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Bulgarian Communist Party Politburo Member Boris Velchev, Report to Boris N. Ponomarev, Secretary, Central Committee, Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), re: Relations with Latin America

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Summary:

Bulgarian Politburo member Boris Velchin reports on a Bulgarian delegation visit to Latin American in late 1969. Liberation movements are characterized by mass participation against imperialism, not socialism. Latin American communist parties have a strong theoretical base, but are weak. Velchev proposes that socialist countries create coordinated economic and political strategies towards Latin American countries and aid the populist movements in their quest for liberation from imperialism. Velchin is interested in collaborating with the Soviet Union, which should coordinate the effort.

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To: the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union [1]

Comrade Ponomarev, B. N.

Moscow

Dear comrade Ponomarev,

Recently the Politburo of CC of the BCP discussed the report of the delegation of our party, which in the end of 1969 visited Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil and adopted resolution for activating of the economic, political and cultural relations of PR Bulgaria with the countries from Latin America.

We would like to share with you some considerations of Politburo of BCP CC about the situation in Latin America and about the attitude of the brotherly socialist countries to this continent.

It is well known that the USA is making big efforts to keep and consolidate its dominance in Latin America, which they have turned into a raw-material appendage to their economics, in a sphere of utilization of capital, and a source of immense profits, generally in their strategic rear.

However, the policy of the USA and the local reactionary regimes meets bigger and bigger resistance on behalf of the peoples of Latin America. They are fighting for true sovereignty, for economic independence and social liberation, which [Nelson A.] Rockefeller, too, was forced to admit after his tour in Latin America.[2] The struggles of the working class, the peasants and the students are growing. They are more and more characterized by mass participation, organized character and political purposefulness. The social basis of the anti-imperialist struggle is broadening and new layers and forces join it - including certain circles from the army and the Catholic Church, and in separate cases, from the ruling circles. The communist parties, with all their weaknesses and faults, as the most staunch and organized revolutionary powers, are aspiring more and more consciously to extend their influence among the working class, they are looking for contacts and common grounds with other democratic and patriotic powers, they are fighting for the building of broad anti-imperialistic, anti-oligarchic and anti-dictators' fronts.

There is no doubt that the upsurge of the struggle for liberation of the peoples of Latin America against the imperialism, the latifundists and the big capitalists, the growth of the anti-American feelings and the flow of new social powers in the anti-imperialistic movement, the increase of the influence of the communist parties, create favorable conditions for further development of the process for liberation of the countries of Latin America from the economic and political dominance of the USA and the local oligarchy. Obviously, this process will develop more successfully the more numerous positions and the greater influence the socialist countries gain in different spheres of life in Latin America.

However, the facts show that the penetration and the influence of the socialist countries are falling behind the development of the progressive tendencies in this region of the world. The economic, political, and cultural relations with the countries of Latin America are limited and do not meet the constantly increasing opportunities.

In our view, the most essential weakness is that the socialist countries do not implement common and coordinated policy in relation to Latin America, in order to concentrate their efforts where there are most favorable conditions, to be used most fully. This refers particularly to the implementing of collective construction works, complete deliveries, granting of credits for technologies, industrial cooperation,

long-term binding of some sectors of the economic activities on the basis of partial division of labor among the brotherly socialist countries (in the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) or bilaterally) and the interested countries in Latin America.

The communist parties, the trade unions, the youth, the women's and the other public and state organizations and institutes from the socialist countries do not coordinate sufficiently their efforts in Latin America.

From all this we arrive at the conclusion that the fraternal socialist countries should discuss coordinated actions for ensuring a constantly increasing participation and influence in the economics, the politics and the culture of the Latin-American countries depending on the interest which they present for us and for the common struggle against imperialism, to develop and to implement a common strategy and tactics in relation to Latin America so that these countries and their peoples can gradually be won as our friends.

Naturally, the center of the coordinated efforts of the socialist countries should be the Soviet Union. Above all, its decisive advance can very soon be felt in the economic, political and cultural life of Latin America. All the rest of the brotherly socialist countries could cooperate, each of them giving its contribution in conformity with its national interests and its international obligations.

Obviously, the change of the attitude of the socialist countries to Latin America should not be measured with the attaining at all costs of a big relative share in the economic relations with the separate countries. At the moment it is not realistic to consider the task of ousting economically the USA from this continent. But the opportunities with which the brotherly socialist countries, and first of all the USSR, dispose of, are such that even at relatively no big share in the economic sphere, the coordination and the increase of our participation in all spheres of life in Latin America inevitably will yield the results that we wish. On one hand, the USA will feel that the time of its monopoly in that continent is ending, and, on the other hand, the patriotic and the progressive powers will have a powerful stimulus and support in their struggle against imperialism, the monopolies and the oligarchy in the respective countries.

In this respect we can give as an example the Peruvian case. From the talks of the delegation with some Peruvian Ministers it can be seen that they are looking for the cooperation of socialist countries because they understand that only this cooperation can be lucrative for them and [can] aid their policy for wringing themselves out of the paws of imperialism and for independent development of the country. The Peruvian leaders feel best that if the new regime is not aided by the socialist countries, then the American imperialists quickly will find a way to submit Peru to their will.

The economic difficulties and the strife for the weakening the dependence on the USA force the Latin-American bourgeoisie to seek cooperation with the countries from Europe and Asia, including the socialist countries. By expanding our economic relations we can cooperate in intensifying of the nationalistic and anti-imperialistic feelings on the continent, to win new allies in the struggle against imperialism.

Comrades Rodney Arismendi, Hilberto Vieira, Jorge del Prado, Orestes Ghioldi, and other representatives of fraternal parties and progressive forces there make more and more explicit statements about the necessity of expanding our all-embracing relations and cooperation with the countries of Latin America.[3] Comrade Luis Corvalan[4] declared before the delegation that indeed there was a danger of direct or indirect American intervention in order to prevent a possible victory of the left wing forces in Chile. But, he also emphasized that it would not happen so easy because the imperialists realized that there was a socialist community, that the Soviet Union

existed in the world, as well as a powerful communist and working-class movement.

With small exceptions, the communist parties in Latin America stand on correct Marxist-Leninist positions, the working-class movement is organized and the revolutionary process is at a higher stage of development. We can be convinced that the common efforts of the socialist countries inevitably will render good results.

On account of all this we suggest that a high level meeting among the brotherly parties of countries members of COMECON be summoned, at which the possibilities for coordinating and implementing our policy and [strengthening] our comprehensive relations with the countries of Latin America will be discussed. If you think that it is necessary, we are willing to go to Moscow in order to inform the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in more detail, to exchange thoughts and after that this issue could be posed before the other parties from the brotherly socialist countries.

I seize the opportunity to convey to you our heart-felt greetings and best wishes.

BORIS VELCHEV

Member of Politburo and Secretary of the CC BCP

[1] In November-December 1969 a CC BCP delegation, led by Boris Velchev, visited Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, and Chile. After returning back home Velchev delivered a broader report to CC BCP Secretariat, which in a shorter version was sent in March 1970 to Ponomarev. On 10 June 1970 CC BCP Politburo approved Boris Velchev's final proposal "On activation of the BCP and PRB relations with Latin America."

[2] The New York Governor went on a series of "fact-finding" trips to Latin America in the spring and summer of 1969 at the request of President Richard M. Nixon.

[3] [Rodney Arismendi was Secretary-General of the Uruguayan Communist Party (PCU); Hilberto Vieira White was the founder and general secretary of the Columbia Communist Party; Jorge Del Prado was the general secretary of the Communist Party of Peru; Orestes Ghioldi was a leader of the Communist Party of Argentina.-ed.]

[4] Luis Corvalan was secretary general of the Communist Party of Chile (PCCh).