

US-Cuban Relations and the Cold War, 1976-81: New Evidence from Communist Archives

Editor's Note: The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union ended years ago, but it thrives in two places: on the Korean peninsula, where communist North confronts capitalist South across the 38th parallel in a tense armed standoff; and between the United States and Cuba, where Fidel Castro remains in charge almost four decades after the revolution he led came to power in 1959—still passionately committed to socialism and still the nemesis of Washington, which refuses to recognize and regularly lambasts his government. Even as such Cold War landmarks as the Bay of Pigs and Cuban Missile Crisis recede into history, relations remain as problematic as ever, and as likely to become entangled in U.S. domestic politics. Presidents from Kennedy to Clinton have maintained an economic embargo on and refused to establish diplomatic relations with the Castro regime, and given at least rhetorical support to a Cuban emigre community in the United States that openly calls for its overthrow. Havana, in turn, has regularly denounced Washington as an imperialist bully seeking to strangle, subvert, and topple the Cuban revolution.

The past year (1996) provided ample evidence that Cold War-era acrimony continues to flourish across the narrow straits separating Cuba and Florida, as exemplified by the enactment in the United States of the "Helms-Burton Amendment" (a controversial law, sharply criticized in Europe, designed to punish firms or individuals doing business with Cuba); the fatal shooting-down by a Cuban air force fighter of a plane piloted by a U.S.-based anti-Castro Cuban emigre group; and fervent anti-Castro declarations by both major presidential candidates in their election campaigns.

The translated East-bloc documents below, dealing with U.S.-Cuban relations during the Cold War period

*of 1976-1981, thus constitute a source of potentially valuable insights both for historians and for analysts of current and future interactions between Washington and Havana. Although scholars (with few exceptions) still lack access to Cuban archives which might allow a more accurate and perceptive reconstruction of Cuban decisions, policies, and motives, the opening of other archives in the former communist world offer new opportunities to probe what was happening on "the other side" of the U.S.-Cuban impasse, and of Cold War events in which Cuba played a part. Elsewhere in this issue of the CWHIP Bulletin, for example, appear translations of Russian on the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and Russian and East German documents on the 1977-78 Horn of Africa events (as well as a rare instance of Cuban archival documents that **have** emerged, in this case relating to Havana's policies in Africa obtained by Prof. Piero Gleijeses).*

All but one of the documents that follow were obtained from the Russian archives in connection with the "Carter-Brezhnev Project," a series of oral history conferences on U.S.-Soviet relations and the collapse of detente in the mid-1970s organized by the Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University in cooperation with the National Security Archive, the Cold War International History Project, and other academic and archival partner institutions. These documents, obtained from the Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation (TsKhSD) (the archival repository for records of the former Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1952-1991) and the Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF), both in Moscow, include:

** a background report on Cuban-American relations, 1976-1979, prepared by the Soviet Embassy in Havana in the spring of 1979;*

** a record of a June 1979 conversation between the Soviet ambassador to Cuba and Fidel Castro regarding the recently-held Vienna summit between Jimmy Carter and Leonid Brezhnev;*

** documents on the September 1979 "Cuban brigade" controversy, in which a political furor erupted in the United States over reports that a Soviet military brigade was stationed in Cuba; although the flap died down after it became evident that the Soviet force was a residual presence dating from the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis rather than a newly-deployed "combat" force (as some alleged), the episode side-tracked Congressional consideration of ratification of the just-signed SALT II treaty and exacerbated Soviet mistrust of the Carter administration;*

** a December 1979 analysis of current trends in U.S.-Cuban relations privately presented to the Soviet ambassador in Havana by the head of the responsible department of the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee;*

** the transcript (provided by the Cubans to the Soviet Embassy in Havana) of a secret November 1981 meeting in Mexico City between U.S. Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig, Jr., and Cuban Vice President Carlos R. Rodriguez.*

Of the Russian documents printed here, perhaps the Haig-Rodriguez transcript is the most surprising given the Reagan Administration's combative public stance toward Cuba at the time (when Haig, hinting at military action, said Washington should "go to the source" to stop Cuban support of leftist insurrections in Latin America). In their meeting, kept secret at the time, Haig and Rodriguez discussed current tensions in bilateral relations and also reviewed past disputes, such as the Cuban interventions in the Angola and Ethiopia crises examined elsewhere in this Bulletin. The Haig-Rodriguez encounter constituted a rare discussion

between senior officials of the two countries, and is all the more remarkable in that it occurred precisely at a moment of acute tension between them. Alas, the accuracy of this Russian transcript and other details concerning the meeting are difficult to ascertain at the moment, since records on this meeting apparently remain secret in both the U.S. and Cuban archives.

Presenting commentaries on the Russian documents noted above are two scholars who have authored numerous works on U.S.-Cuban relations: **Peter Kornbluh**, Senior Analyst and Director of the Cuba Documentation Project at the National Security Archive, a non-governmental research institute and declassified documents repository located at George Washington University in Washington, DC; and **Jorge I. Domínguez**, Dillon Professor of International Affairs and Director of the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University and author of *To*

Make a World Safe for Revolution: Cuba's Foreign Policy (Harvard University Press, 1979).

In addition to the Russian documents, the translated materials include an excerpt from the East German transcript of a May 1980 summit meeting in Havana between Castro and the leader of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), Erich Honecker, in which Castro presents his version of the "brigade" controversy of the previous autumn and other aspects of East-West relations. This excerpt, as well as a Castro-Honecker conversation in East Berlin in April 1977 also excerpted in this issue of the Bulletin, are from a larger collection of records of Honecker-Castro conversations between 1972 and 1989 obtained from the SED archives in Berlin by **Christian F. Ostermann**, a doctoral candidate at Hamburg University currently based at the National Security Archive, who has also joined the Cold War International

History Project as Associate Director. Ostermann plans to analyze and present additional translated selections from the Honecker-Castro conversations in a future CWIHP publication.

Both the Russian and East German documents were obtained and translated via the collective efforts of the CFPD, the National Security Archive, and CWIHP. They and other declassified U.S. and East-bloc documents obtained by the Carter-Brezhnev Project are available for research at the National Security Archive, Gelman Library, 7th floor, 2130 H St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20037; e-mail: nsarchiv@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu; tel. (202) 994-7000; fax: (202) 994-7005. The collection is part of the Russian and East-bloc Archival Documents Database (READD), maintained by the Archive and CWIHP. READD hopes to include Cuban documents if and when the archives in Havana become accessible to scholars.—James G. Hershberg

USSR Embassy in Cuba, "Informational Letter on Contemporary Cuban-American Relations," 26 April 1979

EMBASSY OF THE USSR
TO THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA

TOP SECRET

Copy No. 4

Ser. No. 223

26 April 1979

INFORMATIONAL LETTER ON CONTEMPORARY CUBAN- AMERICAN RELATIONS

Havana

1979

The process of relaxation in Cuban-American relations, which was abruptly interrupted in 1976, commenced anew with the election of Jimmy Carter as president of the USA. The new American administration, by all appearances, is counting on the results of normalization in relations and expansion of trade with Cuba to restore certain positions in the economy and turn the country's difficulties to its own advantage. In this regard the question continues to surface regarding the possibilities inhering in a prospective "break" between Cuba and the USSR.

A large influence in the change of Carter's policies has been contributed by an

influential group of individuals in his close circle ([U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations] A. Young, [Democratic Senator from South Dakota] G. McGovern and others), who believe that the normalization of relations represents greater opportunities for the United States to neutralize the policies of Cuba toward Africa and Latin America.

As part of the new approach, the Americans have come out with official pronouncements about their readiness to commence discussions with Cuba on the problems existing between the two countries "without preliminary conditions." The Carter administration has also taken practical steps to reduce tensions in relations. Flights over Cuban territory by reconnaissance aircraft have been terminated; several measures have been undertaken to bring a halt to terrorist activity of Cuban revolutionaries on USA territory; and the prohibition of travel to Cuba has been relaxed. USA authorities have begun to warn the Cubans about hostile activities being planned by Cuban emigres, and a number of their participants have been arrested and prosecuted in the American courts.

The Cuban government has adopted a wait-and-see attitude, although in general it has reacted positively to these USA gestures. In a series of public statements, and also in the course of meetings with American senators and congressmen arriving in Havana during this period, Fidel Castro has indicated

the readiness of Cuba in principle to improve relations with the United States, and as a mandatory condition has put forward the demand for an end to the economic blockade.

In early 1977, both countries undertook practical steps toward the goal of improving relations. In March, at the initiative of the Americans, the first direct negotiations at the level of deputy foreign ministers since the interruption of diplomatic relations took place in New York. In April, in Havana, agreements were signed concerning fishing rights within the 200-mile zone along with preliminary agreements on delimitation of the maritime economic zone. At the initiative of the Americans, interest sections have been opened in the embassy of Switzerland in Havana and the Republic of Czechoslovakia in Washington. American citizens with families living in Cuba have been granted the right for their families to visit the United States.

In late 1977, the policy of Cuba in Africa, in particular its international assistance to Ethiopia, put the brakes on the process of normalizing relations with the USA. However, in spite of threatening pronouncements in the press and from an array of congressmen concerning the Cuban military presence in Ethiopia, the USA administration refrained from exerting serious pressure on Havana and attempted to preserve the conditions for dialogue. In December 1977, at

the behest of Carter, Representatives F. Richmond and R. Nolan visited Cuba and expressed to Castro the president's concern in connection with the "growing Cuban intervention" in Ethiopia. In February 1978, the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs S[antiago]. Roel Garcia, secretly visited here at the instructions of President L[opez]. Portillo and conveyed to Castro an oral message from [U.S.] Vice President [Walter] Mondale expressing the concern of the American government about the presence of Cuban troops in Ethiopia. Through the intercession of Portillo, the position of principle held by Cuba on this question was communicated to Carter. It was represented that, in the case of necessity, the Cuban military specialists located in Ethiopia would take part in military operations only on the territory of that country.

In May 1978, during the course of the well-known events in the Zairian province of Shaba, which the Americans attributed to the Cuban presence in Africa, Fidel Castro met with the head of the American Interests Section in Havana, L[y]le. Lane, and through him transmitted to Carter an oral message in which he emphasized that Cuba "has no ties whatsoever" to the events in Shaba.

The USA government attempted to diminish the tensions arising in relations between the two countries during late 1978 in connection with the propaganda campaign in the USA centering around the issue over the supply of Soviet MiG-23 fighters to Cuba. In Havana, during a closed meeting between Fidel Castro and representatives of the Carter administration, the latter attempted to justify the resumption of flights over Cuba by USA reconnaissance aircraft on the grounds that the appearance of the MiG-23's had provoked significant anxiety in the United States and that the president had been forced to adopt a "position which would permit him to assure the American people that everything was being done to ensure the security of the country." The Americans also declared that the training of naval forces taking place off the Cuban coast was being carried out in the traditional region and was not being directed against Cuba. The Cuban side took this explanation under advisement.

Notwithstanding the developments outlined above, a certain amount of progress continued in connection with several specific questions regarding bilateral relations. In late 1977, in connection with the expiration of the temporary agreement on the delimitation of the maritime economic zone, the Americans proposed to conduct new negotiations. In December an agreement

was struck that conclusively strengthened the maritime boundaries between the two countries. In January 1978, an agreement was reached between the coast guards of the two countries calling for the rendering of assistance to vessels in distress in the Straits of Florida, common efforts against the trafficking of narcotics, and a halt to terrorist activity by Cuban counterrevolutionaries on USA territory.

The Cubans were permitted to open accounts in American banks, which was necessary, in part, for normal operation of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, which was also granted the right to transmit consular payments to Havana. Cuban emigres, living on USA territory, were permitted to send their relatives in Cuba up to 500 dollars every three months. American tourists visiting Cuba received the right to bring back into the United States goods having a value of up to \$100 per person.

In response to these "gestures" from the Carter administration, the Cuban government freed three Americans who were serving sentences for espionage activity (out of eight). Readiness was declared to favorably examine the question concerning the remaining Americans being detained under the condition that the USA, for its part, would release the Puerto Rican freedom fighters Lolita Lebron and her three comrades [imprisoned for involvement in a November 1950 assassination attempt against President Harry Truman]. American citizens with families located here were returning to the United States (in all about 250 individuals); and persons having dual citizenship were permitted to leave.

A policy of dialogue continued between the parties. Exchanges of opinions on a wide variety of issues concerning bilateral relations took place among contacts at various levels, including those during closed meetings in Atlanta (USA) in August and in Cuernavaca (Mexico) in October 1978. In this connection the Americans emphasized that the principal impediment to full normalization of relations was the Cuban military presence in Africa. From their part they undertook efforts to exert pressure on Cuba in this regard, and to obtain at least a partial withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola and Ethiopia. In this connection, official representatives of the American administration declared in closed meetings that if Cuba sincerely desired an improvement in relations, then it must make "positive steps" in the areas of "vital interest" to the USA located in Africa and Puerto Rico. For example, to begin with, the withdrawal of forces from Angola and Ethiopia would lead to a readiness by the USA to examine the

question of lifting the ban on the sale of medicine and certain types of equipment for the nickel industry. They pointed out that the presence of Cuban forces in Africa and the possibility of their intervention in Zimbabwe and Namibia was causing anxiety in the USA and preventing the president from reaching a decision in respect to the economic blockade. The Americans attempted to attain assurances that Cuba would not intervene militarily in Zimbabwe and Namibia, and exhorted Cuba to support Western plans for a "peaceful settlement" of those problems.

In response to the Americans it was firmly declared that Cuba would not impose any preliminary conditions on the normalization of relations with the USA but would not back down on questions of principle relating to its foreign policy. It was further emphasized that the solidarity of Cuba with African and other countries, and the internationalist assistance rendered by it to Angola and Ethiopia, could not be the subject for negotiations with the USA. "We will withdraw our forces from there," Castro stated in discussions with the Americans, "when conditions of peace and security are achieved there. And this will be done on the basis of agreement with the governments of those countries, and not as the result of pressure exerted by the USA."

It was indicated further that Cuba did not oppose a peaceful political settlement to the problems of Zimbabwe and Namibia, but that it refused to bind itself in connection with its future policy in that region, considering that the racist regimes might undertake such provocations and aggressive actions against Angola as would "demand a response." At the same time it was emphasized that Cuba adhered to a constructive position and consistently therewith was in favor of a peaceful settlement to conflicts, including those arising among African countries. As an example, they pointed to the efforts previously undertaken by the Cubans to attain a peaceful resolution to the conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia, and the assistance rendered by them in support of an improvement in relations between Angola and Zaire.

In the course of meetings with official representatives of the Carter administration, Castro emphasized that the principal impediment to the normalization of relations was the economic blockade and the presence of the American base at Guantanamo. He stressed that Cuba regarded as highly immoral the policy of utilizing a blockade as an "instrument of pressure and imposition of demands." It was stated to the Americans that the problems of Africa and Puerto Rico

were not related to the economic blockade and that Cuba would not conduct negotiations on those questions in exchange for its lifting. "Cuba," Castro emphasized, "is not China and is not Egypt. It has nothing in common with those countries which can be pressured or bought."

All the same, in the course of these contacts with the Cuban side an obvious degree of flexibility was demonstrated. A readiness was declared to include, in the general discussion of normalizing relations, as a condition to the lifting of the economic blockade, the issue of compensation for the nationalized property of Americans, claims for which were calculated at 1.8 billion dollars (considering interest at 6% for 18 years, that sum will almost double). The Americans were apprised that Cuba, in turn, has counterclaims for losses resulting from the economic blockade, and that only on this basis could negotiations on that theme be conducted.

The Cuban leadership has stimulated interest on the part of certain business circles in the USA in studying the possibilities of future trade and economic ties. The organization "Business International" conducted a seminar in Havana with the participation of leaders of major corporations from the USA, Japan, and several West European countries. It was made particularly apparent that the participants wielded broad influence in USA political circles and were in a position to exert pressure on Congress necessary from Cuba's perspective.

In late 1977, Cuban Minister of Foreign Trade M[anuel] Fernandez visited the USA at the invitation of the Council on East-West Trade. He attended a conference in Washington in which the leaders of more than 80 USA trade and industrial firms and representatives of the Commerce Department and State Department participated. The minister announced that in the event the economic blockade were lifted, Cuban-American trade could reach several hundred million dollars per year. Cuba would be interested in acquiring USA grain, feedstock resources, medicines, chemical products, light and heavy metals, construction materials, turnkey factories, miscellaneous equipment and other goods.

Groups of American business leaders and businessmen from the states of New York, California, and elsewhere, have visited Havana. The Cubans believe that there are American companies who are seriously interested in the conduct of business in Cuba. These companies are even prepared to waive their claims for compensation of their nationalized property.

Notwithstanding, the economic block-

ade continues to be maintained essentially in its entirety. The prohibition on exports of American goods, imports of Cuban products, issuance of commercial and financial credits to Cuba by governments and private financial institutions, and activity by banks of the USA and other countries containing American capital, accounts and dollars, continues in force.

At the same time, the USA has been forced to implement modifications in those aspects of its policy which had related to trade with Cuba by foreign countries. The ministries of finance, trade and state department have been permitted to issue licenses for transactions concluded with Cuba by companies of those countries which are controlled by American monopolies. They are able to export nonstrategic materials and import Cuban products. Exports to Cuba of goods from third countries containing up to 20% in components of American manufacture are also permitted.

On the other hand, subsidiaries of American monopolies located in third countries are not permitted to maintain accounts with Cuba in American dollars, to issue it credit for a period of more than one year, or to transfer technology.

In sum, according to data of the USA Interests Section in Havana, from October 1975 through January 1979 the USA Commerce Department has issued licenses to subsidiaries of American firms in third countries for the export of nonstrategic materials in the amount of 450 million dollars, although not all applications for export licenses have been realized, and the share of goods directly produced in the USA is not greater than 5-6%.

Licenses have been granted for such products as electric motors, industrial scales, tractors, light and heavy automotive equipment, equipment for the paper industry, pharmaceuticals, florescent lamps, herbicides, locomotives, textile machines, boilers, etc. Exports of navigational systems, computers, communications, electrical distribution equipment, construction machinery, electronic experimental equipment and so forth, are prohibited. Up to 50% of applications for the issuance of licenses have been granted to subsidiaries of American companies located in Canada and Argentina.

It should be borne in mind that a lifting of the economic blockade would not automatically result in the development of trade between the two countries. Cuba would first of all have to comply with the provisions of the USA Trade Act of 1974 requiring it to guarantee the right to emigrate from the country and to conclude bilateral trade agreements. Failing this it will

not be granted most favored nation trading status, nor will it be eligible for credits from the Export-Import Bank or the USA Commercial Credit Corporation. Without such status, products for Cuban export will be subject to high customs tariffs (for example, cigars at \$4.50 per pound plus 25% of their value).

The USA has attempted to apply the provisions of the embargo to imports of Cuban nickel by Japan, Italy, and France. These governments have been informed that the USA will not permit the import of special steels using Cuban nickel. At the same time, in the course of Cuban-American contacts in 1977-78, according to data provided by "Business International Cooperation," five leading USA nickel companies announced their interest in cooperation with Cuba after the lifting of the economic blockade in the sphere of nickel production and trade.

A new and recent significant step in Cuban-American relations is the decision of the Cuban government to release more than three thousand political detainees (not less than 400 persons per month) on the condition that they go to the United States; and to permit the departure of Cubans wishing to reunite with their families abroad and visits by Cuban emigres to their relatives. This decision, adopted on the basis of a comprehensive analysis of the domestic situation regarding emigration, marks a fundamental reexamination of the previous policy on that question. At the negotiations which took place in Havana in November and December of 1978 with representatives of the Cuban emigre community, Castro confirmed this decision and emphasized that up to 500 political detainees will be released each month. However, implementation will depend in the final analysis on a decision by the USA to admit them into the country.

In a closed meeting with representatives of the American administration in late 1978, Castro stated that the "primary factor" making possible the adoption of these decisions was the policy of the Carter administration, which had "ceased to encourage terrorist and subversive activity and intervention in the internal affairs of Cuba." This, in his words, had created a new environment, making possible a new approach to the emigration issue.

The United States turned out to be totally unprepared for Cuba's proposal, which scored a serious moral and political victory - the American administration was deprived of its trump card consisting of the supposed violation of human rights. The USA was confronted by the need for a response to the Cuban initiative. Moreover, the American

administration was subjected to strong pressure from representatives of the Cuban emigre community. Under the circumstances, the USA officially announced that it would accept all of the political detainees (up to 3,500 individuals), to be released at the rate of 400 persons per month, together with their families. In order to examine this problem, special commissions from the USA Justice Department came to Havana. In October 1978, the first group of political detainees and their families departed for the USA. This March, the Americans introduced a new simplified procedure for the issuance of visas to political detainees in order to facilitate the conditions for the admission into the USA of up to 400 persons every month.

In the beginning of this year, Cuban emigres began to arrive on visits to their relatives. According to accounts of friends, the number of such persons in 1979 will exceed 100,000 individuals. During the first three months of this year around 20,000 Cuban emigres have arrived.

The Cuban leadership understands the need to intensify its ideological work in the country relating to the new policy in connection with emigration. This question occupied an important role in presentations by Castro at the recent Seventh Plenum of the Central Committee of the party and at a national conference of party leaders last February. In accordance with conclusions reached by the Division of Revolutionary Orientation of the Central Committee of the party, measures have been worked out to neutralize the negative influence from a massive arrival of emigres for meetings with their relatives. Party organizations at all levels have been authorized to explain to the workers the basis for the present policy in relation to the Cuban emigre community.

Cuban-American contacts have achieved a definite development in the spheres of culture, science, and sport. The improvement of these contacts is serving as one of the methods for achieving a mutual understanding between the two countries, as well as an additional source for the receipt of hard currency. Thus, on the commercial front, the National Ballet of Cuba completed an extended tour of the USA in 1978. Its performances in Washington and New York were attended by around 100,000 spectators. The director of the ballet, A. Alonso, was elected as an honorary foreign member of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Her essay on Cuban ballet was published in the USA.

Last year and again this year, the musical groups "Iraqueres," "Moncada," "Manguardi," "Los Papines," and "Aragon" toured in the United States, along with the

composer-performers A. Brouver, S. Rodriguez, P. Milyanez, and the singers T. Martinez, E. Burke and others.

American artists and choreographers participated in the Sixth International Ballet Festival in Havana. Last March, in the large concert hall here named after Karl Marx, three joint concerts by American and Cuban musicians and singers were held. They were attended by members of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba C. R. Rodriguez and A. Hart, and by member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the party A. Peres Effera.

Cuban Minister of Culture A. Hart had discussions in Havana with the vice president of the firm "Columbia Broadcasting Systems" about the possibility of releasing a recording of Cuban music in the USA.

In 1978, 35 film critics were invited from the USA. Based on their examination of Cuban films and meetings with colleagues, they published a series of positive materials in the American press about Cuban cinematography. This ensured the success of the Cuban Film Week, organized in Washington, New York, San Francisco, Chicago, and Los Angeles, which was attended by a delegation of cinematographers under the leadership of the director S. Alvarez. It met with leading representatives of the American cinema, as well as university students and professors.

An American rental company is now acquiring Cuban films for display in cinema houses and on television. The journal "Cuban Cinema" will be re-published in English in the United States. In 1978, 16 American films were purchased through an intermediary firm in Italy.

The first high school contacts have been established. Late last year, a delegation headed by Minister of Higher Education F. Vecino visited the United States. It visited eight universities and met with their deans, the Assistant Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, and a number of senators. At the invitation of F. Vecino, teachers from the Universities of Pittsburgh, Massachusetts and Minnesota this year visited Havana University and Central University, as well as polytechnic and agricultural institutes. An exchange of small groups of students for training in agricultural specialties has been proposed. The son of Senator McGovern is currently enrolled at the University of Havana.

Several contacts between scientific institutions are being worked out. Thus, the National Center for Scientific Studies is now receiving informational materials. The American side is offering Cuba assistance

in studying the application of solar energy for the cooling of industrial and residential buildings.

Last March, at the invitation of the Minister of Public Health H. G. Mundis, the USA Assistant Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, USA Surgeon General H. Richmond, was here. At a press conference he announced that he was favorably impressed by the development of public health in Cuba, especially the low rate of infant mortality and the degree of attention directed to health care among the adolescent population. During the course of negotiations, the Cuban side sounded out the possibility of purchasing pharmaceutical supplies in the USA. H. Richmond was received by Fidel Castro. Under the auspices of UNESCO, several Cuban medics are receiving on-the-job training in the USA.

An exchange of literature is taking place between Casa de las Americas in Havana and New York, nongovernmental organizations involved in cultural ties with Latin American countries. This year, the Vice President of the Cuban Institute of People's Friendship (ICAP) J. Gayardo visited the USA for negotiations with Casa de las Americas in New York over the organization of informational work at the local community level relating to real life circumstances in Cuba.

In April of this year, at the invitation of ICAP, for the eleventh time, 130 progressive young Americans visited Cuba as members of the "Venceremos" brigade, to become acquainted with the country and to participate in the sugar harvest.

Traditional annual Cuban-American boxing matches have been started up. This year American athletes participated in international meets in Havana in classical and free form competitions. It is expected that they will participate in the Brothers Barrientos international light athletic tournament.

An examination of the development in Cuban-American contacts permits the conclusion that the Cuban leadership is maintaining a firm position on the issue of normalizing relations with the USA, decisively rejecting attempts by the Americans to exert pressure on Cuba, and that Cuba will not yield on matters of principle relating to its domestic and foreign policy as a form of "payment" for the normalization of relations.

The Cuban leadership understands as well the negative consequences in the domestic ideological realm and the international arena that would be brought about by a full normalization of relations with the United States.

In this connection it may be assumed that contacts with the USA on a variety of levels, particularly in the spheres of cultural, scientific, and athletic ties, will continue and expand. Both sides are expressing interest in preserving the level of contacts already attained and in making further progress.

Considering the importance of the issue of Cuban-American relations in the context of the present and future interests of the Soviet Union and the countries of the socialist bloc, and the desirability and necessity of receiving information about it from the Cubans, it would appear appropriate and fitting to continue an exchange of opinions with our Cuban friends on this problem, utilizing for this purpose joint visits and meetings of governmental and party leaders as well as responsible employees of the Foreign Ministries of the USSR and Cuba.

It is evident that special attention should be directed to an analysis of the conditions being put forward by the American administration for the normalization of relations with Cuba.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR
TO CUBA
/s/ V.VOROTNIKOV

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 76, d. 828, ll. 1-13; translation by the Carter-Brezhnev Project; copy on file at National Security Archive.]

Soviet Ambassador to Cuba V.I. Vorotnikov, Memorandum of Conversation with Fidel Castro, 25 June 1979

From diary of V.I. Vorotnikov

TOP SECRET
Copy No. 4
Ser. No. 326
4 July 1979

Record of Conference
with First Secretary of the Central
Committee of the Communist Party of
Cuba and Chairman of the State Council
and Council of Ministers
of the Republic of Cuba,
Comrade Fidel Castro Ruz

25 June 1979

We received a visit today from F. Castro at my request. Pursuant to instructions, I reported to him the results of the meeting and negotiations in Vienna between Secretary General of the Central Committee of the CPSU and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Comrade L.I. Brezhnev, and USA President

Jimmy Carter.

1. Having listened closely to me, Castro expressed his gratitude for the information "which," he said, "is extremely important and interesting, and represents a synthesis of the Soviet Union's appraisal of the points of the Vienna conference which, judging from its achievements, was a convincing success of Soviet foreign policy and personally for Comrade L.I. Brezhnev. I will send a congratulatory telegram to Comrade Brezhnev, the text of which will also be published in the national press," Castro stated.

As the discussion continued, Castro touched upon the events taking place in Nicaragua and the results of the latest conference of the OAS [Organization of American States] in Washington, which he described as the latest in a series of crippling defeats suffered by American imperialism in the Western hemisphere. In his words, that meeting of the OAS demonstrated with complete clarity that today ever more Latin American countries are exhibiting "disobedience" to the demands of the United States. He pointed out further that these issues will be the subject of discussion tomorrow during his meeting in Havana with the president of Venezuela [Luis Herrera Campins]. "I am certain," Castro declared, "that the Americans will not dare to intervene unilaterally in the affairs of Nicaragua, and that Somoza will eventually be required to leave."

2. At his own initiative, Castro raised the issue of a member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, Comrade R. Valdes Vivo, recently removed from his duties, who had failed to discharge the functions entrusted to him and was unable to correctly and precisely fulfill his assigned task in a recent trip to a number of African countries.

"We assigned him a single and essential task - to inform several African leaders that we would be unable to render military assistance to them, and instead Valdes became distracted in the disposition of other problems which he did not have the authority to discuss. And this resulted in damage to our activities, and raised a host of doubts and false rumors not only among our Soviet friends, but among the Africans as well," said Castro. "We discussed the performance of Vivo extensively and acknowledged all of his past services, but we were unable to excuse his lack of discipline and disobedience in the execution of such important and sensitive assignments. This was the only correct decision. We have now appointed Jesus Montane Ordonez to the post of Manager of the General Division of In-

ternational Relations, an experienced, tested comrade, a serious, disciplined, thoughtful and, at the same time, personable individual," Castro explained.

From my part, in accordance with instructions previously conveyed, I once again assured him that, in Moscow, the activities of the Cuban government in Africa are regarded with complete confidence and that, in connection with the Rhodesian question and other issues, it is considered that the USSR and Cuba are acting in conformity and with a unity of purpose.

3. At the conclusion of the discussion, Castro informed me that the sugar harvest was almost complete but that, apparently, as a result of heavy rains, they would not succeed in reaping in this harvest the planned eight million tons of sugar. "There will be somewhere around 7.9 million tons or slightly more," he noted. Touching on the matter of the supply of Cuban sugar to the USSR and the delay already allowed for in that connection, Castro said, "I have discussed this matter with C.R. Rodriguez (who informed me about the letter from Comrade I.B. Arkhipov and your conversation with him), and with other Cuban comrades, and I am aware of your difficulty with the supply of sugar. We are doing everything we can," he said, "to stop the interruption and cure the shortfall in the July sugar supply, perhaps to some extent in August, but most likely a portion of the supplies (approximately 80 thousand tons) will be delayed until December." In this connection Castro emphasized several times that they will not permit a similar situation to recur.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR
TO THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA
/s/ V. VOROTNIKOV

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 76, d. 833, ll. 40-42.]

Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Vorotnikov, Memorandum of Conversation with Raul Castro, 1 September 1979

From the journal of TOP SECRET
Vorotnikov, V.I. Copy No. 3
Original No. 393
13 September 1979

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION
with the second secretary of the CC CP of
Cuba, deputy chairman of the State
Council and Council of Ministers,
minister of FAR [Revolutionary Armed
Forces] of the Republic of Cuba

Raul Castro

1 September 1979

On September 1 Raul Castro visited the embassy. He anxiously described the extensive Western, primarily American, anti-Cuban media campaign, timed to coincide with the VIth conference of the heads of states and governments of non-aligned countries. The theme of the increased Soviet military presence in Cuba and the stationing there of ground troops was particularly exaggerated. What is being referred to specifically is an infantry brigade numbering 3,000 soldiers. In recent days American officials have supported this campaign. R. Castro noted the statement by the State Department spokesman Hodding Carter in which he dwelled on the supposedly "recent discovery of Soviet combat units in Cuba," and demands by Senators Stone and Church to conduct an investigation into the question of the Soviet military presence on the island. Furthermore, R. Castro recounted that on September 1 Wayne Smith, the new head of the USA Interest Section in Havana visited the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In his conversation with the deputy minister of foreign affairs of Cuba, P[elegrin]. Torras, he stated that he was authorized to convey the American government's "concern" about the "evidence" of the presence in Cuba of a brigade of Soviet troops. P. Torras replied that the Cuban side would not accept this line of questioning and that American diplomats are fully aware - although the USA fails to understand it - that Cuba is a sovereign state and should be addressed as such, or else it will be impossible to achieve mutual understanding between the two countries. W. Smith hastened to explain that he received instructions only to communicate "concern" and did not require an answer to his statement. He added that the State Department considered it inappropriate to react to the statements by Senators Stone and [Idaho Dem. Frank] Church through bilateral diplomatic channels, without recourse to public debate. The American diplomat also expressed his regret that his first meeting with P. Torras took place on this unpleasant occasion.

In connection with these actions by the USA and considering that this question could emerge at any moment at the Conference of the NAM [non-aligned movement], F. Castro authorized R. Castro to come to an agreement with the Soviet side on a possible reply. The Cuban leaders proposed the following reply: "For the past 17 years a symbolic Soviet combat unit, created as a training center where Soviet military specialists train officers of the FAR [Revolu-

tionary Armed Forces] to use and maintain new military equipment, has indeed been located in Cuba." R. Castro emphasized that they proposed this version out of principled convictions and experience with previous confrontations with Americans regarding the Soviet military presence on the island, and consider that we should not camouflage the real state of affairs but, at the same time, should not make a concession to the Americans, who could easily interpret attempts to negate the presence of a training center on Cuba as a repudiation by Cuba and the USSR of their right to create such a center and send necessary military personnel there. R. Castro added that the Americans have known about this brigade for a long time and that he was struck by the cynicism with which they affirm that it was "recently" detected. He also noted that they had no doubts that the VI conference of the NAM in Havana was one of the domestic and foreign policy reasons for the outbreak of the anti-Cuban campaign.

He further described the proceedings of the meeting of the foreign affairs ministers of the countries of the NAM. On September 1, by the end of the session, the agenda for the Conference of heads of states and governments was practically approved. The inclusion on the agenda of the problem of Western Sahara was the only point on which there was serious discussion. The representative from Morocco spoke against the inclusion of this topic on the agenda because he contended that this was a colonial issue, which had been decided under the auspices of the UN a long time ago, and in consequence of which an agreement with Spain et al. had been signed. Some countries supported him, however, they were in the minority; of the 31 delegations speaking out on this topic, only four urged that Western Sahara not be included on the agenda for the summit conference.

R. Castro considered the dinner given by F. Castro in honor of [Yugoslav leader] J.B. Tito on August 30 to be strictly a formality. The negotiations which took place between F. Castro and J.B. Tito on the next day, however, were useful in his view. The Non-Aligned Movement was unable to achieve mutual understanding on many issues, and on the issue of Kampuchea each leader merely stated his point of view. At the same time J.B. Tito's effort to avoid open confrontation with Cuba and other socialist countries was noticeable and the general tenor of the discussion was rather calm. In a private conversation with F. Castro, the Yugoslav leader tried to convince him that Yugoslavia's policies could not be considered anti-Soviet at all, and, in particular,

stated that he did not allow anti-Soviet books to be published in Yugoslavia, assuming he knew of their content in advance.

R. Castro also said that J. Tito's entourage, particularly, [Yugoslav Foreign Minister Milos] Minic, was noticeably more "cocky" in his approach to Cuba and the USSR, than he (Tito) himself. During the negotiations Minic tried to outdo Tito and give his own answer or make his own attempt to interpret Tito's words. Thus, for example, Tito agreed to publish a joint Yugoslav-Cuban communique in the press, but then Minic started saying that this would be difficult to accomplish, and as a result it was never drafted.

J. Tito also meet with [Ethiopian leader] H. Mengistu. The latter openly posed a whole series of questions about Yugoslavia's policy towards the NAM; however, Tito evaded direct answers to them and talked his way around them with general arguments and appeals to maintain the unity of the Movement.

It still remains undecided whether or not J.B. Tito will speak at the opening ceremony of the Conference of heads of states and governments or during the working session. Yugoslavia claims that, since he is the only founder of the Movement who is still living, he should speak at the opening of the Conference. However, irrespective of how this will be decided, J. Tito will speak in any case, in all likelihood after F. Castro.

During the visit of the Minister of Defense of Nicaragua to the USSR, R. Castro emphasized again that improving military cooperation is not an issue, and that they only intend to influence Bernardino L[arios]. Montiel on political and educational issues. R. Castro related that at one time F. Castro had advised the Sandinistas to appoint one of the former Somoza officers who went over to the revolutionary side as minister of defense. The front's leadership selected B.L. Montiel who gives the impression of an honest and candid individual, but who does not have any fixed political positions. He is mostly "for show"; the army is being built without his knowledge and all real power in this area belongs to the commander-in-chief of the people's Sandinista army, Humberto Ortega. B.L. Montiel senses this and tried to send in his resignation. To prevent his resignation and give him the appearance of authority, the leaders of the FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front) organized a trip to Cuba for the minister and asked for the cooperation of the Cubans in the organization of trips for B.L. Montiel to other countries. The first reaction of the Cuban friends was that it would not be appropriate for him to travel

either to the GDR or to the USSR. They said this to H. Ortega. He answered that he shares their fears, but explained Montiel current situation and said that he was already promised trips to Cuba, Arab states, and Europe, and once again affirmed that what was proposed was only an unofficial, private, exclusively "informational" visit. After this second request by H. Ortega, considering that they themselves suggested to the Sandinistas that they make the former Somoza officer defense minister, the Cuban leaders decided to turn to the Soviet side on this matter.

R. Castro also commented that the Nicaraguan foreign minister, Miguel D'Escoto, who was also in Cuba, was a former Jesuit priest, but apparently one of a small number of "red priests" in Latin America. He is educated and has a grasp of many issues, but his political views cannot be called clear and well-founded. However, he has conducted himself very well at the session of the OAS on Nicaragua and now at the conference of ministers of foreign affairs of the NAM in Havana. His appointment to the position of minister of foreign affairs of the FSLN also followed the advice of F. Castro to include several priests in the government. The minister of culture is a second priest in the government.

I thanked R. Castro for the information he conveyed.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR
TO THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA
(V. Vorotnikov)

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 77, d. 833, ll. 63-67; trans. by Elizabeth Wishnick.]

**Minutes of CPSU CC Politburo
Meeting, 27 September 1979 (excerpt)**

Top Secret
Only copy
Working Transcript

MEETING OF THE CC
CPSU POLITBURO

27 September 1979

Chaired by Comrade BREZHNEV, L.I.
Attended by Coms. Grishin, V.V., Kosygin, A.N., Suslov, M.A., Ustinov, D.F., Chernenko, K.Y., Demichev, P.N., Ponomarev, B.N., Solomentsev, M.S., Tikhonov, N.A., Gorbachev, M.S., Dolgikh, V.I., Zimianin, M.V., Kapitonov, I.V., Rusakov, K.V.

[. . .] 5. About a response to the President of

the USA regarding the issue of the Soviet military personnel in Cuba

BREZHNEV. Last night Carter once again appealed to us via the hot line regarding the issue of the story they have dreamed up about the presence of our military brigade in Cuba. There is nothing new in the message. We informed Com. Gromyko, who is conducting negotiations with Vance, about that.

Today com. Gromyko sent a rough draft of a response to that telegram.

I think that we must assign the same commission to urgently and attentively review, and if necessary, rework this draft, after which, as Com. Gromyko suggests, having agreed with Fidel, we will send our response to Washington, to Carter.

The comrades are familiar, evidently, with the draft. The telegram was distributed.

KOSYGIN. I agree with the draft response, but with a minor editorial correction. I would strike three [sic—trans.] words: "...and to be ruled by cold reason."

BREZHNEV. Comrades Aleksandrov, A.M. and Ponomarev, B.N. also have corrections.

ALEKSANDROV. I would like to suggest beginning the text of the letter with the following: "First of all, I must openly tell you, Mr. President, that we are extremely surprised by the openly hostile to the Soviet Union campaign which has been launched in the USA with the active participation of the Administration, for which the United States has absolutely no real reasons and no legal basis. It seems to us that the only result of the swelling of this artificially created campaign can be a real loss to the relations between our countries and to the stability of the peace, the importance of which we discussed in Vienna."

BREZHNEV. Com. Ponomarev, B.N. also supports this proposal.

If the comrades have no other remarks, then let us approve the text of this letter taking into account the proposed corrections and send it for agreement with Com. Castro. And if no remarks arrive from Com. Castro, then it follows that we should send the letter to Carter via the hot line.

RUSAKOV. Perhaps it is necessary to assign the MFA to prepare a text of information on this issue for the leadership of the brother parties of the socialist countries, with the exception of Romania.

BREZHNEV. If there are no more remarks, let us accept such a resolution.

ALL. We are agreed.

[Source: *APRF*, f. 3, op. 120, d. 42, ll. 335,

339-40; translation by Mark Doctoroff.]

**CPSU CC Politburo Decision, 27
September 1979, with Brezhnev-Carter
Hotline Correspondence**

Proletariats of all countries, unite!
Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
CENTRAL COMMITTEE
TOP SECRET

No.P169/V

To Comrades Brezhnev, Kosygin, Andropov, Gromyko, Suslov, Ustinov, Ponomarev, Rusakov.

Extract from protocol No. 169 of CC CPSU Politburo session of 27 September 1979

About a response to the President of the USA regarding the issue of the Soviet military personnel in Cuba

1. Approve the draft of Com. Brezhnev, L.I.'s response to the President of the USA J. Carter on the given issue (attachment 1). Send this response after coordinating it with Com. F. Castro. Transmit the response via the direct line Moscow-Washington.

2. Affirm the draft instructions to the Soviet Ambassador in Havana (attachment 2).

3. Assign the MFA USSR and the [General] Department CC CPSU to prepare a draft of information for the leadership of the fraternal parties of the Socialist countries (except Romania) taking into account Com. Gromyko's conversations with C. Vance in New York and in accord with the exchange of opinions which has taken place in the Politburo, and submit it to the CC CPSU.

CC CPSU SECRETARY

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ob

[attachment 1]

Re: Point V, Prot. No. 169
Top Secret

Attachment 1

Dear Mr. President,

My colleagues and I have familiarized ourselves with your appeal.

First of all, I must openly tell you, Mr. President, that we are extremely surprised

by the openly hostile to the Soviet Union campaign which has been launched in the USA with the active participation of the Administration, for which the United States has absolutely no real reasons and no legal basis. It seems to us that the only result of the swelling of this artificially created campaign can turn out to be a real loss to the relations between our countries and to the stability of the peace, the importance of which we discussed in Vienna. We are sorry that despite it all you maintain the made up version of the Soviet military unit which is supposedly located in Cuba.

My advice to you: drop this version. We have a military training center in Cuba, which has existed there for more than 17 years. It carries out its training functions in accord with an agreement with the Cuban government. It does nothing more and can do nothing more. You can be entirely calm about that. In a conversation with A.A. Gromyko, Secretary of State C. Vance, himself, also remarked that the Soviet Union had done nothing which contradicts the 1962 agreement, and the Soviet military personnel which is stationed on Cuba does not present any sort of threat to the United States.

(I repeat, there is a military training center in Cuba; it will exist. We do not have any intention of changing its status as such a center. We are informing you of this in order to show good will, since this entire issue relates entirely and exclusively to the competence of two sovereign states — the Soviet Union and Cuba.)

[Along the margins of the above paragraph the following is written: "Conditional, taking into account the possible opinions of F. Castro."]

But if that which is going on now in the United States around this issue is an attempt which is motivated by some other considerations, then we can only express our regret about that.

It seems to us that any sort of other thoughts should recede before the significance of the Soviet-American relations, in which now the important place is occupied by the Treaty on Limitation of Strategic Arms (SALT-2).

Let us, Mr. President, proceed from the results of the exchange of opinions on the key issues of Soviet-American relations and problems of world politics which we had in Vienna and which I value highly.

In general, Mr. President, I wanted to tell you one thing: it makes sense to remove this artificially contrived issue without spoiling the atmosphere, showing restraint and consideration.

I think that such an approach would

correspond to our mutual interests.

With respect.

L. BREZHNEV

27 September 1979

[attachment 2]

Top Secret

HIGH STATE MATTER

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USSR/USA

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-P.1-

Dear Mr. President,

I am sending this message, sincerely hoping that you and your colleagues will favorably regard the constructive proposals aimed at resolving the new problem which has arisen in the relations between us, which Secretary Vance made to Minister Gromyko. The presence in Cuba of a brigade of Soviet troops, which we consider to be combat troops, causes deep and serious concern among the part of the American government and American society. This concern was not caused artificially. The quickest possible resolution of this problem by mutual agreement will prevent the unfavorable development of our mutual relations and will allow both our countries to continue the course toward which we are striving—to broaden the bounds of American-Soviet cooperation.

Mr. President, both you and I have worked intensively—you longer than I—to achieve an agreement on SALT-2. It would be a tragedy for our countries if this work for peace would be today threatened as a result of the fact that both our governments could not resolve the problem which has caused on one side a feeling of deep concern.

On parting in Vienna, we agreed to openly inform each other when necessary, and I am writing to you specifically in the spirit of that openness and our common adherence to the establishment of more stable mutual relations.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

His Excellency James E. Carter
President of the United States of America
The White House, Washington

LINES OF DIRECT COMMUNICATION,
KREMLIN COMMITTEE of STATE SECURITY OF THE USSR

TRANSLATION

Copy of Issue No. 93/2 of No 1

25 September 1979

ADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNMENT
COMMUNICATIONS TRANSLATED

Pages

Special Center for Lines of Direct Communication in the Kremlin

6:25 P.M. 2

Telephone numbers: PATS 44-82

TRANSLATOR [illegible]

[Source: *APRF*, f. 3, op. 89, d. 69, ll. 128-30
134-45; translation by M. Doctoroff.]

Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Cuba A.S. Seletskii and Jose Antonio Arbesu, Head of the USA sector of the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee, 27 December 1979

FROM THE JOURNAL
OF SELETSKII A.S.

SECRET

Copy No. 3

Issue No. 2

"03" January 1980

RECORD OF CONVERSATION
with the head of the U.S. sector
of the Americas Department of the CC of
the Communist Party of Cuba Jose
Antonio Arbesu

27 December 1979

In the conversation at the CC of the Communist Party of Cuba J.A. Arbesu presented some considerations concerning current Cuban-American relations.

The USA policy in the question of normalization of relations with Cuba is determined by two main factors: their military-strategic interests, and the domestic situation, said Arbesu. At the same time, from the military-strategic point of view, there are two policy lines in the USA leadership now: the line of the National Security Council, and the line of the State Department. Thus, Brzezinski thinks that Cuba, "as a result of its economic dependence on the Soviet Union," does not have its own foreign policy, that it is a "Soviet satellite", and that therefore, there is no sense in talking to Cuba. All the questions concerning, for example, the Cuban actions in Africa or in Central America should be discussed with the Soviet Union so that it would "put the needed pressure on Cuba."

The USA State Department takes a different approach in relation to Cuba. They believe that in spite of all those things, the questions concerning Cuba should be discussed with Cuba itself, not with the USSR.

In the last several months Brzezinski line took over in the American leadership, said Arbesu; and that had a negative effect not only on USA-Cuban relations but also on their policy to Latin America in general. The USA instigated the well-known "microcrisis" concerning the presence of the Soviet military training center in Cuba, renewed reconnaissance flights over our territory, conducted provocative maneuvers on their base at Guantanamo and naval exercises near our coasts. All this led to the situation where now we have reached "the lowest point in our relations with the USA since Carter became President in 1977," mentioned Arbesu.

At the same time the State Department does not want to close the door completely, and has shown an interest in maintaining our contacts. American congressmen, businessmen, university professors continue to visit Cuba, though in smaller numbers, and our cultural and sports contacts continue. The State Department, mentioned my interlocutor, agreed to conclude an agreement between the coast guards of our two countries, and allowed our aircraft to fly to the USA, mostly to transport members of the Cuban community for visits with their relatives in Cuba. The Americans were supposed to ratify the agreement on fishing before the end of this year. However, since the USA Congress is currently in recess, the agreement would probably be approved by the USA government with the subsequent ratification by the Senate.

The "gestures" made by the American side toward Cuba earlier remain in force, said Arbesu. Thus, our Interest Section in Washington was allowed to have accounts in American banks, which is necessary for its normal functioning, and to transfer the consular fees to Havana. Cuban citizens residing in the United States still have a right to transfer \$500 to their relatives in Cuba every three months. American tourists are allowed to bring Cuban goods valued up to \$250 into the United States. We consider all this, reiterated Arbesu, as a sign of the State Department's desire to maintain a certain, although minimal, level of relations as a basis for their future improvement when the circumstances become more favorable.

Arbesu pointed out that since December 1978 the American side no longer showed the initiative to conduct "closed meetings" with the Cubans, during which in the past they exchanged opinions on a broad spectrum of international, especially African and Latin American, problems. It is apparent, said Arbesu, that the Carter administration is now more than convinced that we would not make any concessions in

the principled issues of our policy in Africa and in other regions of the globe, especially in the circumstances when the economic blockade of Cuba is being maintained in its fullest form. However, Arbesu mentioned, the Americans show some interest in a dialogue with our Interest Section in Washington, though it has a certain situational character. For example, when the "microcrisis" concerning the presence of the Soviet military specialists in Cuba came up, they discussed it with our representatives at the Interest Section.

The American side also tried to put pressure on us in the question of Nicaragua, said Arbesu. However, they did not make any official statements in that regard. Besides, it is not in Carter's interest to raise this issue because his political opponents could exploit it. If Carter claims that Cuba interferes in Nicaraguan affairs, it would give a reason for his opponents to blame him for not giving the necessary support to Somoza; and this is not in his interest.

Arbesu said that the question of lifting the American economic blockade of Cuba remains frozen, and is not on the agenda now. He mentioned that it might be reasonable to expect that when the USA Congress gathers in session, it would make a decision granting us licenses for purchase of some pharmaceutical products and drugs in the USA. Therefore, now we can speak about only a partial lifting of the economic blockade, emphasized my interlocutor.

Arbesu said that as far as he knew, the Americans did not in any form raise the question of Cuba joining the Treaty of Tlatelolco [in which Latin American countries agreed to make the region a nuclear-free zone], or the Non-proliferation Treaty. Besides, he said, the USA is well informed about our position in those questions.

No doubt, said Arbesu, the beginning electoral campaign in the USA will have more and more influence on their policy toward us. The recent "microcrisis" could be explained by Carter's desire to show himself as a "strongman," who can be "tough" when USA interests are at stake. He wanted to remove the accusations presented by his opponents who blame him for his "weakness."

Besides, mentioned Arbesu, we believe that the so-called "expansionism" will be one of the themes of this electoral campaign in the USA. It will mean primarily the Soviet Union, and its actions in Africa, for example, and it will certainly touch upon us as well.

The electoral campaign which has begun in the USA also led many Senators and Congressmen, who always stood for im-

proving relations with Cuba, not to speak about it publicly. Senator G. McGovern has to exercise caution now because the state in which he will run for reelection [South Dakota] is well known for its conservative electorate. The same could be said about Senator Church [of Idaho]. Other "young Senators [Representatives]," like, for example, F. Richmond, and R. Nolan, even though they are not up for re-election this time, prefer not to mention the question of normalization of relations with Cuba now.

In regards to who the winner will be, said Arbesu, in our opinion it is still too early to make predictions. For example, we do not exclude the possibility of J. Carter winning the election. At the same time, E. Kennedy would be able to ensure more governorships and seats in Congress for Democrats. We should not discount the possibility of the victory of the former CIA Director G. Bush either.

Regarding the Republicans, mentioned Arbesu, governor Reagan has more chances for success than [John] Connally.

In a nutshell, said Arbesu in conclusion, we believe that until the elections and a new President is in the White House, even if that is J. Carter again, we should not expect any significant steps for improving relations with Cuba from the American administration. After the elections a lot will depend on the evolution of the international situation in general. For example, on how the events unfold in Iran and in Central America. For the USA now Iran represents one of the main problems.

ADVISER AT THE EMBASSY OF THE
USSR IN THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA
/s/ A. SELETSKII

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 77, d. 642, ll. 18-21; translation by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

**Transcript of Conversation between
Cuban Premier Fidel Castro and East
German leader Erich Honecker,
Havana, 25 May 1980 (excerpt)**

(uncorrected)

Minutes of
the official talks between the Secretary
General of the SED Central Committee
and chairman of the State Council,
Comrade Erich Honecker and the First
Secretary of the Central Committee of the
Cuban Communist Party, the chairman of
the State Council and the Council of
Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, Fidel
Castro Ruz at the Palace of Revolution in

Havana

Wednesday, 28 May 1980
(Beginning: 9:45 a.m.)

Fidel Castro: Dear Comrade Erich Honecker! Dear German comrades!

Your visit, dear Comrade Honecker, has long been on our agenda, long before it came to the problems of the recent past, long before the military maneuvers [scheduled by the U.S. at its Guantanamo Bay naval base for May, but cancelled--ed.]. But now it has a special meaning that your visit is taking place right now, at a time of increased activity of the USA and the other enemies of our revolution.

Hostility and aggression, of course, did not come all of a sudden, but there are reasons for this: the liberty of Ethiopia, events in Nicaragua, the situation in Central America; then there was the conference of the nonaligned countries [in Havana in September 1979], and aggression gradually increases in this whole situation. During the conference of the nonaligned countries, they were very angry and started a malicious campaign. At that time, they discussed the issue of the Soviet brigade, exactly at the time of the conference of the nonaligned countries. We corresponded with the Soviet comrades regarding this issue. We took the view that this should be called a brigade. But when we explained all that to the Soviet Union, it was called a study center. Of course, the Soviet comrades did not want to aggravate the international situation any further, and since SALT II still had to be discussed in the Senate, there was no other option than calling it a "study center." Thus, the brigade was called study center no. 12. Once this had been said, we had to stick to that term.

I have expressed this in a special way on the USA-TV and in the USA-press: what you call a brigade and we call a study center is something that we have had for 17 years now.

This unit came here after the October [1962] Crisis. Actually, we strongly resisted a total withdrawal of troops. Finally, we managed to have one brigade stay with us, and for 17 years, this brigade has been here. These troops were not included in the agreements following the October Crisis. The October Crisis affected the missiles, the bombers, and the nuclear weapons, but not the troops. When the brigade stayed with us, no agreements were concluded.

In any event, we always would have liked to see these troops called a brigade for one reason: we must not relinquish our right to have Soviet brigades here. We did not

relinquish that right. If we call this a study center for moral reasons, then we relinquish the right to have a brigade. At the May 1 demonstrations, I said that we have got study center no. 12, but that we would like to have numbers 13, 14, 15. But the malicious campaign started with that brigade. All USA presidents knew that we have a brigade here. One can hide a pen, but not an entire brigade with tanks, guns, with 2,000 to 3,000 men. Everyone knows this. The CIA tries to find out whether the soldiers have a bride or not. They want to know everything. They knew about the presence of this brigade, and for 15 years, they treated this as a secret, the issue has never been discussed.

When the October Crisis started they were not bothered by the fact that we had a brigade here. No president has raised this issue, neither Kennedy nor Johnson, neither Nixon nor Ford. But now, the current president does.

The Americans themselves believe that the president has made a mistake to discuss this question just at the same time when the Senate was supposed to discuss SALT II and the conference of the nonaligned countries was taking place, with the intention, of course, of bringing Cuba into a difficult legal situation, to portray it as a country with a Soviet military base, because they took up the issue and produced a big scandal, a very big scandal. This caused damage to SALT II and led to a tense climate, the pretext to create an operational military command near Cuba. In reality, it is an intervention force that they have created just after this problem. It is also possible that Carter thought that, under such strong pressure, the Soviet comrades would be forced to withdraw these troops. That's what they thought. Perhaps Carter hoped to achieve a political success.

The Soviet comrades made it clear right from the beginning that they are not willing to discuss the issue, that these troops would not be withdrawn. In the end, it was a disaster for Carter. But this was part of the escalation of threats.

Then, there were the spy planes over Cuban territory. The most recent event was the organization of a naval exercise, including a landing in Guantanamo military base. Actually, they have taken a step back because of the great mobilization of the masses. We announced to organize mass rallies all over the country. The issue of Mariel existed before. We already had organized the April 19 mass rallies and after that, they took a step back. They canceled the landing exercise in the military base, and even signaled that they were ready to negotiate a suspension of the Mariel exercise.

That was on April 29, about 48 hours

before May 1. Once they had said that, I thought they were ready to suspend the exercise. I told my comrades they might explain that we were going to respond on May 1 or 2. Yet on April 30, at night, during the first hours of May 1, before the mass rally we organized against the military exercise, at this point they proclaimed the suspension of the exercise. The very same day! This is the first time that they set up something like this on such a big scale, and they have suspended it without any conditions. The planes haven't been flying over our country for several weeks. Mariel and the issue of the USA interests section here is giving them a big headache now. There are 380 counter-revolutionaries. This is the situation. They want to negotiate. But what they are interested in is to resolve these two issues.

We are saying that this has to be discussed globally. And just at that time Comrade Honecker's visit takes place, and therefore it is of great importance for us.

The Mexican government, too, has adopted a friendly attitude towards us. Recently, the Mexican president announced that he would visit Cuba, too. [Jose] Lopez-Portillo is going to visit our country on July 28. He announced the visit almost three months in advance, in the midst of this tense situation. Clearly, this has political implications.

The Mexican press also behaved well. And Mexico's attitude in general was a positive one. When Lopez-Portillo visits us, we will give him a great reception. We will choose roughly the same route that you have taken. Usually, we don't take choose a long route but a much shorter one. It is an exception that we chose such a long route. I think the last visit for which we organized such a big trip was [Algerian leader Houari] Boumediene's; we also did it for Brezhnev.

Moreover, the state security is very worried during such big visits. Lots of people have to be deployed because there is always a potential risk. I suppose this is the same in the GDR as it is here in Cuba. We are located in immediate proximity to the USA, and it is always possible that someone will infiltrate. Hence, such a trip is always potentially dangerous.

This is the time at which you have arrived, Comrade Honecker, this is why this visit is of special importance for us, and we feel very honored. I am convinced that this visit will contribute to the future development of the relations of the two countries. The people are very excited about this visit and there is great satisfaction with it.

Erich Honecker:

Comrade Fidel, please let me convey

the warmest salutes [*die herzlichsten Kampfesgruesse*] from the CC of the German Socialist Unity Party, the State Council, the Council of Ministers, and the people of the German Democratic Republic to you, the members of your delegation, and the party and state leadership.

We are very pleased to have the opportunity to visit revolutionary Cuba, the American island of liberty, at the present time because we know - as you have already pointed out - that this visit has special importance. First, this visit takes place at a time when the USA apparently is trying to increase tensions at the international level. In this context, it goes without saying that the measures the USA has taken against Cuba in the Caribbean are of particular importance. It is obvious that this USA exercise has been drawn up according to a long-term plan. It has become clear that detente, which has its primary basis in Europe, does the imperialist circles no good.

In the meantime, the Americans not only have been kicked out of Vietnam, but the Vietnamese also managed to counter China's aggression. In addition, the Americans had to leave Iran because of the Iranian people's revolution. Of course, this is an uncomfortable matter for the USA's political elites; since the stake is not only the oil, which does not belong to the American imperialists, but also an outpost at the southern border of the Soviet Union.

Moreover, there were the events we could witness on our trips through Africa, such as Angola, Zambia, Mozambique, Ethiopia, South Yemen. We had meetings with the South African national liberation movement, with SWAPO [the Southwest African People's Organization], with the ANC [African National Congress], and also with the Organization for African Unity in Addis Ababa. The OAU Secretary General, [Edem] Kodjo - in presence of all African ambassadors - presented me a copy of the OAU charter and gave a speech of anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, and anti-racist character. He expressed strong solidarity with the socialist German Democratic Republic and thanked us. It became clear that Africa - and not only the socialist countries - is heading off for new shores, which are not those of imperialism.

The scheme of Camp David, which basically did not solve any problem concerning the Middle East, was declared doomed to failure. Except for Egypt, all countries - including Saudi Arabia - are against the Camp David agreement. The resolution of the Near East conflict is dashed by Israel's imperialist stance, which is strongly backed by USA monopolies.

The situation in the Caribbean has to be seen in this context. The USA, albeit very reluctantly, would have tolerated Cuba, since they understand that because of the then-concluded agreement, the Soviet Union stands behind Cuba. They know that the whole socialist community stands behind Cuba, that behind the slogan "Hands off Cuba!" stands the power of socialism.

Through the powerful manifestation of revolutionary Cuba within the last couple of weeks, the mobilization of the Cuban people, they felt that the revolutionary regime and the government of Cuba led by Fidel Castro are very solid.

I completely agree with Fidel Castro: they feel that Cuba is not alone, that it is virtually the lighthouse of socialism in America, that it provides a stimulus for the anti-imperialist revolution in Latin America. They had to swallow the fact that Cuba is revolutionary, but Nicaragua came as a great surprise to them. As we all know, events in Nicaragua did not fall out of the blue, and they felt that the Nicaraguan revolutionaries had the moral and material support of Cuba. Add to this the events in El Salvador.

The USA imperialists have a strong interest that all is quiet in their "backyard." But there is a new revolutionary wave in Latin America. As Comrade Fidel rightly pointed out: Kennedy kept quiet about the so-called Soviet brigade, as did Johnson, Nixon, and Ford. In the beginning, Carter did not feel like broadcasting it. However, we have seen that there are powerful elements within USA imperialism that don't like detente at all. They reached the conclusion that cooperation with the Soviet Union benefits the socialist movement in Europe and Asia and the national liberation movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. For a long time, they have been preparing a blow against the policy of detente, in order to go over to a policy of confrontation.

It is not yet clear whether they will take the crucial step, that is, the step from confrontation to war; because a military attack on Cuba means world war, as does a military attack on the GDR. They know that the Soviet Union, after the forced American withdrawal from Iran, did not permit them to compensate through the occupation of Afghanistan or the strengthening of USA influence there. Thus a situation was created that is reflected by various actions and in the development that Comrade Fidel Castro has pointed out.

The US-Americans aim at increasing tensions on the international level. Certain elements have an interest to dramatize the situation, to make it seem as if the outbreak of World War III is imminent. We have seen

that they can't ignore the power of the Soviet Union and its allies. For the first time ever, war would be carried to directly to the USA. In the past, the USA has always sent merely an expeditionary corps across the Ocean when the war was almost over. Now they must reckon that a war with nuclear weapons also affects the USA.

The big fuss they make about Afghanistan is of the same nature as the invention of the Soviet brigade in Cuba just at the time of the conference of the nonaligned countries [and] the ratification of SALT II. For a long time, the most aggressive circles within the USA have been preparing their strike against the policy of detente, against peace, because they want to tip the global balance of power in their favor. They want to counteract the further strengthening of Real Socialism, the development of national liberation movements in Africa and Latin America, the development of communist and workers' parties within the capitalist countries, and their mass impact in the struggle against the attempts of the bourgeoisie to pass on the burden of crisis to the working people.

In fact, this can be discerned directly from recent political events. They are known to Comrade Fidel and the other comrades. Recently, at the session of the Political Advisory Committee of the Warsaw Pact countries in the Polish capital, we have examined this situation. On the basis of Comrade Brezhnev's fundamental speech, his assessment of the present and future international situation, the declaration drew concrete conclusions. You know that declaration. In my speech in Warsaw, I have pointed out that the current attempt to further heighten international tensions results from the mounting crisis within the capitalist countries, which leads some imperialist elements to regard war as their last resort. Whether the countries of Real Socialism and the masses all over the world are going to allow for this, however, is a different question.

We have to note the fact that the Vladivostok agreements [of December 1974 between Brezhnev and Ford regarding a framework for SALT II] were not kept by Carter. Comrade Fidel already mentioned that despite prolonged negotiations and the signatures of Vienna, SALT II has not been ratified by the U.S. Congress and Senate.

Furthermore, we must note that, against the will of world public opinion and that of many NATO member states, the 1978 NATO Council Meeting in Washington has adopted the NATO long-term program, which envisions yearly increases in military expenditures until 1990. At a time when what matters is adding a military dimension,

i.e. disarmament, to detente, they have adopted the long-term defense program, in spite of opposing resolutions passed by the UN.

NATO's [December] 1979 Brussels missile deployment decisions [to deploy medium and intermediate range missiles in West Germany and elsewhere in Western Europe] are a provocative step. At the same time when disarmament is on the global agenda and Carter, at the signing of SALT II in Vienna, talks about the existence of a rough balance of military power on the global level, they raise an outcry over an alleged Soviet threat and pass this defense program in Brussels.

Basically, the production of new American intermediate nuclear forces and their deployment in Western Europe is an attempt to undermine the results of SALT II. They want to offset the fact that Soviet missiles can reach the USA. This is supposed to be achieved through the deployment of American intermediate-range (nuclear) missiles having a range beyond Moscow up to the Urals. While it takes 20 to 30 minutes for the missiles that are deployed in the USA to reach the Soviet Union, they only need 5 minutes when deployed in the Federal Republic, Belgium, and Great Britain, except for the so-called wing missiles [*Fluegelraketen*], which would also violate the neutrality of such states as Sweden.

Hence, this a large scale, long-term attempt to tip in favor of American imperialism the rough balance of military power that currently exists in the world. This is supposed to put pressure on the Soviet Union and the socialist countries, including Cuba, on countries like Nicaragua, and others, and on the national liberation movement. They want to foster anything that leads to an alliance of the USA, Japan, China, and, if possible, the FRG, too, against Real Socialism and the national liberation movement. For us, a very interesting aspect is that China supports the so-called reunification of Germany, i.e. the elimination of the GDR.

It is necessary to recognize this situation. On the other hand, the situation certainly is not like the reactionary imperialist circles would have it. Of course, Real Socialism is strong enough to defy the USA. It is perfectly possible to shatter the USA imperialism's attempt to conduct a large-scale offensive against the socialist countries and the national liberation movement.

In this context, we regard socialist Cuba, the American island of liberty, as playing a very important role. Our country's citizens, the citizens of the Soviet Union, and those of all socialist countries, see it as a

banner that is waved by the Cuban people under the leadership of its communist party and that of Fidel Castro.

Likewise, our struggle, too, the GDR's and the CSFR's [Czechoslovak Socialist Federal Republic's] struggle, is a banner for all peace-loving people in the world, since we don't allow imperialism to take any step against our borders. I am mentioning the CSFR because, together with us, it is fighting in the front line.

In the aftermath of [the 1975 East-West accords at] Helsinki, the West German imperialists have attempted to build up a fifth column in the German Democratic Republic. To this end, they addressed not only counter-revolutionary elements, which, of course, still exist in our country, too, but also the reactionary, the unsteady, and the uncertain. All this took place under the slogan of human rights.

They placed their hopes in the Protestant and the Catholic Church, which have 8.5 and 2.5 million members, respectively. These churches and their bishops were supposed to act in our country as guerillas of the West. With the help of the 6,000 Western citizens, who, as a result of the international recognition of the GDR and the ensuing establishment of Western embassies, came to our country, they undertook subversive activities. The American, the Federal German, and other embassies established contacts with our artistic intelligentsia in particular. One million copies of a so-called manifesto against the GDR party and state leadership have been published, allegedly written by leading SED functionaries. Under the slogan of human rights, it has been tried to set up committees for the "protection of human rights" and the "protection of workers' rights."

Various elements have been given the opportunity to use the FRG's TV and radio to influence the GDR. All around the clock, 24 hours a day, 35 FRG radio stations are broadcasting political commentaries. The three Western TV channels were also used for interviews with certain authors and other GDR people, which were conducted "on behalf of the SED against the SED leadership." On behalf of socialism in the GDR, they spoke out against the SED's alleged dogmatism. They disguised themselves as socialists, but all their efforts were in vain.

In May of last year, our republic held municipal elections. There were mass rallies all over the country, where all issues were discussed. More than 99 percent of the citizens voted for the candidates of the national front, despite the fact that the Western media had asked the people either not to vote at all or to vote against these candi-

dates.

In Berlin, we organized a big rally of the GDR's youth. 700,000 FDJ [Free German Youth] members marched up. This left even the Western correspondents flabbergasted. After all, there are only 1.2 million people living in the capital. 700,000 FDJ members marched into Berlin and dominated the city at the time.

(Fidel Castro: From all over the country?)

Yes, from all over the country.

(Fidel Castro: How were they accommodated?)

In tents, in schools, in apartments, or in other peoples' homes. This was a big campaign. They didn't have much time to sleep, but they all had a place to stay. Some families hosted up to 7 teenagers. The family slept in the kitchen, so that the FDJ members could sleep in the bed and living-rooms. There was huge attendance. We never had had something like this before.

During these four days, the Western journalists were not subjected to any restrictions in their interviews. Moreover, some 200,000 people from the Federal Republic and West Berlin came to the capital to discuss with the FDJ members. In any case, none of them managed to report something negative. They were surprised that this youth is different from what they thought.

Along a wide front, we prepared for the 30th anniversary of the GDR [in October 1979]. 250,000 young people marched in Berlin. Comrades Brezhnev, [Polish leader Edward] Gierek, [Czechoslovak leader Gustav] Husak, [Bulgarian leader Todor] Zhivkov, [Hungarian leader Janos Kadar], [Mongolian leader J.] Zedenbal, and others were there. In any case, we gave our adversary such a thrashing that he lost all his interest in continuing his shameless propaganda against the GDR with the same ferocity as before.

At this time, the Chancellor of the FRG, Helmut Schmidt, requested a meeting. This means that while adhering to their revanchist attitude towards the GDR, they were forced to accept that socialism has a solid basis in our country.

Then, at the transition from 1979 to 1980, there was the heightening of international tensions.

(Fidel Castro: One question before we continue. In which month did this marching up of the 700,000 young people take place?)

This was in May 1979, and in October, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary, there were 250,000. The demonstration in May, at Whitsun, was the big response to our adversary's campaign which claimed

that the GDR youth does not support the regime. Since then, they keep quiet or say that it has to be admitted that the enthusiasm was not organized.

Then, dear Comrade Fidel Castro and dear Cuban Comrades, there was the apparent heightening of international tensions in late 1979/early 1980. We have reacted with great level-headedness to this situation. On January 9 we had a reception for the diplomatic corps. There, I expressed the GDR's hope that it would be possible to reduce international tensions because there is no alternative to the policy of peaceful coexistence. Only the American ambassador did not attend the reception since our politburo and the Council of Ministers had made a statement in support of the entry of a limited contingent of Soviet troops into Afghanistan following the Afghan government's request. A couple of days later we had a hare-hunt for the diplomats.

We have continued our policy of socialist buildup with great popular support, and I expressed to Chancellor Helmut Schmidt my readiness to meet him for a talk in 1980.

They all were surprised that the GDR, together with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, reacted so calmly to Carter's confrontational course. Indeed, the citizens of our republic stand firmly behind the policy of the party and the government, which is directed against Carter's confrontational course and stands up for peaceful coexistence and international cooperation. We have activated our ministerial exchange with the FRG, but also with Belgium, the Netherlands, France, and Austria. While one has to proceed from the assumption that the Western governments, particularly with respect to the boycott of the Olympic Games [in Moscow in summer 1980], will show a certain class solidarity with the USA, they still hesitate to identify entirely with the hardened policy of the USA administration.

Thus, it came to the meeting [on May 19 in Warsaw] between Leonid Brezhnev and Giscard d'Estaing, about which you are probably informed. Finally, there was the long delayed meeting [on May 16 in Vienna] between the new Secretary of State in the Carter administration, [Edward S.] Muskie, and [Soviet Foreign Minister] Comrade [Andrei] Gromyko. Today, the GDR newspapers report that on June 30 and July 1 the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Helmut Schmidt, is going to meet with Comrade Brezhnev in Moscow.

During my stay in Belgrade, on the occasion of Tito's funeral [8 May 1980], I had talks with several statesmen.

Many expressed the desire to talk to

me. Of course, the first meeting I had was with Comrade Brezhnev, who, after his health cure is back on the world stage in full health. Old comrades-in-arms and friends sat together the night and talked about current issues. I had meetings with [Indian leader] Indira Gandhi and various other personalities, which I don't want to go into at this moment, and with Helmut Schmidt, too.

Two issues were central. The first issue was that, because of our commitment to never again let a war start from German soil, one has to resist the Carter course of confrontation. We thus discussed the necessity to supplement the political dimension of detente with detente in the military field, not to support, but to counteract the unpredictable policy of Carter.

The second issue was the boycott of the Olympics. I said that it is an insult to the Soviet Union and to Comrade Brezhnev personally, if the athletes of the Federal Republic are prevented from participating at the Olympic Games in Moscow. Schmidt told me that he is under heavy pressure from the USA. Moreover, he said that this was the "mildest reaction" to the "invasion," the "intervention" of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan as he put it.

I said: Mr. Schmidt, what you call an "intervention" in Afghanistan is no intervention at all. On this issue, we apparently have differing points of view. You used to be defense minister and you know exactly that after the Americans got kicked out of Iran, they now try to gain a foothold in Afghanistan—through external aggression, as a compensation for the weakening of their position in Iran, so to speak. Hence, the Soviet Union simply had to respond to the requests that Afghanistan already had voiced several times before by sending a limited contingent of troops to that country. As soon as Afghanistan's neighbors ensure non-interference in Afghan domestic affairs and the stopping of the external aggression, guaranteed by the USA, the Soviet Union, perhaps France as well, as soon as the Afghan government declares that the Soviet troop contingents can be withdrawn or reduced, the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan will begin. I pointed out that Fidel Castro, as chairman of the nonaligned movement, has made a similar proposal.

Schmidt did not want to see it this way. He told me: Mr. Honecker, have you seen the maps of the Soviet invasion? I said: I also have maps, but this is irrelevant; stopping the external aggression is the crucial issue.

Then I had to go to the meeting with Comrade [Zambian President Kenneth] Kaunda, and Schmidt asked me: When are

we going to meet in the GDR? I answered: First, go to Moscow to Comrade Brezhnev, then we can meet in the GDR.

That's how we parted, and we both found that this was a useful meeting. Certainly, this meeting has a certain impact on the situation in Europe, because the Federal Republic has some influence on its western, northern, and southern allies. Of course, we don't believe that we are the center of the world, the normalization of GDR-FRG relations, however, certainly is of great importance for detente in Europe. It helps to restrain the belligerence of the USA. After all, the Federal Republic of Germany is the second strongest power within NATO.

The events in the Caribbean, and especially the anti-Cuban campaign of the USA and the Western media are related to the heightening of international tensions. In this context, our visit, which had been planned for a long time, indeed carries great international importance. This view has been expressed yesterday by the "Pravda" and this morning by the "Neues Deutschland." They wrote that, especially in the present situation, the solidarity with revolutionary Cuba shown by the Soviet Union and its allies, including the GDR, is of great importance. In the GDR, we have started a big solidarity campaign under the slogan: "Hands off Cuba! - Stop the American economic embargo against Cuba! - Stop the espionage flights! - Give up the USA military base in Guantanamo!" I was pleased to hear that the espionage flights are currently being suspended.

Under these conditions, Comrade Fidel Castro, we renew the fraternal solidarity and our comradeship in arms between the GDR and revolutionary Cuba. We are aware that we are fighting in the front line, but we know there are strong reserves in behind. On this basis, we look with optimism into the future and will develop our bilateral relationship further.

I apologize for having talked so extensively about the international situation, but I was prompted by your statements on these issues.

Fidel Castro:

What Comrade Honecker has told us is very interesting. We have listened with great attention. The international situation is of vital importance for us; because its aggravation means increasing dangers for Cuba.

As I have already pointed before, the Yankees have been very angry with us for some time and they toy with the idea of how to get back at us, especially after events in Angola and Ethiopia. In our contacts, they

insisted on a troop withdrawal from Angola and Ethiopia. We always replied that we are not on any account going to discuss this issue with them. We refused to talk about it. This was one of their most pressing demands.

Another demand relates to our solidarity with Puerto Rico's independence; and it is virtually a tradition of the revolution to show solidarity, to give support, if there is a struggle for the liberation and independence of Puerto Rico.

This was before the revolution in Grenada, a small country. This has important implications in the Caribbean, where there is instability after the success of revolution in Nicaragua [words unintelligible.] the difficulties in Central America.

For some time they have been hoping that we would make a mistake, so that they can teach us a lesson, as they put it. Thus we must act with great caution on all these issues.

It is not our fault that there are revolutions. We are [not] responsible for what happens in El Salvador. This is a phenomenon that has developed over time. Except for the example that Cuba gives, and to give an example is always best, because solidarity, too, plays a big role. These political phenomena, however, arise virtually as natural events, because the people no longer accept such a situation. When such a revolutionary situation emerges in these countries, then inevitably this leads to tensions. Thus, with the revolution, of course, there are tensions. In Afghanistan, too, with the revolution, there were tensions, and the new situation in Iran, the revolution, has produced tensions in that region. We take an interest in what happens in the Caribbean, but also what happens in all other areas of the globe, what happens in Afghanistan.

Some Yankees, some groups of forces within the intelligentsia, are developing the argument, the strategy, that, when a crisis unfolds in one part of the globe, in Iran or Afghanistan, in the Indian Ocean or anywhere else in the world, then the USA has to respond [against] Cuba. They have said that quite frankly. If they have some clash with the Soviet Union in a part of the globe where the balance of power is unfavorable for the USA, then they should respond in a place where the balance of power is favorable for the USA. Because one should not think that only a global conflict is possible. A world conflict is the most severe. The decisions are of tremendous importance and they are dramatic ones. However, the real prospects for a conflict, not a general conflict, but a local one, are much greater.

In this sense, it doesn't matter to us in

which part of the globe it happens. It will affect us. This is why the failure of detente is of special importance to us, of very special importance. First, because detente eliminates the possibility of a global conflict, but at the same time eliminates the possibility of local conflicts and also the opportunities for repression and attacks on the liberation movement.

Of course, detente has numerous advantages, particularly if it involves disarmament and a lowering of military spending. This is virtually the only way to give the Third World more resources for their development. This is why the policy of the Cold War, of arms races, is a catastrophe for all countries, but particularly for our country, given its geographic position. However [it is a catastrophe for Cuba], not only because of this position, but also as a developing country, and it is not only political and military effects, but also economic ones in Latin America. The Cold War can trigger a special effect. This allows the USA to better control certain wavering governments and to conduct a policy towards the whole liberation movement that suits them. This hurts the revolutionary movement all over the world, but especially in Latin America; because the Yankees believe that Latin America is their back yard. The USA has an interest in what happens in Asia, what happens in Europe, in Portugal, and so on, but they have a much stronger interest in what happens in Latin America, in the revolutionary changes in Latin America. Particularly in a Cold War situation, an intervention becomes more likely. This is why, for us, the issue of changing the current course and of finding the way back to detente, if possible, is of tremendous importance.

Erich Honecker:

There are some new aspects. We got information about the meeting between Comrade Brezhnev and Giscard d'Estaing. This meeting came as a complete surprise to the USA.

Even if one takes into account the existence of a certain class solidarity between France and USA imperialism, this talk between Comrade Brezhnev and Giscard d'Estaing still suggests that France intends to pursue a policy independent from the USA and is not willing to support the hardened, Cold War, course of the USA. Giscard d'Estaing explained that France will not support the USA's economic sanctions against the Soviet Union, that its athletes will go to Moscow, and that France does not want the FRG to become the leading power in Western Europe. France, Giscard d'Estaing said, has an interest in the further

existence of a divided Germany as an important element of the European balance of power. With respect to the issue of Afghanistan, France wants a political, but not a military solution, and this goes for Afghanistan as well as for Iran. By and large, this is a useful element, since it limits the chances of the USA to revive the Cold War with all its ferocity.

In this context, the conversation that the new American Secretary of State, Muskie, had with Comrade Gromyko is interesting, too. Muskie presented himself as the man who wants to be the number one in U.S. foreign policy. He did not mention Brzezinski's name, but he said: I am independent from the President's entourage. Mr. Gromyko, let us discuss the issue of Afghanistan and sort it out.

Comrade Gromyko replied: We sent our limited contingent of troops to Afghanistan only after there was interference in Afghanistan's domestic affairs, when there was the danger that you would get a foothold in Afghanistan after you got kicked out of Iran. Comrade Gromyko added, as discussed in Moscow, that Afghanistan is nothing but a pretext for the USA to heighten international tensions. This means, this was a result of long-planned steps taken by the USA.

Comrade Gromyko went on saying: Give up the boycott, so that your athletes can come to the Olympic Games. It is a symbol of your attempts to stir up the Cold War. Also, this contradicts your statement, Mr. Muskie, that you want a healthy international climate. Muskie said this could not be changed, the President has taken his decision. Thereupon, Comrade Gromyko explained that the President already has changed his mind so many times, perhaps he could do it again in this case. Muskie replied that this would not be possible.

In concluding, Muskie said that he would inform his President. Comrade Gromyko could proceed from the assumption that he, Muskie, has been Secretary of State for 20 days while Gromyko has been in office for 20 years. However, he would like to say that the USA wants a normalization of the situation between the USA and the Soviet Union.

No one knows whether this was only diplomatic maneuvering or not. The ratification of SALT II played an important role in the conversation. According to Muskie, it is not impossible that, after the elections, the situation might change. The conversation has demonstrated that the USA does well understand the implications of the aggravation of the international situation.

Fidel Castro has pointed out that the

international situation leads to Cold War, also leads to an increased danger of local conflicts, including the Caribbean. On the other hand, the peoples' revolutionary movements have examples in the form of other countries, as Cuba here in Latin America; but they are objectively determined. If a subjective factor is added to that, then such welcome events as in Nicaragua take place. Of course, the USA now endeavors to prevent a second Nicaragua in El Salvador, and their actions in South Korea also demonstrate their determination to defend the status quo. On the other hand, there are such events as those mentioned by Comrade Fidel Castro, e.g. Grenada in the Caribbean.

As far as the African region is concerned, you are under heavy pressure of the USA because of your military operations in Angola and Ethiopia. But we are sitting in the same boat, even though we don't have any troops there. We only have technical experts there. The USA is very curious about what the GDR does in Africa, be it in Angola or Ethiopia, in Zambia or Mozambique, Namibia or South Africa. We have a lot of cadres there who are active in various fields, and we train cadres for them. This is why the USA is currently tightening its policy towards the GDR. Above all, they bring their influence to bear on the banks in order to hurt us, in order to create economic problems in the GDR.

However, our economy is sound, we have enough allies. In addition to the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, there are also imperialist monopolies that want to trade with us. For example, we are expanding our economic relations with France, Italy, Scandinavia, and Belgium. After this visit, Comrade Mittag will go to Mexico. This year or next, President Portillo plans to visit the GDR.

We have met the Cuban comrades in Angola and Ethiopia. I would like to thank you, Comrade Castro and the other comrades for the extensive security measures that you have provided; a whole Cuban battalion in Luanda.

Fidel Castro: Yes, I remember. We asked our comrades there to provide comprehensive support for Comrade Honecker's trip.

Erich Honecker: We felt this support everywhere, and I would like to thank you on behalf of our delegation and of our republic as a whole.

Fidel Castro: I believe it was a very good initiative of the GDR's party and government to send such a delegation to Africa. It supports the liberation movement and is very beneficial for us. It is very important to develop the GDR's cooperation with these

countries, and we are very happy about that. Among the socialist countries in Eastern Europe the GDR is the country that pays greatest attention to Africa. When I talk about the socialist countries in Eastern Europe, I would like to exclude the Soviet Union. Because for a long time it has made a lot of efforts in this area. I am convinced that the African countries greatly appreciate the cooperation of the Soviet Union and the GDR. This is important; because if the GDR does not go there, others will go, who have different intentions, who want to cultivate relations in order to moderate developments. I am thinking of the Yugoslavs. They want to exert influence in a sense which is not the most positive. This is why the GDR's presence helps us a lot to maintain the most radical positions.

Erich Honecker: The speech you gave before our State Council [in April 1977] is still ringing in our ears. This was after your trip to Africa. Since then we have increased our engagement there.

Fidel Castro: This is very important for all of us, for the whole revolutionary movement. The Ethiopian comrades are very happy that you want to supply a cement factory. We have promised to help them to put up the cement factory. But the contribution to sustaining the radical spirit in these countries, in Ethiopia, in Angola and Zambia, in Madagascar has to be added to that, and is very beneficial for us within the framework of the nonaligned movement.

The great success of the VIth summit conference [of nonaligned countries in Havana in September 1979] notwithstanding, the radical countries are in the minority, but we were able to win them over on the most important issues, and thereby to isolate the countries with reactionary positions; because there actually were very significant disagreements at the nonaligned conference.

The situation in Afghanistan has caused a lot of problems for us, particularly with regard to the Third World. We remained in the absolute minority. The imperialists exploited this issue. At that time, we were fighting for the Security Council, and we gained some 90 votes. Colombia was a major obstacle for us, they got 50 votes then. We would not have backed off but would have continued the elections, however, because of the events in Afghanistan, we had to talk to the Mexicans and to give up the idea. It would have been nonsense, many votes would have been lost, and this did a lot of harm to the nonaligned movement, because the number of progressive, radical countries still is very limited. There is a middle group, though, which can be won over on some issues.

Of course, the situation has aggravated, for several months already, and also already before events in Afghanistan. The events in Afghanistan basically are a pretext for carrying through the boycott and all these measures. This started after the confirmation of SALT.

You mentioned Carter's words in Vienna; however, when Carter came back to the USA, he gave a speech before Congress and used quite sharp words with respect to Cuba. In this speech he explained to the public that he had told Brezhnev that Cuban adventurism in the Caribbean constituted an obstacle to detente and peace. He expressed fairly wicked intentions toward us, and basically accused us of constituting an obstacle to detente, an obstacle for the relations between the USA and the Soviet Union.

He basically asked the Soviet Union to control us. Just at this time, we wanted to have some contact, because the revolution in Nicaragua had reached its final phase, and they wanted to talk to us. We refused to talk to them and, after Carter's speech before Congress, we cancelled a meeting they had scheduled.

The worst in all of this was the policy of preparing certain armaments. The decision to deploy 570 missiles is a very serious issue. I agree with you that this deployment upsets the balance of power. If Europe deploys an additional number of missiles against the Soviet Union, then this is a change in the correlation of forces. There are no missiles close to the USA. We can understand this situation very well, because we experienced the October Crisis. When the missiles were deployed here, the Yankees disagreed, and they almost provoked a world war precisely because the missiles that were deployed in Cuba could have reached the USA within a couple of minutes. This would have annulled the entire warning system and all time calculations. The Yankees didn't agree at all with the installation of such missiles. We had 52 missiles here, but they are talking about 570 intermediate range missiles against the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union's long range missiles do not have that range, the USA's intermediate range missiles in Europe, however, can reach the Soviet Union; this is a traumatic situation.

Erich Honecker: Helmut Schmidt told me at our meeting: Mr. Honecker, we are afraid, this is why we agreed with that missile decision; because the Soviet Union got these SS-20 missiles, as you call them, and they are aimed at us, the Federal Republic. I replied: Mr. Schmidt, if you are afraid of the missiles, then you should have been

afraid before the decision, because the missiles that can reach you in the Federal Republic are not at issue here at all. The group of the Soviet armed forces has got them, and the NPA [National People's Army of East Germany] has got them, too. We can destroy Bonn with missiles at any time, or even the whole Federal Republic. The missiles, however, that you want to deploy, they are supposed to reach up to the Urals. The USA thereby achieves superiority over the Soviet Union in terms of missiles. These are the issues at stake and not the Federal Republic.

The USA wants to turn Western Europe into an anti-Soviet missile carrier, and they want to shift the risk to Western Europe. Thereby, they shift the military balance, and we will not allow that to happen. This means that now we must have defense systems against missiles that can reach us within 5 minutes. This necessitates great armaments efforts.

At the VIth conference of the non-aligned countries, you said that armaments should be reduced and that a \$500 million fund should be created. However, if now, following the Brussels decision, these missiles are built, there will be no detente in the military field. Then we have to muster all means in order to increase our defense efforts. We will not allow a military imbalance to the disadvantage of the socialist countries. Your comparison is a very good one. The USA has made a big fuss about 50 missiles at the time of the October crisis. Now they want to want to deploy 570 missiles right on the Soviet Union's doorstep. After the elimination of their Iranian bases and facilities, they now try the same in Afghanistan. Moreover, there are their activities in Turkey.

The aggravation of the international situation thus is intertwined with the heightened crisis in the Caribbean, the USA's backyard, so to speak. But the USA is not going to succeed.

Fidel Castro: I would like to add the following story. In the resolution of the October crisis, the USA has pledged to withdraw the missiles from Turkey and Italy. They have done that. In a certain sense, their plans [to deploy missiles in Western Europe] are illegitimate and violate the October crisis agreements. This has not been publicized, but [former Soviet leader Nikita S.] Khrushchev has shown me the letters, the letters related to the agreements. This was a tacit pledge to withdraw the missiles there. They were of a different kind than today's; however, they, too, could reach the Soviet Union.

Erich Honecker: Then they relocated

the missiles to submarines, to ships. It is known that exactly at the peak, if you can say so, of the USA's plans against Cuba, the Soviet Union has pointed to this agreement. Comrade Gromyko did the same when talked to Muskie. This is how all this is intertwined with each other.

Fidel Castro: I believe Brussels is the most serious step they have taken.

What you said with regard to Muskie, we think that he has certain ideas. Some political circles in the USA take the view that to chose Muskie for that function was a smart move; because what one got to know about Muskie was that he is a liberal, not an aggressive man. He has no bad reputation. There is no doubt that he has been appointed Secretary of State just at a point when Carter feels weak. I think he has made some demands. Among other things, he said that he is independent, and that he will not be Brzezinski's tool but a true Secretary of State. There have always been disagreements between Vance and Brzezinski. Every time they sent a contact group to us or to Panama, or to Costa Rica, this group consisted of two men. The first belonged to the State Department, the other to the National Security Council. At any rate, I am of the opinion that Muskie will pursue a policy of defending his positions against Brzezinski, and he will claim authority.

Erich Honecker: This is why he said he is responsible for foreign policy.

Fidel Castro: He can exert a positive influence. Vance has exerted a positive influence. The policy of missile buildup is Brzezinski's. The policy of allying with China against the Soviet Union is Brzezinski's. He traveled to China, he had pictures taken of himself at the border.

Erich Honecker: He had a picture taken of himself at the [Pakistani] border with Afghanistan, with a machine gun in his hand.

Fidel Castro: Yes, he is a cunning devil.

Erich Honecker: This policy is dangerous, but he won't succeed. However, it can cost us a lot.

One has to say that resistance against this policy is beginning to show in Western Europe. It's true, they bow before the USA and they have seriously supported the missile decision, e.g. the FRG. However, we had conversations in the Netherlands, in Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, and France. The leading politicians of these countries don't want a Third World war.

We are in contact with the folks of big FRG companies, the chemical industry, Mannesmann, and others. They all oppose the boycott, too. It is very interesting that even the Federal Republic's protestant

church, together with and on suggestion of the GDR's church, has issued a statement against the Carter policy.

Fidel Castro: Is it correct, that you have so many Protestants in your country? Are they indeed religious?

Erich Honecker: They are church members, and of course they are religious, otherwise they were not members. I had conversations with the bishops. This was the first time ever in the history of the GDR. They said: We don't want to be partisans of the West. We are GDR citizens. The members of our congregation work for socialism. We conceive of ourselves as a church within socialism. I couldn't say anything against that. The vast majority of the people feel attached to their state, to socialism, and the leaders of the church are smart, they take that fact into account. They exert an influence on the churches in the Federal Republic and in the USA. At the World Council of Churches, they have introduced a resolution calling for the continuation of detente and disarmament. It has been presented to the governments of all countries. The Protestant churches of the GDR and the USA have issued a common statement calling for the continuation of detente. Hence, certain changes become apparent here.

Of course, the church does not want to join together with us completely. This is evident, they can't do that. However, it is still better to have a church that is loyal to the socialist state than one that works against it.

In the USA, too, there are quite a lot of people who oppose the policy of confrontation, otherwise Vance would not have had to go. He was against the military adventure in Iran. What you said about Muskie confirms our information that Muskie indeed wants to act more independently. We have to exploit that.

Fidel Castro: I believe that a lot of people understand that the third world war would also be the last.

Concerning the boycott of the Olympic Games, a many people believe that the USA's non-participation increases the others' chances at the Games a lot.

Erich Honecker: With respect to the chances of preventing a third world war, we are optimistic, even though you never know what some lunatics will get up to.

Regarding the Olympic Games, there are some people in our country who think that the USA does not send its athletes to Moscow because it is afraid that they would again lose against the GDR's athletes as was the case in Montreal [in 1976].

(12:25 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.: Lunch Break)

Erich Honecker: As for the movie we've just seen, I have already asked if we can get it for our TV.

Fidel Castro: In less than four weeks we have organized three big rallies, the last of them being the one for your arrival yesterday.

Erich Honecker: This huge manifestation has already been covered by our TV yesterday, as will be today's negotiations; everything in color. Millions of GDR citizens are watching this. 80 percent of the people have a TV-set.

Fidel Castro: Hence, there are much more viewers than there are Catholics and Protestants.

Erich Honecker: These are loyal citizens as well.

Fidel Castro: If we said that we have Catholics, then we could talk about millions of Catholics who are baptized. Yet actually, nobody becomes involved with the church. Our relations with the church are not that bad. In the early days of the revolution it was necessary to make some priests leave the country, to expel them; because Catholicism was the faith of the rich. 60% of the people were farmers, and on the countryside there was not a single church. In other Latin American countries they do exist. Once a year, priests visit the villages to baptize the people, but they lack a religious education, they were only educated in the big landowners' private schools. Therefore, religion did not exert a particularly strong hold on the people. Nevertheless, we are very careful in our relations with the church, especially given the situation in Latin America, not to admit that the revolution is opposed to the church. In addition, we have talked a lot about the Christians' closeness to the Marxists, and said that Jesus was Christian.

Erich Honecker: The Sermon on the Mount says something along these lines, too.

Fidel Castro: There are many priests with a revolutionary attitude in Latin America. We think this is of great importance.

Erich Honecker: We also integrated a lot of them into the National Front. At the elections, they call upon the people to vote for the candidates of the National Front.

I come from a miners' town. The majority of the people was Catholic. There was a street where 80% of the people living there voted for the KPD [the Communist Party of Germany].

After 1945, we had Priest Kleinschmidt in the GDR, who was responsible for all of Mecklenburg, and we had priests on the National Front's National Council. We had

a bishop, Bishop Mitzenheim, responsible for Thuringia. He was awarded the National Medal of Honor in gold for his contribution to the building up of our republic. We thus approach the issue of cooperation between Christians and Marxists in the same manner.

Fidel Castro: The archbishop of Salvador [Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, assassinated on 24 March 1980] was an apostle of the poor, of the revolution. The CIA killed him. He exercised strong resistance and cried out against repression. The church in Salvador has a very revolutionary attitude, and this is of great importance for Latin America as a whole. In Jamaica, I met with church representatives, as I did in Chile in 1972. I talked a lot about the alliance between Christians and Marxists. This is no tactical alliance, but a strategic one.

I mentioned Jamaica. Jamaica currently faces a very difficult situation, above all for economic reasons, particularly because of the oil price. They produce bauxite. The oil price has increased 15 times, the price of bauxite only two times. [Jamaican leader Michael] Manley is a very able man, but he has got some problems.

The opposition party is influenced by the CIA, and they do all that they can in order to destabilize and overthrow the government. Now we have to see how these problems can be solved. It is a very dramatic situation that shows certain similarities to the situation in Chile at the time. We give them any kind of support they request. Yet sometimes they act like the Chileans at the time.

Erich Honecker: Every people has to learn by experience.

Fidel Castro: They simply are too democratic—Comrade Honecker, the floor is yours now.

Erich Honecker: I've already taken up a lot of time.

Fidel Castro: You have much more to tell than I do. To sum up, I would like to say the following:

It is our party's belief that our relations with the GDR are very good ones. We are very satisfied with how this relationship has developed, and we are very grateful to the GDR. You are virtually the first country with which we have concluded the coordination of the five-year plan. In our view, all issues have been settled to our satisfaction, and this helps us a lot. Our discussions with the others have not yet been concluded.

As for the political issues, we fully agree. I believe that there still are a lot of possibilities to develop our cooperation in the economic and political field. But things are going well. This is what I wanted to say

regarding political issues in general.

I suppose there is not much I need to tell you about our own problems; during our conversations we return to that topic time and again. Yesterday I have already talked a little bit about our difficulties. And there are shortcomings, too. But we fight against these shortcomings to get rid of them.

With regard to the implementation of the planning and management system for the economy we have made some progress. We have been working on that for years, and currently we do a lot to improve efficiency.

We had some difficulties in meeting the goals of the five-year plan. The five-year plan will not be fulfilled, but we will nevertheless make significant progress. The cement factory we are going to open tomorrow is one example. With this five-year plan, we face problems in the world market. Unfortunately, our economy is highly dependent on international trade, on trade with the Western countries. We have to buy some products from the Western countries, particularly food, e.g. milk. We do a lot in order not to be dependent on the West. We have agreements with the GDR concerning the production of powdered milk. As a result, we will no longer depend on Canada, France, and other Western countries, at least not to such a high degree, the dependence will be reduced.

There are also many chemicals, e.g. pesticides, herbicides, where we are dependent on Switzerland and the FRG, because the socialist countries have not yet developed such chemicals. Unfortunately, there is no hope that the GDR will develop such products in the foreseeable future. We also must buy a lot of equipment from the Western countries. It will be the same for you. Above all, the issue is raw materials, many sorts of raw materials, and spare parts. In sum, a significant part of our trade depends on relations with the West.

In addition, the prices of sugar and nickel were low for some years. This year, the price of sugar has increased. The world price of sugar will probably very good next year, and this helps us a lot in dealing with these difficulties.

However, there are other problems as well. We had some obscure plagues recently. We believe that these plagues were caused by sabotage.

First, there was a fungal disease in our tobacco plantations. This year, 90% of our tobacco production were destroyed, and we had to import tobacco. Fortunately, there are chemicals that are well-suited for fighting this sort of fungus. We have made a strong effort and we got the necessary amount for next year. Therefore, we believe that we will

have solved the problem by next year; because this plague has brought us into a very difficult situation. Other countries were hurt, too. In Jamaica, the whole tobacco production has been destroyed, in Canada, too, and perhaps the USA will be affected as well. It's blue mould [*Blauschimmel*].

On our sugar plantations we also had a very serious plague, but it affected only one type. 30% of our sugar plantations have been planted with this type of sugar. This led to a loss of some 1 million tons of sugar. We fight against this plague by replacing this type of sugar with another one, a new type, which is resistant against this disease.

Then there is the African swine fever, which we are fighting successfully. This swine fever is practically under control. It is strange, though, three plagues all at the same time.

A couple of days ago a plane overflew our country and dropped a gelatin-like, liquid substance containing a fungus; quite clever, in microscopically small capsules. Currently, we are conducting research on the issue. These things were dropped in a width of 25 kilometers. We haven't publicized anything yet, because we are still in the process of conducting research. We have asked the Soviet comrades for help. But we still need more facts.

This is very disquieting, however, since these could be symptoms of bacteriological warfare. These chemicals are highly developed. The material that has been used does not come from a small group of counterrevolutionaries, it belongs to a highly developed industry. Now we don't know who has done this. We know for sure that we are dealing with fungi, a type of fungus that could damage the sugar. We are doing the relevant tests before we publicize something. The dropping took place 12 to 14 days ago. But we don't have all elements available yet. Perhaps this is psychological warfare?

Furthermore, there are various signs of sabotage. A couple of weeks ago a very serious act of sabotage occurred. A day-nursery in a high-rise was set on fire. This fire was very dangerous, because there were 570 children in the nursery at this point. By a miracle, all children were saved.

A few days later, the same thing happened to a old people's home in Jamaica. 150 old women died. Imagine what would have happened here if 100 children had died! Maybe the people would have killed the rogue. The people might have killed some 10,000 of these guys, but then the problem would have gotten out of hands; because we have to run a visible campaign with the party and the mass organizations in order to keep the people calm. They want to strike back,

and we are at pains to calm the people down. If 150 children had died, then we would have witnessed serious acts of revenge. And apparently this was the intention.

Three days ago a special school was set on fire, a dangerous incident, too.

Yesterday a small rum factory was set alight. Hence, there is sabotage, and this either could have been planned by the CIA or instigated by the radio stations of the USA and the venomous pirate radio stations. Altogether, these acts are typical of the CIA's war of nerves. Therefore, we will have to take more drastic measures and send some people before the firing squad. These are terrible things. Our main concern is that they use bacteriological means against the economy.

Our problem is that we are heavily dependent on agriculture. Our exports depend on agriculture. Agriculture suffers from natural plagues, such as droughts. However, there are also these artificial plagues, and now we struggle with this kind of difficulties.

Nevertheless, the morale is good. We have practically formulated the next five-year plan already. It is not a very ambitious one, but a modest, a realistic plan, that has been calculated cautiously, on the basis of low world prices. If the situation improves, we will try to fulfill the plan.

We now coordinate the plans with the other socialist countries. We are preparing for the II Party congress. It will be characterized by a fighting spirit.

The party has grown, perhaps a little bit more than we desired, because we improved very restrictive criteria, always in search for excellence. Recently we tried to increase the number of workers in the party. Our comrades also work in services, intelligence, the ministry of the interior, the military. We also had a special campaign aimed at increasing the percentage of workers. Currently the party has 400,000 members and candidates. At the time of the I. Party congress, there were 150,000 members and candidates. The youth organization has 450,000 members, and it has a restrictive character, too. We will stick to this policy because we look not so much for quantity but for quality. The party is very unified, the people are very unified. All the people who are sitting here are comrades, all revolutionaries are comrades, and even the rogue is ready to fight. The people who are now leaving our country and go to the USA, who are no revolutionaries at all, have a revolutionary mentality. They are rebels. They refuse to obey orders. They will give the USA a big headache, although they are enemies of the revolution.

There are two very interesting phenomena. They all believe what the revolutionary government says, and second, they have the methods of the revolution, a revolutionary style.

This is strange. The Yankees concentrate them in bases, and there they organize the revolt. They don't obey any orders. With these rogues they have imported rogues with a revolutionary style. In comparison, the other emigrants in the USA are calm, but the Cuban people raise all sorts of outcries.

Hence, this is the situation. The West does not really understand this. 90 % of the people are steadfast and agree with the revolution, 10 % are against the revolution, but the latter are militant. The West does not really understand this phenomenon. This will remain the same for 30 or 40 years, as long as we have the USA on our doorstep. There will always be a small minority. I am totally convinced of that, we must not have any illusions about it.

Therefore, every country where there is a regime change means increased security for our revolution. Each additional revolution makes us stronger because we gain allies. For 20 years, we have been isolated, on our own, now there are already three of us in the region: Grenada, Nicaragua, and Cuba. Moreover, there are friendly states, such as Panama and Jamaica, for example; some countries that have developed a positive attitude towards us compared to the time of our isolation, when not a single country had a friendly attitude towards us. Mexico only entertained formal relations with us, but no relations of a friendly nature. This situation has changed a lot.

Mexico's position is a very interesting one; since after the discovery of the huge (crude) oil resources, its economic situation has changed, its power has grown. The dependence on the USA has been decreased.

However, at the same time, this engenders a danger, because the USA demand that Mexico supplies them with 4,000 barrels of (crude) oil every day in order to solve their energy problems. The Mexicans are afraid of the USA. They don't want to follow the USA's oil policy, but maintain a limited position that corresponds to the country's development needs in order to simultaneously expand the markets. But Mexico plays an important role in this area of the globe, a very important role, since it has got the economic power because of the oil. Hence, attention should be paid to Mexico. Lopez Portillo, the Mexican president, has a good attitude, a brave position, he is open-minded, and this should be taken into account.

Argentina and Brazil are in a different situation. These countries are much more

dependent on the USA. Brazil seeks to increase its independence. Without any doubt, this is a very reasonable government, but the situation is different from that in Mexico. Mexico can be seen more as an ally, as a friend.

The Yankees have asked the Mexicans to do them some service here, in order to solve their problems with us. We told the Mexicans that we would agree, if the goal is to solve all problems at the same time, not only those that are of interest to the USA. They Mexicans said that they agree with that.

When the Mexicans, the Yankees, and we sit at a table, the relation will be two to one on some issues. The Mexicans have invited representatives from Panama, and we have said that it is better to have more Latin Americans. Maybe it is better for us if the Mexicans participate in these talks. Therefore we agreed. We don't know what is going to happen and where it is going to happen because the Yankees are quite constrained in their actions because of the campaign. Before the elections, Carter must make no concessions at all. Therefore, the situation is not going to change before the elections. On no account, can we help Carter solve his own problems. What guarantees is Carter going to give us? And what if he loses the elections? They don't talk about Angola and Ethiopia any more, now they talk about solving the problem in the USA's interests section which is full of counter-revolutionaries, and in Iran, they demand their hostages. They were afraid that our people would attack the consulate. Before our demonstration, they were very concerned, and Mariel is the second issue that they are very concerned about.

There, we are the ones who issue the exit visas. They are afraid of Latin America, of the people from Haiti, Mexico, and the next problem is the hijacked plane. They are interested in agreements and they are concerned about that.

However, they always find something new. At the time, they talked about subversion in Latin America, now there are new issues. In this pre-election period, it is very difficult for them to make concessions. Hence, we remain at the present point as long as the elections have not taken place.

This was a broad outline of the current situation. We will provide further information about Cuba, but these were the main issues.

Erich Honecker: Comrade Fidel Castro, thank you for your explanations. It is quite obvious that there are no issues between us that need further discussion.

As far as we know, the communique

has been prepared. All questions have been settled, and we have expressed our opinions on international issues.

We consider the conclusion of the treaty on friendship and cooperation very important.

(Fidel Castro: This is our first treaty.)

The people of the German Democratic Republic will be delighted when they learn about it, and it is certain that this will receive great attention; just as our stay here already receives great international attention. The conclusion of this treaty will outline all that what we, even more so than before, will have to live up to in our mutual cooperation.

Despite all agreement with regard to economic and other issues, there will be a whole string of additional possibilities to develop the cooperation of two countries that are so much joined together in friendship as are the German Democratic Republic and the Republic of Cuba.

We in the GDR follow with great pleasure with how much energy you implement the decisions taken at the 1st Party congress of the Communist Party. We follow with deep sympathy your efforts concerning the preparation of the 11th Party congress, about which you have just informed us.

The remarks you made in the context of the Party congress regarding the effectiveness and quality of your work are very familiar concerns for us. We, too, devote increasing attention to these issues given the conditions of our development. Moreover, in our activities we proceed from the assumption that revolutionary Cuba commands great authority and conducts a very active, principled foreign policy in full accordance with the Soviet Union and the countries of the socialist community while certainly taking into consideration your country's specific situation.

It is obvious that in the preparation of your 11th Party congress you are concerned with a whole string of issues that we also have to deal with in preparing for our Xth Party congress. Recently our Central Committee held its 12th conference. Supplementing the Politburo's report on the organization of our Xth Party congress, I held a speech there. The Xth Party congress has been scheduled for 11-16 April 1981. We publicized the agenda and at the same time we announced that motions to be considered by the Party congress have to be proposed before the end of March. In the context of the summoning of our Xth Party congress the entire country will engage in a great debate about the future shaping of the German Democratic Republic's developed socialist society. Of course, this will be re-

lated to the continuing carrying through of the GDR's foreign policy.

As far as foreign policy is concerned, the problems are quite obvious. The cooperation with the Soviet Union is the cornerstone of our foreign policy. We coordinate our foreign policy with the socialist brother nations. Concerning foreign policy, there is agreement as to the basic issues, the issue of the further consolidation of the unity and indivisibility of the community of socialist countries, the issue of defending the achievements of detente, its supplementing with arms reductions, and active support for national liberation movements. In this process, we pay great attention to the development of the nonaligned countries about which Comrade Fidel Castro has informed us in the context of the Havana conference and the subsequent events.

Although all these issues concerning the future development of our foreign policy are understood, the citizens of the GDR certainly face a lot of problems. World events are highly complex, so that the Party has to be very active in this area; this all the more so since the enemy seeks to deceive the people through the mass media and to disguise its aggressive policies, particularly that of the USA. We have created a solid basis regarding these issues. The comrades now are increasingly capable of thinking for themselves and clarifying these issues in dialogue with the people.

In January of this year we held big talks with our party's first district secretaries (*Kreissekretäre*) under consultation of the local government secretaries (*Sekretäre der Bezirksleitungen*).

Fidel Castro: How many districts are there in your country?

Erich Honecker: There are 136 districts (*Kreise*), but also a whole string of industrial districts. Altogether there were 600 comrades present there. At this meeting, we assessed the class struggle between socialism and imperialism and its implications for the work of our party. One can note the differences between the various imperialist countries, but the basic conflict still is the one between socialism and imperialism. The imperialists are quite united in their struggle against socialism, they only disagree with regard to method.

We also evaluated the development of the national liberation movement and the role of the Communist and workers' movements in the developed capitalist countries. It was a broad range of international issues, which are mainly ideological issues, and issues concerning the future shaping of the developed socialist society. For example, we discussed the question how to continue

our dynamic economic policy under changed international economic conditions in combination with the execution of our socio-political program. These questions are certainly not only of theoretical importance; above all they concern the masses and hence the Party.

We believe that we can compensate for the changed international economic conditions, which find expression in increasing prices, in inflationary tendencies, through higher labor productivity. You know our development, therefore I don't have to go into detail. The main problem we face is to combine the advantages of the socialist social order with the scientific-technical revolution. This means, among other things, especially a more efficient management of natural resources. We have great supplies of brown coal in our country. Within the framework of the plan, we are currently making it our task to extract 300 million tons of brown coal a year instead of the 240 million tons we have produced in the past. Of course this is a huge task, since it involves the opening of new coal mines.

Fidel Castro: How many kilocalories does coal have?

Erich Honecker: 2,000 to 3,000, it varies. However, given the increase in world prices, this is a very important natural resource.

Fidel Castro: How many tons of brown coal are necessary to substitute 1 ton of oil? I am talking about the type of brown coal that you produce.

Erich Honecker: Practically, we use brown coal for our carbochemical industry. Relatedly, it is the source material for various raw materials, plastics, rubber (elastomers?), for the production of gas. We just have opened a new factory near Buna. Near Leuna we then saw the old plant, which works in the field of carbochemistry. The new one works on the basis of oil. Initially, we intended to abandon carbochemistry because at that time oil was cheaper than brown coal. We wanted to switch completely to petrochemistry. But now we are developing a stronger carbochemical industry, and the new plant produces 100,000 tons of PVC per year on the basis of brown coal, rock salt, and lime. This leads me already to the answer to your question. 4 tons of brown coal are necessary to substitute one ton of oil. However, this is not the crucial issue. Crucial is the fact that we have brown coal, but not oil. This is why we now support brown coal and develop the carbochemical industry to produce plastics and rubber. The second way of exploiting brown coal consists of using it as a source of energy. Currently our grid has a capacity

of 18,000 megawatts, on the basis of brown coal in fact.

Fidel Castro: This is eight to nine times as much energy as we produce. So, 60 million tons of brown coal produce the same as 15 million tons of oil. This is more than what Romania produces.

Erich Honecker: I have picked this example because, under the changed international economic circumstances, for us as a country lacking in raw materials it is certainly more effective to use brown coal for carbochemistry, for coke, town gas. This is a crucial component of the GDR's economic power.

Fidel Castro: But 300 million tons of coal are the same as 75 million tons of oil.

Erich Honecker: At any rate, we don't have the oil, but we have the brown coal. We import 20 million tons of oil per year, which we use primarily for chemical processes. In addition, we import 4 billion cubic meters of natural gas, and we produce 8 billion cubic meters ourselves. However, our domestically produced gas has a low calorie content - ca. 2,000. We use this kind of gas mainly for process energy because it is less well suited for chemical processes.

Hence, the first principle is to use our own raw materials more efficiently for the development of our economy. These are, as mentioned before, brown coal; moreover, the earths for the porcelain industry, which experiences a rapid development, both china and porcelain for technical use actually. We have the earths for developing the glass industry - we were presented the thermopanes in the *Palast*, but glass is mainly used for house building. We have great deposits of potash. We produce around 3.2 million tons annually, part of it gets exported. In recent years we have increased production by 1 million tons. We also have supplies of uranium, and it is known that uranium-mining is strongly developed. The uranium is mined by a German-Soviet company. Uranium can be used for peaceful and for non-peaceful purposes.

This is already it as far as our own supplies are concerned. We have to import oil, gas, ore for our metallurgy, various metals, precious metals for the metallurgy, sheet steel, etc. All these questions of improving efficiency and quality, with which the party is concerned in its entire work, played a role in the discussions with the first district secretaries, not only regarding better exploitation of these raw materials, but, relatedly, for a more efficient development of certain pace-setting industries. The production and processing of brown coal are certainly pace-setting for the development of our economy.

Fidel Castro: How long are the supplies

going to last?

Erich Honecker: Until the year 2000 and beyond. Supplies for the next 30 years are ascertained. We don't have to worry about that. Our greatest worries concern the raw materials that we don't have such as oil and gas, gold, silver, nickel, wood, etc.

Fidel Castro: Why do you need gold?

Erich Honecker: For microelectronics, for example. Of course the processing of these raw materials is pace-setting, but especially the development of microelectronics. At this year's Leipzig spring fair, the visitors were very surprised by the triumph of microelectronics in a several of the GDR's industries, e.g. in machine tool engineering, where it plays a very important role in the context of automating entire production processes, in the car industry, through the use of industrial robots, in the rolling mill industry, certainly in measurement technology, in the gadget industry, in ship and crane building. In our republic, almost every industry witnesses the triumphant march of microelectronics. This is necessary since 95 to 99 percent of the increase in industrial production is supposed to be achieved through increasing labor productivity.

Fidel Castro: Microelectronics and higher productivity will make up for the workers that you are lacking.

Erich Honecker: Indeed, we are saving 300 million man-hours per year because of technological improvements and the scientific management techniques. In one year we saved 167,000 workers simply by increasing labor productivity. Despite the crisis of the capitalist world market, despite the price increases national income on average grew by 4% annually within the COMECON, industrial production by 5 to 5.5%. Overall net income grew by 4%, those of workers and employees by 4.7%. Retail sales are up by 4% on average. This could only be achieved because of the division of labor within the COMECON, especially with the Soviet Union, and the strong increase in the productivity of the working people of the GDR.

Now I'd like to tell you how we managed to achieve such an increase in labor productivity. This is possible because we have a standardized socialist system of education; almost every child of our people goes to kindergarten, all attend the 10-class polytechnic secondary school. This not only leads to a higher level of general education, but creates a better basis for professional training as well. The best get sent to the universities and technical colleges.

Since the German Democratic Republic came into existence 1.4 million skilled

workers have graduated from the universities and technical colleges. Without the high level of education among workers, without the good professional training for everyone, without the fact that under the worker and peasant power 1.4 million people attended universities and technical colleges such an economic and hence social development of the GDR would not have been possible. This is the reason why the GDR belongs to the ten most powerful industrial countries. Stalin's slogan: "The cadres take all decisions." still holds true. This is the only way to develop the various branches of our economy: electrical engineering/electronics, metallurgy, scientific equipment-building, the shipyard industry, mechanical engineering, the chemical and the optical industry, etc., of course the ceramics industry as well.

When you are planning your IInd Party congress—and you mentioned that the cement factory with an output of 1.6 million tons of cement per year will play an important role, it is the biggest cement factory in Latin America, and many new factories have been built in Cuba—our experience has been, and this is all I can speak of, that one has to educate the cadres and rely on them. The issue is not only discipline at work and making full use of working hours, but also to achieve a balance between the scientific-technical cadres and the cadres with good professional training, who know their trade, who are loyal politically and skilled workers as well. This is the secret that allows the GDR to defend the position that it has gained.

We discussed all these issues at the meeting with the district secretaries and explained that only through the further dynamic development of the GDR's economy we can ensure our social policy and the comprehensive strengthening of the GDR against attacks by our imperialist enemies. This is the case simply because here people have the tendency to compare. For them, socialism has to be more attractive than capitalism. Since you can get three of the FRG's TV channels here, but only two of the GDR, the actual situation is decisive.

The last ten years have witnessed the biggest housing program ever in the history of our country. Between 1971 and 1976 we have built or modernized 603,000 apartments. This is the final year of the 1976-1980 five-year plan, and in compliance with the decision of the IXth Party congress we will have built or modernized 750,000 apartments, 510,000 of them with the help of apartment factories; of course this is a huge housing program since, for every new household, the equipment, i.e. floor covering, drapes, furniture, etc. has to be added.

Fidel Castro: Where do you get the wood for the furniture from?

Erich Honecker: We fell 7 million cubic meters of solid timber per year ourselves, the forestry ministry wants to increase the output to 8 million. The rest of the wood are imports, particularly from the Soviet Union. But we do not only use wood. For the furniture, we increasingly use plastics, rubber, etc. We make chipboards from wood shavings and import chipboards. Sometimes the furniture looks as if it was made from oak or birch or walnut, or even from African walnut, from precious woods. Yet actually it is film produced in our factories that gives that impression. Our Party printerries produce film, and this wood has proven to be of higher quality than natural wood. Various corrosives have been used for testing. The material lasts.

The housing program is the centerpiece of our social policy. Moreover, we are in the process of introducing gradually the 40-hour workweek while retaining the 5-day workweek. We have increased minimum vacation from 15 and 18 to 21 days, we have taken special measures concerning the protection and support for mother and child and the family. We have increased the paid leave for mothers for the first child to six months, it used to be six weeks, and to one year for the second child.

Fidel Castro: This country will become a real anthill.

Erich Honecker: See, Fidel, you must proceed from the conditions in your country, we from those in ours. We are building socialism under different conditions. I wouldn't mention this at all if the development of our peace-oriented foreign policy and anti-imperialist solidarity weren't closely related to the issue of the further shaping of the developed socialist society and intellectual-cultural life.

At the same time we have to set aside considerable resources not only for international solidarity with the peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, etc., but also for our defense, the development of the National People's Army, the army, the air force, and the navy. It is known that our army is hardly small, and it is equipped with the whole range of state-of-the-art weaponry with which the Soviet troops in the GDR are equipped, too.

We explained all these tasks openly before the Party and at the same time said: if we fulfill them we will be able to keep the prices for basic consumption goods, rents, and services stable. All this is worked through by the Party, discussed with the people.

I can say that this year we are noting a

great improvement concerning qualitative economic indicators, especially with regard to the increase in labor productivity. This leads me to our Xth Party congress. We have discussed political-ideological issues, we have explained openly the basic economic issues that have to be mastered. We have decided that what matters is to consolidate and gradually expand our social achievements. Now it is up to the Party and the people to fulfill these tasks.

Because of the results we already have in hand we are very optimistic. My speech before the first district secretaries was read out to 150,000 party activists, and then these issues were discussed within the entire Party. Each basic organization has an action plan for realizing the political-ideological, economic, and cultural goals.

In the economic field the working people of more than 120 combines have made it their task to bring an additional 2 to 3 daily productions to the plan, with the same amount of raw materials and other inputs if possible.

We have 16.9 million citizens in our republic. Following the principle of individual selection, which says that the best should belong to the Party, we have 2.1 million members and candidates. 56% of them are workers. For the first time in the Party's history 20% belong to the scientific-technical intelligentsia. This means more than 450,000 scientists, technicians, graduates of the universities and technical colleges are Party members. This enables the Party to fulfill the tasks explained before. According to a decision taken at the 12th session of the Central Committee, for every 800 members there will be an elected delegate.

We are deeply convinced that in connection with the open discussion within the Party surrounding the Party congress, with the help of the dialogue between the Party members and the entire citizenry, in the year 1980 the conditions for formulating at the Party congress another program for the development of the GDR until the year 1985 will be created. Here we envision an average annual increase in labor productivity of 4% for the years 1981 to 1985, and of 5% per year in industrial production. The figures for income, net income, retail sales, for investment, housing, and other social programs will correspond to that.

We thus fight for the realization of our Party program, adopted at the IXth Party congress, by setting ourselves the goal of further shaping the developed socialist society and creating the conditions for a gradual transition to communism.

I apologize if my explanations have been too extensive. There were some ques-

tions, which perhaps can be answered later in more detail. These questions concern problems in the development of the GDR. Just like the comradeship between the Cuban Communist Party and the German Socialist Unity Party is the centerpiece of our friendship, the Party is the decisive force in your country. It couldn't be otherwise. We thus create the basis for the further development of the relations between the German Democratic Republic and socialist Cuba.

Fidel Castro: We have a Communist Party, but haven't built socialism yet; you have a Socialist Unity Party and are already building Communism.

Erich Honecker: This is the dialectic. Moreover, this is always connected with what you have said before. There are different ways to Communism. The important thing is to actually pursue these paths. Then it is no longer decisive how the party calls itself. All of us who are sitting here come from the German Communist Party (KPD), from the Communist youth organization. Through the unification of Social Democrats and Communists we became the German Socialist Unity Party. Now we have already developed so far that we think of Communism. You first thought of Communism and called your party Communist Party.

Fidel Castro: It's Karl Marx's fault. I have listened carefully to your explanations because we can still benefit more from the GDR's experience. That's what I was thinking of when you talked about the system of education. With respect to some things the conditions in your country are different from those in ours. There are some issues where we can use your experience. We have to make an effort in that regard.

In the realm of professional training there is still a lot of room for improvement.

Our situation, though, is very different from yours. Let us compare just a few figures. You produce nine times as much electricity as we do, and you consume 16 times as much wood. These are only two examples. We face severe constraints concerning raw materials and have no energy sources, neither gas nor oil. We don't even have wood. We are asking the Soviet comrades to establish a Cuban colony in Siberia for the production of wood.

Erich Honecker: You can get it. The Bulgarians are there. We also got an invitation, but we are lacking workers.

Fidel Castro: You should transfer this invitation to us.

Erich Honecker: Agreed.

Fidel Castro: Then we make the deal together. In the Soviet Union, people think that the Cubans can't work in Siberia be-

cause of the cold. But thousands of Cubans are in the South of Angola, in the trenches, for months. Why shouldn't they be able to work in Siberia? I am convinced that they can work there, and we are having discussions along these lines with Comrade Baibakov and various personalities in the Soviet Union. However, they doubt that we can stand the cold.

Erich Honecker: If we can stand the heat, why shouldn't you be able to stand the cold?

Fidel Castro: There are remote areas, where they kept prisoners, but that doesn't matter.

Erich Honecker: There are vast areas, and we got such an offer, too. We couldn't accept it for the reasons mentioned before. Therefore we have a well-developed forestry [sector]. Unfortunately, you don't, for objective reasons, and what we can't get, we have to substitute through chemistry. Yet what it does not produce are the silicon chips for microelectronics, the microprocessors.

Fidel Castro: We have silicon.

Erich Honecker: We have silicon en masse. We control the whole silicon chain with the help of our scientists. We have produced the multispectrum camera at Zeiss. When Comrade [Gunter] Mittag met Schmidt [on 17 April 1980 in Bonn], he claimed that our camera was better than the American one. We are not modest as far as our productive capabilities are concerned. However, apart from that, what is actually crucial are the cadres.

Fidel Castro: Where do you produce that camera?

Erich Honecker: In Jena. But in Dresden, the industry is very powerful, and the institute for microelectronics is located there.

I have yet to fulfill an honorable task. On behalf of our Party's Central Committee, the Council of State, and the Council of Ministers, I would like to invite a party and government delegation of the Republic of Cuba under the leadership of Comrade Fidel Castro to visit the German Democratic Republic. Our people would be pleased if Fidel visited the GDR.

Fidel Castro: The next time, I will be more experienced and thus able to make better use of my stay with all what I have learned now about microelectronics. I won't go hunting wild pigs, won't go to Rostock, but visit the factories instead. Halle is a very nice area, it has young cities, sports facilities, a new swimming bath, a very good wine tavern, and a very big enterprise, Leuna. There I saw the militia branches, this is a very interesting spot for visitors. I always think of Halle. It was very nice there. In

Dresden, I had a chance to see the marks left by the war. I was told, however, that everything has been removed. I think that this was a mistake. One should have left one devastated district as it was.

I am pleased to accept your invitation to visit the GDR.

(End of the official talks: 6:35 p.m.)

[Source: *Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massorganisationen der ehemaligen DDR im Bundesarchiv* (Berlin), DY 30 J IV 2/201/1365; obtained by C.F. Ostermann; translation for CWIHP by Ostermann and Holger Schmidt.]

Transcript of Meeting between U.S. Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig, Jr., and Cuban Vice Premier Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Mexico City, 23 November 1981

Embassy of USSR to Republic of Cuba TOP SECRET
Copy No. ___
Ser. No. 544
8 December 1981

CC CPSU

Attached please find a stenographic record received by the Soviet Ambassador from C. R. Rodriguez of his conference with U.S. Secretary of State Alexander A. Haig which took place in Mexico City on 23 November of this year.

Attachment: original in Spanish, 38 pages, and translation consisting of 26 pages; this address only.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR
TO THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA
/s/ V. VOROTNIKOV

[attachment]

Translated from Spanish

CONFERENCE OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE COUNCIL OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ WITH U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE ALEXANDER HAIG, IN MEXICO,
23 NOVEMBER 1981
"YEAR OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF VICTORY AT PLAYA GIRON"

(Stenographic record, State Council)

Carlos R. Rodriguez. [Mexican Foreign Minister] Jorge [Castaneda], why don't

you stay with us a while? I'd like to make some introductory remarks.

Jorge Castaneda. Okay.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. Just one more minute (spoken in English). Can you sit with us for a little while?

Jorge Castaneda. Of course.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. Just a second (spoken in English).

It seems to me necessary and fitting that we express the thanks of the Cuban government to the government of Mexico for the kind intentions it has displayed in making the conduct of this meeting possible.

When the government of Mexico communicated this suggestion to us, we immediately expressed our agreement. Indeed, this was a difficult moment, inasmuch as, in the entire period of our revolution, we have never encountered such a torrent of accusations and threats against our country, and besides that we knew that our counterpart would be the Secretary of State, one of the very most active exponents of this trend, Mr. Haig himself. Notwithstanding, we consider that this meeting comports with the principles to which we have adhered since the moment of victory of the Cuban Revolution and its ascendance to power.

We have never refused to engage in dialogue. We have always considered that dialogue must take place in conditions of equality and mutual respect, and, for our part, we approach dialogue in the light of respect for principles which, from our point of view, are not subject to debate.

We have had contacts with the American government over the course of these years: contact with the Ford administration, and the Carter administration, on parallel levels. There were moments of rapprochement. And then circumstances arose which cut short that rapprochement.

In our message to the government of Mexico, we wanted to say that, from our side, we are in complete accord with the ideas expressed yesterday by President Lopez-Portillo, who called for an end to the verbal terrorism which has been widely utilized by both sides in the recent past, and for a beginning to the process of detente.

From our standpoint, within the framework of these principles to which we adhere, we consider that this is possible, and with these intentions we have come to this meeting, which has not been easy, at which discussion will take place over the resolution of problems that have deteriorated to the brink of confrontation, but which, in our opinion, can find a solution that is acceptable not only for bilateral relations, but for relations in all of this region, provided that both sides will demonstrate respect for each

other and the rights of each.

Alexander Haig. I applaud you for your outstanding introduction. For the past some time I have been following your pre-eminent career.

I also am very grateful to President Lopez Portillo for the invitation, which he made several months ago to President Reagan, to function as a party assisting in these negotiations.

Jorge Castaneda. As a messenger.

Alexander Haig. We don't have an adequate expression for "assisting party" and therefore, if you prefer, one may say "messenger" or "bridge."

(Jorge Castaneda leaves the room).

In Washington, we consider that this is a very fitting occasion for our meeting, because, indeed, we are going through a critical moment in the history of these twenty-odd difficult years. The only course open to us leads to the requirement that we make a choice. In any event, we believe that it is essential to conduct negotiations between the two governments prior to proceeding further.

Prior to the commencement of this meeting, I already expressed to Jorge our appreciation for this constructive initiative, which has made it possible to discuss our circumstances and, beginning with this, our first meeting, to forge ahead in an examination of the questions which are a cause of concern to both countries.

I'm very grateful that you have come from a long distance to this unofficial, secret meeting. From our side, we intend to hold it secret.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. That is consistent with our wishes. We have decided to do the same.

Alexander Haig. I have been involved with these problems for a greater portion of my time that you might suppose. In the beginning, I started working in Washington under President John Kennedy. After the so-called missile crisis I was an assistant to Cyrus Vance and well remember those difficult days which followed upon that crisis, and the actions taken by each side against the other which, in the final analysis, brought to you, instead of potentially dangerous consequences, a period of relative tranquility. Then, beginning in 1975-76, for various reasons, matters began to go very poorly and have continued to deteriorate. And now we have come to a crossroads which, by all indications, even by a most modest appraisal, may be described as dangerous.

Looking at our relations in all of their manifestations during the course of the past twenty years makes it evident to me that the difficulties, the beginning to which occurred

in 1975 under my former colleagues Ford and Kissinger, and also the domestic situation in the United States created under the influence of Vietnam and the Watergate scandal - that it was these, and not only ordinary geopolitical reasons, that formed the basis for a process of continual worsening in relations and growing repercussions, which I regard as very dangerous factors in the cause of international peace.

At that time, I was located abroad, but nevertheless discussed the question in detail with Kissinger and Ford. At that time they were not in a position to achieve a general consensus in the United States with regard to support of a policy that they considered correct at that moment. Subsequently, the Ford presidency dialectically reflected the spiritual condition of the American people after the Vietnam War and Watergate.

All that has changed now. Now any disposition of forces gives rise to a counter-measure. That is what has happened in this case. These days our national spirit has significantly strengthened, allowing the attainment of unprecedented levels of military expenditures, and simultaneously creating a readiness to come to terms with limitations in the social and economic sphere. That spirit is developing into an ever greater growth of the desire to come to a solution of international conflicts which the American people regard as a threat to peace.

In that which concerns the United States and Cuba, it seems to me, in essence, that we never had any tensions as a result of ethnic or spiritual conflicts. To the contrary. Historically, Americans and Cubans were very close and had good relations, relations based on mutual respect. However, due to objective reality - founded or unfounded - the people of the United States regard the chain of events as a challenge to their vital national interests, as intervention. This situation has come about during an extended course of time, beginning in 1975 and continuing right up to this day. First Angola, then Ethiopia, South Yemen, the threat to North Yemen, and in all of this Cuba has played a role.

Beginning in 1978, we have seen a renewal in our hemisphere of actions characteristic of the beginning of the 1960s. These have been regarded by the people as an unacceptable intervention from the point of view of the interests of the United States. That is what it was like in the 1960s. In the beginning of the 1970s there came a period of calm. Then an increase in tensions began anew. In our subjective assessment, all this does not differ so significantly from relations with the Soviet Union and Soviet actions.

After the missile crisis, we went through a long period of tensions. The situation improved at the end of 1969, even in spite of the conflict in Vietnam and the role of the Soviet Union in that conflict, which was major, candidly speaking, major. I was located there at that time and believe that Americans came to the conclusion that matters in that situation were handled improperly. That was an attempt to resolve a problem arising exclusively out of conceptions of a struggle for so-called social justice between two parts of Vietnam, at the same time as it was necessary to approach the problem from the point of view of relations between the superpowers who, in essence, made the war possible. Americans drew from this the conclusion that domestic [internal? indignant?--ed.] forces should create the conditions - either by peaceful means or through the shedding of blood - to provide for their future. Just operating exclusively on their own resources - well-founded or otherwise - they can express their concerns and the state of mutual relations among the people. I can say that the United States adheres to exactly this position in relation to Central America.

I do not believe that President Reagan has some kind of preconceived notion regarding the social system in Cuba. This must be determined by the people of Cuba.

Our capability for coexistence, notwithstanding ideological conflicts, is manifested most graphically in relations with other Communist regimes: China, Yugoslavia and the growing number of countries in Eastern Europe. Notwithstanding all of the Soviet rhetoric to the contrary, the problem is not here. In other words, in their judgment about everything, they ascribe our difficulties with you to ideological dissatisfaction on the part of the United States in relation to the political system in Cuba.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. It is good that we are here together (spoken in English).

Alexander Haig. I was saying that we are looking at the relationship between the global activity of the Soviet Union and the local activity of Cuba.

We are capable of arithmetic and know that one third of your resources are provided by the Soviet Union: everything that relates to transportation, equipment, materials, all of the assets and means necessary for sustenance of the Cuban economy.

On the other hand, in 1975 we were witnesses to a situation which subjectively led us to conclude that the Soviet leadership assessed the changes which took place in our country as changes of a geopolitical character - I am talking about Watergate and the war in Vietnam. This was abundantly

clear in the widening of activity in Africa, Southeast Asia, and in Northwest and Western Asia. In this manner, there exists a tendency - correct or mistaken - to believe that an agreement exists between Moscow and Havana in connection with various international activities, at least a tacit one, if not explicit. All this has created a mood in the United States which brought Mr. Reagan to power.

We are closely following public opinion polls, and I can assure you that the mood of the people in the United States is definitely militating toward a change in our relations with Cuba, a change that is not positive for Cuba, but which regards Cuba as a threat. I assume that there is room here for some subjective misstatement, but this is the fact of the matter.

I suppose that any leader comes to power having certain fixed opinions about things, and President Reagan is no exception. Maybe he will turn out to be an exception, if you consider the recent past, and his understanding of how to fulfill his mission. But I can assure you, that he is a man of peace, a man who wants to relieve the people from the burden of armaments, a man who does not oppose social transformations. His approach to the conflicts at the Cancun Conference, and his initiative in connection with the basic direction of developments in the Caribbean Basin, should serve as a reference point. Pursuant to his instructions, I have met with the leaders of Eastern Europe and representatives of the Angolan regime. In my opinion, all of this attests to the fact that we are talking not about ideology, but about a geopolitical problem. And specifically, due to this understanding, he is ready to pursue matters to the most dangerous line. In recent months he has been occupied with an examination of this problem. We are thoroughly familiar with the reality of Cuba in the area of security, economics and defense. We understand well the vulnerability of Cuba. We have discussed this problem with the Soviet Union for a long time. They understand perfectly well the meaning of these discussions and are aware of the limitations on activities, transgression of which could lead to confrontation between the superpowers, for which we are prepared.

At the same time, we have analyzed with great care the needs of Cuba, in the sense of its hopes for the future. It seems to us that the Cuban people have suffered a great deal from sacrifices imposed from abroad. We believe that the possibility still exists for a normalization of its relations not only with the United States, but with all of this hemisphere.

You are aware, Mr. Minister, that in the developing countries of the so-called "Third World," there are many leaders who today are turning away from the Soviet Union's arms, its technical assistance, and trade with it, from participation in economic relations, where the reward is measured on a scale of sacrifice. You yourselves suffer from this reality and have a right to participate in international trade, including trade with the United States. I know that President Reagan considers trade with Cuba a possibility. We must discuss this in the atmosphere of mutual respect to which you referred, which must be the goal of an independent peace, and to do this it is necessary to account for geopolitical reality.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. Thank you very much.

I have listed with great interest to the exposition of principals laid forth by the esteemed Secretary of State. At the outset I will speak to two points. First of all, to your words about the position of Reagan on the question of bilateral relations with Cuba and its common position on the problem of peace and problems confronting humanity today.

We have keenly felt the danger of the approach to this problem by Reagan and his group of leaders from an ideological point of view. Speaking candidly, in the public pronouncements, first and foremost of Reagan, we perceive a great ideological content. And we have been greatly surprised by its manifestation in the declarations of the Secretary of State as well. And we have been surprised more than once because, judging from information received from prominent European leaders, we had gained a different impression about the positions of Mr. Haig on international questions, which we had considered to be more pragmatic. That does not mean that they are not based on principle, only that they are more pragmatic, not so much determined by the influence of ideology.

What we have heard gives us cause for reflection.

The second element that I consider to be important inheres in the treatment of the mutual feelings of the people of the United States and Cuba. I am fully in accord with that.

Despite 22 years of continuous sharp exchanges, there is no anti-American sentiment in Cuba. It does not exist among the people, and we, the leaders, similarly do not rule with anti-American sentiments. We can say this absolutely categorically. This is seen in the course of any meetings of Americans with our people, irrespective of their posts and positions.

I am satisfied with the opportunity -

after the words just spoken by the Secretary of State - to attribute the current intensification of our conflicts to geopolitical reasons. And I would hope to possess all of the necessary eloquence, within the short time available to us, in order to attempt to prove that the geopolitical reality is not what it is made out to be in this case.

I am aware that the Secretary of State is a great lover of philosophy. Thus, even in the seventeenth century, since the time of Hume, it has been considered proven that the factual appearance of "B" following the appearance of "A" does not signify that "A" necessarily is the cause of the appearance of "B." I will attempt, in the briefest of fashion, in order to avoid tiring you, to describe our interpretation of events, beginning in 1975.

We became involved in Angola without the slightest wish to establish our military presence there. Speaking of military presence, I have in mind the presence of regular troops. In sending the first 150 people to Angola, we had absolutely no conception of what would become of the events in that country. This I can state to you unequivocally.

We had long maintained our ties with the MPLA [Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola] in its struggle against Portuguese colonialism. President [Agostinho] Neto requested our assistance in the preparation of groups which led to organization of the Angolan army. With this aim we dispatched 150 persons in three schools: one located in the south, the other in the northeast, and the third around Luanda. The subsequent development of events ensued as follows: suddenly we received news from Neto that they had been attacked by forces from Zaire and troops of Holden Roberto from the north, and by South Africa from the south.

I can assure you unequivocally, inasmuch as I played a direct role in this matter, that when the decision to dispatch Cuban forces into Angola was made, we communicated nothing about it to the Soviet Union. We were not even aware of its point of view on that account. And we had absolutely no idea of the number of troops that it would be necessary to send. In this manner, the first group was dispatched when the forces in the southern theater advanced more than 400, almost 500 kilometers from the Namibian border, approaching Lobito and Benguela, and the forces of Zaire were located 30 kilometers from Luanda. In this situation we sent at first not regular troops, but rather groups of commandos.

It is true that subsequently an agreement was reached between Cuba and the So-

viet Union regarding the activity of the forces, inasmuch as the Soviet Union already had an obligation to Angola to supply arms and it became necessary to speed up its implementation. As a result, we reached an agreement, and we don't deny this, under which the Soviet Union proceeded to dispatch certain types of weapons, and we sent people who were capable of using them.

And thus it was. When we became involved in the events in Angola, we had absolutely no concept of the geopolitical conceptions about the importance of Angola in light of the interests of the Soviet Union. We saw in Angola a friendly country, a group of revolutionaries struggling against colonialism, against South Africa, and embarked on all of this.

And then Ethiopia stepped to the front of the line. How did all of this happen there?

We established relations with Ethiopia at the request of Somalia. We had maintained no diplomatic ties with Ethiopia, and we harbored serious doubts in relation to the process that was taking place in that country. At the time, the leader of the revolution was not Mengistu. Power was in the hands of Teferi Bante. And I was personally assigned to establish contact in Colombo [Sri Lanka], where I headed the Cuban delegation at a conference of the heads of state and governments of the non-aligned countries [in August 1976], to establish contact with Teferi Bante and Ali Bukarom, at that time Vice President of Somalia, for the purpose of attempting to reconcile them among themselves, which turned out to be impossible because of the refusal of Teferi Bante.

Subsequently, Vice President [of Somalia Gen. Mohamed Ali] Samantar, simultaneously occupying the post of Minister of Defense of Somalia, came to Cuba. I was in charge of the preliminary negotiations with him. In their course he addressed himself with a request for military assistance from Cuba for an attack on Ethiopia, claiming that that country represented the greatest danger to socialism in North Africa. At that moment we had no idea that our troops would ever end up in Ethiopia. We had a group in Somalia, which was rendering assistance in the creation of a militia, and the Soviet Union had armed forces in Somalia and was utilizing the Somali port of Berbera as a base for its navy. This is how the close cooperation with Somalia came about.

Samantar had a discussion with Fidel and Raul Castro, who counseled in favor of restraint and the conduct of negotiations.

During his visit to Africa [in March 1977], Fidel Castro met first with Siad Barre and then in Ethiopia with Mengistu, and agreed with them to conduct a historic meet-

ing in Aden. That meeting was attended by Mengistu and his assistants, Siad Barre and his assistants, Ali Rubayi, who at that time was the president of [South] Yemen, Fattah Ismail and Ali Nasir, who is now the president of South Yemen, and Cuba was represented by Fidel Castro and myself. Fidel worked - and when I say Fidel, it is because he was at the center of that meeting - from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 in the morning, trying to achieve a consensus among the parties. However, this proved impossible to attain, because Siad Barre unequivocally rejected all of the suggestions presented at the meeting. While the meeting did not lead to an agreement, nevertheless Siad Barre promised not to attack Ethiopia. And then, when Siad Barre attacked Ethiopia, we considered ourselves obligated to Mengistu, whom we had persuaded to attend the peace conference which had taken place in Aden.

One fine day, all of this will come to light. You can believe me or not, but some day this will be common knowledge.

The outward geopolitical character of these events is completely at odds with the essence of the true facts. I had the privilege to accompany Fidel Castro at the time of his meetings with the leadership of the Soviet Union. These were attended by Brezhnev, Kosygin, Podgorny, who had just returned from Africa, Gromyko, and Rusakov. And it was we who insistently urged the need to render military assistance to Ethiopia. This was the situation, to be distinguished from that in Angola, because in this case preliminary negotiations were taking place. But in these negotiations it was Fidel Castro himself who first advocated military assistance. History will bring all of this to light.

I did not understand what was said about Yemen, because our forces have never been there. Subsequently we spoke about Nicaragua, where the same is occurring.

In [South] Yemen, with the assistance of a small number of specialists, we helped to organize the militia. In this connection I can assure you that if the war, which Yemen began, did not turn into an extended war between the North and the South, this was mainly owing to the position of Cuba, which not only played no role in it, but which categorically and completely opposed the war, and the current position of the commanding army of Yemen, which surrendered all of its positions . . . was in large part connected with these events. [ellipsis in original--ed.]

In this fashion, it would be desirable, that in connection with this everything should be entirely clear - I am interested first and foremost in the logic of the develop-

ment of events, namely, the logic.

Let us turn now to Latin America, where, as you say, beginning in 1975, there has been a return to events characteristic of the 1960's.

As you indicate, there was a tranquil period in relations between the United States and Cuba. I would say, as you did, that this tranquil period was interrupted by the events in Angola. I believe that this was connected to the pride of Secretary of State Kissinger, who had his own plan for a solution for Angola, which did not include the government of Agostinho Neto[:]; this is aptly described by [ex-CIA officer John] Stockwell in his book [*In Search of Enemies*], which nobody could deny and Kissinger, having maintained ties with us, from that moment became our most sworn enemy.

The administration of Carter came to power and brought to life a prolonged and difficult process. We believe that the principal actors in the Carter administration understood the gist of events in Angola, but that, unfortunately, the information of the CIA about Shaba was completely mistaken.

On the very day [25 May 1978] when I was to meet, and did meet with Cyrus Vance in New York, one hour beforehand President Carter delivered a speech in Chicago, in which he laid on us the responsibility for the events in Shaba, in relation to which we had not the slightest connection and in respect to which we even conducted serious discussions with our Angolan friends, warning them about the danger of placing the forces of the Shaba gendarme at the border. That ruined everything.

And then came Nicaragua.

I suggest to you, Mr. Secretary of State, that you would be committing a serious error in allowing a geopolitical mirage to impel you toward a mistaken interpretation. I wanted to note, for example, that the mistake in Shaba had a most negative result. Beginning in 1976, quietly, saying nothing to anybody, and without any pressure on us, we began to pull our people out of Angola, inasmuch as we considered that more of them were located there than was necessary to ensure minimal security for that country during the period in which we were organizing their armed forces. The events in Shaba forced Neto to address us with a desperate request, not only to refrain from removing personnel, but to return a portion of those personnel that we had already removed. For this reason, we now have more people in Angola than were there in 1976.

As for Central America. It is not only we who say that it would be a mistake to conceive of that which has happening now in Central America as a result of external

subversive activity; even such moderate government leaders as Lopez-Portillo are completely open in their adherence to this view. I believe that he knows [Venezuelan President] Carlos Andres Perez. I believe that Carlos Andres Perez is a right-wing Social Democrat and holds to the same assessment. All who, during the course of many years, have engaged in analysis of the circumstances in Central America, all who, during the course of many years have studied it, have come to the opinion that this situation is inflammable, naturally inflammable.

The circumstances of the struggle against Somoza gave rise to these events. We helped the Sandinista front in every way that we could, with all of the means that we were able to deploy. But we were not the only ones who helped them. You know that there were several governments in Latin America who helped them substantially more than we did. Thus, this was a situation, which was regarded by Latin America as a fatal tumor which it was necessary to remove.

We are close friends with the Sandinistas. [But] It would be a serious mistake to believe that the Sandinistas rely on the advice that we give them. On the contrary, they have a very clear concept of that which they are required to do.

We believe that the Sandinistas are inclined to preserve in Nicaragua a pluralistic system. It is known that several of the Sandinistas want to carry out a revolution that is deeper than that which exists at the moment. This is a fact. And we always speak the truth as we understand it. I believe that they understand perfectly well that it will be difficult and undesirable to hasten the process of intensifying the revolution. I believe it is correct what you said yesterday before your departure from Washington, to the effect that the possibility of negotiations with the Sandinistas is not to be excluded, although I am disturbed by your pronouncement, which bore the resemblance of a threat directed at Nicaragua, that time is running short. I distinctly regret your making that statement, and we can exchange our opinions on that score.

We are rendering and will continue to render to Nicaragua our solidarity and support, inasmuch as we consider this our obligation and our right. We have no intention, regardless of the consequences, to refuse the solidarity which we consider to be right. I believe that Cuba is not in the slightest degree interfering in Nicaragua. We have there 2,759 people, of which 2,045 are teachers, 240 are technicians, 159 are doctors, and 66 are nurses. We have no forces in Nicaragua. We have there several dozen military

advisors of various categories, rendering assistance in the organization of the armed forces and training of the Nicaraguan army. That is all that we have there.

When we hear the repeated pronouncements of the esteemed Secretary of State about our dispatch of 500-600 soldiers to Nicaragua, and the statements of other leaders in the United States to the effect that we have there 3,000 military instructors, all of this seems truly absurd to us, inasmuch as, it seems to me, we are in a position to know what we have there. We are prepared to publish a list of those 500 persons, who went there on the day when [U.S. columnists Roland] Evans and [Robert] Novak wrote that in the course of two days, 500 Cubans arrived; we can state their names, the place where they lived in Cuba, and the place where they were teaching in Cuba. We can tell you the places, where they are teaching now. We can publish the names and places of employment of the 2,700 Cubans located in Nicaragua. And this will be easy to verify. It is true that we have there 2,759 persons. This is true. But it can be easily and universally verified, that there are no [Cuban] soldiers in Nicaragua.

It surprises us to hear talk that Cuba has sent arms, which Nicaragua has received for its defense, and that such arms are funneled through Cuba. I have even heard declarations from Mr. Haig himself on this score. If the intelligence services of the United States speak of this, then they speak of what they do not know, for it would be easy for them to verify whence these armaments came, how they were delivered, on what they arrived, in what manner they were followed, and not one of them came through Cuba.

Naturally, we are not inclined to disclose the source from which they came and how they arrived, but we know that the CIA knows how they arrived, in what manner, from where, and how many. So why do they say that it came from Cuba; why do they insist that Cuba is involved in this[?] Cuba is in agreement with the concept that Nicaragua should be armed. Nicaragua has made it completely clear to us, and we share their opinion, that they are arming themselves not because they are next to Honduras, not because they may suffer an attack from El Salvador, and not because Guatemala might participate in an attack against them, but for a combination of these factors, in addition to the threat from the United States. This much is clear. You tell me. I know, that [State Department official Thomas] Enders has stated to the Nicaraguans, that it is absurd for them to arm themselves, inasmuch as the United States can destroy all of it in

the course of a very short period of time. This is true, this is true, it is for sure. However, not one self-respecting small country will reconcile to a demand that it admit to its own destruction without putting up a fight. I think it is necessary to understand this. I think that it should be understood.

El Salvador.

We do not have there, Mr. Haig, we do not have there any troops, nor any military advisors, and we say this to you with the same clarity with which we have spoken to other leaders from different parts of the world. We have declared this and are ready to prove it. We would request to be shown even one instance of an appearance there of these fabled Cuban troops. In those places where Cuban troops are located, they are universally recognized, and in El Salvador they are nowhere to be found, inasmuch as there are no Cuban troops, and no Cuban military advisors there.

We are explaining all of this out of a desire to prevent a dramatic confrontation under circumstances in which it is possible to attain a mutual understanding by means of negotiations. When we say that we are not supplying armed forces to this or another part of the world, we say this not because it would be a violation of the moral principles of Cuba or somehow unlawful. There is one confirmed fact: the United States has troops in various parts of the world. President Reagan has admitted that the USA is rendering support to Afghan counter-revolutionaries located in Pakistan. He has publicly declared this.

Not long ago the administration forced Congress to repeal the "Clark Amendment" on the grounds that it wanted a free hand for the purpose of rendering assistance to [UNITA leader Jonas] Savimbi and other forces operating against the government of Angola. Frankly speaking, we do not understand why the United States, merely because it happens to be, at the present time, one of the most powerful states, can have a right which we, being a small country, do not have. I believe that it is irrational to hold such a position. That is our principal point [*iskhodnaia tochka*], to which we will adhere.

Thus, I have attempted with considerable specificity to prove the absence of geopolitical reasons. We could say the following: What does the "White Book" say? The "White Book" contains certain truths, and certain lies, as well as certain data about the supposed ties between the revolutionaries who are struggling in El Salvador against the right-wing junta, and the Soviet Union. And what is evident from this: the fact that the Soviet Union has absolutely no desire

to involve itself. I am acquainted with colleagues who are noted there. These colleagues exist and are carrying out their obligations. But these colleagues have no power, they are not authorized to bestow the name of the Soviet Union, not one iota. It is clearly visible, that the Soviet Union in no way wants to be entangled in anything which is seen to be a revolutionary process in which it does not desire to participate.

I would like to tell you something in addition to this. Certain American leaders are always expressing the opinion that the Soviet Union acted as a hostile influence between the United States and Cuba, that it fermented in Cuba hostile feelings towards the United States. I could tell you that the opposite is true. Many of the conflicts that we have had with the Soviet Union were occasioned by the acts, words, and positions of Cuba, which did not correspond with the intentions of the Soviet Union in this portion of the world. I believe that nothing worries the Soviet Union more than the course of developments in the situation in Central America and the Caribbean Basin, which could become a new element in the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. I believe that when Mr. Haig and Mr. Reagan have the opportunity to consult with Fidel Castro, he will tell them about this in greater detail than I can, because, although I have attended many meetings, nevertheless, no one could speak about this problem more than he.

Such are the facts.

And what about our position in relation to the events in El Salvador? At the present time we are in favor of a political solution. A political solution which, naturally, we understand to be more or less encompassed in the plan which was announced yesterday by President Lopez-Portillo: the possibility of convening a Founding Assembly, but with the participation of all the forces involved in the conflict, including the Revolutionary-Democratic Front and the Front for the National Liberation of Farabundo Marti. Such is the position of Cuba.

We are prepared for any compromise in this direction, a compromise in which, as we understand it, the other parties will also be committed, including the United States. We must all take these obligations upon ourselves. We can discuss the extent of our participation in all of this. In this connection our intentions were communicated by Comrade Fidel Castro to President Lopez Portillo, to the Deputy Chairman of the Socialist International Vishnevsky, to the chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party of Canada [Edward] Broadbent, communi-

cated in a letter to [Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliot] Trudeau during the course of an exchange of correspondence with him. In this I repeat that for which we are prepared.

You touched upon our difficulties and our vulnerability. This is true. We are vulnerable, and our people has suffered a great deal from the American blockade. You call this an embargo. We consider ourselves to be blockaded by the United States. We have suffered physically. Our hospitals at times have been without medicine. We have suffered economically. Three days ago I received a communication from London, in which it was indicated that several companies, due to pressure from the Americans, had difficulty obtaining nickel. The Japanese have repeatedly stated to us, that owing to American pressure, they cannot develop economic relations with us to the extent that they would like to achieve.

We well understand, and Fidel Castro has spoken about this, that if we could improve relations with the United States, then our conditions would be better. The very fact of having the United States as a potential market, located several miles from us, would ease our problems. We would have access to technology that is currently inaccessible to us, we would have access to financing which we do not have, and we believe that this is desirable and possible. But I would like for you to understand our point of view, that we do not intend, for the purpose of achieving that, to sacrifice that which we consider to be our primary principles. Of course, you have not told me, that we must sacrifice them. But I would like to discuss this question as it arises from the concepts of the current administration of the United States. As we understand this matter, we are not being requested to be an ally of the United States or to conform with the social system that exists there. We do not like the social system in the United States. But, naturally, that is the social system of the United States, and the American people are entitled to decide what they must do. In view of all these realities, it follows that we should examine the following principles:

First, the sovereignty of Cuba - the inalienable right, being understood to include territorial sovereignty, including the base at Guantanamo; we have the right to trade with the entire world, including the United States.

Second: we have a right to solidarity with the countries of the "Third World," and in particular, with the countries of Latin America.

Third: our friendship with the Soviet Union. We are friends of the Soviet Union,

close friends. We reject any suggestion that we are an agent of the Soviet Union in any part of the world. I have explained to you the nature of our position on this issue. We not only have real feelings for the Soviet Union, cemented in a common ideology, but also we have received significant assistance from the Soviet Union for our own economic development. Naturally, with that assistance alone we cannot develop our country as quickly as necessary and as we would like to. However, we do not believe that such assistance is incompatible with the establishment of normalized relations between the United States and Cuba.

Alexander Haig. Mr. Rodriguez, I believe this has been a very fruitful exchange. I am certain that you will forgive me, if I do not agree with all of this logic. Several months ago our intervention prevented a serious clash between your forces located in Angola and the South Africans. But the next time it is possible that we will not have such success in stopping their movement with the assistance of our influence.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. But I would say that our forces are located far away from them, and that it was not merely your intervention, but our restraint.

Alexander Haig. I know that. I am aware of that. But they would have advanced further to your bases, and we stopped it. We knew nothing about their operations or about when they would commence. But the fact that they appeared served as a source of information for them concerning the operations of SWAPO [the Southwest African People's Organization]. They even captured a Soviet prisoner, who has not stopped talking to this moment about how he was captured, about the scale of activity and coordination of activities in Angola. He did not exclude anything from his observations.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. But that was not a Cuban prisoner. Correct?

Alexander Haig. Correct. We knew where the Cuban armed forces were located, and we also know, that it would be highly desirable, if Cuba would pull out of Angola. This would help Angola, it would help Cuba, and it would assist in the resolution of the issue over the independence of Namibia and normalization of conditions. This is something that I have discussed with the Soviets, the Angolans, and the governments of the "Front Line," and there is an ever growing opinion, that this is the very thing which you must do.

And moreover, as concerns the events which you described, and the activity of the CIA, I can assure you, that they are in possession of information about military aircraft which has been supplied by you to other

countries. I could furnish you with information about these things which, perhaps, are taking place without the knowledge of some members of the government. That can happen. It has happened at times even in our country, not very often, but in certain instances.

We believe that the presence of Cuba in Nicaragua constitutes a threat to the continent, and in addition, we believe that the activity of Nicaragua in El Salvador likewise constitutes a serious threat. I can assure you categorically that we are in possession of comprehensive proof of such involvement. There isn't the slightest bit of doubt about it. It's a fact. We have photographs, documents, minutes of interrogations and "confirmations" by those interrogated. For this reason, I cannot agree with that which you are telling me. I am not saying that you have no right to say it. You have every right to say what you want to, but we also have a right to draw our own conclusions from the events as we see them. We have proof, and we are telling you about it.

Unfortunately, the time has come, when the rhetorical debate between the United States and Cuba will not solve the problem, and, on the contrary, there is an array of areas in which the sovereignty of Cuba is not in the slightest bit implicated. However, Cuba is exporting revolution and bloodshed on the continent.

We know what you write, we know what you defend, we know what you are talking about, and we believe that it constitutes a threat to peace and stability, and we cannot see it in any other light, inasmuch as we are talking about objective reality.

You complained about the embargo. We have not had an effective embargo, but we can impose one on sugar, on the production of all the products which you use to obtain hard currency. However, we don't want to do that, we don't want to have any other complications. I must inform you of this. You speak of solidarity with the Sandinistas. I believe that you would render to them the greatest form of solidarity, if you would bring the Cubans home, and say to the Sandinistas that they should establish an order that does not violate the rights...

Carlos R. Rodriguez. Return doctors? Teachers? Return three thousand Cubans who...

Alexander Haig. We have a very good account of the doctors, teachers, Angolan veterans and military advisers, their titles, names and past activity.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. It would be interesting to take a look at it.

Alexander Haig. I can assure you that the benign picture that you have painted does not conform to reality. I'm not saying that you don't have a significant number of teachers there, but they are teaching your philosophy to Nicaraguan children, just as they tried to do in Chile. However, we do not agree that you have the right to do that. The Nicaraguans have the right to teach their people what they believe in. You are deeply involved in the Sandinista revolutionary movement, and we suggest that this creates a great risk for us all: for the Cubans, for the hemisphere, and for Nicaragua. We believe that Cuba should reexamine this. Nobody is asking Cuba to humiliate itself; we are not talking about that. We are talking about the conditions of ever increasing bloodshed in Central America.

We believe that the only solution for El Salvador is to allow the Salvadoran people themselves to decide their own fate, that is, by means of the electoral process, in which all sides should participate. A Legislative Assembly would be created, in which the political process would conform completely with the will of the people. But we cannot consent to Nicaragua's intervening in El Salvador under the mask of solidarity or any other revolutionary ruse, as it has been doing for quite some time. And your presence there, your assistance, facilitates this. Just as day follows night, this is the objective reality.

I have no doubts about the facts which you have marshalled with respect to Shaba or the situation in Ethiopia. However, the question arises, on what basis do Cuban forces continue to be located in Angola, performing various functions, and in Ethiopia[?]. Why do the regimes want this? I am addressing a serious question to you, not in respect to Ethiopia, but about the situation in Angola.

You say that you are not involved in South Yemen, but I can tell you, that we have counted large and small aircraft, which have flown from Ethiopia to South Yemen, and we have heard radio broadcasts...

Carlos R. Rodriguez. And did you see Cubans as well?

Alexander Haig. We have intercepted radio broadcasts in the Spanish language. I have read them every day. And if it wasn't you, then it was Ethiopians that speak Spanish remarkably well. And for this reason, I am telling you, that all of this activity, be it within the framework of geopolitics or otherwise, has convinced the Americans that it has a geopolitical connection.

Consequently, we must find a solution, if we are interested in peace and stability in the immediate future, we must find a solu-

tion to these problems. Otherwise, we will be required to pursue a different course, which, I believe, after my discussions with you here, would not be desirable for you. I know that the United States also does not want this, but it is prepared, after many years of not being in a position to take any measures, is ready to take them very quickly. Therefore, I am speaking to you of the need to immediately find a solution. I can assure you, that these solutions would not impinge the honor, sovereignty, or integrity of Cuba or the Cuban people. Nobody wants that. That would be foolish. And it is an objective fact, that it would be much easier to achieve this by force, but that is not our intention. However, frankly speaking, we believe that time is slipping away.

We have not disclosed to the American public our data or the information that is available to us. You have seen the "White Book," but we have another fifty of them. We have volumes, records of radio broadcasts, data from technical reconnaissance, we have photographs.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. A good factory for "White Books."

Alexander Haig. It's just the first chapter.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. But I understand that you have a good factory for "White Books."

Alexander Haig. Notwithstanding, the President does not want to do this, although he is prepared to do it and very soon. This would incite great enmity, and would stir up emotions even more. I insist that you take seriously what I have told you, and on an assessment that any sound-minded American will be compelled to make in the face of the events I have described. This does not mean that your involvement has not been exactly as you have described it; however, we regard this as a serious threat to our vital interests and the interests of peace and stability in the hemisphere.

If you share my opinion that stability and peace are desirable in the hemisphere, then you can work out a solution that does not compromise your dignity. How could this be accomplished so that nobody even asked you about that? I have already said that it would be necessary to extol the firmness of Cuba and its spirit of self-sacrifice. However, the basic problem in this matter remains the same, about which we are engaged today in the whole world: peaceful changes in the framework of acceptable legality, and not through bloodshed, arms, and not by the means of instigating terrorism and revolution.

And so, if the Cuban Revolution has matured to this point, then that is fine. If

that is not the case, then we are on a path toward confrontation, and soon. I know that this sounds like rhetoric, but believe me, I have examined and reexamined many documents, detailed reconnaissance data, the content of negotiations conducted in all parts of the world; much of it may be inexact, and I am certain that there is inexactness in the "White Book," and it could not be otherwise. It has to do with reconnaissance and intercepted documents which, for the most part, we have examined in Colombia, where the involvement of the Cubans was significant, and we did not raise the question about Colombia...

Carlos R. Rodriguez. Let's talk about that as well...

Alexander Haig. Your involvement was significant...

Carlos R. Rodriguez. Not as significant as it was said to be.

Alexander Haig. ...but significant enough to raise problems. And this is occurring also in Guatemala...

Carlos R. Rodriguez. If you will permit me, I will address that later.

Alexander Haig. ...fine, what I am saying is, that we must find a solution and quickly.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. What solution?

Alexander Haig. There must be a solution, because nobody gave Cuba the divine right to interfere in the internal affairs of the countries in this hemisphere, regardless of what arguments may be advanced to justify it. You know that today we have 34 military advisors in El Salvador. And how many does Cuba have in Nicaragua?

Carlos R. Rodriguez. We have there not many more advisors, not many more.

Alexander Haig. We are in possession of intelligence, and you are correct when you say that there are many independent forces in Nicaragua. And they tell us every day what is happening there every day. And what is happening is unacceptable. Regardless of the manner in which you describe it, regardless of what seems to you subjectively as moderation, it cannot be accepted. Anxiety exists in the countries of this hemisphere. There was a time when Cuba held very sound positions in the non-aligned world. However, issues have now arisen concerning its involvement. It is essential that we come to a mutual understanding, otherwise the results may be very serious. And we are not talking about the intervention of American forces against Nicaragua, we are not going to do that. However, we can find no explanation for an army of 50,000 men and a militia of 200,000 men. There is no justification for that.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. Why not?

Alexander Haig. Fine, as countries they have the right to do this, but if they choose this course, then they must pay the price for that choice. And this gives rise to anxiety in all of the countries in the region, and they are bound to oppose it. This constitutes a danger. Wherein lies the necessity for this? I have no information to suggest that any country wants to invade Nicaragua. If you have in mind a handful of Somoza supporters, who are engaged in smuggling in Honduras and who do not even have arms, the government of Honduras has announced that it is attempting to relocate them to another place in order to avoid any pretext for an invasion. And that effort has already been underway for a period of several months. I say to you in complete candor, that time is slipping away from us.

For this very reason, as you are aware, the Mexicans proposed this approach. I have studied all of the negotiations that took place during the time of the Carter administration, and they were nothing but a series of delaying tactics, in order to prevent any progress. And nothing was achieved by that, not a thing. We do not want to establish that kind of a dialogue, you don't want that, and we don't want it. If you are prepared to speak seriously, we are also prepared. But we are in need of a prepared context for discussions and some kind of sign from your side that results will be achieved.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. Inasmuch as we have little time, I will try to be brief, laconic, and objective.

First, you have insisted upon the need for a solution and have expressed the interest of the United States in a solution in which there would be no humiliation of Cuba or threat to the sovereignty of Cuba. We are prepared to search for a solution, and we must come to an agreement at another time about what steps to take, because this involves not only the United States and Cuba, but also the other countries of the region, and the revolutionary forces with their own criteria and points of view. We believe that Mexico could be a uniting link in this matter. We could conduct an even more direct exchange of opinions.

Alexander Haig. Let's maintain contact directly, without intermediaries, as we have done in the past. We could send our ambassador with special authority, General [Vernon] Walters, to Havana. We can meet, in turn, in Havana and New York, because, in my view, we must commence a dialogue immediately.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. I believe that this is important, and we are ready to do it. In addition to this I would like to introduce several clarifications, because certain misun-

understandings can arise.

I do not want at this time to commence a discussion about the facts, although at some point we can also discuss whether there or not there is falsification. When General Walters comes to Cuba, I think that it is important for him to bring with him as much data as possible in order to examine it for the purpose of interpreting these facts.

I remember that the "Bay of Pigs" was brought about by information from people located in Cuba that led the CIA to a mistaken conclusion. As regards your reference to aircraft, I can tell you, that everybody knows what is taking place in Cuba. We have no factions in the government. We have a division of labor. However, the members of the Politburo know everything that the military is doing. And I can assure you that you are telling me things with which I cannot in the slightest bit agree, frankly speaking, not in the slightest degree. About Angola, about Ethiopia. They ask, why are we still located there[?] Because they want us there, and the same in Angola. If, as a result of what is happening there now (we already know about the results of the meeting of the contact group, about the decision of the foreign ministers of Africa, we see that there is an opportunity to achieve a consensus on Namibia, and that there are visible signs of progress), if as a result of a solution to the Namibia issue the Angolans allow us to withdraw our forces, then we are ready to leave there. There is no doubt about this whatsoever. But I am concerned by the fact that we have in Angola not only several thousand soldiers, several tens of thousands of soldiers, but also several thousand construction workers and civilians.

And the information that you are spreading about Nicaragua is a complete falsification. We can discuss all of this with General Walters in detail in the course of several days. We can discuss this, and we can give you all of the details that are of interest to you, because we do not want a confrontation to arise because of a mistake.

We are also prepared for a confrontation. We know that such a confrontation will be traumatic for our people. We have no doubt about this. But neither are we afraid of a confrontation. What we fear is an unnecessary confrontation, in which, as a result of errors by both sides, as a result of an absence of contacts, thousands of Americans and hundreds of thousands of Cubans will perish. This worries us. And I am worried by other elements of interpretation which, I believe, we must discuss. If necessary, I can on any day leave for New York and organize a different, more detailed meeting. But several of your personal interpretations

which, as you say, are also consistent with the interpretations of the President of the United States, cause me great anxiety. For example, I do not believe that the United States has any right to interfere in matters related to the presence of Cuban teachers in Nicaragua. This, and what they are teaching, is a question for the Nicaraguan government to decide. I can assure you, that these are elementary school teachers who can hardly teach Marxist-Leninism. I don't know whether you have ever attempted to read any books about Marxist-Leninism, but it would be very difficult for our 2,700 teachers to teach Marxist-Leninism to little Indians. However, we believe that only the government of Nicaragua, and no other, must decide whether or not they need our teachers. I am convinced of this, because I have had enough discussions with the Nicaraguan leadership and I have also spoken with Fidel, and I know from other discussions, at which I have been present, that the Nicaraguans do not have the slightest desire or interest to intrude in Honduras. They understand perfectly well that this would lead them into a confrontation with the United States, and there would be nothing worse for Nicaragua, than to be pulled into a confrontation with the United States.

We can and must continue our discussion about all these things. You say that time is slipping away from us. Let us use it to the maximum extent. I want to say one thing: Cuba never lies, and Fidel never lies. That which we say, we can prove. I have stated to you what we are prepared to do, where we can achieve a consensus, and where we cannot achieve a consensus. When we say "We are obligated to do it," we are obligated.

You spoke of Colombia. You do not know how these members of M-19 ended up in Cuba. [Colombian] President [Julio-Cesar] Turbay [Ayala] had a telephone conversation with me in which he requested me - requested me! - that we accept in Cuba members of M-19, inasmuch as they had seized a group of ambassadors in the embassy of the Dominican Republic. As a result, they came to Cuba. They were in Cuba, they underwent preparation, just as thousands of others who come to Cuba. Any Latin American who comes to Cuba - member of the intelligentsia, poet, military person - wants us to teach him to use firearms. And we have taught thousands. That is true. And we never conceal the truth, but we have had nothing in common with the training of the group that infiltrated Colombia, and had nothing to do with its arming. The countries who have spoken about this are fully aware of who trained them, who gave them

weapons, and who organized them. I can assure you that Fidel Castro exerted efforts to prevent this adventurism, not for the sake of the government of Turbay, but for the sake of the fate of those young people that we knew would be killed. This was an ill-conceived adventure.

However, as to why Cuba trained the men of M-19. At our initiative, an agreement was reached with [Colombian] President Alfonso Lopez Michelsen, when he came to power, when he again recognized Cuba: we agreed not to help, in any way, any one partisan group, and we fulfilled that agreement. You can ask Alfonso Lopez about this. And we adhered to this under the government of Turbay. And only after the government of Turbay assumed a hostile position in the United Nations, which we, in a geopolitical sense, interpreted as a provocation directed by the United States, only then did we consider ourselves discharged from that agreement.

There is no obligation that we have taken upon ourselves with any country, group or government, that we have failed to honor. This should be clear to the United States.

[Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 84, d. 584, ll. 1-27; translation by Bruce McDonald; document obtained by Carter-Brezhnev Project and on file at National Security Archive.]

RESEARCH IN MOSCOW

Scholars needing research performed in the Russian archives may contract with scholars at the Russian Center "Archival Conversation at the Historical Archives Institute (HAI) of the Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow. For further information please direct inquiries to:

Prof. Alexander B. Bezborodov; Historical Archives Institute (HAI); Russian State University for the Humanities; Moscow, Russian Federation; fax: (7-095) 432-2506 or (7-095) 964-3534; tel.: (7-095) 921-4169 or (7-095) 925-5019

Scholars may also address inquiries regarding possible collaboration for research in Russian archives to:

Prof. Alexander O. Chubarian; Director, Institute of Universal History; Leninsky prospekt 32a; 117334 Moscow, Russian Federation; fax: (7-095) 938-2288; tel: (7-095) 938-1009

COMMENTARIES

CUBA AS SUPERPOWER: HAVANA AND MOSCOW, 1979

by Jorge I. Domínguez

In 1979, Cuba behaved as if it were a superpower. Tens of thousands of Cuban troops were stationed in Angola and Ethiopia, and hundreds of other Cuban military advisers, trainers, and additional troops were posted to other countries across the seas. Cuba had international programs assisting about three dozen countries in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and South-east Asia; many of these programs required the overseas deployment of Cuban personnel, while others provided training in Cuba itself for over 20,000 foreigners. In part for these reasons (and notwithstanding Havana's tight alliance with the Soviet Union), Cuba had been elected chairman of the Nonaligned Movement—at the time a significant organization of African, Asian, Latin American, and Caribbean countries—and it hosted its sixth summit in Havana in September 1979.

Cuba was also the Soviet Union's only truly reliable military ally in the Cold War, and the Cuban armed forces proved to be the only communist army capable of fighting effectively in distant locales for objectives at best remote from the "cause" of the defense of the homeland. From the mid-1970s to the end of the 1980s, over 300,000 Cuban troops served abroad. In any given year, relative to its population, Cuba had more troops posted overseas every year than the United States had posted in Vietnam at the peak of its engagement in that war. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Cuban armed forces were able to accomplish three times on African soil (in Angola in 1976 and 1988, and in Ethiopia in 1978) what the United States could not do in Vietnam and what the Soviet Union could not do in Afghanistan: Cuban troops won the wars they went to fight.

Nearly two decades later, this account reads like a fantasy, for Cuba's government today is struggling to survive, all its troops have been repatriated,

and its concessional foreign aid programs have ended. The Soviet Union no longer exists, and the Russian Federation is unable and unwilling to provide Cuba with the funding and other support that permitted the latter to behave as if it were a superpower.

The declassified documents from the Soviet archives, which this note accompanies, are drawn mainly from the year 1979; even the document that dates from 1981 focuses principally on events that had taken place at the end of the 1970s. None of the documents breaks these documents discuss have been part of the public record for some time. But the documents do shed interesting light on a variety of questions, the most important of which is the nature of the Soviet-Cuban relationship at what turned out to be the apex of their joint influence in world affairs.

In the summer of 1979, the United States (re-)discovered the presence of a Soviet combat brigade in Cuba. That brigade had been left in Cuba since the 1962 missile crisis consistent with the same "trip-wire" concept that had led the United States to keep troops in Europe. In each case, the forward forces posted by the respective superpower were deemed insufficient to stop an all-out invasion by the other superpower, but the presence of those forward forces had deterrent value: if an invasion were to occur, both superpowers would be immediately and automatically locked in war. As it turned out, some time in the late 1960s the U.S. government lost track of the Soviet brigade in Cuba; it was found only as a result of intensified intelligence monitoring of Cuba in the late 1970s.

The attached documents for September 1979 discuss the Soviet and Cuban response to the new U.S. challenge. The issue for the two governments was to decide how honest they should be in their response to the United States. With authorization from President Fidel Castro, on September 1 Armed Forces Minister General Raúl Castro sought an agreement with the Soviet Union on the content and style of the reply. General Castro's preferred formulation was: "For the past 17 years a symbolic So-

viet combat unit, created as a training center where Soviet military specialists train officers of the [Cuban armed forces] to use and maintain new military equipment, has indeed been located in Cuba." He recalled Cuba's "experience with previous confrontations with Americans regarding the Soviet military presence on the island" and emphasized that "we should not camouflage the real state of affairs." Certainly, he emphasized, there should be no attempt "to negate the presence of a training center on Cuba" because that would be interpreted "as a repudiation by Cuba and the USSR of their right to create such a center and send the necessary military personnel" to Cuba.

In fact, as the subsequent documents indicate, the Soviets chose to camouflage. Their response to the United States acknowledged the presence of a "military training center" but did not acknowledge that it was a "combat unit," contrary to Cuba's preference. In 1979, the Cuban leadership behaved as good believers in democratic centralism. Fidel Castro's own reassurances to the United States emphasized that it was a military training center, with no reference to a "combat unit"—echoing the Soviet position exactly.² Only in September 1991, when the Russian Federation government announced its decision to withdraw the combat brigade from Cuba, did Havana publicly vent its anger that the Soviets had rejected Cuba's advice in 1979.

Cuba believed that the Soviet position in 1979 retreated from the principle that both governments had the right to agree to station a Soviet combat unit in Cuba. Cuba was closer to the mark. The settlement of the 1979 crisis in fact modified the series of understandings begun in 1962 that had evolved over time. For the first time those mutual understandings extended to conventional forces. Also for the first time, the Soviets accepted a limitation on the presence of their military personnel in Cuba, pledging (27 September 1979 document) that "We do not have any intention of changing its status as [a military training] center." In effect, this minicrisis was settled through a uni-

lateral Soviet concession to the United States.

Other important areas of disagreement between the Soviets and the Cubans become evident in the minutes of the 23 November 1981 meeting between Cuban Vice-President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez and U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig.³ The text makes it clear that the talks were not successful. Nonetheless, the minutes show a perhaps surprisingly accommodating opening gambit from Haig, followed by his lack of understanding of one key point that Rodríguez was communicating. Haig's principal concern was the close connection between Cuba and the Soviet Union in backing Cuban overseas operations. Rodríguez kept telling Haig, in effect, that it was fine for the United States to blame Cuba but, please, do not blame the USSR.!

Rodríguez first asserts: "I can assure you unequivocally, inasmuch as I played a direct role in this matter, that when the decision to dispatch Cuban forces into Angola was made [in 1975], we communicated nothing about it to the Soviet Union. We were not even aware of its point of view on that account." Next, Rodríguez discusses the Ethiopian war (1977–78): "I had the privilege to accompany Fidel Castro at the time of his meetings with the leadership of the Soviet Union. . . . And it was we who insistently urged the need to render military assistance to Ethiopia. This was the situation, to be distinguished from that in Angola, because in this case preliminary negotiations were taking place. But in these negotiations it was Fidel Castro himself who first advocated military assistance." Finally, Rodríguez turned to the troubles in Central America: "Certain American leaders are always expressing the opinion that the Soviet Union acted as a hostile influence between the United States and Cuba, that it fermented in Cuba hostile feelings toward the United States. I could tell you that the opposite is true. Many of the conflicts that we have had with the Soviet Union were occasioned by the acts, words, and positions of Cuba, which did not correspond with the intentions of the Soviet Union in this portion of the world."

These three statements are quite consistent with everything that had been known about the nature of Cuban-Soviet relations in general, and specifically on these issues. The only exception is that Rodríguez claims a larger role for Cuban initiative in making the decision to enter the Ethiopian-Somali war on Ethiopia's side, whereas scholars had believed that the Soviets had had a considerably greater impact in making that original decision. The key point that Haig, and others, missed is that the USSR had a restraining effect on Cuba in the late 1970s, and that serious differences occurred between the Soviet Union and Cuba because the latter was much more militant. To be sure, Cuba could not have conducted such a far-ranging foreign policy were it not for the massive Soviet political, economic, and military backing, and on this central issue Haig was right to challenge Rodríguez.

The attached documents also feature other interesting aspects of Soviet-Cuban relations. For one, they demonstrate a thorough and competent knowledge of Cuban affairs and policies by Soviet embassy officials. They show a very close communication between the two governments on large and small issues that concern them. The minutes of the Soviet Politburo meetings underscore the importance Soviet leaders accorded to securing Fidel Castro's agreement on the proposed joint course—even if Castro's views did not prevail in the end.

The documents also shed light on the role of several key Cuban officials, some of whom remain important players in contemporary Cuba. Rodríguez was long a thoughtful and cosmopolitan influence at the peak of the Cuban government, and his encounter with Haig—though ultimately unsuccessful—confirms his reputation for statesmanship. José Antonio Arbesú has been for many years a senior Cuban government and communist party decision maker and analyst with broad responsibilities for U.S.–Cuban relations; the 27 December 1979 document illustrates his broad competence in analyzing U.S. affairs. Raúl Valdés Vivó has repeatedly been given high responsibility by Cu-

ban government officials, and has repeatedly produced nefarious results. The 4 July 1979 document cites Fidel Castro's judgment that Valdés Vivó "failed to discharge the functions entrusted to him and was unable correctly and precisely to fulfill his assigned task in a recent trip to a number of African countries." Valdés Vivó "raised a host of doubts and false rumors not only among our Soviet friends, but among the Africans as well." In 1996, Valdés Vivó, then heading the School of Political Science at the University of Havana, took the lead in launching an assault on the highest-quality semi-autonomous Cuban research think-tanks, intolerantly and dogmatically criticizing their research on Cuba.⁴

The documents conclude with a timeless statement about Cuba's approach to international affairs. Though not always honored, it remains an important signpost for governments that must still deal with Fidel Castro's government: "There is no obligation that we have taken upon ourselves with any country, group, or government that we have failed to honor."

¹ I have written about these issues in Jorge I. Domínguez, *To Make a World Safe for Revolution: Cuba's Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

² Castro's remarks in *Granma Weekly Review*, 7 October 1979, 2.

³ For Haig's account, see his *Caveat: Realism, Reagan, and Foreign Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1984), 130–137.

⁴ For an example of his writings on general Cuban affairs in recent times, see Raúl Valdés Vivó, "¿Sociedad civil o gato por liebre," *Granma*, 4 January 1996, 2.

A "Moment of Rapprochement": The Haig-Rodríguez Secret Talks

by Peter Kornbluh

The United States "will go to the source" to stop Havana's alleged export of revolution in Central America, Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig, Jr. dramatically warned Fidel Castro's Cuba shortly after Ronald Reagan took

office. On 23 November 1981, Haig did just that, sitting down for a secret meeting with Cuban Vice-President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez in Mexico City to discuss the issues that divided the United States and Cuba.

Of all the American presidential administrations that have dealt with Fidel Castro since 1959, Reagan's seemed the least likely to engage in a dialogue with Cuba's communist government; and of all the hardline officials in the Reagan Administration, Alexander Haig seemed the most unlikely choice for such a mission. "I want to go after Cuba," Haig told his then deputy Robert McFarlane in early 1981 as he demanded a plan for U.S. military pressure against Castro. As McFarlane reported in his memoirs, "it was as though Haig had come into office thinking, 'Where can we make a quick win?' and judged that place to be Cuba."¹

For that reason, the Haig-Rodríguez talks stand as an extraordinary episode of U.S.-Cuban diplomacy at the height of the Cold War in the Western Hemisphere.

Extreme secrecy surrounded preparations for the talks: Reagan and Haig kept most of the U.S. government out of the loop; an unmarked car was used to ferry Haig from the U.S. Embassy to the private home of Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda; and Haig and Rodríguez agreed this would be an "unofficial, secret meeting." Yet it quickly leaked to the Spanish magazine *El País*, and then to the Mexican and U.S. press. In a televised interview with CBS News in January 1982, Reagan admitted that such a meeting had, in fact, occurred.²

Moreover, since the 1984 publication of Haig's memoirs,³ historians have had a U.S. version of the Mexico meeting. Haig's rendition of events, and his summary of the substance of the talks, generally comports to the Cuban version printed in this issue of the *Bulletin* (although it omits discussion of how the secret meeting came to occur in the first place). This Cuban transcript—originally in Spanish, translated into Russian, obtained by scholars from the Russian archives and now translated into English—provides new details, as well as the flavor of the discussion and

insights into the style and personalities of the two diplomats involved.

The Mexican government was simultaneously intermediary, mediator, and catalyst for the Haig-Rodríguez meeting. Alarmed by the Cold War rhetoric emanating from the Reagan Administration—much of it from Haig himself—in 1981 the government of President José López-Portillo sought to mitigate the growing potential for U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean by urging dialogue instead of what the Cubans described as "verbal terrorism." In an effort to preempt future hostilities, Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda called for "a ceasefire of silence." "Mexico," he offered, "is prepared to serve as a bridge, as a communicator, between its friends and neighbors."⁴

López-Portillo's major opportunity to promote an agenda of negotiations came at the North-South Summit held at the Mexican resort of Cancun in October 1981. Cuba had been involved in the preparatory meetings for the summit, and Mexican officials hoped the gathering of world leaders might provide an opportunity for a "discreet" meeting between Castro and Reagan. But, according to one of the conference organizers, Andrés Rozental (now Mexican ambassador to Great Britain), U.S. officials balked when they learned Castro was scheduled to attend. "If Fidel came, Reagan wouldn't," Rozental recalls being told. Although Mexico had long resisted U.S. pressure to isolate Cuba, López-Portillo was forced to call Castro and essentially disinvite him. "Castro understood immediately," Rozental remembers, "and graciously agreed not to make it an issue."⁵

Instead of the summit, López-Portillo invited the Cuban leader to a private meeting on the island of Cozumel in July. The two talked about a potential U.S.-Cuban dialogue. Through Mexico, Castro passed the message that he was willing to discuss all outstanding issues with Washington.

Haig and other administration hardliners, however, forcefully opposed talks with Cuba as anathema to a strategy of raising Castro's level of anxiety through verbal threats and U.S. military

maneuvers in the Caribbean. "There could be no talk about normalization, no relief of the pressure, no conversations on any subject except the return to Havana of the Cuban criminals [from the Mariel boatlift] and the termination of Cuba's interventionism," Haig wrote in his memoirs.⁶

During the limousine ride to the airport with Reagan after the Cancun summit, however, López-Portillo and Castaneda put their appeal directly to the president of the United States. According to one Mexican official, López-Portillo essentially called in his chips: he asked Reagan to return Mexico's favor of disinviting Castro to Cancun by authorizing a U.S. emissary to meet secretly with Cuba's vice president later in the year. Reagan readily agreed, and subsequently directed Haig to undertake this mission when the opportunity arose in November.

The meeting took place in the spacious home of foreign minister Castaneda, located in a suburb of Mexico City. According to a member of Castaneda's family, the Mexican foreign minister introduced the two protagonists to each other in his library, and then left them to talk privately, aided only by a Cuban translator.

The house, according to family members, had no secret taping system. Yet, the Top Secret 38-page transcript of the discussion, which Vice President Rodríguez provided in Spanish to the Soviet ambassador to Havana in December 1981, suggests that the meeting may in fact have been recorded—perhaps by the Cuban interpreter. In any event, the existence of an apparently verbatim record allows historians to chart the issues, diplomatic positions, and tenor of the discussion.

The central issue on Haig's agenda was Cuba's alleged role in supporting the Sandinista government in Nicaragua and funneling aid to the El Salvadoran guerrillas. Drawing on what he called "volumes, records of radio broadcasts, data from technical reconnaissance ... photographs," Haig charged that Cuba, in "tacit agreement" with the Soviets, was fueling revolution in Central America. "We regard this as a serious threat to our vital interests and the

interests of peace and stability in the hemisphere," he stated.

In response, Rodriguez spent considerable time and detail attempting to refute the U.S. "evidence" of Cuban involvement in revolutionary movements from Central America to Africa. "I am aware that the Secretary of State is a great lover of philosophy," he said to Haig, noting that

Since the time of Hume, it has been considered proven that the factual appearance of 'B' following the appearance of 'A' does not signify that 'A' necessarily is the cause of the appearance of 'B'.

The U.S. had a "mistaken interpretation" of Cuba's role in Nicaragua and El Salvador, Rodriguez asserted, which he blamed on CIA distortion of intelligence. In response, Haig reasserted that the U.S. possessed "proof" that Cuba was "exporting revolution and bloodshed on the continent." Dismissing Rodriguez's lengthy version of world events since 1975, Haig declared: "I can assure you that the benign picture that you have painted does not conform to reality."

Notwithstanding the acrimonious disagreement on the nature of Cuba's role abroad, the Haig-Rodriguez discussions did produce a surprising commitment toward coexistence. Unlike the Democratic Clinton Administration—which a decade later would demand that Cuba democratize as a prerequisite for normalizing relations—Haig made it clear that Washington took a *realpolitik* position on Cuba's internal political setup. "I do not believe that President Reagan has some kind of preconceived notion regarding the social system in Cuba," Haig stated. "This must be determined by the people of Cuba." Later in the conversation Haig noted that "President Reagan considers trade with Cuba a possibility." While dismissing past "moments of rapprochement" as "a series of delaying tactics" on the part of the Cubans, Haig stated that "if you are prepared to talk seriously, we are also prepared."

According to the transcript, Rodriguez and Haig agreed that Mexico "could be a uniting link in this matter"

of continuing talks, and that conducting "an even more direct exchange of opinions" would be desirable. Haig, at his own initiative, suggested that special U.S. envoy General Vernon Walters visit Havana for additional talks. "We can meet, in turn, in Havana and New York, because, in my view, we must commence a dialogue immediately," Haig is recorded as saying at the close of the meeting. "I believe that this is important, and we are ready to do it," replied Rodriguez.

In the immediate aftermath of this meeting, both the Mexican interlocutors and the Cubans believed that a positive step had been taken toward dialogue between Washington and Havana. "We had accomplished what we wanted—to get them together," recalled Andres Rozental. Face-to-face, the Cubans found Haig to be far more level-headed, respectful, and reasonable than his vitriolic Cold War rhetoric had led them to expect. In Rodriguez's opinion, shared later with Mexican officials, Haig was "neither crazy nor stupid, but a reasonably intelligent, experienced person with whom conversation was possible." Rodriguez was said to be impressed that Haig was willing to send Walters—an official of "great authority, close to President Reagan"—as an envoy to continue the talks, and that the Secretary of State had emphasized the need to make a supreme effort to settle issues through "la via pacifica"—the peaceful road.

Haig, on the other hand, appears to have interpreted the meeting as evidence that U.S. pressure on Castro was working. "Clearly the Cubans were very anxious. They had read the signs of a new American policy."⁷ Haig returned to Washington to push, again, for a blockade. Walters did make a secret trip to Havana in March 1982—Mexican officials contributed once again to the arrangements—and spent five hours conferring with Castro and Rodriguez on Central America. But nothing concrete came of the talks.

In the end, as Ambassador Rozental puts it, the Mexican initiative was a "failure in getting anything going" between the United States and Cuba. Moreover, U.S. military involvement in

the Central America conflict escalated dramatically in the months and years that followed, and for most of the decade, Nicaragua and El Salvador were wracked with the violence and bloodshed that Mexico had hoped could be avoided if the Reagan Administration and Castro's government could achieve a *modus vivendi*.

Yet, the fact that the Haig-Rodriguez talks occurred at all may well have mitigated against the further development of the even more overtly bellicose U.S. policy toward Cuba that Haig, among others, initially sought. The talks also set the stage for negotiations between Washington and Havana over immigration that took place in 1984. At the very least, the U.S.-Cuba meeting in Mexico demonstrated that a "moment of rapprochement"—a civil, rational high-level dialogue—was possible, even at a peak of acrimony in bilateral relations.

¹ McFarlane recalled that Haig wanted to "close Castro down," and directed McFarlane to "get everyone together and give me a plan for doing it." McFarlane writes that when he came up with an options paper that pointed out the practical drawbacks of blockading Cuba or other types of unprovoked hostility, Secretary Haig harshly reprimanded him. "Six weeks ago I asked you to get busy and find a way to go to the source in Cuba. What you've given me is bureaucratic pap. . . . Give me something I can take to the President so that he can show a substantial gain during his first year in office. I want something solid, not some cookie-pushing piece of junk." Eventually, McFarlane reports, calmer heads prevailed and the Reagan Administration decided to stick to the agreements on Cuba worked out with the Soviets during the Cuban missile crisis. See Robert McFarlane, *Special Trust* (New York: Cadell & Davies, 1991), 177-181.

² See "Reagan Says Haig Met Key Cuban," *New York Times*, 28 January 1982. State Department officials, according to the story, "described themselves as 'quite surprised' that the President had said what he did. They still insisted they knew of no such meeting."

³ Alexander M. Haig, Jr., *Caveat: Realism, Reagan, and Foreign Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1984), 133-136.

⁴ Quoted in Morris J. Blachman, William M. Leogrande, and Kenneth E. Sharpe, eds., *Confronting Revolution: Security Through Diplomacy in Central America* (New York: Pantheon, 1986), 276.

⁵ Author's telephone interview with Rozental, October 1996.

⁶ Haig, *Caveat*, 133.

⁷ Haig, *Caveat*, 136.