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**From the Journal of S.M. Kudryavtsev, 'Record of a
Conversation with Guevara, President of the
National Bank of Cuba, 1 September 1960'**

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Summary:

Guevara discusses the US intention to implement an economic blockade of Cuba in the OAS after the Quito conference as well as the possibility of the US implementing a naval blockade of the island. He argues that other Latin American governments must fight American imperialism.

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from the journal of
S. M. KUDRYAVTSEV

RECORD OF A CONVERSATION WITH
GUEVARA, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL BANK OF CUBA

1 September 1960

I visited Guevara this evening at his request.

Guevara said that for information purposes he would like to pass a copy of a personal message of Fidel Castro to N. S. Khrushchev on the question of giving Cuba technical assistance in the creation of its own industry. Guevara continued, this message will be sent to N. S. Khrushchev by Chomon, our Ambassador in Moscow, who should leave for the Soviet Union in a few days.

For my part, I thanked Guevara (a copy of the message was sent to the USSR MFA by diplomatic post).

In the course of subsequent conversation I asked Guevara's opinion about the prospects for the further development of Cuban-American relations.

Guevara said that, in his opinion, new aggravations in relations between the US and Cuba ought to be expected in the immediate future. Guevara stressed, we have to take an invariably assertive position with respect to American imperialism. We need this not only for domestic, but also for foreign policy considerations. Guevara continued, we are absolutely convinced that the US will increase subversive activity against Cuba. The hostile actions of the US will be both through economic channels as well as through the organization of armed provocations with the aid of counterrevolutionary elements.

In reply to my question, does he, Guevara, think the adoption of anti-Cuban resolutions at the conference in Bogota possible, the latter said that the conference in Bogota can hardly have great importance in itself. At this conference the Americans will obviously conduct corresponding preparation of Latin American governments in order to get them to adopt a decision about economic sanctions against Cuba. However, this can only follow at the next OAS conference in Quito. According to information we have, at the conference in Quito the US intends to raise the question of authorizing the implementation of a military-economic blockade of our island in the name of the OAS. Guevara continued, the US understands that the current measures of an economic blockade being conducted with respect to Cuba are not providing the proper effect by virtue of the fact that we get aid from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and we are also expanding our trade relations with other countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Therefore it is not excluded that one fine day the US will resort to intercepting ships going to Cuba, that is, they will actually establish a naval blockade. The revolutionary government consequently intends import all the necessary goods to Cuba in advance, and also to create some reserves in order to withstand an American blockade for some period of time in the event one is established. Guevara continued, we know that the US government has come to agreement with its allies about this question in principle. Almost no ships come to Havana at the present time with cargo from NATO member countries. However, this cannot continue for a long time inasmuch as the lack of trade with Cuba will

undoubtedly cause a certain dissatisfaction with US policy in the economic circles of the capitalist countries of Europe, and the current blockade will eventually fail. We know that there is also certain dissatisfaction in American industrialist circles who are interested in selling their goods in Cuba. These circumstances will push the US to establish a naval blockade of Cuba with which they want to strangle us faster, especially as the current measures to implement just an economic blockade are actually not rendering any economic effect on the Cuban economy.

Referring to the possibility of the establishment of a naval blockade by the US Navy Guevara further stressed that the revolutionary government therefore attaches especial significance to its talks in Moscow in October on the question of economic integration in the field of foreign trade. Guevara continued, he himself will head the delegation to the October talks in Moscow. Fidel Castro has already agreed with this and has charged him with preparing all the necessary materials.

Further in the conversation it turned on the subversive activities of the counterrevolutionary elements in Cuba.

Guevara stressed, the task of the revolutionary government in conditions of a possible increase of subversive activities from the American agent network recruited from counterrevolutionaries both from former supporters of Batista, as well as from deserters from the revolution is to hold the people in constant mobilizational readiness, increasing the level of the masses' consciousness, and explaining to them that the main enemy of Cuba is American imperialism. Guevara continued, we also proceed [from the position] that Cuba ought to be a unique beacon for the countries of Latin America. The brave and vigorous actions of the Cuban people against American imperialism inspire confidence in the fraternal peoples of Latin America, and revolutionize and strengthen their consciousness that the yoke of American imperialism can be thrown off.

Guevara began to speak in this connection in very sharp expressions that the leaders of the leftist parties in the countries of Latin America do not make use of the available revolutionary situation, behave in a cowardly fashion, do not go, as he expressed it, into the mountains and do not begin open combat against their venal governments. The leftist parties of the other countries of Latin America, Guevara stressed, have much better conditions for armed struggle and victory than the Cuban people. Guevara noted in this connection that political leaders of the type of Lombardo Toledano only slow the revolutionary process. Guevara said, Toledano only has left [his] name and halo of past glory, but in reality he is a real opportunist. We are confident that an active struggle against American imperialism which Cuba is waging right now will revolutionize the popular masses of the countries of Latin America. In the final account genuinely revolutionary leaders will come forward there who are capable of leading the people against the current reactionary and venal governments and achieve victory. Therefore, Guevara stressed, we think that any attempts of the Cuban government to hold talks with the US to settle our differences will not only lead to nothing, but on the contrary might be misinterpreted by the peoples of Latin America as a Cuban weakness and might be understood as a demonstration nothing need be done with American imperialism. We need to overcome the feeling of fatalism which has spread among the peoples of the countries of Latin America that it is impossible to fight American imperialism. Cuba has shown the example, and it should continue to vigorously speak out against American imperialism.

The rest of the conversation was about ordinary subjects.

ATTACHMENT:

1. A translation of F. Castro's message on four sheets.
2. A list of specialists in Spanish on six sheets.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR IN THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA
(S. KUDRYAVTSEV)