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Letter from Khrushchev to Fidel Castro

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Summary:

Khrushchev wrote to Fidel Castro to discuss the issues in the two countries' relation after the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Soviet leader attacked voices from other countries, including socialist ones, blaming the USSR of being opportunistic and self-serving. He explained the decision to withdraw missiles from Cuba, stressing the possibility of advancing Communism through peaceful means. Khrushchev underlined the importance of guaranteeing against an American attack on Cuba and urged Havana to focus on economic, cultural and technological development to become a shining beacon of socialism in Latin America. Besides, he also invited Fidel Castro to visit Moscow and discuss the preparations for such a trip.

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Contents:

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Letter from Khrushchev to Fidel Castro. Re: Point 3, Protocol No. 80

Dear Comrade Fidel Castro,

I have been thinking of writing this letter to you for a long time now. And now that I am on my way back to Moscow from Berlin, where I was attending the congress of the Socialist Party of Germany, I am writing this letter to you. Our train is passing through the fields and forests of Soviet Belorussia, and it occurred to me suddenly that it would be very nice if you yourself could take a look, now in this sunny weather, at the earth covered with snow, at the forests covered with frost.

You are a man from the South, you must have seen this only in pictures. It is probably difficult for you to imagine what the ground looks like when it is covered with white trees and the forests when they are covered with white frost. And it would be nice if you could see our country during all the seasons of the year. In our country every season-- spring, summer, autumn, and winter-- has its own delights!

Cuba is a land of eternal summer. I remember how during our talks in New York~ had different views on why the New York climate was uncomfortable: to me it was very humid, but to you, you told me, it was cold.

But all these ramblings about nature should not distract me from the main subject of this letter. The main point here is the deep wish felt by me and my friends to meet with you, to talk a little, to have a heart-to-heart chat. We have things to talk about. I would like this meeting and this conversation not to be postponed for long. I would like our meeting to take place soon.

Why so soon? Well, because you and we have survived a very important period, a period that will be considered a milestone in the development of Cuba, of the Soviet Union, and of all socialist countries. After all, we are the first countries after the Second World War to come so close to war. And at the center of this dangerous crisis in the Caribbean Sea was Cuba.

We understand that most of the urgency of the crisis has been eliminated by now, but even so the danger of the encounter has not completely disappeared. You understand this very well, and we fully share your concern, and are evaluating the situation with it in mind.

But what is most important now is the question: Why should we need to meet with you and talk openly?

The urgency of the crisis that was created by American imperialism in the Caribbean Sea area has been eliminated. But it seems to me that that crisis has left behind some trace, albeit hardly perceptible, in the relations between our states-- Cuba and the Soviet Union-- and in our personal relations. Now, to speak quite honestly, they are not what they used to be before the crisis. I will hide that fact that this saddens and worries us. And it seems to me that in many ways the future growth of our relations depends on a meeting between us. At the present time, a means of contact such as written correspondence simply is not sufficient. Nothing can replace a personal conversation. After all, in conversation any misunderstanding of each other's positions can be easily and quickly corrected, and a common language can be found. Thus people who use technical means for getting together and exchanging opinions try to have personal meetings, personal contacts, and personal conversations. As you know, our enemies meet quite frequently, perhaps even more frequently than we do. And you and we should meet with each other. During the crisis in the Caribbean Sea, our views did not always coincide, we gave different evaluations to the various stages of that crisis, and we had somewhat different approaches to finding ways to eliminate

it. After our well-known statement, you even said publicly that during the unfolding of the crisis a certain discord had arisen between the Soviet government and the government of Cuba. As you yourself understand, this did not make us happy. And now that the tension has eased and we have entered a different phase of relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union-- on the one hand we have a different relationship with the United States of America, and on the other hand, there also remain some fissures (how deep they are is difficult to determine) in the relations between us and Cuba.

Thus we want a meeting, at which time we would be able to bridge up and eliminate those fissures between us, however deep they may be; they may even simply be light marks which could be easily erased. There should be no rough patches in the relations between our two socialist countries. Our relations should be truly brotherly.

Now that a certain time has passed since the difficult crisis, and there is every opportunity for calm analysis by all the parties of that crisis, I am allowing myself, dear friend, to make a short detour into the past, to recall certain events to memory, and to give an assessment of the actions that took place.

I would like to say sincerely, so that you have no grounds for doubts, why we made the proposal to place our ballistic missiles in Cuba. I want to talk about this because even the representatives of some socialist countries strangely discuss and distort both our first and our last actions, cloaking their position with Marxist terminology and some rather fine-sounding sentences about the irreconcilability of our common class enemies. Why, honestly, are they making judgments about other governments, even though they themselves, as you already know well, made no real attempts to offer aid to Cuba, which was in mortal peril? You seem to have noticed that people, groups of people, or even the leaders of certain socialist countries that merely observed the crisis, suddenly started after the crisis was over to make a fuss, started to issue statements on what actions should have been taken in the crisis period, criticizing those who bore most of the weight of the struggle on their own shoulders. They say that this and that action should have been carried out, these or those measures should have been undertaken, and yet they themselves did neither one nor the other, remaining on the sidelines, away from the real struggle. We are right to ask such critics the natural question: Why at the height of the crisis did they not take any such actions-- not verbal but real actions, which would have demonstrated their commitment to offer help in Cuba's defense, to stay beside us even if war broke out.

But in those days they showed no such commitment, limiting themselves to merely lashing out against capitalism and imperialism. If we decided to hold a verbal-abuse contest, then we could easily beat such competition: as is well known, Russians have a large selection of swear words to choose from.

In the first years of the revolution, we used those words liberally against imperialism. At that time we were the only socialist state, and we had little economic or military power. But now you and we live in an entirely different era. Now the Soviet Union is no longer the only socialist state, now there exists a powerful global socialist network, and a community of socialist states. Thus the Republic of Cuba is not alone. Placing itself under the banner of Marxism-Leninism, Cuba has entered the community of socialist countries. We have welcomed this, and continue to do so. And we did not welcome in words only. Our country, which has sustained great battles in order to defend the triumphs of the October revolution, fending off the intervention of 14 different powers, playing a huge role in the defeat of Hitler's war machine-- a country which the USA did not recognize for 16 years, long years in which it did not acknowledge it and other countries, shows especially clearly what sorts of difficulties now lie on the shoulders of the Cuban people, its leader, and its allies in defense of the Cuban revolution, in the defense of the right of the Cuban nation itself to decide its own fate and conditions, when neighbored by such a powerful, aggressive, and merciless force as American imperialism.

We were the first to experience the whole array of the forms and methods of wickedness that our enemies are capable of. When Churchill, who called out for the smothering of the October revolution, failed with his allies to smash the country of Soviets through intervention, they put an economic blockade into effect. They were sure that we had neither the skills, nor the power, nor the personnel to revitalize our legacy that lay in ruins. Soviet Russia, they said, will fall apart on its own, cold will smother it, typhus will kill it, and the experiment in building socialism will fail.

But what happened? The nations of the Soviet Union, under the leadership of the Bolshevik party headed by the great Lenin, displayed their organization and willingness to fight, they destroyed the White Guards, they expelled the interventionists, they overcame all economic difficulties. The socialist path has proven to be so practicable, so beneficial, that we have transformed the backward Russia of tsarist times, which could not even dream of competing with the developed Western European capitalist states, into a country that now occupies second place in the world in terms of gross production, and in term of the development of science and technology occupies a position rivaling that of the most highly developed capitalist country, the United States of America, and perhaps even a higher position. If you consider the level of our attainments in space exploration, then it is well known that the Americans up to now have not been able to catch up with us in the weight of the missiles launched into outer space, or in the number of flights by astronauts around the Earth.

Following the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, the Communists have shown their skill in creating material values on a new, socialist foundation, in encouraging culture, and in raising science to a level that now seems the highest of all the countries of the world. It is no accident that after our rockets were launched into space, the Americans sent a highly select delegate to visit us in order to study public education and the training of engineering and scientific personnel, after which they were forced to give us highly favorable reviews of our system of education. Every year we train three times as many engineers as the United States does, which bears powerful testimony to the intellectual development of society, to the arming of a nation with knowledge. And the more powerfully we are armed with knowledge, the faster our final victory will be guaranteed.

When the revolution took place in Cuba, its enemies were seized with fear. They saw that a socialist Cuba could become a guiding star, a magnet drawing to itself other nations also fighting for their independence and freedom. Nations that have only attained political liberation from colonial oppression, but have not yet become real masters of their own countries see Cuba as an example of how to solve their social problems.

For this reason we were firmly convinced that the United States of America would never be reconciled to the existence of a socialist Cuba.

We knew that they would do everything in their power to eliminate that socialist Cuba, and keep capitalism dominant in all the countries of the Western hemisphere. Precisely with these goals in mind, they took out of storage the Monroe doctrine, which they themselves had almost never used in practice.

You of course know as well as we do that the Monroe Doctrine declared that America would not interfere in the concerns of Europe or Asia, and that Europe and Asia would not interfere in the concerns of the Western hemisphere. But by now the USA has long acted on its "right" to interfere in the affairs of Europe, Asia, and the other continents; and has created in those regions military alliances among imperialist countries, with the aim of preparing a third world war. Yet the part of the Monroe Doctrine that concerns the Western hemisphere they want to keep untouched, in order to suppress liberating revolutions and to guard against socialism.

Within our administration, in the Presidium of the Central Committee and the Government, we have often discussed how aid might have been more effectively shown to Cuba. When the Yankees declared an economic blockade, leaving Cuba without fuel and other necessary materials and products, and when the Republic was feeling sharp need for trained personnel, Cuba faced huge difficulties, and we instinctively reached out our hand to you in a gesture of brotherly aid. It is true that certain people without any Communist conscience are flinging around the accusation that the Soviet Union, in offering that aid, was only pursuing some pragmatic goals of its own. But this is just the result of bitterness, a loss of reason and of a healthy approach to reality. We can adduce real facts in any debate we might participate in, showing the complete unsubstantiality of such accusations.

I do not believe that you need proof that we have offering aid to Cuba for any self-serving reasons. Only a crazy man could think that we were getting rich off this or gaining something from it. In offering huge material aid to Cuba, we are doing so conscientiously because we are Communists. We ourselves have been beset by enormous difficulties in our struggle for socialism, and from our own experience we know that it is no easy feat to build a new society. We have been offering and will continue to offer aid to Cuba. We are looking to the future.

When American imperialism saw that its plans to squelch Communism by means of an economic blockade and a cutting off of diplomatic ties had failed, it began to speak of an armed invasion, and in 1961 began to launch its mercenaries against Cuba.

But American imperialism underestimated the solidarity, the will to victory, and the organization of the Cuban people, its dedication to ideals of freedom and independence, faith in its government, and faith in you, dear Fidel. And the enemy was beaten by you. All we socialist countries, all progressive people took pride in your glorious triumph.

It was clear to us that the Americans, having suffered defeat once, would never acquiesce in it, that they would simply change tactics and repeat the invasion. This one, however, would be significantly better prepared and thus a more dangerous invasion, since it would have learned from the lessons of the first defeat. Indeed, the Americans spoke openly about this. In talks with our representatives, for example, they often referred to the events in Hungary in 1956. They tried to interpret those events as offering sane justification for their own actions against the Cuban revolution. You, they told us, did that in your own interests, since Hungary was close to you; we have the right to take similar decisive actions against Cuba, which is close to us. Our representatives of course firmly rejected such a "basis" for a new invasion of Cuba.

Our party and government saw that the affair was heading towards an invasion. And it was clear from your statements that you, our Cuban comrades, understood and felt the reality of the aggression, calling to the people to the defense of its revolutionary triumphs. Your slogan "The homeland or death!" we considered. an absolutely correct revolutionary slogan. But we also understood that mere heroic willingness to face death was not enough to hold back imperialism. The imperialists of course wanted to bring the Cuban nation to death, not to victory. And the US imperialists have great forces for coming down upon tiny Cuba; and Cuba of course will not be able alone to withstand their war machine for long.

How would it have been possible to aid Cuba in these circumstances?

Some chose the path of revolutionary words. Making statements during the days of crisis about their support for the Declaration of 1957 and the party Statement 81 of 1960, they in fact offered no real aid besides protests and demonstrations as signs of

their solidarity with Cuba. Those people of course uttered great numbers of true words about the heroism of the Cuban people, its leader and its comrades, about its fearlessness and readiness to die rather than give itself up to the enemy. But could all that really have averted an invasion, offering Cuba only that kind of support, cursing at imperialism? You know very well that behaving like that meant not doing the most important thing, the most decisive thing.

We chose a different path. We decided to go meet the danger head on, to take measures that would put a choice before the US imperialists: either renounce your planned invasion of Cuba, or face the unleashing of thermonuclear war. In the name of Cuba's defense we proposed placing missiles in Cuba. If American imperialism had initiated their invasion, then no protests of ours, no demonstrations lasting for three shifts, three weeks, or even three months would have stopped American imperialism. Only one fear could hold them back, the understanding that if they started an invasion, then the missiles would do their business, and the cities of America would fall to ruin. We understood that the placement of that sort of weaponry in Cuba was the most effective means for defending Cuba available at that point in time.

We believed that Cuba needed arms for holding back the USA from another invasion of Cuba.

We discussed this issue several times, and decided to put forth the proposal to bring in the weaponry you are aware of, manned by our own crews. We operated on the assumption that the missile weaponry would be in the hands of Soviet military units. We want to hold to this policy in the future as well. We wanted to ensure that our enemies would hold the same positions, at least for a certain period of time. Ultimately, of course, West Germany will probably have similar weaponry in its hands, but it is in our interests to postpone that time.

When this issue was being decided, we started to realize that the imperialists could use this measure of ours as a reason for heating up the situation, placing the world on the verge of war or even unleashing war. In the interests of defending Cuba, in the interests of the Whole Soviet camp and the proletarian solidarity of the Marxist-Leninist party, we took decisive action. What could be more important to our country, from the point of view of fulfilling the international proletarian duty, than taking such action in the interests of another socialist country, in the interests of the common Marxist-Leninist cause? We understood that our country could be swept up into a war in the Caribbean region. And that would mean that the war would become global. I am not even mentioning the fact that our people--and there were thousands of them who arrived when you gave your consent to the new armaments-- were meant to share the fate of the Cuban soldiers. That is clear to everyone. And we have come to this with the full understanding of our international duty.

This not a resolution, this is not cursing at imperialism--which will not do you any good in weakening it. As the Belorussian proverb says: Curse at a man and he'll only grow fatter. It is really like that. You can curse at imperialism as much as you want, but it will not grow any thinner because of your cursing, it will not get weaker, and its insolence will not diminish. Imperialism recognizes only real force. It does not acknowledge anything else. For this reason you may call imperialism a paper tiger, or manure, as much as you want, but unless imperialism knows that there is real force behind those words expressing our indignation, that will not do anything to stop it, and will not diminish its insolence and aggressiveness.

We consider real force to be, first and foremost, an economy in which the people are joined in solidarity around their government. Only on the solid foundation of an economy can the necessary armaments system be built.

We socialist countries value the maintenance of peace above all else, we make every

effort to strengthen it. But we may never neglect to take into account the existence of the imperialist camp, and its constant striving to strangle the socialist countries. For this reason we must observe the necessary proportion in spending our funds and developing the economy-- for that is ultimately the very foundation of military power-- but without begrudging funds for creating the most up-to-date armed forces and the most cutting-edge weaponry that would meet the necessary requirements, and that would moreover surpass the weaponry of our enemy.

Without this it is impossible to ensure a peaceful coexistence; without dealing with these practical matters it is impossible to defend peace throughout the world. Thus those who say that we are begging for peace are either consciously distorting our position, or simply not understanding what they are saying. As the proverb says, only God knows what they have more of, bad intentions or ignorance.

Now there are some people whose tongues are wagging away slandering us, saying that in helping to resolve the conflict in the Caribbean Sea area, we were simply operating on our own self-serving interests. But that is, in fact, the most biting insult the Soviet people could receive. We sent Soviet citizens to Cuba with the knowledge that aggression could be unleashed against them. If that occurred, then our people would have fought alongside their Cuban brothers to the very end, and, if necessary, would have willingly burned themselves up in the fire of war.

Indulging in the sort of slander I mentioned above can only be done by people who, while calling themselves Marxist-Leninists, do not pay due respect to that name. It is clear that, pursuing some egotistical, opportunistic aims of their own, they go so far as to slander the Soviet Union, the first country to achieve revolution, to build socialism, and to set an example for not giving in to the enemy in its struggle against its bourgeoisie and landowners, and which now sets an example for not giving in to the imperialists. You are of course aware that the Soviet Union has offered and continues to offer huge aid, including aid with arms-provisioning, to nations which are struggling for their freedom from imperialism.

Honorable people cannot help but feel indignation when they hear the slanderous charges addressed to the Soviet Union. They rejoice and take pride in our successes, in our politics of international Leninism.

As you see, dear Comrade Fidel, I have gotten carried away, and I am being verbose in my letter to you. You will understand, I think, that I have a sincere need to do so. As we Russians say, you feel like pouring out your soul when you talk with a comrade, a friend, a brother. Although this conversation is taking place across a distance, I would like letter-writing to communicate our feelings truly. I hope that when you come visit us-- and if you want to bring your comrades along, we would be happy with that-- we will have a good number of brotherly chats.

I will not conceal from you, since it would be stupid to do so, that at the present moment any incautious step, any tension in our relations could cause a variety of problems. An action taken without being thought through or an incorrect turn of phrase are causes for reflection, not just for you but for us too. In ordinary circumstances it is possible that no significance would be attributed to this, but in the circumstances that exist at present I would say that calm and restraint are necessary. You of course understand that I am talking here only about external details. When we talk about the situation in depth, you and we have every reason to feel good. We and you both have succeeded in keeping the aggressor from invading Cuba and, in spite of the mobilization of huge armed forces that the aggressor carried out, he was unable to attack the island of Freedom. We cannot underestimate the aggressive imperialist forces prepared for an attack on your republic.

They far surpassed the forces that Cuba had at its disposal, even including the troops that we had on your territory-- which, dear Fidel, would have fought side by side with

your heroes, and if necessary would have died alongside them for the cause of the revolution.

When we asked Marshall Malinovsky what Cuba could do in response to US aggression, he said with honesty, though his answer was hard to give: "If we are talking," he said, "about the alignment of forces as they exist in the Caribbean Sea area-- and we know what Cuba has at its disposal-- we can say that with that alignment of forces it will unfortunately be impossible to hold firm, and, if military action breaks out, Cuba is not likely to withstand for long, because its forces there are too inferior."

You may not agree with us, even though we would prefer otherwise. But, my dear friend Fidel, you are a military man, and I too spent almost the entire Second World War on the front, and I took part in the Civil War as well: there is a real alignment of forces, you can't get away from it. When Hitler attacked our country, we withdrew for a long time, losing city after city, leaving millions of tortured people under enemy oppression. It was bitterly hard for us, but neither our curses, nor our appeals, nor our tears, nor our anger were of any help during that time. Only then did we become stronger in the military sense, and start to beat the Fascists. Twenty million dead-- that is the sacrifice of the Soviet people on the altar of freedom. In brief, insofar as we understood the alignment of forces in the Caribbean area, we assume that Marshall Malinovsky gave a sober and accurate evaluation of the real situation.

But then why did the enemy--- the American aggressor--withdraw, why did he renounce the invasion? Of course he was not held back only by the forces in Cuba, including those 42 medium-range missiles that we had placed in Cuba. The main thing that held American imperialism back was the powerful forces of the Soviet Union; it was held back by the fact that an attack on Cuba would entail a world war and the destruction of many countries. The United States of America would also suffer horribly.

We of course have no desire to underestimate the important role played by the Cuban people with their firm resolve to defend the triumphs of their revolution.

That is what held the enemy back, and not some exorcism of imperialism, not curses addressed to it, not resolutions-- even though we consider the criticism and cursing of imperialism to be a useful and necessary activity in our struggle against the enemy. But we cannot think that cursing alone, or even heroism alone, could bring about a triumph over any enemy. The Communists highly value qualities that are very important for revolutionaries, qualities like will and heroism; but if they do not have any real forces to rely on, then those qualities are not so frightening to the imperialists. I emphasize again that only real forces can hold back the enemy, only the fear of losing the war can keep him at bay. Or, even if he believes he can with it, then he must do another sort of book-keeping and take into account his colossal losses, understanding that those losses in current circumstances would make a victory mean nothing, and that a war would make their territories into a field strewn with corpses and infected with radioactive materials.

They you can never trust your enemy. We have always stood by this, and we will continue to stand by it.

It is clear to every Marxist-Leninist that American imperialism will not give up the thought of eliminating the socialist creation in Cuba, the revolutionary order in your country, restoring capitalism and reaction to it. As long as the two systems exist-- the socialist system, which rebuilds life on the basis of the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, and the capitalist system-- they will be antagonistic to each other, and the struggle between them will not cease, will not cease until one of them attains a complete victory.

We Marxist-Leninists are deeply convinced of our eventual victory. Not just convinced-- our progress towards an ultimate triumph for the construction of Communism, in accordance with the Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is firmly counted on. The period designated for that ultimate triumph for the Soviet Union is twenty years. It is true that this will still not be full Communism, but the material and technological basis for Communism in the Soviet Union will have been created by then. And the other socialist countries will at that time be moving along with the Soviet Union, growing in economic power. And in military power too we should not grow weaker, but stronger. Speaking honestly, there is very little hope at the present time for reaching an agreement on disarmament.

But this last remark does not mean that we should give up our efforts in the struggle for peace, and replace our calls for disarmament with calls for arms proliferation. With appeals like that we will not attract the popular masses; we will not become an appealing force for laborers and all peace-loving people. If it is not the fight for peace that we put in first place, but the fight for unleashing war and annihilating capitalism through war, rather than through peaceful rivalry, then we will be practically calling people to their deaths.

People go to death when there is no other way out. And only when there is no other way out.

Yet we ourselves do have a way out! We are sure of our righteousness. And not just of our righteousness, but also of our potential for victory. We have shown that potential in the practical business of building socialism, in the very fact of its existence. Forty years ago, the Soviet Union occupied one of the last places among the European countries with respect to economic development, now we occupy second place, and by 1970 we should be in first place. We have been successful in making the words "peace" and "socialism" inseparable in the minds of all the nations of the globe.

Could this fail to encourage us? Could this really call us to opportunism, to an unleashing of thermonuclear war? Why should we act on the principle of all or nothing? You act like that only in situations that offer no way out. Desperation and pessimism are for imperialist circles. It is they who may have recourse to war, having lost the faith that they can win the struggle with us through peaceful rivalry; they have the aggressive forces to do so.

But for us a world war for the triumph of the cause of Communism is not necessary. We Communists have the best prospects, a firm certainty, and that certainty is based not on words, but on real things. In peaceful circumstances socialism develops its forces and proves its advantages in all fields, including such momentous advantages as a huge lifting of the economy, the productivity of labor, and the material and cultural level of the masses.

On the other hand, peaceful coexistence does not free capitalism from its irresolvable contradictions; it contributes to a sharpening of the class conflict between the laborers and exploiters, and to a strengthening of the national-liberation movement. You have surely noticed that the most important strikes, and the greatest growth in the national-liberation struggle have occurred in the last ten to fifteen years, in other words during the period of peaceful coexistence. In conditions of peaceful coexistence with a different social basis, national-liberationist and socialist revolutions are not only possible but inevitable, including of course revolutions in Latin America, whose lead was taken by Cuba. For this reason we are making every effort to avert the outbreak of global thermonuclear war. We have no interest in unleashing war.

But we are indeed ready to make a retaliatory strike. If imperialism tries to liquidate

us through war, we have the potential to liquidate the imperialist forces, thereby putting an end to imperialism once and for all. This, as is recorded in our Party documents, in the resolutions of our Party congresses, in the Program of the Communist Party, and in the declarations of our kindred Communist parties, would be the last war unleashed by imperialism.

I have already told you, dear Fidel, that at present there is certain guardedness and mistrust in our relations, and that this is harmful to our common cause and of course harmful as well to both Cuba and us. Let me say straightforwardly that if this unsettles our Party and our country, then those rough spots cannot be any good for you either-- for, after all, we can well imagine how many different matters and concerns you have to attend to, in encouraging your country's economy and in many other domains.

I am baring my heart in telling you all this. We would very much like you to care visit us. You have had a standing invitation to come visit us for a long time now. But recent events transpired in such a way that we ourselves advised you to postpone your visit a while. We have been extraordinarily wary recently, seeing that American imperialism could exploit your absence to carry out an invasion of Cuba.

But now we believe-- and we are quite sure of this-- that your absence from your Homeland and your making a trip to Moscow could not be used by the enemy as an opportunity for invading Cuba. There are nonaggression pledges that have been made by the United States of America through a statement by its President. Of course one cannot rely on them as an absolute guarantee, but it is not entirely reasonable to completely ignore them either. That statement is issued by the President of the USA has now become a sort of international document that has been formalized by the UN. The crisis in the Caribbean Sea area, and the attempts by American imperialism to invade Cuba with armed forces have turned into a global crisis. Your relations with the United States of America are now no longer merely relations between two countries, between Cuba and the USA-- no, now the issue between you has become a global issue. However uncontrollable your aggressor may be, he must to some degree take that into account.

Imperialism can, of course, change its methods for pursuing its goals. But the goal it sets for itself-- to fight socialism-- does not change. And this should not surprise us. After all, we ourselves talk openly about the worldwide triumph of socialism. We talk about both peaceful coexistence and the inevitable triumph of Communism across the whole world, and how the Marxist-Leninist banner will be unfurled one day over the 'Whole globe. At the same time we say both "Long live peaceful coexistence!" and "Long live Communism!"

We want to attain this great goal in conditions of peaceful rivalry. In a situation of peaceful coexistence we can demonstrate the superiority of socialism over capitalism, and can thereby draw more and more people from the capitalist countries into the struggle against capitalism that is being waged within every country, the fight to defeat it, to establish the dictatorship of the working class, to ensure the triumph of peace, democracy, and socialism.

"As I said before, peaceful coexistence allows for the development of class struggles in the capitalist countries, and the growth of the national-liberation struggle among the peoples of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, which also greatly alters the balance of power in the global arena to the benefit of the socialist forces. We have used and will continue to use all the means at our disposal to help those nations in their righteous struggle against imperialism.

Kennedy recently gathered together all the counter-revolutionary riff-raff that you expelled from Cuba, along with some other rabble, and did a lot of fancy talking

before them, promising to deliver to Havana the banner that had been presented to him by the interventionist, as soon as a different government took power there. This does not daunt us in the least. After all, you probably remember that when I was on my visit to the United States of America, I said quite openly that capitalism would bury in its grave. But I said that the grave-digger would be that working class of America. The working class itself is digging the grave for American imperialism.

The Soviet Union does not rule out the possibility of frenzied and uncontrolled actions on the part of American imperialism. It would be stupid not to see that danger. But now, after the difficult crisis in the Caribbean Sea area is over, there is reason to believe that you have room to breathe freely now, and that you will use it for peaceful and constructive purposes. That breathing-space should be used above all for economic development and agricultural production. That will allow you to raise your nation's standard of living. It is the American monopolists and imperialists who are most afraid of the revolutionary example set by Cuba. And for this reason they want to strangle Cuba.

From this, there follow many important tasks facing the Cuban Republic at the present time. Developing the economy and culture, raising the standard of living of the masses-- efforts must concentrate on these goals. And we, comrade Fidel, are ready to work with you. The Soviet Union has been doing, and will continue to do, everything it can to encourage this cooperation. Such cooperation will require that we offer aid to your republic. Investing in the strengthening of the Cuban economy, in its power, the Soviet Union is not at all proceeding from materialistic calculations. When we help strengthen the economy and defense capacities of Cuba, we see it as an investment in our common development, an investment in the empowerment of revolutionary forces and the unity of the socialist countries. With our joint efforts, we are blazing a path on the new continent, the path to a new world-- the world of socialism.

Revolutionary Cuba is a bright star in the Western hemisphere. And the more highly developed its economy, culture, and the material well-being of the Cuban nation become, the more brightly that beacon will shine, drawing to it the working class, the peasantry, the laboring intellectuals of the Latin American countries, the countries of Africa and Asia, encouraging them in their fight for freedom and for a better life.

These, Comrade Fidel, are my sincere opinions.

Now I would like to talk, dear Fidel, about what in our opinion would be the best time for you to come to the Soviet Union. From our point of view, the season has no special significance. But, bearing in mind your tropical climate in Cuba, and remembering that you physically felt cold in New York, we should take into account our Russian winters.

With regard to political warmth you cannot compare us to any other continent, in spite of the geographical position of our country--with us, warm feelings of friendship create tropical conditions at any time of the year for our guests from our brother countries. But the fact is that -we are still powerless to give you relief from the physical perception of cold. Thus it may be more convenient for you to come visit us with the onset of spring, so that you would be able to take part in our First of May celebrations.

You once expressed a desire to visit the Soviet Union precisely around the First of May, to see our demonstrations and parades. Thus it would be good if you could come before the First of May, so that you can get to know our cities, our buildings, and our people. I would be very happy to travel around the country with you, keeping you company on a visit to several cities. We would chat during that time, and we could celebrate the First of May in Moscow, where you could see the parades and

demonstrations.

Before the First of May we could do a little hunting. Big-game hunting with us is over in early January, but even during the spring we have a lot of good hunting. Hunting is especially interesting for lovers of nature not for the game killed, but for the poetry of the experience, and for a vacation this would be very nice. We also have fishing. I have been told that in your leisure time, although you do not have much of it, you like not only to hunt but to fish too. We can guarantee you both of these.

In a word, you yourself should choose the time that is most convenient for you. The First of May with you in attendance would be an even more joyous holiday for Muscovites and for all the nations of the Soviet Union. The popularity of your revolution, and your personal popularity as leader of the Cuban revolution are very great among our people; the Soviet people deeply revere you, and are delighted with your revolutionary boldness. The Cuban revolution won over the hearts of our people. You will feel this warmth. When you yourself come visit us and meet with the people anywhere: in a city, in a plant, on a collective or state farm-- wherever you go.

I will not conceal from you, dear Fidel, that I myself would very much like to visit Cuba. At one time before the crisis it had already been decided by me and my comrades that I would go visit you in Cuba in January, in order to talk with you, to travel a bit, to see your part of the earth, to meet with your people, our Cuban brothers, and, most importantly, to share with them my experience in building socialism. I do not believe that you will condemn or consider me a braggart for this: the fact is that, after the revolution, we have accumulated a lot of experience. You may not entirely agree with this experience; indeed, if we had to start again, we ourselves would not do everything over again in the same way. But the value of experience is not just in the fact that it is useful, but also in its capacity to show what should not be repeated, what was wrong or at times even harmful.

Now, after our generally successful overcoming of the crisis, now that we have repelled an American invasion through our united efforts, preserving revolutionary Cuba and its triumphs without any losses, postponing world war, the situation has significantly improved. In overcoming the crisis we have won time. Perhaps for a year or two, or even we believe for as much as five or six years, the situation for Cuba will be more beneficial than it was before the crisis. And winning time is a very important factor, since the balance of power is changing more and more to the advantage of socialism, which has a huge significance for the Cuban revolution as well.

I thought that after the elimination of this tension it might be possible to visit you in Cuba. But circumstances have unfolded in such a way that it seems to me now best not to go. We came to this conclusion because it might be incorrectly understood both by you, and by other countries. Many people have started to ask: why is Khrushchev going to Cuba, wasn't Comrade Mikoyan just there recently? Mikoyan's trip was misinterpreted in many countries, even socialist ones.

And if Khrushchev still goes after all, then they will say: what, do you know, conditions have arisen in the relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union that have made it necessary for Khrushchev himself to go there.

I state once again now that I want very much to visit you, if you invite me. I am sure that such a trip would be fruitful. But you and I will discuss this when you come to the Soviet Union, and together we will choose a time for me to come visit you in Cuba.

Now we are busy with our domestic issues. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union recently began a large project on reorganizing the structure

of our Party, improving the administration of the state economy. We are devoting even more determined efforts by the Party and the people to the development of the economy, and to raising further the level of agricultural production, industry, construction, science, and technology. With all this, of course, we have enough to do; we are not suffering from idleness. When you come to Moscow, we will have honest talks on all topics that interest us.

Please accept, Comrade Fidel, heartfelt Communist greetings from me and from all my comrades.

N. KHRUSHCHEV

31 January 1963