

October 12, 1962

**Memorandum of Conversation between Chinese
Ambassador to Cuba Shen Jian and Member of the
Cuban Integrated Revolutionary Organizations
Emilio Aragonés**

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Summary:

Shen Jian and Emilio Aragonés discussed the Sino-Indian border disputes, in which both questioned the attitude of the USSR toward India. The other talking points include the attitude of the socialist world toward Yugoslavia and the revolutionary movements in Latin America.

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Memorandum of Conversation between Ambassador Shen Jian and
[Emilio] Aragones, Member of the Cuban Integrated Revolutionary Organizations

On the Sino-Indian border, the Soviet Union's relationship with Yugoslavia, and
liberation struggles in Latin America

12 October 1962

Before leaving, Ambassador Shen invited Aragones for dinner, during which Aragones asked about the issue of the Sino-Indian border. Ambassador Shen introduced a simple history and the recent situation of the Sino-Indian border. Ambassador Shen said that the Sino-Indian border problem is very complex due to India's invasion and due to the fact that Nehru is unwilling to solve the border issue. It is not easy to understand the point of the issue if one does not adequately understand it. Some people have even said that India is neutral, but this is in fact wrong. Aragones said that we [Cuba] do not think India is neutral either.

Nevertheless, many Cuban people's knowledge of the Sino-Indian border issue is vague and confused. In my [Aragones'] opinion, some of the views of comrades from Soviet Union encourage such vagueness. Ambassador Shen continued and said that the sale of fighter aircrafts by the Soviet Union to India for a low price does not, in our opinion, conform to proletariat internationalism. Aragones said that "the deed of Soviet Union's comrades is difficult to explain" and continued to say that, "according to the recent news, there is some kind of deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations." Ambassador Shen said that "we were at variance with the Soviet comrades on some issues, including peaceful transition, war and peace, supporting liberation struggles of peoples in various countries, the issue of Yugoslavia, and so on." On one hand, Ambassador Shen briefly introduced our views towards the Yugoslavia issue and, on the other hand, Moscow spoke bluntly and declared its condemnation of China's modern revisionism towards Yugoslavia. We believe that Yugoslavia is not a socialist state but a traitor of Marxism-Leninism working for imperialism. The Ambassador also mentioned our views on nuclear weapons via the note which we sent to the Soviet government. Aragones said that he saw a copy of the note from the Chinese government and thought China's stance was correct.

After dinner, Ambassador Shen asked if [Che] Guevara and Aragones exchanged views on many international issues when they visited the Soviet Union. Aragones said that "we talked little about international issues; it seemed that the Soviet Union was well informed and knew of our practices. They still respected our views on various issues without intention to intervene. We talked a lot about Yugoslavia. They said that this is a problem of strategy: if Yugoslavia would like to change and the leaders of Yugoslavia admitted their past mistakes, it will open up a new road toward socialism for the people of Yugoslavia. The Ambassador said that Yugoslavia gained over 3 billion U.S. dollars from America and, adding the aids from England, France and West Germany, the amount exceeded 5 billion U.S. dollars. How can imperialism raise a socialist country with their money? Aragones said that "America had not given even a thousand dollars to China or Cuba." The Ambassador said that "both of our countries have abundant anti-imperialist experience." Aragones said that "we also have some experience with revisionism. Yugoslavia was not willing to sell us even one mortar. We have different views from the Soviet comrades on this issue. The Yugoslavs here complained that we did not treat them as our comrades. Our attitude towards Soviet-Yugoslav relations is as follows: accept this as a fact, but disapprove of it. You can see that our newspapers' comments on the Soviet Union's visit to Yugoslavia are very general." Aragones continued that "we had a deep friendship with the Soviet Union and required support from the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, we kept different views on various issues. We never gave up our principles, but we have a realist mind.

Cuba would perish in a few hours if we lost the support from Soviet Union. Cuba's situation is difficult and complicated." Ambassador said that "we understood Cuba's situation." Aragonés said that "the issue of Albania set an example for us. In some cases, we had to yield to Soviet Union, but we would not break off the friendship with Albania. The Soviet Union agreed with us, so it seems we had some impact on the Soviet Union. Khrushchev said to me and Guevara that the Soviet Union would stop its open attack on Albania." After a while, Aragonés said that "some speeches of the Soviet [Communist] Party were difficult to understand." Ambassador Shen asked Aragonés if the United Socialist Revolution Party will be established soon. Aragonés answered, that "it will be set up soon, early next year" Then Aragonés, switching the topic said, that "we would like to be able to survive without involving the issue of principles. I can restate to you that, before anti-sectarianism, some people talked about Cuba's peaceful transition, I said to you that Cuba would never fall into opportunism or revisionism. After the anti-sectarian struggle, I told Fidel [Castro] our views on some of the principle issues which you had told me. The conversation we had was one of the factors which spurred me to see some the elements of sectarianism." Ambassador Shen said that "as your comrade, we love the Cuban revolution." Aragonés said that "we know that the Chinese [Communist] Party as well as the Chinese people think highly of the Cuban revolution." The Ambassador said that "the success of the Cuban revolution set a good example as a struggle for national independence." Aragonés said that "while we would like to hold this flag enthusiastically, the situation is difficult. We do not have any illusions. The American imperialists want to invade Cuba at any time. Reliable sources reported that Kennedy thought his reappointment would be determined by the resolution of the Cuban issue."

When the Ambassador asked the economic situation of Cuba, Aragonés said that, in recent months, there have been some improvements to the supply situation, which are the result of correcting some mistakes in agriculture. Under support from the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, the Commerce Department took many measures.

Regarding counterrevolutionary activities, Aragonés said that "domestic counterrevolutionary activities have become less and less powerful. All of the counterrevolutionary ringleaders who could be mentioned last year have all been executed. And we will take a strict measure for the urban capitalist class. And there will be a kind of strike for the rural capitalist class next year after the Party is established." Ambassador Shen asked "if this includes peasant households owning 30 ka of land" Aragonés said that "households owning less than 30 ka are included [in the rural capitalist class]."

Ambassador Shen asked again what the situation of liberation struggles in Latin America was. Aragonés said that "Venezuela was carrying out the struggle and we were training people as well. The parties in Latin America misunderstood us. We pretended to be deaf and dumb and said, "What situation? Training who? Where are they training? We have no idea. I can convey this suggestion to the all-national leadership committee. No matter what opposition, we would never stop training people. We would not be good communists if we gave up the work. I must speak out on this at the conference of the 81 parties next time." Ambassador Shen asked "which parties did not complain about Cuba in Latin America?" Aragonés said that "if they did not complain to us, they come to Moscow to complain." Ambassador Shen asked "what was Moscow's attitude was on the issue?" Aragonés said that "there was no unified opinion and they only asked us to have conversations with the parties in Latin America." The Ambassador asked "Did Venezuela not complain?" Aragonés said that "we had a good relationship with Venezuela. The Uruguayan and Chilean parties were friendly to us and respected our views. We respect the Chilean [Communist] Party's views as well because, based on the current conditions, they are the sole party who can succeed in elections. However, they did not take power. Thus, we understand their mistakes. But we could not respect the Colombian [Communist] Party who kept the same views. Whoever wants to be respected must do something

which is worthy of respect."

When Ambassador Shen asked about the issue of the Brazilian [Communist] Party, Aragonés said that "we had relations with the left split from the Brazilian [Communist] Party and those people preparing for armed struggle. But we have had to be careful. We had relations with both parties. But we declared our sympathy for the left. When comrade Luo Jia came to Uruguay through Brazil, [Luis Carlos] Prestes made some suggestions and thought that we could not invite to Cuba the persons who had been sacked. I thought that Luo Jia's answer was too weak. If it had been me, I would have answered it in another way, telling him directly that we were not satisfied with their actions. We cannot interfere in another party's internal affairs, but we can show that our attitude is different. Prestes is like the United States Marine Corps, always promising to come but never showing up. He said he was sick. But why could he go to Moscow but refuse to come to Cuba? I believe that the views of peaceful transition at the 22nd Congress encouraged the activities of these parties. In 1957 in Mexico, one of the issues debated by Comrade Audochi was the resolution on peaceful transition passed at the 22nd Congress. I objected to the resolution passed at the 22nd Congress. France is an example to show the impossibility of a peaceful transition."

In addition, Aragonés asked about the situation in China and so on and Ambassador Shen introduced to him the communiqué passed by the Tenth Plenary Session. At the same time, Aragonés asked if the removal of the two secretaries from their post as shown in the communiqué was connected with past hardships. The Ambassador said that "hardships were mainly due to natural disasters. Although there were some mistakes made by some cadres in some regions, the main cause of our hardships was from three-years of natural disasters."

In the end, Aragonés said "Ambassador Shen, please send my regards to all of the leaders of the Chinese [Communist] Party and send my regards to Comrade Mao Zedong." Ambassador Shen expressed his thanks and promised to forward his greetings.