

November 25, 1968

**SED CC Department of International Relations, 'Note
on a Conversation with Com. Carlos Rafael
Rodriguez on 22 November 1968 at the Havana
Airport'**

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Summary:

SED CC Department of International Relations writes this note on a conversation with Com. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez on 22 November 1968 at the Havana Airport with Com. Egon Winkelmann. They discuss foreign relations between Cuba and the GDR.

Credits:

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Gen. Rodriguez took Com. [Egon] Winkelmann [Deputy Director of International Relations, SED CC] aside and asked if the delegation was satisfied with the communique. [Winkelmann responded that] the communique was good given current circumstances even if the delegation had expected that for example the role of the Soviet Union and the necessity of the common struggle of the communist parties against imperialism would have been mentioned. Gen. Rodriguez responded: "We are delighted by the communique. It is significant particularly for our people as it demonstrates after all that we are moving closer to the socialist countries." Fidel Castro had explained the position towards the Soviet Union, he continued, in the ring [the meaning of ring is unclear - trans.] of Havana. Cuba was interested in an improvement of relations. That's after all why the foreign trade minister and other delegations had gone to the USSR. In response to the question whether Cuba would send a delegation to the USSR at the highest level in the foreseeable future, Gen. Rodriguez responded that they expected that a high[-level] Soviet delegation would come to Cuba since Fidel Castro had already been to the USSR several times. The timing was still uncertain. Gen. Rodriguez emphasized in this context that he very much appreciated our position towards the Soviet Union; the Cuban CP leadership had also been impressed by Khrushchev - except for the matter of the missiles - because he had done a lot for Cuba; even today the Cuban CP considered the USSR as an important guarantor for the maintenance of peace.

Questioned how the Cuban CP felt about future participation in party plenums of fraternal parties, Gen. Rodriguez said that this question was difficult to answer. Up to now they had not attended as they feared strong attacks by the fraternal parties of Latin America. At the last party plenum of the Bulgarian CP, e.g., Cuba had been attacked vehemently from this direction. As the relations with the socialist countries improved a change of the situation would certainly be possible, he contended.

[Rodriguez complains about Bulgarian newspaper attacks on Che Guevara and considers the GDR delegation visit a big step in the rapprochement between both parties.]