

August 9, 1961

**From the Journal of S.M. Kudryavtsev, 'Record of a
Conversation with Prime Minister of the Republic of
Cuba Fidel Castro Ruz, 18 June 1961'**

Citation:

"From the Journal of S.M. Kudryavtsev, 'Record of a Conversation with Prime Minister of the Republic of Cuba Fidel Castro Ruz, 18 June 1961'", August 9, 1961, Wilson Center Digital Archive, AVP RF, F. 0104. Op. 17, P. 118, D. 4, ll. 95-98. Obtained by James G. Hershberg and translated by Gary Goldberg.

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Summary:

Kudryavtsev and Fidel Castro discuss several points of business, including Kennedy and Krushchev's conversation at their Vienna meeting, the US invasion of Cuba, Yuri Gagarin's trip to Cuba, and the visit of two Cuban Majors to the Soviet Ministry of Defense.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

from the journal of
S. M. KUDRYAVTSEV

Secret. Copy № 2
9 August 1961
№ 267

RECORD OF A CONVERSATION
with Prime Minister of the Republic of Cuba Fidel Castro Ruz

18 June 1961

1. I met with Fidel Castro this evening at my apartment and, in accordance with instructions [I] had, I passed him the complete record of the conversation between Cde. N. S. Khrushchev and Kennedy during his meeting in Vienna.

Fidel Castro asked me to pass Cde. N. S. Khrushchev his sincere gratitude for this new act of trust in him personally and the Cuban government as a whole. Fidel Castro stressed, we very highly appreciate the trust in Cuba shown by the Soviet government. These conversations will serve as an excellent orientation for us inasmuch the point of view of the Soviet government on the main international questions is presented with utmost clarity. We read several sections of the conversations together with Fidel Castro, first of all the section concerning Cuba. He especially liked this section. He joked and laughed about the characterization of him (Fidel Castro's) which Cde. N. S. Khrushchev expressed in his conversation with Kennedy.

After familiarization with this section Fidel Castro said that, in his opinion, Kennedy's admission at his initiative that he made a mistake in organizing an armed intervention against Cuba is very important. The truth is, Fidel Castro noted further, the President of the US avoided an answer to the question how this mistake occurred: that he sent few troops against Cuba and did not prepare how this intervention ought to be, or that such a policy with respect to small countries is absolutely impermissible. We think, stressed Fidel Castro, Kennedy nevertheless ought to draw certain conclusions for himself from the explanations to Cde. N. S. Khrushchev. At the present time the position of Cuba has strengthened in the countries of Latin America, and any new hostile actions by Kennedy against the Cuban revolution will weaken the position of American imperialism in these countries.

Ending the conversation on this question, Fidel Castro noted that he will study the record of the conversations closely, both for purposes of a personal orientation as well as for the orientation of the Cuban government.

2. In accordance with instructions [I] had, I informed Fidel Castro about the proposal of Balaguer to establish diplomatic relations between the Dominican Republic and the USSR, and also about our decision to leave this overture of the Dominicans unanswered, considering that no substantive changes have occurred in the Dominican Republic since the murder of Trujillo, and also considering the attitude of Cuba toward the Dominican Republic on the whole.

Expressing gratitude for the information, Fidel Castro said that he is somewhat surprised by this step from Balaguer, inasmuch as it is known that right now he is strenuously seeking the favor of the US. Therefore, it is not excluded that this proposal of his is a peculiar intimidation to force the Americans to give new concessions to the new Dominican regime.

In our opinion, continued Fidel Castro, the decision of the Soviet government to leave this appeal of Balaguer unanswered is correct. The Soviet Union has recently considerably increased its prestige in the countries of Latin America as a result of [its] consistent foreign policy directed at strengthening peace. The unselfish aid to Cuba has created the Soviet Union many friends in Latin America, and even the reactionary governments of a number of Latin American countries have now begun to look at questions of cooperation with the Soviet Union in a different way.

Fidel Castro noted, in these conditions the establishment of relations with the Dominican Republic might only bring harm, since the propaganda of forces in Latin America hostile to the Soviet Union would immediately make us of this fact to try and compromise the Soviet Union in the eyes of the broad popular masses of the American continent.

Fidel Castro said, we think that right now it is more important to establish diplomatic relations with Brazil and thereby break through the unique opening inasmuch as Brazil will undoubtedly also be followed by other countries of Latin America.

3. Fidel Castro informed me that the Council of Ministers of Cuba had adopted a decision at its evening meeting about establishing the first high order of the Republic, "Playa Giron", in honor of the victory over the interventionists. This order will be awarded to both Cuban and foreign citizens. The Council of Ministers of Cuba, continued Fidel Castro, adopted a decision at the same time to give the first order of Playa Giron to Yu. A. Gagarin as soon as he arrives in Cuba. Fidel Castro asked me to inform the Soviet government of this decision and find out whether there would be any objections to this decision from it. Fidel Castro stressed when doing this that giving the first Cuban award to Yu. A. Gagarin would be taken very well by the Cuban people.

I told Fidel Castro for my part that I would convey his request to the Soviet government and then inform [him] about our point of view on this question.

4. Then Fidel Castro addressed a request to invite Major Juan Almeida, who at the present time is the commander of the central sector, to the Soviet Union. Major Aldo Santamaria, a prominent leader of the 26th of July Movement, should also go with Almeida.

Fidel Castro asked that these two army officers be invited if possible through Ministry of Defense channels and to familiarize them with the achievements of the USSR both in the field of industry as well as agriculture. It would also be desirable to familiarize them, within the limits of the possible, with the structure of work concerning organization and the command of troops.

Fidel Castro then stressed that he would like for Almeida and Aldo Santamaria to be received modestly in the Soviet Union, without any fuss, in a simple working atmosphere and without any publication about this in the press. Juan Almeida and Aldo Santamaria are personal friends of Fidel Castro. Neither of them are members of the NSP, but have recently been actively cooperating with friends and firmly follow the revolution. Describing Juan Almeida and Aldo Santamaria, Fidel Castro stressed that they ought to be closer to the resolution and dispel the recent doubts they have. In this light, Fidel Castro noted, the trip of Juan Almeida and Aldo Santamaria to the Soviet Union will bring them much benefit. It would be desirable to send them together with the Spanish comrades Francisco and Ramon, who should go to the Soviet Union on vacation at the end of July. This is also connected with the fact that at the instruction of the Cuban government Almeida should fly to Prague on 30 July for the graduation of Cuban students. In Prague Almeida and those accompanying him will spend several days at the invitation of the Ministry of Defense of Czechoslovakia.

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