

March 25, 1965

**Conversation between Raul Castro Ruz, and a
Member of the Polish Politburo, Zenon Kliszko**

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Summary:

The conversation between Castro and Gomulka took place on the initiative of Castro. Parties discussed the following topics: (1) relations between the UPSR and the PUWP, (2) the issue of the legalization of the Cuban Revolution, (3) the Situation in Vietnam, (4) Cuba and the Current Situation in Latin America, (5) the position of the PUWP with regard to the conference of 81 parties, and (6) the attitude of the socialist camp towards Cuba.

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The conversation took place on the initiative of Cde. R. Castro, who wished to return to certain matters which were not exhaustively discussed during the meeting in the CC PUWP with the participation of the 1st Secretary of the CC PUWP, Cde. Władysław Gomułka.

First of all, Cde. R. Castro asks that copies of notes prepared by the Polish side from the abovementioned meeting be delivered to him. He justified his request mainly by wanting to have at his disposal the identical versions of the notes taken by both sides. Cde. R. Castro asked that the materials be handed to him directly or through Cuba's ambassador in Moscow, C[arlos]. Illivares [Olivares] Sanchez, through the ambassador [Edmund Pszczolkowski] of the PPR [Polish People's Republic] in Moscow between 2 and 5 of April this year (Cde. R. Castro returns to Cuba via Moscow). The guest also asked for possibly supplementing the notes with other materials related to the matters discussed during the meeting and which the Polish side would be interested in putting forth to the Cuban side.

Relations between the UPSR and the PUWP

The divergences which Cde. R. Castro referred to during the meeting in the CC PUWP were mainly related to the old leadership of the CPSU. They mostly resulted from the development of the Caribbean Crisis. Due to the development of this crisis, the Cuban leadership concluded that each new step in the field of inter-party relations must be the result of an independent thought process based on concrete facts and evidence; a result of comprehensive discussions. The recently conducted talks with Soviet comrades allowed for the discovery of an existing convergent position of both parties with regard to a series of essential matters. Some other problems remained to be discussed. They are, however, not fundamental matters.

The Cuban leaders conclude that the current leadership of the CPSU is assuming a more cautious and proper position with regard to the controversy [spór]¹ within the international movement.

The Issue of the Legalization of the Cuban Revolution

The Cuban specificity contributed to the fact that the leadership of the UPSR does not have to² attach such great importance to the issue of elections. According to Cde. R. Castro, one should not talk about the legalization of the revolution, since it is a legal act if the situation as a whole is taken into consideration. It is true, however, that the lack of firm local authority is palpable, thereby causing additional troubles for the revolution. Such a situation will possibly change only after the process of establishing a new party has been completed. A typical thing is that if the consolidation of revolutionary forces in Cuba had materialized in the years 1959-1960, it would have to be carried out based on a multiparty system. The solution of this matter at the end of 1960 and 1961 made possible for the attainment of integration on the basis of the existence of one party.

The Situation in Vietnam

Cde. R. Castro inquired:

About the Polish assessment of the situation in Vietnam;

Whether one should not interpret the bombing of North Vietnam by American imperialism as evidence of losing control over the situation in the South;

Whether the Polish side believes that the US would withdraw from Vietnam if it could

do so with saving face,

Whether and, possibly how, will the PPR react to the situation in Vietnam.

Cde. R. Castro agreed that the lack of readiness of both sides regarding a political solution of the problems must lead to a complicated situation and to the intensification of the danger of deepening the feeling of impunity on the side of the US imperialism, which, in the face of the above, could aim at expanding further military actions in this region. He listened to the opinion regarding serious and negative consequences, psychological and economic (with all implications resulting from it), which would have to result in long-lasting military actions against North Vietnam. The guest also listened with interest to the fact that the PPR has reasons to believe that the US would withdraw from Vietnam if it were possible to do so with saving face. At the same time, he seemed to agree with the view that the setback of the US in South Vietnam is more of a political, and not military, nature as well as that the US's material resources are too great and it has too many broad interests in South-East Asia for it to withdraw from Vietnam in the role of the defeated.

Cde. R. Castro confirmed the fact that the excerpt of the last speech of Fidel Castro, in which he talked about comprehensive aid which Cuba would give to Vietnam had it been neighbors with this country, was directed against the PRC.

Cuba and the Current Situation in Latin America

Cde. R. Castro expressed apprehension that the current developments in the Vietnam crisis may develop into a dangerous precedent for Cuba due to the following reasons:

Latin America is a fighting continent. The struggle assumed a particularly harsh [ostry]³ character in Venezuela due to the increase of a revolutionary wave, the extent of the influences of the [communist] party as well as thanks to the moods in the army (avoiding fighting with the guerillas). One should not exclude the fact that as soon as the fight assumes a more severe character, the US can use repressions against Cuba, just as they are doing currently against North Vietnam.

In order to illustrate to what degree the situation in Venezuela has become complicated, Cde. R. Castro presented a maneuver of US imperialism; that it is striving to persuade the Venezuelan government to sound out the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations with the USSR, thereby certainly aiming to show that the CPSU is, in some way, cutting itself off from the activity of the Venezuelan party. The leadership of the CPSU, however, did a proper thing by consulting with the comrades from the CP of Venezuela regarding the matter. As a result, the Soviet government will not establish relations with Venezuela.

The guest announced that Cuba was providing aid to the Venezuelan comrades. The guerillas were trained in Cuba and the Cuban comrades were sending weapons to Venezuela. As a result of carelessness of the Venezuelan guerrillas, part of these weapons found itself in the hands of the Venezuelan authorities. This fact served as a base for putting forth a well-known accusation against Cuba. However, these weapons were, in their entirety, American, and were introduced in great quantities into Cuba's territory by American intelligence. Cuba, Cde. R. Castro stated, will never withdraw its moral support for the Venezuelan guerillas.

The position of the PUWP with regard to the conference of 81 parties

Cde. R. Castro asked, once more, for the explicitness of the position of the PUWP regarding this matter. Following the reply of Cde. Z. Kliszko, the guest stated that the positions of both parties on this subject are in agreement.

The attitude of the socialist camp towards Cuba

Cde. R. Castro asked what exactly Cde. W. Gomułka had in mind when, during the meeting in the CC PUWP, when he talked about the lack of a mutually-worked-out policy of the socialist camp regarding Cuba's defense.

The answer was that the lack of a mutual political position between the CPSU and the CPC, which is due to divergences, is reflected unfavorably not only in Vietnam, but also in the Caribbean.

At the end of the conversation, Cde. R. Castro expressed interest in continuing this type of honest exchange of opinions.

Drafted by R. Czyżycki

Prepared in 5 copies

[1] This word can also mean contestation, quarrel, dispute, or altercation--trans.

[2] The text here is incomplete. The word here could be either może (can) or musi (must, have to). It is most likely that the word is musi (must, have to)--trans.

[3] Ostry also means sharp, acute, and severe--trans.