

January 30, 1961

Record of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Sergey Kudryavtsev and Che Guevara

Citation:

"Record of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Sergey Kudryavtsev and Che Guevara", January 30, 1961, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation (AVPRF), Moscow, Fond 0104, Opis 17, Folder 118, File 3, pp. 58-59; translated by Svetlana Savranskaya (National Security Archive).
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/115178>

Summary:

A record of a conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Sergey Kudryavtsev and Che Guevara, recorded in Kudryavtsev's diary. They discuss financial transactions being made between the Cuban and Soviet governments, gold and currency reserves, the U.S. economic blockade of Cuba, and more on U.S.-Cuban relations.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

From S. M. Kudryavtsev's Diary
Top Secret
Copy No.
15 February 1961
No. 45

RECORD OF CONVERSATION
with President of the National Bank of Cuba
Emesto Guevara
30 January 1961

1. I visited Guevara at the National Bank and in accordance with my instructions informed him that the State Bank of the Soviet Union, in accordance with the preference of the National Bank of Cuba deposited 17,523,008 grams of pure gold in the name of the National Bank of Cuba. On 23 January, the State Bank received 11,874,800 pounds from the Mosnarbank in London and deposited them to the account No. 7 of the National Bank of Cuba. The State Bank withdrew 7,124,377 pounds from this account for the amount of gold mentioned above, which was transferred to the National Bank of Cuba. Specifications for the deposited gold will be sent to the National Bank shortly after they are received from Moscow.

I also informed Guevara that the State Bank would credit 3.75% annually to account No.7 unless any changes are made.

Thanking me for the information, Guevara told me that the storage of gold and currency reserves proposed by the State Bank of the USSR fully satisfied the Cuban side, and that they would act in accordance with the proposed procedure.

2. In the course of further conversation, I asked Guevara about the progress of the selection of 100 Cuban students, who were supposed to be sent by the ship "Cooperation." I said that "Cooperation" must leave Cuba no later than 8 February of this year.

3. In response, Guevara said that he was personally involved in this issue. The students were being selected, although there were certain problems involved. However, he was confident that they would be able to send if not all 100 people, then at least 70 to 80 people in accordance with the signed agreement.

4. In the course of further conversation with Guevara, we touched upon the issue of Kennedy's speech to the U.S. Congress. In this connection, Guevara said that he personally never expected Kennedy to change the U.S. hostile policy toward Cuba. His speech in Congress has only confirmed my conviction. The United States will continue the policy for strangling the Cuban revolution as they did under Eisenhower. Kennedy, noted Guevara, would also actively support the internal and the external counterrevolution in the hope to undermine the stability inside the country with its help, and to create an opportunity for an extensive uprising of counterrevolutionaries.

5. We are convinced, continued Guevara, that Kennedy would continue the economic blockade in order to create internal difficulties. I personally, noted Guevara, am absolutely convinced that Kennedy will not stop before a direct military intervention, when he sees that all his calculations for overthrowing Fidel Castro's revolutionary government with the help of forces of the internal and external counterrevolution are failing.

6. At the present time one can be sure, continued Guevara, that Kennedy's main efforts would be directed at achieving a more perfect isolation of Cuba from the

countries of Latin America and the external world. At the present time Cuba has air communications only with Mexico, and that line is hanging by a thread. In such circumstances, emphasized Guevara, our task should be to conduct ourselves in such a way so as not to allow realization of these designs of the U.S.. We should conduct our foreign policy in such a way, emphasized Guevara, so as not to allow isolation of Cuba from the countries of Latin America. At the present time, we have great, though maybe unfounded hopes for [Brazilian President Jânio] Quadros' assumption of power in Brazil. Quadros, representing interests of Brazil, cannot benefit from the U.S. strangling of Cuba. Therefore, it would be possible to rely on him, or rather use his interest in strengthening the national independence of Brazil in the Cuban interests. It seems to rile, noted Guevara, that Quadros, guided by precisely those considerations, and in particular by the need to strengthen the Brazilian positions vis-a-vis the United States, would most likely want to establish diplomatic and trade relations with the Soviet Union.

USSR Ambassador to the Republic of Cuba
[signature]

(S. Kudryavtsev)