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### **Hungary and the Cuban Missile Crisis: Selected Documents, 1961-63**

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# Hungary and the Cuban Missile Crisis:

## Selected Documents, 1961-63

Introduction by Csaba Békés<sup>1</sup> and Melinda Kalmár<sup>2</sup>

I.

**H**ardly a year after the Berlin Crisis peaked, a major East-West conflict erupted due to the installation of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, bringing the world the closest it came to a direct superpower clash during the Cold War era. The unique feature of the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 was that in this case, originally the idea of changing the status quo by exporting revolution to Cuba had never occurred to the Soviet leadership, yet it still arose, in an indigenous way, thanks to the victory of the revolution led by Fidel Castro.

In Cuba the fighting guerillas under Castro's leadership overthrew the pro-American Batista regime at the beginning of 1959. By 1960 the new left-wing system was rapidly expanding political and economic relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and it became increasingly likely that Cuba would soon become a member of the Soviet alliance system. The Eisenhower Administration initially implemented a wait-and-see policy, and hoped that with financial means it could topple the revolutionary regime. Later, however, US officials considered more urgent and extreme political and military solutions. In January 1961, shortly before John F. Kennedy became president, Washington broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba, and a few months later, in April, CIA-trained armed Cuban emigrants landed at the Bay of Pigs. Even though this military action failed, it became clear to the Cuban leadership that on their own they could not guarantee their country's security against the United States. Therefore, in July 1961, they signed a military agreement with the Soviet Union under which Soviet medium- and intermediate-range nuclear missiles were later installed in Cuba.<sup>3</sup> It appears that this momentous and provocative Soviet decision had double aims. On the one hand the missiles were to defend Cuba against a possible American attack, for in such a case the USA would have had to risk nuclear retaliation as well as a direct military conflict with the Soviet Union. On the other hand with this step Khrushchev made an attempt to establish a global strategic balance at a time when the United States was significantly ahead of the Soviet Union in intercontinental missiles production, and this could not be hidden anymore due to satellite reconnaissance (Washington had made clear to the world in October 1961 that the "missile gap," if there were one, favored the United States, not the USSR).<sup>4</sup> In this situation the geographic location of Cuba had a significant

strategic advantage because the installed Soviet nuclear missiles in the country—which had been produced in great numbers in the Soviet Union by that time—could threaten basically the entire territory of the continental United States. Khrushchev hoped that if the installation of the missiles could be kept secret, the American leadership would have to accept the fait accompli, all the more because the missiles installed in Turkey just recently threatened Soviet targets in a similar fashion. The calculation however, did not work, as the US intelligence discovered the missile sites under construction in Cuba in mid-October 1962. Kennedy, after considering all the possible responses, announced in his 22 October speech that he ordered a sea blockade ("quarantine") around Cuba, effective two days later, to prevent further shipment of missiles to the island. The Soviet and Eastern-European cargo ships which were on their way were approaching the island on 24 October, therefore undeniably there was a risk for an outbreak of a direct Soviet–American armed conflict. However, in the end, the conflict did not escalate into a military clash since Khrushchev called back the ships in time.

Kennedy also demanded the removal of the missiles which were already in Cuba, and indicated that otherwise the US was ready to make a preventive strike on the country. Intensive communications commenced between the parties, using various channels, the most important being the backchannel between the president's brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, and Soviet ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin.

We now know that during the crisis management both parties showed great flexibility and an ability for working out a compromise solution, although at the time this could be publicly perceivable only on the Soviet side.<sup>5</sup> At the categorical American response Khrushchev quickly retreated, as soon as it became apparent for him that otherwise there was a serious danger of a direct superpower clash. In his message on 28 October Khrushchev promised to withdraw the missiles, and this did happen relatively soon (at least the medium-range and intermediate-range missiles, as opposed to the tactical nuclear weapons, still essentially undetected), in early November. In exchange, Kennedy effectively guaranteed that the USA would not invade Cuba.

We now know, that the Soviets would have retreated without conditions, but the American leadership, being not aware of this, and also extremely worried about the potential escalation of the crisis, facilitated the Soviet retreat even further: Kennedy, besides making a public announcement promising

that the USA would not attack Cuba, made another, secret concession as well: he also promised the withdrawal, within 4-5 months, of American Jupiter missiles from Turkey.<sup>6</sup> This meant nothing less than that the American administration made a secret pact with the Soviets behind the back of their NATO allies. It is no wonder, that in exchange Kennedy asked that there be no written traces of this deal on the American side. So now it was the Soviet's turn: Ambassador Dobrynin, after hesitation, eventually was willing to withdraw the Soviet letter, which contained the American promise.<sup>7</sup>

So the peaceful solution of the crisis was at the same time a *victory and a fiasco for both superpowers*. The United States successfully barred the construction of a Soviet nuclear striking force on the American continent, but they had to give up on invading Cuba (despite withholding a formal commitment due to the absence of UN ground inspection of the missiles' dismantling and removal from the island). For the Soviets it had caused a significant loss of prestige from the perspective of international politics, as they had to withdraw their missiles from Cuba, nevertheless they had achieved one of their main aims, securing the survival of the revolutionary Cuban communist regime.

Based on all this, it can be said, that during the resolution of the Berlin and Cuban crises, which are still deemed to be the most dangerous ones of the Cold War from the aspect of world peace, the threat of starting a Third World War was in reality not as immense as world public opinion thought at the time. And this was exactly because while solving the crises, the leaders of the superpowers showed a great sense of responsibility and moderation. The lesson of these two grave crises was clear for both parties: in the future the emergence of such dangerous conflicts that could result in a direct superpower clash, threatening the destruction of human civilization, must be avoided at all costs, primarily through enhanced cooperation between Washington and Moscow. Arguably, the peaceful solution of the Berlin and Cuban crises became further successful test cases of the mechanism of compelled cooperation between the superpowers.<sup>8</sup> All this significantly contributed to both creating new, more effective, institutionalized forms of superpower cooperation and to the success of the evolution of a new wave of the *détente* process unfolding from the early 1960s. The first concrete results of this understanding were the establishment of the hot line between the White House and the Kremlin and the conclusion of the partial nuclear test ban treaty in the summer of 1963.

## II.

During the conduct of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Moscow's policy towards its allies was exactly the opposite of how it

had behaved while solving the Berlin problem a year earlier. Then the Soviet leadership consulted continuously and frequently with the Warsaw Pact member states, and with the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the coordination was downright intensive.<sup>9</sup> This time, however, the Soviet response was prepared in the utmost secrecy, moreover during the resolution of the crisis they did not inform even the Cubans about the possible course of events. This is why news of the evolution of the crisis—of which they heard from the media—caught the countries of Eastern Europe totally by surprise and unprepared.

In Budapest it was not only the danger of a direct East-West military conflict, and the fear of a new world war that caused acute worries. It was also alarming that even in case of the eventual peaceful resolution of the crisis, a war hysteria could develop in the society which would be hard to control by the leadership. Such a turn could then seriously disturb the progress of internal pacification that had been going on successfully since the upheavals (i.e., revolution and Soviet invasion) of 1956.

Based on the currently available sources, a precise picture still cannot be drawn about the Hungarian leadership's actions, or of what information it possessed and when, during the crisis. At 10 a.m. on 23 October, the Hungarian minister of defense received the following telegram via military channels from Marshal Andrei Grechko, Commander in chief of the Supreme Command of the Unified Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact: "Considering US President D. Kennedy's [sic] provocative announcement on 23 October 1962 and the increased danger of the outbreak of war caused by the Western aggressors, I hereby propose:

1. To introduce increased combat readiness for all troops of the services of the armed forces subordinated to the Supreme Command [of the Unified Armed Forces].
2. Please, report on the arrangements made by you on 24 October." (Document No. 8)

The "proposal" was put in effect on the same day and in Hungary mostly the air force and air defense units were put into combat readiness.<sup>10</sup> Thus it is very probable that the Hungarian army was actually mobilized directly by Moscow, without the prior knowledge of the local party leadership. The same day the Political Committee (e.g., Politburo) of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (HSWP) held a regular meeting but according to the transcript of the session the situation in Cuba was not even mentioned there.<sup>11</sup> The session was probably over by the time the news of Grechko's telegram reached the political leadership.

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Sometime later, however, after the news about a lengthy Soviet government declaration<sup>12</sup> arrived in Budapest, an ad hoc group of top leaders under the direction of HSWP First Secretary and Premier János Kádár and including the deputy prime ministers and the foreign minister, worded a short declaration on behalf of the Hungarian government in which it condemned the aggressive moves of the United States, threatening the independence of Cuba.<sup>13</sup> The government itself, however, was convened only two days later, on 25 October (Document No. 9), when the cabinet members had to retroactively approve the announcement. However, there must have been considerable hesitation in the leadership—perhaps they were hoping to get more information from Moscow via diplomatic or party channels—so the declaration was not published the next day, on 24 October, but only a day later, on the 25th in the HSWP's daily, *Népszabadság*. At the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 25 October, Kádár, who since September 1961 held both the position of Prime Minister and the first secretary of the HSWP, enlightened the cabinet members about the Cuban situation probably based on the information gathered from Marshal Grechko.<sup>14</sup> His report, however, as we now know, was very deficient. Kádár said, after reviewing the American moves, that combat readiness was ordered in the Soviet Union, but reserves were not called in. A significant number of new Soviet forces were transported to the territory of the GDR, while Poland made troop reinforcements on the Oder–Neisse border, and Bulgaria did the same at its borders with Turkey and Greece. Besides these measures, in every member-state of the Warsaw Pact the militaries were put onto combat readiness. Kádár also told the government that at the “request” of Marshal Grechko the Hungarian military leadership had also introduced the “necessary measures” and he now asked the Council of Ministers to retroactively approve that move as well.

Although the Hungarian leadership obviously did not possess adequate information about the situation, Kádár rightly evaluated the crisis as the gravest international conflict since the Second World War. While he evidently had no first-hand information from Moscow, as a pragmatist and one who knew Khrushchev's thinking rather well, he concluded that now the conflict would very likely be solved peacefully. This conclusion rested mainly on two factors: there was no clash between Soviet and US ships, “when the blockade and the ships should have clashed,” and in the meantime the Soviet Union announced that Moscow was ready to participate in a summit meeting. This convinced Kádár that now “the most critical danger is over and diplomacy has come to the fore.”

In accordance with this, the government authorized the “extraordinary cabinet,” as the ad hoc group of a few top leaders—now complemented by the minister of defense—could

be called, to take the necessary measures in connection with the crisis. During the following days, most probably this ad hoc crisis managing body handled the problems resulting from the crisis, although no documents of any kind have been found pertaining to its activity. The official organs of the Hungarian party did not deal with the situation connected to the Cuban crisis, according to the minutes of the Political Committee and the Secretariat meetings held on 2 November.<sup>15</sup> Prior to that, on 25 October the Secretariat had decided by instant voting to send an MTI (Hungarian News Agency) reporter to Havana. This also suggests that the leadership already ruled out the possibility of a superpower clash at that stage. It seems the idea of convening an extraordinary session of the Central Committee, that would have been a logical move in such a grave situation, had also not arisen; at any rate, no such meeting took place. In the given situation the Hungarian leadership could not do much, because they could have no impact of any kind on the course of events, although the potential result of the crisis, if disadvantageous, would have crucially affected Hungary's fate as well. That is why the only field for activity became that of propaganda: state and party authorities tried to strengthen the population's empathy for Cuba, and organized solidarity meetings in factories and plants.

The most spectacular and largest mass rally was held in the Sports Hall in Budapest on 26 October where the main speakers were deputy prime minister Gyula Kállai and Cuban ambassador Quintin Pino Machado. At the rally a message was adopted to be sent to UN acting Secretary General U Thant asking for his mediation to solve the crisis.<sup>16</sup> In another important gesture of solidarity, János Kádár received the Cuban ambassador along with two journalists of the Cuban paper *Revolution* and their conversation was published on the front page of *Népszabadság* next to the Hungarian government declaration on 25 October. Nevertheless, it is striking that when on 31 October Kádár addressed the party conference in Budapest, in preparation for the 8th congress of the HSWP held in late November, his speech contained not one word about Cuba or any other international issue.<sup>17</sup> According to the confidential reports on the mood of the people at the time of the crisis, there was no war panic in the country, the population trusted the Soviet Union that it would avert the danger of a violent conflagration successfully.<sup>18</sup> All of this is quite plausible, especially as the leadership did everything it could to make the people understand as little as possible about the true nature of the crisis.

Significant first-hand Soviet information was only given to the Hungarian leadership in the beginning of November. On November 5 at a closed, special meeting of the Political Committee of the HSWP, János Kádár reported that during

a phone call with Khrushchev that morning, they agreed that Kádár would immediately travel to Moscow.<sup>19</sup> In the last days of October and the first days of November several Soviet-bloc leaders also visited the Soviet capital, so Kádár's explanation seems logical, according to which the meeting was requested by him, because "people could misunderstand" if the Hungarians did not participate in such a consultation. However another explanation is also possible: On 2 November, a British citizen, Greville Wynne, was arrested on charges of espionage in Budapest, while visiting the Budapest International Fair.<sup>20</sup> On the 14th he was transferred to the Soviet authorities with the explanation that most of his crimes were committed against the Soviet Union. Indeed, Wynne was a British diplomat in Moscow acting as an intermediary for the famous Soviet spy Oleg Penkovsky, who was selling military secrets to British intelligence. Wynne was sentenced for spying to eight years in prison in May 1963. He was released in exchange for the Soviet spy Gordon Lonsdale, serving a fifteen year prison term in Great Britain, in 1964. We know nothing of any similar case, neither from previous nor from later times, so it is not impossible, that this important international issue was at least one of the main reasons for Kádár's hastily-arranged visit to the Soviet capital on 7-10 November. The information about the Cuban crisis acquired in Moscow was not much more extensive than was already known by the Hungarian leaders by that time: the Soviet Union reached its goal, for basically it had managed to acquire an American guarantee that the Cuban communist regime would survive<sup>21</sup> (Document No. 10).

### III.

The leaders of the Warsaw Pact member-states learned a serious lesson from the Cuban Missile Crisis, suddenly grasping the extent of their defenselessness and vulnerability. It was especially hard for them to understand, that if the Soviet leaders had considered the Berlin crisis, which had generated significantly lower international tension, important enough to hold regular consultations with the allies, then how it could have happened that a third world war had nearly broken out while the members of the eastern military bloc just had to stand by and wait for the denouement without any substantial information. Nor had they known that, contrary to the claims of Khrushchev's propaganda, it was not the Soviet Union, but the United States that had a significant superiority with respect to intercontinental missiles at the time! It was the Romanian leadership that drew the most radical conclusion from the case: in October 1963, the Romanian foreign minister, requesting utmost secrecy, informed his American counterpart that Romania would remain neutral in the case

of a nuclear world war. On the grounds of this standpoint, he requested the Americans not to set Romania as a target for a nuclear strike.<sup>22</sup> Thus the Romanian "trend" of conducting a deviant policy, which had appeared in the economic area as early as 1958 and was officially acknowledged in 1964, can be attributed, at least to a significant extent, to the impact of the Cuban Missile Crisis

The Polish leadership was equally indignant at the events, furthermore, they considered, that the Soviet leaders did not understand the significance of the affair and the Kremlin would continue to regard preliminary consultations with the allies as unimportant. Among other things, the Polish leaders objected to Moscow's lack of consultation with Warsaw Pact member-states concerning the nuclear test ban treaty, especially since they had to sign it as well after the treaty had been concluded. During his negotiations in Budapest in November 1963 (Document No. 25), Gomułka stated that Cuba intended to join the Warsaw Pact, which would pose a significant threat to the security of the eastern bloc as well as world peace.<sup>23</sup> Therefore he firmly stated that should the request be officially submitted, Poland would veto Cuba's admission. A similarly negative Polish stand prevented another Soviet Bloc ally, Mongolia from joining the Warsaw Pact during the same year. This plan was seen in Warsaw as a clearly anti-Chinese move that was to seriously exacerbate the Soviet Bloc's relations with Beijing and one that would make the Sino-Soviet split irreversible. The Polish position, nevertheless was based on the legal argument that the Warsaw Pact was a *European* defense alliance, therefore extending it to Asia would be a violation of the organization's statute. To avoid similar unexpected challenges in the future, the Polish leaders proposed intensifying preliminary consultations within the Warsaw Pact, and significantly boosting the political role of individual member-states.

Although the Hungarian leadership was much more cautious in criticizing the Soviet behavior than the Poles, it basically agreed with the Polish views pertaining to the nature of future co-operation within the Warsaw Pact. Kádár, during his visit in Moscow in July 1963, proposed to establish a Committee of Warsaw Pact Foreign Ministers, long before the plans to reform the Warsaw Pact were officially placed on the agenda in 1965-66.<sup>24</sup> The clear objective of the initiative was to place the Soviet leadership under the pressure of necessity for consultation and information provision as well as to enforce the multilateral nature of the decision-making process. Kádár clearly stated to Khrushchev in July 1963 that "the question is that there must not be a case when the Soviet government publishes various statements and the other governments read them in the newspaper.... I thought of a preliminary consultation. I have also told [Khrushchev],

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that experience showed it is better to dispute sooner rather than later.”<sup>25</sup> The proposal was rejected by the Soviet leaders—who, nevertheless, themselves came forward with this idea two years later—on the pretext, that at a time when a “sovereignty disease” broke out, the reaction of the member-states would be wrong, and they would only misunderstand the intention.<sup>26</sup>

#### IV.

The Hungarian documents published here shed light on the prehistory, the history, and the aftermath of the crisis. Most of them are reports of the Hungarian Embassy in Cuba, which opened in December 1961. They give detailed accounts on the position and the views of the Cuban leadership on many issues. During these years Fidel Castro and his comrades were working hard to make Cuba a solid member of the Soviet bloc, enjoying the same privileges as the “old” Eastern European allies of Moscow, including extending the Soviet “nuclear umbrella” to their island. As it was formulated by Carlos Rafael Rodríguez during the crisis, “Cuba’s territorial sanctity and possibility of normal life” should be guaranteed not only by the United States “but in some form by the Soviet Union as well” (Document No. 11). However, they thought all this was compatible with their having a special approach to the issue of peaceful coexistence, the prospects of the revolution in Latin America, the Soviet Bloc’s split with Albania and the emerging rift between the Soviet Union and China. Hungarian Deputy Foreign Minister Péter Mód visited Cuba between 28 December 1961 and 6 January 1962, and conducted important political talks with Prime Minister Fidel Castro, Foreign Minister Raúl Roa, and senior communist Carlos Rafael Rodríguez. The long report prepared after his visit (Document No. 2) sheds light on the views of the Cuban leaders concerning the above mentioned issues of international politics, also highlighting important differences of opinion. While Fidel Castro deemed the probability of an American invasion to take place “not very high,” the foreign minister explicitly warned his Hungarian partner that an American invasion is to be expected “at around the meeting of the foreign ministers of the states [belonging to the Organization of American States] scheduled for 22 January.”

Castro, who during the missile crisis urged Khrushchev to start a nuclear war against the US if it attacked Cuba, had raised a comparable idea ten months earlier, during his talks with Mód in January. He explained that now the Soviet Union had an advantage in terms of military technology. He suggested he did not know “whether the advantage would remain, increase or, quite the contrary, decrease or totally disappear in the future. Therefore, as long as the Soviet Union

has this advantage, we need to make use of every opportunity to strike a blow at imperialism.” It is obvious then, that in October 1962 Castro, himself believing Khrushchev’s lies about the state of the missile competition, made his infamous proposal on the false assumption that Moscow had a significant advantage vis-a-vis the US in the nuclear race, while now it is clear that at the time Washington in fact enjoyed considerable superiority in ICBMs over the Soviets.<sup>27</sup>

After the crisis, feeling betrayed by Moscow because of the withdrawal of the Soviet missiles, the differences of opinion with the Soviets were made much more explicit by the Cuban leadership than before, especially during the period between November 1962—when the tensions surfaced during Kremlin emissary Anastas Mikoyan’s visit to Cuba to mollify Havana—and the spring of 1963, when Castro visited Moscow and held extensive talks with Khrushchev. Several reports of the Hungarian Embassy in Havana are dedicated to documenting the anti-Soviet sentiments and the emerging divergences in the Soviet-Cuban relationship (see especially Document Nos. 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, and 19). The overly optimistic Cuban position concerning the role of the Cuban revolution and the prospects for Latin American revolutions, as defined by the Second Havana Declaration of February 1962, was unacceptable not only for the CPSU and East European communist parties but also for several Latin American communist parties. In the summer of 1962, when defense minister Raul Castro visited Moscow, Khrushchev explained to him that while the Soviet party did not want to interfere in the affairs of other parties, he thought that “the Cuban party should have a debate with the mentioned [Latin American] parties if they did not agree in everything, the Latin American parties could not be neglected, and one could not make decisions instead of them. ‘After all, you are not the Comintern,’” he added sarcastically.<sup>28</sup>

Following the crisis, the main source of disagreement—according to the Hungarian Embassy reports—was that the Cuban leaders and especially Fidel Castro, despite all the Soviet (and Mikoyan’s in particular) efforts, did not believe or understand that, in connection with the missile crisis, Moscow’s aim was to ensure Cuba’s independence and her rescue from the threat of US invasion. They “were convinced that the Soviet Union was only maneuvering and being tactical, she used the Caribbean crisis and its solution and Cuba only as instruments in the political game with the United States.”<sup>29</sup> Their suspicions were further exacerbated by the fact that the Kremlin was indeed unwilling to give an explicit or iron-clad guarantee for Cuba’s security. As reported by Hungary’s ambassador, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez told him on 23 October 1962 that “Cuba was ready to agree to the removal of missiles and etc. if Cuba’s sanctity was ensured

also by the Soviet Union.”<sup>30</sup> During Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily V. Kuznetsov’s talks in Havana in January 1963, Fidel Castro also hinted unequivocally at the demand for a Soviet security guarantee, by saying that “Cuba’s situation was singular because the European socialist countries are guaranteed by the Warsaw Treaty.”<sup>31</sup> Castro contradicted even the basic Soviet argument, i.e., that in turn for the withdrawal of the missiles Kennedy had formally obliged himself not to attack Cuba and thus Moscow had guaranteed her security. Kuznetsov had a hard time explaining that “there were several ways of making agreements between states and governments, one form of talks and agreement was e.g. what had been realized by the published correspondence” of Khrushchev and Kennedy.<sup>32</sup> In such a mood it is not so surprising that at their first casual meeting in a theatre Castro greeted his guest with the following words: “I do not offer you a cigar, because Khrushchev, too, gave the cigar I presented to him to Kennedy.”<sup>33</sup> (However, the Hungarian reports from Budapest’s embassies in both Havana and Moscow also point to the improvement in Cuban-Soviet relations, and Fidel Castro’s impressions of his superpower patron, after he visited the Soviet Union in the spring of 1963—see Document Nos. 22, 23, and 24.)

Finally, to demonstrate that the leaders in Havana may have learned a lesson from the missile crisis in several ways, let us mention a quote from a report in March 1963: “Raul Castro mentioned to the Romanian ambassador in the past days, and it is not likely to be his private opinion, that for Cuba among the possible [US] presidents at present Kennedy is the best”<sup>34</sup>



## DOCUMENTS

### DOCUMENT No. 1

#### Hungarian Embassy in Havana, Report on Secret US Documents, 22 August 1961

The Embassy of the Hungarian People’s Republic  
to Comrade Foreign Minister Endre Sík  
Budapest

TOP SECRET!

Havana, 22 August 1961.  
57/1961./top secret

Subject: The secret documents of the State Department of the

United States.

Encl.: three documents<sup>35</sup>

Cuban Minister of Industry Che Guevara made two secret documents of the United States public at the CIES [Inter-American Social and Economic Council—ed.] conference in Montevideo [i.e., Punta del Este, Uruguay, in August 1961].<sup>36</sup> The documents were passed to the Cuban government by “friendly hands” in a way not specified further. One of the documents is addressed to the United States’ ambassador to Venezuela, [Teodoro Moscoso—ed.] in which the members of the US State Department present the principles concerning Venezuelan economic policy. The other secret document contains a summary report on the position of Latin-American states and the Latin-American public opinion concerning Cuba.

Both documents are extremely valuable. Their authenticity cannot be doubted, as even the American delegate [C. Douglas] Dillon participating at the Montevideo conference did not dare to doubt their authenticity.

The publication of the documents made an extremely great impression both at the conference and in Venezuela. The Venezuelan America-friendly government protested in a note to the Cuban government, they considered the publication of the document interference in their internal affairs. In their reply to the note, the Cuban government explained it in detail that the publication of the document took place just in the interest of Venezuela and other Latin-American peoples. (I have sent the press cuttings of the notes in a letter.)

I do not wish to make any special comment on the documents themselves, they speak for themselves.

I suggest that their exact Hungarian translations should be sent to all our embassies to Latin-America or maybe to all our embassies to capitalist countries. Our embassies to Latin-America and Washington should study the documents thoroughly by all means. I request you to inform our Embassy also about the opinions concerning this.

I have expressed our gratitude in a note to the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs for sending the document.

Miklós Vass  
chargé d’affaires ad interim

[Source: *Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL)* [Hungarian National Archives], Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 2. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]



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## DOCUMENT No. 2

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Deputy Foreign Minister Péter Mód's talks with political leaders in Cuba, 9 January 1962

HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL!

Havana, 9 January 1962

Subject: Deputy Foreign Minister Péter Mód's political meetings in Cuba

Comrade Mód visited Cuba between 28 December 1961 and 6 January 1962. He conducted important political talks with the following personalities:

- 1./ With Cuban Foreign Minister Raul Roa on the day after his arrival,
- 2./ With Prime Minister Fidel Castro on 3 January,
- 3./ With Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, one of the leaders of ORI and the chief editor of its central paper, on 3 January
- 4./ With the secretary of the county organization of ORI Oriente in Santiago de Cuba on 4 January.

Although I was present at Comrade Mód's every meeting and occasionally also participated in the discussion, I will not separately indicate what Comrade Mód said and what I said and I will not specify which answers refer to his or to my questions.

### 1./ Meeting with Foreign Minister Raul Roa

Foreign Minister Raul Roa explained that in his view the United States was preparing for another invasion against Cuba. There are several sign of this attempt, and the Cuban party also has some confidential information on these preparations. Actually, one should say that the invasion has already begun, not only in the form of political preparations and actions but also in a military sense. The United States has sent various agents, diversionary troops and saboteurs to Cuba through various illegal channels; weapons, ammunition, explosives, various types of bombs, transmitter-receiver units and various other equipments are constantly being smuggled into Cuba. The agents and saboteurs arriving in Cuba were ordered to kill, explode and destroy wherever they can. All this can be seen as the initial phase of the invasion. He stated that if the USA had begun using these tactics last winter on the same scale, it would have caused immense damages to Cuba, whose consequences would have been unpredictable. Since then, however, the so-called Comités de Defensa de la

Revolucion (Committees for the Defense of the Revolution) have been organized all over in the country in cities and villages. Thanks to their activity, the tactics of the United States have ended in failure and the damages caused by them are insignificant.

(By way of explanation I note here that on the one hand these committees were created at every workplace, and on the other, in the cities they were based on blocks of houses while in the villages the setup depended on the nature of the particular place. Their members were workers and ordinary people in general with a revolutionary conviction who signed up on a voluntary basis. There were a lot of women, housewives and old people among them since young people and those who were willing to take a greater sacrifice were doing service in the armed militia—also on a voluntary basis, giving up most of their free time. The work of each committee is led by the chairman elected by the members. Their task is to defend the revolution at their workplace or at home against the sabotage of counter-revolutionists as well as agents and saboteurs coming from abroad. They do not have an office, a budget, a uniform or any equipment of their own. They seem to be operating quite effectively.)

Furthermore, Roa said that one of the main political tools used for the preparation of the invasion was the OAS [OEA in original, for *Organizacion de Los Estados Americanos* or the Organization of American States]. The United States made every effort in the OAS—in vain—to maintain or get unanimous support for the resolution regarding Cuba. However, there has been a qualitative change in Latin America. The Cuban revolution gave rise to a new situation in every country. Although the Cuban revolutionary government declared itself to be Marxist-Leninist and the revolution to be a socialist movement, the OAS is no longer an obedient executive body that remains loyal to the USA to the very end. Several countries, among them some of the most important ones, object to the invasion plans of the United States. The political secretary of state [at the Cuban Foreign Ministry], Dr Carlos Olivares is just visiting the Latin American countries and—as far as it can be seen in the short telegraphs—he was given definite promises for the support of Cuba in several places (Brazil, Ecuador, Chile and Mexico), or at least for not adopting the American proposal that appears in the guise of a Columbian motion. He reported on bad news only from Argentina; it seems that [Argentine President Arturo] Frondizi decided to back Kennedy. A unanimous resolution is simply out of the question. Thus, the USA will take care not to submit, or not to have another country submit, a proposal that explicitly condemns or imposes sanctions on Cuba. There are two reasons for it: 1./ The USA wants to prevent the OAS from splitting apart or possibly being totally disintegrated as a result of

the opposition of the Latin American countries. This does not mean that it will not make every effort to obtain a two-thirds majority in accordance with the regulation, that is, 14 votes; 2./ The military sanctions proposed by the OAS requires the approval of the [United Nations] Security Council, which cannot be obtained because of the Soviet Union's right of veto; there is no point politically in trying to put military sanctions to a vote under such circumstances, with Brazil, Mexico, etc. objecting.

Nevertheless, all this does not mean that the USA will now give up on the political and military role of the Latin American countries in the invasion. As the OAS charter provides that in case one of the member states is attacked, the military sanctions adopted as retaliation will come into force immediately and in this case the only thing the charter requires is to inform the UN, there is a clear danger of self-aggression [i.e.—a US-organized provocation that could be blamed on Cuba]. Self-aggression may take place against the American base in Cuba (Guantanamo) where there are many Cuban counter-revolutionists that can be used for such a purpose, or against a Central American country, also using Cuban counter-revolutionists hired by the USA. This is what can explain the USA's efforts in the OAS.

Then the foreign minister stressed that the situation was extremely tense and we were having hard times. He was convinced that the USA would take serious action, perhaps including a second invasion at around the meeting of the foreign ministers of the OAS states scheduled for 22 January [in Punta del Este, Uruguay]. The invasion is to be expected right before, during or right after the meeting, depending on the course of preparations for it. He requested that this information be forwarded to the Hungarian government and announced that as soon as he had more detailed information, he would summon the ambassadors of the socialist countries one by one and inform them so that they could also report to their respective governments.

Finally I should note that Roa repeated the information that in the spring he will travel to the Soviet Union at the invitation of [Soviet foreign minister Andrei] Gromyko and spend only two weeks there. Right before this visit, or after it, he will accept our invitation and visit Hungary too.

## 2./ Conversation with Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

After a rather casual introductory part, upon learning that Comrade M6d had lived and worked for quite some time in France and I had come to Cuba from there too, Fidel Castro asked us about our views on the situation and the activity of the French Communist Party. When he heard that although we did not wish to criticize the PCF's policy

or pass a judgment on it, we could not help mentioning the fact that we had some doubts whether their policy was right, he explained his own opinion. According to Fidel Castro, the French party's policy is not bellicose and fails to mobilize large masses of people, which is especially apparent in their policy regarding the Algerian war. He believes that it is not right to have only legal options in sight and consider only parliamentary methods.

Then suddenly, he put the following question: "Are there any preparations underway for negotiations between the Soviet Communist Party and the Chinese Communist Party to eliminate the antagonism between them? The answer was very briefly this: "I hope so." Next the Prime Minister explained at length how concerned he was regarding this antagonism, saying that in his view this was one of the major problems in the present situation, and with Albania the entire problem further intensified. Any break in the unity of the socialist camp can severely harm the fight against imperialism and the USA. The coordinated international action against the imperialists is threatened by serious dangers. One of the first signs of this danger is what happened at the meeting of the Peace Council in Stockholm. It should not go on like this and become even more serious, or else various international consultations, congresses and actions will meet with failure and the imperialists will benefit from arguments made public and from deepening antagonism. At the moment it seems that as soon as a discussion is started at an international forum, the disputed issues between the Soviet and the Chinese parties immediately come up. As if thinking aloud, he examined its impact on the international political situation, especially regarding the international position of Latin America and Cuba, and then spoke about the need for somebody—it could also be them, the Cubans—to take the initiative in order to resolve the issue.

Then he asked what the Soviet–Chinese debate was really all about; what was the essential reason for their antagonism.

The answer was practically the following: the Chinese view and position that differ from those of the Soviet party cannot really be understood in and of themselves because they are obviously based on the internal Chinese situation, the local conditions and working methods, etc. However, as we have not been to China, we don't know the Chinese conditions. Fidel Castro largely agreed with this but when he returned to this point during the conversation, he provided a different answer to this question, somehow like this: the Soviet–Chinese antagonism is essentially based on practical problems that arise in the cooperation between the two countries. He doesn't know the origin and details of these problems, nor does he fully understand the entire range of problems. He has heard about various things, including some problems that emerged

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along the common border, some kind of a complication that emerged in connection with a tribe there.

Fidel Castro returned again to analyzing the extremely harmful consequences that may follow from breaking up unity in the socialist camp, and the analysis of the international, especially the Latin American situation led him to conclude that this was the worst time possible for a debate like this and especially the worst time for the deepening of the antagonism between the Soviet and the Chinese parties.

The response to this analysis was as follows: it is always the worst time for a debate or antagonism to emerge within the socialist camp during the fight against imperialism. However, Hungary and the history of the Hungarian counter-revolution demonstrate, among other things, that the issues raised at the 20th and the 22nd congresses of the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] must be addressed and resolved. The failure to resolve the range of problems called a personality cult would, sooner or later, have led to much more serious complications than the confusion that has been caused by raising the issue.

Fidel Castro first explained in detail that the personality cult, everything that this term covers, should not be the topic of dispute. A personality cult is indefensible, and anybody who supports a personality cult is unable to conduct a political debate. He gradually returned to presenting the joint fight of the socialist camp against imperialism, stressing that coordinated action was not only possible but also necessary, despite any differences and specific features. The Soviet Union and Cuba are examples for that. We, he said, are talking about something in a way that the Soviet Union should not speak about, or at least not in this way. The differences in terms of actions and statements, he added, are only apparent among the rest of us; in reality they are coordinated. Despite any debate or antagonism, it should be like that in the entire socialist camp.

During the conversation Castro suggested that the Soviet-Chinese debate might have very harmful consequences here in Cuba too. For now it has not been made widely known but the public wouldn't understand it anyway. He noted that the nations that are engaged in a difficult, perhaps armed fight see things differently from those that are already enjoying the results of the fight they have already fought.

Here is where this part of the conversation ended. When we were saying goodbye before leaving, Fidel Castro noted he was not sure why he had raised these issues to us since he hadn't discussed anything like this with any of the delegations he had received before.

As for the probability of the invasion and its impact on Latin America if it occurred, Castro essentially said the following: in the present situation—disregarding the unpredict-

able factors that characterize the USA—the probability of the invasion to take place is not very high. Should it occur, a serious reaction with unpredictable consequences can be expected first of all in Venezuela. The situation in Venezuela is very unstable and [President Rómulo] Betancourt can hardly hold out.

Talking about the Latin American situation he said there was an opportunity for objective, armed revolutionary fight in several countries, mainly in Venezuela and Brazil but elsewhere too. These opportunities are not being utilized although their utilization could easily result in the acceleration and completion of the process that would, on the one hand, mean the total liberation of Latin America and on the other, a fatal blow to the American imperialism that would lose all of its strength. The United States is now making strong efforts to win or enforce the support of as many governments as possible against Cuba in order to keep the Latin American countries in a semi-colonial state. It is using huge economic pressure to achieve that. For example, there are serious economic problems in Brazil and if the situation doesn't change significantly, in two years a serious revolutionary situation may develop in that country. In some sense the USA is in a dead-end street. Instead of supporting highly reactionary layers of society, it should promote a land reform that would help the emergence of conservative land owners who are loyal to capitalism. By refusing to give loans and money it can only increase bitter feelings and create a revolutionary atmosphere. Sooner or later it will have to give money. Some of the Latin American governments still appear to be unable to recognize and make the best of this. The suspension [i.e., poor functioning—CSB] of the Alliance for Progress by Kennedy is a short-sighted policy. Chile's approach—which was surprising even to him—is typical. It seems that the conservative Chilean government took the firmest stand against the invasion [at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961—ed.] and by the side of Cuba's autonomy, apparently firmly resisting any economic pressure by the USA. Chile intends to rely on the Soviet Union in these efforts by significantly increasing Soviet-Chilean trade. In order to characterize the USA's difficult situation he mentioned the rapidly growing economic strength of the Soviet Union which is gradually becoming an important factor in dependent countries and in states being liberated as well as elsewhere. All this is taking place in a situation when on the one hand the imperialist powers are coming up against one another in different parts of the world (e.g. in Congo) and on the other hand, they are afraid to attack the Soviet Union because of its advantage in terms of military technology. Fidel Castro suggested he didn't know whether the advantage would remain, increase or, quite the contrary, decrease or totally disappear in the future. Therefore, as long

as the Soviet Union has this advantage, we need to make use of every opportunity to strike a blow at imperialism.

As for some of the other topics that were raised during the meeting, I need to mention that Fidel Castro sees the liberation of Goa by India [from Portugal in December 1961] as a major defeat for the USA. He finds it unlikely that Indonesia, that is, Sukarno, will decide to take a similar step [to capture West Papua New Guinea, i.e., West Irian Jaya, from the Netherlands—ed.]. He believes that Sukarno has made the best of the situation; although he is bluffing, the results can already be seen: the Netherlands has already made concessions and is willing to negotiate.

[insertion:] At the time of the preparations for the Moscow conference held in 1960, “when there was no collective leadership in the revolution yet” in Cuba, the Cuban position was worked out by a group made up of Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, and Ernesto [“Che”] Guevara as well as several other old communist leaders (Blas Roca, Anibal Escalante, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez), which was then represented by Anibal Escalante who participated in the preparation of the Moscow conference. At that time there was consensus on the issues to be discussed.<sup>37</sup>

### 3./ Conversation with Carlos Rafael Rodriguez

This discussion addressed not only one but several issues of which I will report on the most important ones.

We informed Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, one of the Cuban leaders whose relationship is perhaps the best with Fidel Castro, about Fidel Castro’s statements on the relationship between the Soviet and the Chinese parties. Comrade Rodriguez said the following as an answer to this: the problem of unity and cooperation among the socialist countries and parties is extremely important for Fidel Castro, just like he is taking care of the unity of all the revolutionary forces in Cuba. The Soviet–Chinese relationship is causing problems in Cuba too. The old Communists see everything clearly; however, the situation is different with other revolutionists who have just joined the communists but have been raised in a different way. Fidel Castro’s careful and expedient work and caution are required to ensure unity and development for everybody. There had been a long debate in the leadership and it was difficult to achieve a unanimous decision on the adoption of Blas Roca’s article, which was then published in the December 4 issue of *Cuba Socialista* in 1961 (I wrote about it in my report 199/1961). By way of an example, he noted that when the Soviet Union recalled its ambassador and the entire embassy from Albania [in August 1961—ed.], several of the new people thought it was exactly what the

United State did to Cuba. Our experienced comrades had to work patiently for a long time to ensure that the honest but inexperienced and uninformed young people who had just joined the Communists, the Communist party, began to see things in the right way.

In addition, he said that in their talks with the members of the Cuban government and other leading politicians, the Chinese ambassador to Havana [Shen Jian] and the officials of the Chinese embassy always bring the conversation to the disputed issues and the result is: anti-Soviet propaganda. He mentioned one single example. He was asked to contact the Chinese ambassador and discuss the issue of reducing the volume of Chinese trade. After discussing the trade-related questions the ambassador started talking about Enver Hoxha’s article, so the conversation ended in a rather unpleasant atmosphere with Comrade Rodriguez pointing out the position of the party.

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez was afraid that it would not be possible to prevent this debate from becoming public until the end of time, which will raise serious problems.

Later, when talking about economic matters, Comrade Rodriguez said that last year the Cuban state budget had a deficit of 400 million pesos (that is, dollars). They prepared a balanced budget for 1962, and essentially it will certainly be balanced. The current budget, without loans, etc. and investments to be implemented, amounts to 750 million. 270 million was earmarked for military spending for 1962 (obviously, this figure will not be made public). 115–125 million will be spent on education and culture. According to current plans for the future, the actual industrialization of the country will begin at around 1970; by that time they will have all the necessary conditions in place, e.g. metallurgy. At the moment, they are focusing all their resources on agriculture. The results will soon come and show their effect gradually in the near future.

As far as the talks on the Hungarian–Cuban exchange of goods are concerned, he noted that their results were satisfactory.

Later the conversation turned back to Fidel Castro again, and Comrade Rodriguez said the following: Fidel Castro and Soviet ambassador [Sergei M.] Kudryavtsev met on 2 January. Comrade Kudryavtsev requested the meeting because he had received a long telegraph from Moscow and he wanted to provide Fidel Castro with some information on international affairs, especially regarding Latin America. At the same time, he wanted to suggest in some way what kind of statements the Soviet Union would see as right and necessary regarding some issues that affected the Latin American countries and also some other matters. After three years [*sic*; Kudryavtsev was actually appointed in July 1960, roughly one-and-a-half years earlier—ed.], it was perhaps the first time that the Soviet

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ambassador was able to send home a reassuring telegraph after the speech. Fidel Castro had never delivered such a successful speech before from the point of view of international political relations. When leaving the rally, Fidel Castro turned to Carlos Rafael Rodríguez in his car: “Tell me, did I break with any country today?” The political nature of the speech was shown by the fact that under its immediate impact even the Brazilian ambassador [Luis Bastian Pinto], who has just arrived in the country, and the ambassador’s deputy of Ecuador rushed to Castro still on the stand and very warmly congratulated him.

The foreign ministers’ meeting of the OAS states will be held on 22 January. The so-called Second Havana Statement will be issued on the same day. Fidel Castro has already prepared the draft, whose tone is very aggressive. This will be discussed by the leadership later. It will be based on the following principles: Cuba has the right to build socialism. Nobody has the right to intervene in it under any title. Worded in the necessary form, the Statement should also include that the independent Latin American countries have the right, at their own discretion, to be faithful to a different social order.

#### 4./ Conversation with the ORI<sup>38</sup> organization in Santiago de Cuba

Unfortunately, Raul Castro was not in Santiago de Cuba when Comrade Mód visited Oriente County, so he only had a chance to meet with the ORI’s secretary. The conversation was about the situation of the party in the county. I can summarize it as follows (this county is significantly different from the other five counties in several respects): the county’s population is 2 million and 250 thousand. The number of party members is a bit over 8 thousand, about half of which came to the ORI from the 26th of July Movement. The creation of party branch organizations, so-called nuclei [*núcleos*] is nearly complete, and their number currently amounts to 1200. The average number of members in a branch organization is between 6 and 7. There is a branch organization in every state farm, in the majority of cooperative farms and sugar factories as well as in the major industrial plants, transportation and commercial companies, etc. In addition, there are branch organizations set up by residential districts as well as special branches organized for scattered villages in the highlands. Most of the members are between 20 and 40 years of age, with 20 to 30 year-olds slightly exceeding the number of 30 to 40 year-olds. The ratio of women is 11%. The number of black and other colored party members slightly exceeds the average national ratio of colored people (which is roughly 30%) in the city itself and along the coastal region of the county, while it is below the national average in other parts of

the county, with a county average below the national average. Members of the working class have a relative majority among the party members; the number of peasants is also significant, while intellectuals are very rare in the party.

Unlike the national leadership, which is not complete as it still has only 17 members, the county leadership is complete: it has all the requested 35 members. Unlike in the other counties, here, the county leadership also has a head: Raul Castro.

Credit should be given not only to the revolutionary nature of the county but also to the special form of organization in the highlands and the work of the ORI for the fact that there have been no counter-revolutionary gangs active in the territory of the county for a long time and for about a year, there hasn’t been a single perpetrator of diversionary attempts or sabotage acts that has been able to flee punishment; all of them were caught successfully.

After Comrade Mód’s departure I contacted Soviet ambassador Kudryavtsev and informed him about the meeting with Fidel Castro, especially about the discussion regarding the Soviet–Chinese debate. I added that both Comrade Mód and I had the impression that Fidel Castro might have received more information from one of the parties than from the other one.

Comrade Kudryavtsev made the following comments: Fidel Castro has received all the documents, including that of the 22nd Congress [of the CPSU]. After returning from Moscow, Blas Roca gave a detailed account, which was followed by a three-day long debate in the leadership of the ORI where Fidel Castro took the correct position. Speaking about the Chinese embassy in Havana he pointed out that the number of staff working there far exceeds the number of staff at the Soviet embassy, although the Soviet Union has a huge volume of trade with Cuba, there are a large number of specialists working in the country, and the Soviets provide a lot of aid for Cuba, while China is not doing anything like that. Under such circumstances, the main task of the Chinese embassy can only be propaganda—this may be the reason for the Cuban sympathy with China. He wonders what Castro may have meant when he talked about the border and a tribe, unless he was referring to the Mongolian People’s Republic. True, the Chinese are not happy about the existence of Mongolia, although they have never raised this issue. Anyway, what could be done now that Mongolia is already an independent state? With its excessively left-wing ideology and fake revolutionary slogans that assist the reactionary forces in the long run, the Chinese propaganda managed to have an effect on several Cuban leaders too, e.g. on Minister of Industry Ernesto Guevara, who cannot understand the need and the conditions for peaceful coexistence.

/János Beck/  
ambassador

[Source: *Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives] Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 2. d. Translated for CWIHP by András Bocz.*]



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### DOCUMENT No. 3

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on the Federal Republic of Germany and Cuba, 16 March 1962

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic  
To Comrade János Péter, Foreign Minister  
Budapest

Top Secret!  
98/1962/ top secret  
Havana, 16 March 1962

Subject: The Federal Republic of Germany and Cuba.

There are normal diplomatic relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and Cuba. The FRG is represented in Havana by an ambassador, who has a staff of seven diplomats and numerous administrative and assistant staff.

As I have already reported, the Cuban Republic did not recognize the GDR [German Democratic Republic; East Germany] officially because the GDR considers it more valuable than formal recognition that the so-called Political Commission headed by the ambassador may demonstrate in reality in Cuba, that is, in Latin-America, day after day the existence of the two self-governing and independent German states. Formal recognition would probably have meant the FRG breaking off diplomatic relations with Cuba corresponding to the Hallstein doctrine.

The number of the staff of the Embassy of the FRG, considered very large among Havana conditions, can by no means be justified by the diplomatic, economic, or other relations between the FRG and Cuba. The political relations between the two countries are well known and need no comments. Their trade relations can be considered insignificant compared with other great Western countries. Neither the

public, nor the Cuban authorities, know of any diplomatic, political, or maybe cultural or other work by the Embassy of the FRG. It may be presumed and I have heard this opinion of the Cuban side several times that the Embassy of the FRG took over the intelligence work of the USA Embassy after their leaving [in January 1961]. Anyway, once I found, myself, that on a commercial ship calling at the Havana port, among the crew there traveled an officer of the FRG military navy disguised as a sailor. Certainly this was not the only case.

At the great Cuban national events, at the receptions held to commemorate national holidays, etc. the ambassador of the FRG is present regularly and asks the protocol chief every time, pointing at the ambassador of the GDR, who this man is and what he is doing here. The protocol chief always explains that he is the head of the GDR political mission, who has been invited similarly to the members of the diplomatic corps to represent his country. The West-German ambassador is usually satisfied with the answer and it has happened several times that the protocol chief or other foreign affairs staff asked him whether he wanted to protest about it or something like that and he answered no and said he only wanted to point out and state the fact.

It seems that it is the interest of the Bonn government to maintain diplomatic relations with Cuba, they may not carry out the break off required by the Hallstein principle or if they did so, only with a heavy heart, because, on the one hand they would change their position in the Latin-American countries to the worse and on the other hand, it would make its now intensive penetration into the new African countries more difficult. West Germany tries to act differently from other imperialist countries in Latin American and African countries and she wants to penetrate into them with her great economic power as deeply as possible. Her anti-Cuban attitude or even her break off [of diplomatic ties] with Cuba would meet with antipathy in some of these countries in the leading circles themselves and everywhere in the various progressive or even patriotic petit bourgeois and other circles—and this would prevent her penetration. The Cuban side is aware of all this, but at present it is also in the interest of Cuba to maintain diplomatic relations with as many countries as possible, it would be particularly disadvantageous to heedlessly provoke breaking off diplomatic relations with one of the NATO countries.

János Beck  
ambassador

[Source: *Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives] Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top*

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*Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 2.d. Translated for CWIHP  
by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.*



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## DOCUMENT No. 4

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report  
on meeting with Yugoslav Ambassador Boško  
Vidaković, 19 March 1962

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic  
to Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest

Top Secret!  
94/1962/top secret  
Havana, 19 March 1962

Subject: Conversation with Yugoslavian ambassador to  
Havana, Boško Vidaković

I had a long meeting with Yugoslavian ambassador to  
Havana Boško Vidaković on 17 March. During this [meet-  
ing,] Vidaković made the following remarks worth mention-  
ing:

In some parts of the Cuban public, mainly among the  
petit-bourgeois and intellectual supporters of Fidel Castro,  
who are not Marxists though, but who have been the sup-  
porters of the revolution for a shorter or longer time, he can  
feel a turning point in their attitude toward Yugoslavia and  
the Yugoslav embassy. While in the past he met with rebuffs  
everywhere, many called him a revisionist openly and refused  
any relationship with him, now more and more people visit  
him, they are most willing to talk to him, they inquire about  
the Yugoslav situation ("What is Yugoslav socialism?" "How  
are production and distribution organized?" etc.) This has  
two causes in his opinion: 1. The Cuban economic situation,  
the difficulties in provision, organizational problems and the  
political problems within the leadership, the interrelationship  
among the three political organizations united in the ORI.  
2. The political problems within the leadership, the inter-  
relationship among the three political organizations united  
in the ORI.

He knows from a completely reliable source that among  
friends Fidel Castro made the following statement two  
months ago: "He is completely aware of the help and is  
extremely grateful to the socialist camp, first of all, the Soviet

Union whose all-embracing help has made the preservation  
and development of the Cuban revolution possible. However,  
he is still considering the idea of revolution according to the  
Chinese."

Four months ago Minister of Industry Ernesto ["Che"]  
Guevara, saying "you have not signed the declaration of the  
81 parties, you are revisionists," refused to have talks with him  
about the development of Cuban–Yugoslav relations, he con-  
sidered trade relations with Yugoslavia the same as e.g. with  
Belgium and refused to listen to the Yugoslav suggestions,  
helpful proposals.

The second Havana declaration was written by Fidel  
Castro alone—and he knows it from a reliable source—he  
had not discussed it with any Cuban leading politicians. He  
discussed the declaration only with one person, a Uruguayan  
professor, who is something like his counselor.

Fidel Castro presented the declaration to the leadership  
of the ORI before its reading at the mass meeting, and they  
approved it. Referring to another—not named but completely  
reliable—source, he said that Blas Roca did not agree with the  
declaration in many points, but he accepted it in the interest  
of the unity of the ORI, that is the leading layer of the Cuban  
revolution. Vidaković has just returned from his trip to Latin  
America lasting for a few days, during which he had the  
opportunity to see that the communist parties generally did  
not approve of the declaration. In Brazil the party criticizes it  
strongly and [Brazilian Communist Party leader Luís Carlos]  
Prestes threatened the Cuban party with public action if they  
did not give up propagating views in Brazil that were contrary  
to the position of the Brazilian party. He considers it a typical  
fact concerning the declaration that the Western members of  
the Havana diplomatic corps all consider the declaration to be  
"the work of the communists," although the old communists  
cannot have agreed with it because it was not written in the  
spirit of the XXII. [CPSU] congress and [the doctrine of]  
peaceful co-existence.

The behavior of the Cuban delegation at the Punta del  
Este conference [in January 1962] was determined by Fidel  
Castro. Neither President of the republic [Osvaldo Dorticos,  
nor Foreign Minister [Raúl] Roa agreed with the appointed  
line, but they could do nothing but stick to it. This resulted  
in the isolation of the Cuban delegation, in that they refused  
or avoided meeting several Latin American statesmen and  
politicians. If the Yugoslavian diplomats had not helped, they  
would not even have known what was happening around  
them. Foreign Minister Roa is too clever and too realistic to  
agree with Fidel Castro's inflexible and leftist revolutionary  
line, he does not often think what he says, or does things  
without personal conviction.

The communists, however, did not agree with the sharply anti-Yugoslav articles published in the party's daily, the HOY about 10 months ago, as Vidaković was told by the editor-in-chief of the paper Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, but they were forced to publish the articles according to the Chinese wish. He considers revolting Fidel Castro's two latest speeches, in which he attacked those who had committed sectarian-dogmatic mistakes (cf. numbers 14 and 17 March 1962 of the Havana reports), because he continued in public the fight between the different groups going on behind the scenes in such a way that he gave no freedom of choice to the other party. According to Vidaković, Fidel Castro attacks the people of the Directory of 13 March on the one hand, and he makes it possible that the communists could be blamed for the consequences of the mistakes on the other hand, although it is just the communists who will make up for the damage caused by the egocentric and megalomaniac Fidel Castro.

Relying on Yugoslavian expert calculations, Vidaković thinks that Cuba is in a catastrophic economic situation. If there should be any deterioration, they must count on a change in the opinion of the peasantry (the first signs of this can already be seen), which would mean the beginning of the fall of the system. To prevent this, during 1962 and in the first months of 1963 the socialist countries must give a new loan—mainly in the form of transportation of food and articles of consumption. According to his calculations, this demand from the side of Cuba will be 100 million dollars.

Vidaković also said that the official Cuban side's attitude toward Yugoslavia had changed. Now their economic relations are better. They gave a 10 million dollar loan to Cuba (not state, but bank loan). If the Cubans follow the agreement and carry out the deliveries, this loan may be doubled in the future or even trebled.

In the sphere of politics, the Cubans seem to begin to understand his reasoning, which is the following concerning the Yugoslavian–Cuban relations:

Yugoslavia does not wish to interfere in internal affairs. But she would not like if in Cuba there was something like a cold war going on in connection with Yugoslavia. Out of general socialist interest, Yugoslavia wishes to provide help to Cuba unselfishly, she is willing to give loans as well besides the mutually advantageous trade. She has provided political help already before (e.g., she achieved that Cuba was able to participate at the Belgrade conference [of the Non-Aligned Movement, or NAM, in September 1961—ed.] against all the resistance) and will do so in the future too. It is an obvious interest of Cuba to maintain good political and economic relations with Yugoslavia, as the USA's policy—Cuba's economic isolation—is going to have its results gradually and it

is Yugoslavia that could serve as a gate toward the Western powers and neutral countries.

I have tried to sum up briefly what I heard from Vidaković. During the whole conversation, the Yugoslav ambassador represented the position of the XXII. congress, he referred to it and supported the old Cuban communists against the Chinese influence and Fidel Castro being under this influence. What he said reflected this position on the one hand—I do not know yet whether this is a position represented only by him and only toward myself—and the opinion of his circle of associates on the other hand. At the same time, he mentioned some things that give food for reflection. Concerning all this I am going to talk to other people and come back to the individual problems.

János Beck  
Ambassador

*[Source: Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives] Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 3.d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 5

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on  
Talk with Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos, 15  
June 1962

János Beck  
Top Secret!  
ambassador  
Written: in six copies:  
Minister Péter  
First Deputy of the Minister P. Mód  
Deputy Minister Szarka  
Deputy Head of Department Szűcsné  
Embassy Department.

Subject: A visit to President of the Republic Dorticos on 15  
June 1962

I was received by President of the Republic Dorticos on 15 June and we had a conversation lasting one hour and 45 minutes. I requested the hearing explaining the fact that I was going on my usual annual holiday and before it I would

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like him to discuss with me all the problems he wanted the Hungarian government to be informed about.

The president said the following concerning the different problems:

#### Agriculture

Some time ago the Cuban leadership considered the solution of agricultural problems the most urgent task mainly in order to ensure the provision of the country with food on the one hand, and the production of their most important source of foreign currency, of sugar on the other hand, and finally to provide a part of the industry with raw material later. To achieve this, they started the complete reorganization of the INRA (National Institute of Land Reform), which is managed by the newly appointed director Carlos Rafael Rodriguez. As a result of the serious measures of the government and the INRA, they achieved at last—said the president—that they were on firm ground concerning agriculture. The results can be observed gradually, but the early results will be felt in the public supply itself only next year. The production of poultry (mainly chicken) and pork is increasing. There is also an increase in the production of various roots (batata and other roots that are considered primary goods of general provisioning in Cuba).

The stock of cattle is about five and a half million heads, but they are economical with them to ensure the possibility of multiplication. Maybe the number of slaughters could be raised, and the quantity of beef for consumption could be increased, but they are waiting, among other [reasons] because it will be inevitable to raise the consumer price of meat as well. For the rise in prices they must wait for the best moment politically and also prepare for it.

The present shortage of food cannot be done away with in some months anyway, it will last until the next winter and even until the next year.

In the long run the food situation will be substantially improved by fishing. Before the revolution fishing was carried out by quite primitive devices and the quantity that was caught played an irrelevant role in provisioning.

There have been taken serious measures already to increase fishing, but only a few days ago did they start to eliminate radically those mistakes that hindered the development of fishing. First of all, we must mention that the fishermen got so little money for the fish and the fishermen were paid so low wages in the cooperatives, which were formed a long time ago and which have acquired a dominant role in fishing (besides egalitarianism), that it was not worth fishing and they tried to sell the few fish they caught on the black market. They have already bought and will receive bigger fishing vessels from the

Poles, and some bigger trawlers from the Soviet Union, which will make it possible not to fish only in the near coast shallow waters but in the open seas as well, e.g. first in the Bay [i.e., Gulf] of Mexico, later in the South American seas. Both the Poles and the Soviet Union are sending the ships with crews and the crews are going to fish together with the Cubans for at least half a year to teach them the industrial fishing methods. The solution of the wage problem has changed the mood of the fishermen from one day to the other, the result of material incentive can be seen in the quantity of fish on the market right away, but from the point of view of general provisioning there will be a considerable result concerning fishing only in the distant future.

Concerning sugar, the situation is the following: the dry weather has caused damage in the sugar crop in prospect as well, as the planned 3000 caballerias could not be sown in spring, so only a part can be harvested in 1963. They are going to sow in the dry (winter) period as well, differently from the usual practice, but it will be harvested only in 1964. The prospects of next year's sugar production are worse than this year. Even if all preconditions are fulfilled, that is, all planned tasks are carried out according to the plans, next year there will be a maximum of 4.5—4.7 million tons of sugar, that is, less than this year, [a situation] which is further aggravated by the circumstance that next year will be started without any reserve of sugar contrary to this year. Next year in the harvest already 1,000 harvesting machines will take part and harvest about 30% of sugarcanes. But there will still be a shortage of manpower, which, similarly to this year, but to a much smaller extent, will be made up for by unpaid or voluntary permanent work. Mechanization will be of the size to do away with the shortage of labor force only by 1964 or 1965.

As far as the harvesting of coffee is concerned, there still remains the great shortage of manpower, so harvesting will be solved with voluntary work and e.g. by deploying students who receive grants in this work during harvest time. As in the past years a lot of people have left agriculture and e.g. started to work in public projects, they are going to take measures to redirect the labor force to agriculture.

To increase agricultural production in prospect and to eliminate the serious damage caused by the dry weather, one of the most important devices will be the creation of a water economy system at high technical level. The highest level Soviet expert delegation has been to Cuba, and after the departure of their leaders the remaining experts started work right away. There is a possibility to reach an immediate result or one that can be seen in, let us say, two years by a smaller investment, but they will start to make long-run plans as well to be able to begin the bigger jobs as well to the best of their ability. In Cuba earlier there was no water economy, they

could not make a step without Soviet help. This help means expert help from the highest level to the simplest skilled worker and the manufacturing and delivery of material equipment.

#### Industry

After they started tackling the crucial problems of industry, prospects have become better and normal progress seems guaranteed. These problems were mainly problems of norm and wages. They are far from being solved, that is, the planned solution from having been carried out, but they have started definitely. (Concerning this, the president repeated what I had written in my previous report on this question.)

#### Plan

This year's plan is not and will not be ready. It is strange and astonishing, but they have not been able to make a plan. The next year plan of 1963 is being prepared, it will be ready soon, but the president stressed that it would be a plan with a lot of unreliable and inexact details. Concerning the long-run plan, he emphasized even more that he personally could not trust even the main numbers. (Let me remind you that President of the Republic Dorticos is also the president of the Cuban Party's Economic Committee.) In contrast with the agriculture and industry, where the Cuban leaders believe, even if only in recent times, that they have reached firm ground after the swamp, concerning planning and organization, they do not know where they stand. As the president expressed himself, they have not managed to create the spirit of planning and organization and he cannot report on any long-run idea either. They do not even know at this moment which line to take to change the situation radically. The cadres working in central planning are quite weak, often much weaker than in the subordinated organs, that is, the comrades working in the ministries and elsewhere. But it is worth thinking over whether they should be moved higher to do central planning jobs, because they may fail in the central work and then the smaller detail planning jobs that are carried out tolerably in some places may become worse too.

(Here I wish to interject that, according to the news spread in Havana, there have been talks going on for a long time whether Minister of Industry Ernesto Guevara or Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, the president of the National Institute of Land Reform, should be appointed to the leading post of the Planning Bureau. Even if for others, but the highest leadership of the Planning Bureau will be obviously substituted.)

#### The counter-revolution

The plan of the United States and the preparation for it is probably that she tries to increase the economic difficulties, which would contribute to the creation of a counter-revolutionary base in the population and the latter would provide a ground to carry out some kind of aggression. The saboteurs and counter-revolutionary organizers arriving from abroad, who organize and direct the internal counter-revolutionary forces, in contrast with the last year or the past situation, now receive not only superficial training and are not only poorly armed and supplied with financial means but are people at a higher level from all aspects and work in a new way. The experiences of the Cuban counter-revolutionary work have been evaluated by the USA, she has assessed the real internal situation realistically and on the basis of this, after long and thorough training, she is sending to Cuba people equipped with the most modern technical devices. Besides the excellent technical equipment, she provides them with a great sum of money contrary to the past. For example, recently such a group of seven people has been caught in the Eastern part of Cuba just after landing, who, apart from the modern and many arms, had serious technical equipment and not false but real Cuban money to the value of several ten thousand dollars per capita [person]. This Cuban currency is probably bought through legal emigration on the one hand, and maybe without any network of agents, through Western embassies on the black dollar market on the other hand.

The Cuban situation may be generally characterized—continued the president—by greatly increasing class struggle. After the elimination of old groups of bandits, now, partly in Las Villas and mainly in Matanzas county there appear newly organized and functioning groups of bandits. Following direct external direction, they partly lean on the richer peasants with a counter-revolutionary spirit, and partly on the middle and poor peasants, who can be easily deceived because of the sectarian and other mistakes committed by the Cuban leadership, and also they win their base in areas with scattered populations by terrorist intimidation. They carry out sabotage actions, which consist of setting places on fire, explosions and other actions, and they also kill people. In Matanzas county in most recent times the situation has become so much worse that they approached the highways as well, and raided vehicles or people. The make-up of the groups is always the same and it shows where the line of class struggle can be drawn in Cuba at present: the members of the groups are the sons off well-to-do farmers, clerical people, and people under their influence and the ex-members of the armed forces and power-enforcement organizations of the old system or their relations and the smaller part is made up of the petit-bourgeoisie of towns.

The Cuban leadership cannot allow the spread of this movement, not even its existence in such size in a county

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neighboring Havana. But they cannot allow either, what the counter-revolution has already tried, that the counter-revolution formed even one group of bandits in the farthest county, Oriente county, which has always been the main fortress of the revolution. Therefore they have started the execution of the necessary measures both in the political and military lines. For this the experiences in Matanzas gave good grounds.

As an interjection, here I would like to report on the events in Matanzas, the details of which I have heard from President Dorticos: The counter-revolution managed to form a group of armed bandits of about 200 people out of small groups of 5-10 people in this county. These groups have been more and more active and in the past days they have managed to incite the population to a counter-revolutionary demonstration in a small village near the small town of Cardenas of Matanzas county. The main cause of the counter-revolutionary success is not to be found in the skillfulness of the counter-revolutionaries and their leaders in the USA, but the faulty policy led by the Cuban leadership and organs for a long time. Vice-Premier and Minister of Defense Raul Castro said that recently he had received reports one after the other from the commanders of the individual units that proved that the peasants began to see their only defender and help again in the Cuban revolutionary army exclusively, while they looked upon the party organizations and their leaders, that is the ORI, just because of the illegal sectarian arbitrary and terrorizing methods, as similar to the defeated authorities of the Batista-regime. The peasants often turned to the commanders of the individual units, not only with their problems, but with their complaints about the procedures of the ORI leadership and secretaries too. The organizers and leaders of the counter-revolutionary demonstration, the members of one of these groups of armed bandits were caught by the authorities right away and four were immediately sentenced to death through a summary procedure and shot dead. In the population the summary sentence met with protest against the renewal of death sentences and executions familiar from the time of the Batista regime. After this, the highest leadership immediately visited this place, gathered the whole population in the main square and explained for hours what had happened, then asked them to appoint and elect new leaders in place of the arrested and executed and fleeing counter-revolutionaries who held some post in the local administration or were the chemist, a cafe-owner and other bourgeois elements and in place of the badly functioning administrative and economic organs. It was during this assembly that the population of the village understood that the new revolutionary system was not the same as what they believed it to be on the basis of the activity of the local petty monarchs and under the influence of the counter-revolutionaries, and they appointed the new leaders

after several hours of debate, rejecting one by saying that he was a drunkard, the other [because he] belonged to the circle of friends of the counter-revolutionary cafe-owner, etc. In this village the counter-revolution will have no base any more. A few days later in the town of Cardenas, President Dorticos held a mass meeting and observed a military parade. After the parade some parts of the army together with the other organs and a part of the population began the all-embracing great military action against the groups of bandits in the county.

#### The Party

During the conversation President Dorticos emphasized that one of the main difficulties in eliminating economic problems and faulty political methods was that in Cuba there was not a party. The organization of the party has started only just now in the truest sense of the word (after the Escalante case) and it is going on very thoroughly and carefully, but slowly. They try not to make any new mistakes and strive to build a strong, uniform and firm Marxist-Leninist party. He does not doubt the success of this work.

During the conversation, mainly answering my questions, he stated that the provisioning of the population was not guaranteed this year and any food supply Hungary could help with, independently of quantity and quality, would be welcomed. He also said that they did not only need counselors, experts undertaking technical or other help in central and national work, but also at much lower levels for the solution of a small detail, to manage a smaller enterprise or institution, and sometimes for the solution of a particular task within a firm or institution requiring new technical or organizational skill, similarly to the Soviet Union, who lends us not only high and middle level experts but also skilled workers to organize e.g. the water economy and fishing.

He also stressed that in all cases when we thought that their Ministry of Foreign Trade or some organ or official within it wished to purchase something or in such quantity that did not correspond to our general situation or our prospects of development, or we could see that they missed to buy something that our more experienced organs or people considered necessary, we should not fulfill the wish of their Ministry of Foreign Trade but stand up for our position considered right and, if needed, even in smaller questions, if it could not be solved otherwise, we should turn directly to him, because even smaller things might have such major significance that he, as the head of the Cuban Party's Economic Committee, wished to deal with.

János Beck  
Budapest, 25 June 1962

[Source: *Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives]*, Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]



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**DOCUMENT No. 6**

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Görög), Report on Cuban President Dorticos' Trip to New York, 16 October 1962

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic  
To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest

TOP SECRET!  
375/1962/Top Secret

Written: in four copies  
Three to Center  
One to Embassy

Havana, 16 October 1962.

Subject: The New York Trip  
of President of the Cuban  
Republic Dorticos

As I have already reported in another form, Foreign Minister [Raúl] Roa informed the heads of the missions of socialist countries about the New York trip of President of the Republic Dorticos and his speech at the UN in advance of the announcement in the Cuban press.

All the chiefs of mission of the diplomatic corps were present without exception at Dorticos' and Roa's departure. It was conspicuous that Fidel Castro was not present.

As we learned from the press the day after, half-an-hour after take-off, the plane carrying the president of the republic, the foreign minister, and their entourage turned back so that some technical defects could be repaired, and the defect in the engine was fixed at the Havana airport. Prime Minister Fidel Castro arrived in the meantime and he had a long conversation with President Dorticos and Roa and the plane left only afterwards, now definitively, for New York.

Of course, the above sparked a great sensation and provided an opportunity for further guessing within the diplomatic corps, too.

During my visit with him, the Polish Ambassador [Bolesław Jeleń—ed.] expressed his deep disapproval about the case, bringing it up as an example of the carelessness and hot-headedness of the Cuban leaders. According to him, what happened was the following: as usual, Fidel Castro arrived late, the plane could not be held up because of the presence of the diplomatic corps, so he ordered the plane, already on its way to New York, to return so that he might give his final instructions to the delegation.

According to the above-mentioned comrade, Fidel Castro did not pay attention to the danger that the plane should pass certain points at given times, nor did he consider that it was dangerous for the plane, which was loaded with the fuel needed to reach New York, to land with the tank almost full. He considered the return order to have been given at random and without responsibility.

I inquired of some leading functionaries of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the causes of the return of the plane. They all referred to the minor technical defects also published in the press, which could not be fixed in the air and the plane [i.e., the pilots] did not want to make a forced landing before New York on the territory of the USA.

On the basis of these different opinions, I consider it likely that Prime Minister Castro wanted to have some talks with the delegation after the official farewell and it is possible that the recall took place on purpose and knowingly—but not because of the delay and out of hot-headedness.

President Dorticos' speech of October 8 at the UN was broadcast on Cuban radio and television. The television [broadcasts] grasped very skillfully those moments when American delegate [Adlai E.] Stevenson produced his notebook and took notes.

When returning to Cuba, President Dorticos was again welcomed by the chiefs of mission of all the diplomatic corps at the airport. All the chiefs of mission, including the papal legate, were present. So was Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

At the mass rally following the arrival, on the balcony of the presidential palace, however, I could see only the chiefs of mission of friendly and neutral countries.

The general assembly made an unforgettable impression on me. The square in front of the presidential palace, and the side-streets leading there, were black with the immense, unbelievably enthusiastic crowd, which fêted their returning president. Prime Minister Fidel Castro's speech (we have published its essence in a press review) was such an expression of faith in Soviet-Cuban friendship, the crowd shouting "Never" frenetically when Fidel Castro asked, "Can we give up friend-

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ship with the Soviet Union?” was so deeply sincere, the sight of the two flag-bearers cheered by the crowd, who raised the Soviet and Cuban flags and intertwined them, was so moving that whoever saw it—and probably the observers of the Americans were present—could not doubt for a moment that this crowd, these leaders would rather choose “Fatherland or Death” proclaimed in their slogan but would never leave the road of alliance with the Soviet Union and the socialist countries.

Erzsébet Görög  
Chargé d’Affaires ad Interim

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.*]



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## DOCUMENT No. 7

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Görög), Report on Algerian Prime Minister Ben Bella’s visit to Cuba, 16 October 1962

The Embassy of the Hungarian People’s Republic to Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest.

Havana, 16 October 1962  
386/1962/top secret

Top Secret!  
Written: in four copies

three copies to Center  
one copy to Archives of Embassy

Subject: The visit of Algerian Prime Minister Ben Bella to Cuba.

At midday on the day of courier dispatch, 16 October, Algerian Prime Minister Ben Bella arrived in Havana on the plane of the revolutionary Cuban government sent for him.<sup>39</sup>

After returning from the airport, I wish to report briefly on Ben Bella’s reception, which was grandiose. The press has been releasing articles for days about the visit of the Algerian Prime Minister, underlining the common features of the fight

of the Algerian and the Cuban people for national independence.

At the airport, headed by President [Osvaldo] Dorticos and Prime Minister Fidel Castro, the Cuban military and political leaders, the heads of diplomatic missions (with the exception of the French and Belgian ambassadors, I could see all the others were present) were meeting the Algerian Prime Minister and the car of Ben Bella, sitting with Dorticos and Fidel Castro, was hailed by immense crowds on the road leading from the airport to the town and decorated by signs with the picture of Ben Bella.

At the airport Fidel Castro gave a quite warm speech, in which he stressed how much he appreciated the heroic armed fight of the Cuban people and the Algerian people for their independence and the personal courage of Prime Minister Ben Bella, who was making his first official visit abroad to Cuba, which was threatened by blockade and American aggression.

Prime Minister Ben Bella replied to the welcome speech, also translated into French, in Spanish, for which he received special applause. He emphasized how happy he was to have been able to come to Cuba, to the country he had wanted to get to know so much and he said that the heroic fight, the victory at Playa Giron [i.e., the Bay of Pigs] was viewed as their own, national affair by the Algerian people.

Ben Bella underlined that by the victory of the Algerian people, the exploitation of man by man would cease and never return to his country.

Apart from this term, Ben Bella—in contrast with Fidel Castro—did not use any Marxist terminology, he talked about social progress but not socialism.

I was standing between the papal legate and the Chilean charge d’affaires in the line when Ben Bella and his suite got off the plane, the legate—with whom we had a really friendly conversation—remarked, “Look, there is a priest in Ben Bella’s entourage too.” To which the Chilean charge d’affaires replied: “Of course, Ben Bella is a clever man!” The Cuban deputy protocol chief—who was standing near us—said that the priest was one of the ministers of Ben Bella’s government. I will report on the further events of the visit and its evaluation in my next report.

Erzsébet Görög

chargé d’affaires ad interim

[Source: *Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives], Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.*]



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## DOCUMENT No. 8

Soviet Marshal Andrei Grechko, Commander of the Warsaw Pact, telegram to Hungarian Minister of Defense Lajos Czinege, 23 October 1962

Highly Confidential!

To: Comrade Lajos Czinege, Colonel General—Minister of Defense of the Hungarian People's Republic

Considering US President D. [sic; "J."] Kennedy's provocative announcement on 23 October 1962 and the increased danger of the outbreak of war caused by the Western aggressors, I hereby propose:

3. To introduce increased combat readiness for all troops of the services of the armed forces subordinated to the Supreme Command [of the Unified Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact].
4. Please, report on the arrangements made by you on 24 October.

23 October 1962

Grechko, Marshal of the Soviet Union,  
Commander in chief of the Supreme Command of the Unified Armed Forces  
of the Warsaw Treaty Member States

23 October 1962 10.05 am—Reported to Comrade Köteles, lieutenant-general

23 October 1962 7.15 pm—Clarified with Colonel General Dagajev<sup>40</sup>—"Effective as it was stated in Comrade Grechko's oral instruction."

Reported to: Comrade Köteles lieutenant-general, Comrade Tóth major general, and Comrade Szűcs major general, on 23 October 1962 at 6.50 pm.

Major Golovány

[Source: *Hadtörténeti Intézet Levéltára*, [Archives of the Institute for Military History]. MN VIII. 29. fond, 1962/T-4. d./6. ő.e.;

published in "A dolgozó népet szolgálom!" Forráskiadvány a Magyar Néphadsereg Hadtörténelmi Levéltárban őrzött irataiból, 1957–1972 ["I serve the working people!" Documents from the Archives of the Institute for Military History, 1957–1972], eds. Róbert Ehrenberger, Erika Laczovics, József Solymosi, intro. Imre Okvát (Budapest: Tonyo-Gráf Nyomdai és Grafikai Stúdió, 2006), p. 106. A short article, containing essentially the same information about Grechko's instruction appeared in the HSWP daily *Népszabadság* on 24 October 1962, with the notable difference that according to the published version Grechko contacted the liaison officers of the Warsaw Pact member states stationed in Moscow and there was no reference to his telegram to the defense ministers. Translated for CWIHP by Sabine Topolánszky.]



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## DOCUMENT No. 9

Minutes of the Meeting of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker's and Peasant's Government (Council of Ministers), Budapest, 23 October 1962

### Participants:

Comrade János Kádár, Prime Minister of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker's and Peasant's Government,  
Comrade Béla Biszku, Deputy Prime Minister of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker's and Peasant's Government,  
Comrade Jenő Fock, Deputy Prime Minister of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker's and Peasant's Government,  
Comrade Gyula Kállai, Deputy Prime Minister of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker's and Peasant's Government,  
Comrade Dr Ferenc Münnich, Minister of State,  
Comrade Sándor Czottner, Minister of Heavy Industry,  
Comrade János Csergő, Minister of Metallurgy and Machine Industry,  
Comrade Frigyes Doleschall, Minister of Health,  
Comrade Ödön Kisházi, Minister of Labor,  
Comrade István Kossa, Minister of Transport and Postal Affairs,  
Comrade Imre Kovács, Minister of Food Administration,  
Comrade Pál Losonczy, Minister of Agriculture,  
Comrade Ferenc Nezvál, Minister of Justice,  
Comrade Ms József Nagy, Minister of Light Industry,  
Comrade János Pap, Minister of the Interior,  
Comrade János Péter, Minister of Foreign Affairs,  
Comrade János Tausz, Minister of Domestic Trade,

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Comrade Dr Rezső Trautmann, Minister of Building and Construction

Members of the government

Comrade György Aczél, First Deputy Minister of Culture,  
Comrade Gyula Karádi, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade,  
Comrade Jenő Köteles, First Deputy Minister of Defense,  
Comrade György Lázár, Vice-President of the National Central Planning Office,  
Comrade Béla Sulyok, First Deputy Minister of Finance,

Representing the ministers in absentia

Comrade Sándor Rónai, Speaker of the Parliament,  
Comrade János Brutyó, Secretary-General of the National Council of Trade Unions,  
Comrade Attila Borka, First Deputy-Chairman of the Central People's Supervisory Committee,  
Comrade György Péter, Chairman of the Central Statistics Office,  
Comrade Géza Szénási, Attorney General,  
Comrade József Veres, President of the Executive Committee of the City Council of Budapest,  
Comrade Dr Tivadar Gál, Head of the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers,  
Comrade Géza Neményi, Head of the Information Office of the Council of Ministers,  
as permanent invited participants of the government meetings.

Before discussing the agenda:

1./ Comrade János Kádár announces that Comrade István Dobi is on leave, Comrades Pál Ilku, Jenő Incze, and Dr Miklós Ajtay are abroad, Comrades Rezső Nyers and János Oczel are visiting places outside Budapest, and Comrade Lajos Czinege is sick.

The Government acknowledged the announcement.

Agenda:

1./ Information on the international situation.

Presenter: Comrade János Kádár

Comrade János Kádár informs the members of the Government on the international situation that has arisen as a result of the aggressive steps taken by the USA against Cuba and on the measures taken by the Hungarian Government.

He proposes that the Government should subsequently approve the government statement<sup>41</sup> drafted on 23 October (and then published) by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Ministers, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs as well as the measures that have become necessary in the international situation which has emerged.

The Government approvingly acknowledged the measures that had been taken.

Comrade János Kádár proposes the Government to authorize the Prime Minister to take, together with the Deputy Prime Ministers, the Foreign Minister, and the Defense Minister, any pressing measures that may become necessary in this tensed situation on behalf of the Government.

The Government granted the requested authorization.  
Dated as above.

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| [signature]  | [signature] |
| /János Kádár/<br>/Dr. Tivadar Gál/<br>Prime Minister<br>Head of the Secretariat,<br>Hungarian Revolutionary<br>Hungarian Revolutionary<br>Worker's and Peasant's Government<br>Worker's and Peasant's Government |             |

Comrade János Kádár: I welcome all the comrades and hereby open the session of the Council of Ministers. I announce that [Minister of Defense] Comrade [Lajos] Czinege is sick and is undergoing medical tests in the hospital. [Chairman of the Presidential Council] Comrade [István] Dobi is on leave, Comrades Ilku and Incze are abroad, and Comrades Nyers and Oczel are visiting places outside Budapest.

We have convened the Council of Ministers to provide information on the Cuban situation.

The current tension is due to the statement made by United States President Kennedy on 22 October and the measures specified in the statement. You, Comrades, know the statement, so I will cite only the main points. The first measure was the announcement of a blockade around Cuba, which means a blockade both in the air and on the sea. They are monitoring the situation in Cuba and will deem any attack coming from Cuba as an attack by the Soviet Union.

They evacuated all the family members from the American stations in Cuba and commanded nearly 100 vessels to the waters surrounding Cuba. The United States' troops were put on high alert, the granting of leave was discontinued, military service at the naval forces was extended by one year, and other measures were taken to complement these steps.

In the same speech they called upon the Soviet Union to withdraw their arms from Cuba as they had been informed that the Soviet Union has mid-range missiles in place in Cuba. The statement concludes by saying that the Cuban people are oppressed and calls upon them to rise in revolt. This statement was complemented by another statement issued by the United States government in which it was published that the blockade would begin on 24 October at 3 p.m. Central European Time.

The Soviet and the Cuban governments gave an adequate response to this decision of the United States government. They evaluated the American steps, basically stating that the blockade and the additional steps breach a wide range of international laws and violate Cuba's sovereignty, while the obstacle to free navigation also violates the sovereign rights of every country. The statements made it clear that the steps taken by the United States were warlike and unlawful, which the statements rejected by saying that the Soviet Union and Cuba would take the necessary measures to prevent the USA from realizing these steps.

It is worth noting a few things about the various steps that the United States has taken. I have already mentioned the 100 warships; these are quite large vessels and the number of effective force serving on them may be as many as 20,000. Two naval command headquarters were set up, as is usual under warlike circumstances: one for commanding the forces in the coastal area and one for the open waters. The USA put its forces stationed in Europe on high alert, and here the most important thing is that the number of patrol aircraft equipped with nuclear weapons was increased significantly. The number of these aircraft—which have been constantly in the air for years—is usually 4, 5 or 6, but now it was raised to 42 in the Mediterranean region and Europe.

As far as the NATO High Command is concerned, no special military measure that would be binding for the NATO countries was taken. If I remember well, the only thing that happened was that Italy's air force and air defense were put on alert, and so was the Greek army.

On our side, the following events took place: the existing effective force of the Soviet Union's army was put on alert. The granting of leave was discontinued, but those on leave were not ordered to return, nor were the reservists called up. Certain units of the Soviet army carried out the maneuvers

that are necessary in such a situation. Part of this was putting the army of the German Democratic Republic on alert.

As far as the member states of the Warsaw Treaty are concerned, the Polish People's Republic mobilized significant troops along the Odera border section, and so did Bulgaria along the Turkish–Greek border. All the member states of the Warsaw Treaty put their existing troops on alert.

In this situation we also need to consider what to do. It was necessary to make a political statement. We drafted the statement of the Hungarian government on the basis of the proposal made by the Foreign Minister [János Péter] and, given the urgency of the matter, we had it approved by the deputy prime ministers and had it published.<sup>42</sup>

The commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Treaty [Marshal Andrei Grechko] is maintaining proper contact with and has informed the commanders of the Hungarian People's Army that are under the command of the Warsaw Treaty. The commander-in-chief requested us to take measures and inform him about them. We did that. Comrade Kőteles<sup>43</sup> and other competent comrades worked out the proposal, which we approved and informed the commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Treaty about them. The essence of the measures involved putting some troops of our army on alert, primarily in the air force and the air defense force. In other units we discontinued granting leave without ordering all those already on leave to return to service and without calling up reservists. Currently, the various commanders stay closely together and are in union. In addition, we made preparations internally to take further action if need be: the fuel reserves of the divisions were filled up, etc., and anything else that appears to be necessary in a situation like this [was done]. We also informed Marshall Grechko of our measures. He expressed his thanks for providing such effective support for him as the commander-in-chief in the present situation.

In my view, this is the most serious international conflict that has emerged since the Second World War. As for the steps taken by the US government, it should be known that there was no negotiation with the allies in advance, and that's what the reaction to them by some of the NATO member states reflects. Essentially, the NATO member states officially endorse the US steps but their informal statements make it very clear that they are offended and feel that they should not take part in any such military action. This is what the French and the English positions seem to suggest.

This step of the US government is especially dangerous because it suggests some kind of conceited arrogance, some frenzy by certain American politicians, which is based on the fact that ever since the USA was established as a capitalist state it has never been defeated anywhere, and also on the belief that America has control over the entire world. This is

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supported by a wide range of facts. The American capitalists made incredible amounts of money during the First World War. The USA rarely got involved in dangerous or risky situations in the Second World War. They made a lot of profit during the Cold War period too, ousting their allies from different places whenever the occasion arose, e.g. Indochina or India. They even undertook to support the Algerian freedom fighters to some extent just to soften up the French in another respect.

We must understand the USA's motives very well because we need to consider the situation on the bases of these motives. They keep bragging, suggesting that they can make it in every situation, they are very strong, and nobody can face up to them. The Americans are characterized by the politics of bluffing; they find pleasure in scaring others. This is one of the aspects of this thing, although it is quite dangerous because it may lead to undesirable steps.

The other thing coupled with it is an atmosphere of panic, which has a number of realistic reasons. The position of the USA has become weaker in connection with most of the key international issues. The Common Market raises a lot of problems, which hit the American capitalists hard too. Their position regarding the issue of West Berlin is very bad. In Laos they were happy to be able to get out of the situation, and they don't have much to expect in Vietnam either. I could continue this list on and on as far as mentioning the fact that the UN is gradually slipping out of their hands too. There is an obvious deterioration in their general position. It is also important to know that there are very effective weapons in Cuba.

It is also worth considering that the position of the current US government is not rosy at home either. It looks like the Kennedy cabinet had a lot of progressive votes during the presidential elections; the trade unions supported them and cherished great hopes in a positive sense, but nothing has really been fulfilled. These supporters are already dissatisfied, and so are many of the aggressive monopolist circles. This is the kind of situation in which they decided to take this step. They deserve to be called a country playing with fire in a hazardous manner, and anything can come out of it.

In addition to the measures mentioned before, we have decided on launching a certain political campaign too. We can mobilize the Hungarian public in the correct manner regarding this issue. There are ad-hoc political meetings in the factories. Ten days ago I was asked to give an interview to Cuban journalists, and it seemed right to make use of this opportunity.<sup>44</sup> We also have some ideas how to proceed. We will continue with the campaign and we are planning to organize an important meeting today where several different

representatives of society will voice their position. This meeting will be held this afternoon in the Sports Hall.<sup>45</sup>

We have introduced a duty service in the Worker's Militia, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Party. As far as we can tell now, the Hungarian people have taken the developments of this situation soberly. Some comrades kept calling us during the night asking what the latest news was. One of the county party secretaries was working on his report; another one said there was some positive concern in his county. The Ministry of the Interior complained that it could hardly dissuade a youth group from going out to protest. There is a healthy sense of sympathy with Cuba among the public.

This had been the situation until last night. Of course, there had been various developments on both sides in terms of both military and political action. As far as the political aspect is concerned, it's worth mentioning the document that is known to all the comrades already: all the three governments involved, the USA, the Soviet Union, as well as Cuba, demanded to convene the [UN] Security Council, all of them expressing the view that some kind of negotiation is required. This claim provided some basis for the work of the Security Council, which was complemented by several other things. The different governments issued a wide range of [draft] resolutions, including the governments of the socialist countries. In addition, a group of 40 non-allied states within the UN also discussed the situation and took action. Apart from a group of African countries, three neutral European states, Finland, Austria and Switzerland, also participated in this action. They also worked out their own position, urging negotiations and for every party to make an effort to prevent a military clash. The UN Secretary-General [U Thant] spoke in this spirit at the session of the Security Council held during the night, suggesting that the United States should lift the blockade and the Soviet Union should stop supplying Cuba for two weeks. Neither the USA's, nor the Soviet Union's, response to this suggestion is known at this point.

Other viewpoints on the situation cannot be disregarded either. Peace movements have also made their force tangible. [British philosopher Bertrand A.W.] Russell has also emerged, and what actually happened was that Khrushchev, Kennedy, and Russell began exchanging messages, some of which gave rise to hopes that it might be possible to prevent the further intensification of the conflict, and some of the positions appear to support the truth of our position politically. It is worth noting that the statement of the Soviet government<sup>46</sup> issued the day before yesterday was regarded even by the English and several others as very moderate and as calm as was possible in a situation like this. The Soviet government's statement has made a very good impression. Russell acted in accordance with this, primarily condemning the USA. In his

telegraph sent to Khrushchev he asked the Soviet party to try its best to avoid being provoked. In his message to the US president he called upon the US to stop provoking the other party. Making the best of this opportunity, Khrushchev gave a very good response, pointing out several important political aspects and unveiling the dangerous nature of the American position. Khrushchev said that if a particular situation emerged, the Soviet Union would take action by using its defensive weapons. The response makes it clear that there is room for negotiation and it also demonstrates that the Soviet Union is ready to participate in a summit meeting too. This approach made a good impression on the entire American public.

Yesterday there was a critical point in the afternoon when the blockade and the ships should have clashed. With respect to this, the tension has eased a little bit since then, as there is no news on any clash yet. So far there has been no clash between the ships that keep up the blockade and the ships that are bound for Cuba with supplies. It seems now that the most critical danger is over and diplomacy has come to the fore. I need to add though that the danger is certainly not over yet.

I request the Government to acknowledge the government statement that has been issued and the measures that have been taken to increase defense preparedness. The Government should give authorization to take any other necessary action in case of an emergency in consultation with the deputy prime ministers and the ministers of defense and foreign affairs. The situation changes from hour to hour, so prompt action is crucial at such times.

As a general task we suggest that the level of readiness that applies to us should be maintained but otherwise we should continue to work as usual. Whenever we have a chance to talk to people at various events and meetings, we should promote our fair standpoint and request the support of the Hungarian people. We should make it clear that this support requires discipline, composure, and, especially, hard work. We may have made a mistake when we omitted one section of the Soviet government's statement which was specifically addressed to the Soviet people, expressing the view that in the current situation the Soviet government is sure that the Soviet people will work even harder and will do everything they can to increase the defense capabilities of the country and accomplish any other goals of their work. This part was omitted from our statement but it should be taken into consideration when the tasks are being carried out.

[Minister of Domestic Trade] Comrade János Tausz: Since this situation emerged, we have been monitoring the sales of goods more intensively, as is usually the case at times when

people are likely to hoard goods. There are signs of hoarding here and there but they are quite sporadic, not general at all, so there is no cause for concern in view of the situation we saw in the morning. I understand that our task is to bear in mind that the requirement to be prepared also applies to us in the sense that we should run our reporting service with even more vigilance.

As far as the supply of goods is concerned, I believe we should continue with our correct policy of not imposing any restrictions. Restrictions tend to backfire, generally costing more than what we can gain by them. Should any local problems arise, we will try to localize them.

Comrade János Kádár: Obviously, we should pay attention to all sorts of phenomena; however, we should make sure that our reassuring measures do not drive people to believe that there should be chaos. I don't know the reporting service of domestic trade but it must be a huge organization. If any extraordinary tasks are given to the reporting service there, maybe one hundred thousand people will get the order and the same number of people will begin to wonder why there is no panic when there should be panic. Comrade Tausz should not order the reporting service to carry out any extraordinary tasks; our domestic trade organization is socialist enough already to report to the competent authorities should any signs of a hoarding craze break out. Instead we should approve of the normal procedure with respect to our reserves; that is, the reserves should be filled up. This point of time is not bad with respect to hoarding; it would have been a lot more inconvenient at the beginning of June.

[Minister of Metallurgy and Machine Industry] Comrade János Csergő: Not underestimating the dangers inherent in the US steps, it occurred to me whether these steps and the [US mid-term Congressional] election campaign that is underway are related. Isn't it just a mere election trick?

János Kádár: It's unlikely that the two are related but the issue should be viewed in accordance with its significance. The weakening of the position of the Kennedy cabinet is not temporary, it has been obvious for some years now, and it is not characteristic of the current period only. It should not be seen as a mere election bluff, though. We should not assume that they commit such a stupid [action] and use a short-term bluff like this because it would result in complete political destruction. The elections will be held on November 6. This crisis cannot be maintained at this level until that time. Certainly, the internal political situation has a role in it too.

Now I would like to inform the comrades about some of the diplomatic steps that the US government has taken

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recently. The US chargé d'affaires to Budapest [Horace G. Torbert, Jr.] contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday at around 10 a.m. and requested to be urgently received by a senior official of the ministry. We were busy working on the government statement, so we put it off a bit, and eventually the audience took place in the afternoon at around 4 p.m. The ambassador's deputy handed over the USA's statement to our government and added some remarks that can be seen as threatening. He said it would be a grave mistake to doubt the resolution of his government because it will implement all the steps that are contained in the statement. He also requested that the Hungarian government should continue to ensure communication between the American mission in Budapest and its administration. That was a clear signal as to how serious the situation really was.

Last Saturday our chargé d'affaires in Washington [János Radványi] was summoned by the State Department and was given a piece of paper. This was part of trying to figure out the Hungarian position through diplomatic channels that has been going on since the summer. This time it was a specific proposal submitted by the American party to the Hungarian government. Its essence can be summarized as follows: they said if the Hungarian government was to declare, of its own free will, that nobody was in prison due to the 1956 events, the American cabinet would be willing to do a number of things. In such a case the US would be ready to take action in the UN and state that there have been changes in Hungary and the US no longer believes that the Hungarian issue should be put on the agenda. In addition they listed a number of other things that could be done: agreements have been proposed, disputed issues could be negotiated, the Mindszenty issue<sup>47</sup> could be discussed, ambassadors could be exchanged, etc. It could be called a real peace proposal. It appears that the USA's position is not very good regarding this issue either; therefore, they are seeking a way out.

We ordered Comrade Radványi to say, if the parties concerned happen to meet, that he has sent this proposal to Budapest where it will be studied carefully. The percentage of the votes on the Hungarian issue at the UN General Assembly is seen even by Western observers as a defeat for the US government, which does not seem to be too promising for them going forward. The US is also in a bad position as far as the issue of mandates is concerned.

I propose that the Council of Ministers should approve the government statement that has been issued and the measures that have been taken, and should authorize the government to take any other steps if need be.

As for the meeting planned for today [i.e., the mass rally in the Sports Hall in Budapest], we think it should be organized by the Party Committee of Budapest, the Popular Patriotic

Front, and the Council of Trade Unions. There will be two key speakers: Comrade Gyula Kállai and the Cuban ambassador. Comrade Gyula Kállai will speak on behalf of the Central Committee of the Party and represent our well-known position. I request the government to acknowledge that.

[Minister of Food Administration] Comrade Imre Kovács: Does anybody know what the Soviet Union is planning to do regarding its future supplies for Cuba? To what extent will the Soviet Union take into account the blockade and will its ships be defended?

Comrade János Kádár: I am aware of the legal position and the most important thing here is the joint statement issued by the Cuban and the Soviet governments in September which declared that the Soviet Union is supplying Cuba with weapons that can help Cuba preserve its independence. The latest Soviet government statement says that the US step is illegal, and then there is Khrushchev's letter, which puts it in a popular language, saying that you should not give a robber just part of your money because he will come back for the rest anyway. I don't know anything more specific regarding the other things, I could only present assumptions but there's no point in doing so.

I don't know what each of the two parties is doing on the sea. The sea is huge, it's dark at night, but there has been no clash so far. The US wants to kill Cuba and the socialist world should not let it happen, nor should the progressive forces accept it because if they shut their eyes to it, the Americans would attack us the next day. All the relevant international laws say that our position is right and the USA's aggression is directed not only at the socialist countries but it also affects the fundamental norms of international life.

Cuba has taken adequate measures and ordered mobilization. The Cuban people are resolute and obviously count on the support of the socialist world.

[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Council of Ministers, XIX-A-83-a-245. jku.—1962. Translated for CWIHP by András Bocz.]



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## DOCUMENT No. 10

Hungarian Socialist Workers Party First Secretary  
János Kádár's account of his visit to Moscow to the  
HSWP Central Committee, 12 November 1962

Strictly confidential!

Printed: in 3 copies

Attended: the members and the alternates of the Central Committee, the Heads of departments of the Central Committee—according to the attached list, along with the Chairman of the Central Revision Committee.

[...]

Comrade Lajos Fehér:

I welcome all the comrades. The first item on the agenda is the negotiation of the congressional report, presenter: Comrade János Kádár.

Comrade János Kádár:

Last week, pursuant to the [HSWP] Political Committee's [i.e., Politburo's<sup>48</sup>] decision, I was in Moscow, I met with the Soviet comrades, and if you allow me, before I move on to the actual agenda, I would like to mention certain details concerning this trip.

The first and perhaps the most important is, that neither from our side, nor from the Soviet comrades' side, did arise any kind of burning question, what would have pressed this meeting. But as it turned out, last Sunday [4 November 1962] the Soviet comrades and we independently from each other thought that a meeting would not be wrong in this situation. As you know, on different issues though, but discussions were going on with most of the sister parties from the member countries of the Warsaw Pact during the previous days and week. We also had to take into account that people may misunderstand the situation here: such negotiations are ongoing with all parties, but not with us. Last week on Monday [November 5] we contacted Comrade Khrushchev via phone and we mentioned this, and we agreed that such a meeting never does harm.

At the discussion we naturally dealt with various issues of the international situation and with several current economic problems in the Hungarian-Soviet relationship. The meeting was useful and had a cordial atmosphere. Entirely new issues were not brought up or raised, we only clarified the situation on a few known issues and realized that we share the same opinion in all of the relevant issues. And it is splendid.

On the 8th I spent almost the whole day with the Soviet comrades. The company was more than just the members mentioned in the communiqué, there were other comrades from the Central Committee, and their relatives were

involved too. The atmosphere was as if the Soviet comrades would have been just amongst themselves.

I was urged by Comrade Khrushchev, [Frol] Kozlov, [Leonid] Brezhnev, [Rodion] Malinovsky, and all comrades one by one and also together to forward their best wishes and greetings. I told them that a Central Committee meeting would be held on Monday. Also in the name of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union they wished our party a pleasant work for the Congress. I felt it necessary to share this.

As to the agenda:<sup>49</sup> firstly, I would like to mention, that the external conditions for preparing the report were not very favorable, because the amount of time that we were to spend on this work, due to the tension of the international situation, the Political Committee could not devote to this. This text which is in your hands should be evaluated as follows: at a certain point it seemed that it was necessary to prepare a report after all, because of this I have dictated a text. Afterwards a four-member committee, set up for this purpose, dealt with this text: Comrade Szirmai, Comrade Orbán, Comrades Darvasi, and Endre Molnár are involved, who assist in data collection and wording. Then this draft was put on the agenda of and discussed in the Political Committee, then the Political Committee's comments—this again relates to my trip—were included in the text by the committee in question. Currently, this is how the case stands.

Regarding the future,—I will tell you this soon—if the Central Committee will have discussed the text which is to become the basis of the report and if the main directives are accepted, all we have to do is to finish it in two days and then, I think, I have to work on it to make the language smooth—and this will become the report. This is the idea. The work itself has requirements that around Thursday morning or shortly after we have to hand it over for translation, otherwise the Congress cannot work properly, because they have to hand the text to the foreigners. Currently, these are the conditions of the work. This additional work, of course, cannot differ from the approved principles.

I would like to mention, that in certain international issues one must take sides clearly and precisely. Now, briefly I wish to say a few words concerning these international issues.

First, of the Cuban question. The root of the question that raises great international tension, is the victorious people's revolution in Cuba that evolved further into a socialist revolution which has been constantly undermined by the United States imperialist circles from the beginning in hope of crushing, overrunning, terminating the Cuban revolution. Concerning the issue—most likely justly—the US sees a great, lethal danger against the country. Especially since the Cuban revolution shook all of Latin America under the American imperialists' feet. Since these South American and Latin American coun-

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tries are colonies of the United States and the situation differs entirely from what the official reports declare in the United States. Furthermore, the domestic situation in these Latin American countries, the citizen's spirits, views, ambitions, hopes, fights are not the same as the American diplomats' views and positions talking there on behalf of them. Therefore the existence of the Cuban revolution indeed, means a lethal danger for the domination of the United States. This is the reason why the only goal was—through the economic embargo, through diplomatic tools, and through aggression if necessary—to annihilate the Cuban revolution. This is the root of the tension concerning Cuba. And these steps were carried into effect consecutively in the United States. The United States attempted political isolation, had already introduced an economic blockade around Cuba in order to crush the country economically. Also, they attempted invading the country by armed counter revolutionists last April. Hence, introducing all means available. Apparently inefficiently. The fact, that the United States was not able to achieve its goals by any means—that have been previously mentioned—depended solely on the determination and endurance of the Cuban people [and] furthermore on the brotherly help that the Cuban people enjoy on behalf of the entire socialist world and other progressive international partners. I do not think it is necessary to point out, that in this fight, for Cuba the biggest and primary help has been granted by the Soviet Union.

Due to constant American threatening and different attempts the situation evolved into an actual threat. In the past few months it became evident, that the United States has not refrained from using any means. Consequently, an agreement has been reached between the Soviet government and the Cuban government—a quasi military and defense agreement in which they have agreed that the Soviet government will provide proper weapons to Cuba and place them in the country. This agreement is several months old. The execution itself has been in effect ever since. Evidently, this could not have been kept in secret from the United States forever—though this has not been the intention at all—since in early September the two governments published the agreement in front of the whole world. They declared that such an agreement exists, according to which the Soviet Union grants weapons to Cuba. This event naturally caused general distress in the United States especially within government and imperialist circles. Concerning their former plan of attacking Cuba—we believed that the American government was basically influenced by two main factors: The first being the aggressive circles of the United States Department of Defense that is naturally backed up by the entire weapon industry of the United States, the monopolies that pursue a politics of war and aggression, circles that believe in [the] arms race,

circles that suffer from self-delusion and are puffing, bluffing constantly by nature. This factor have been made even worse by a general panic, hence aggression—the belief that they are better and stronger than all the rest—and a general desperation were present simultaneously. These were the two factors that motivated the American government. It has to be said, that both were visible in the government's actions. Moreover there is a certain minor disagreement between the Pentagon, the interest groups associated with weapons, and another group represented by Kennedy. There is a slight difference between these views and interests, however only minor, not important. In relation to this, the American elections were an external factor. The comrades know what kind of actions the Republican Party Eisenhower, Nixon, and the others have taken [on this issue]. At the end they were agitating that in fact communists were leading the United States. This also forced the government to take different actions. Therefore, the situation became as it was what triggered the events on the 22nd of October on the US government's side.

They announced the Cuban blockade, and were simultaneously prepared for amphibious landings and for a direct American invasion of Cuba. Both were already decided plans on 22 October.

We have to see this as a reckless game, when a certain group does not think of future consequences and puts all its eggs in one basket. This happened on 22 October and actually prevailed throughout this tense period. The Americans were determined to start another World War, rather than giving up on the termination of the Cuban revolution. Steps were taken accordingly. At that time, the ring of naval ships was publicly acknowledged that was set around Cuba. This was one of their force alignments, besides this there was another force alignment: 70 miles from Cuba on American territory significant forces were joined, three or four air transportable, most modernly equipped divisions, marine divisions, etc., namely made up of 7-8 divisions that would have served for the invasion of Cuba.

The third force alignment of the United States' government occurred in the European region, where mostly reactive forces were mobilized. The comrades are familiar with these planes, that carry around nuclear weapons, that have been in use for years. The number of these planes were raised by five times the usual number, then war ships in the navy and those stationed around the European region (equipped with nuclear weapons at the Mediterranean) were joined around Sicily and without mobilizing the entire army were combat ready (including the partial mobilization) that the comrades know very well from the news. This is what the government of the United States has done. Something was also done by the NATO organization, however not as much as the United

States has done. What happened there, was the following: the United States did not cross-check these decisions with her allies, legally pulled together the so-called Organization of American States [OAS]—this was the ally who they referred to. The United States did not cross-check these actions with the NATO. Consequently, NATO allies were not that active.

Some kind of monitoring system, a certain preparedness was present in the forces of NATO powers as well, but without any particular mobilization. Thus, this was the situation on the 23rd of October.

In the meantime on our side the following event took place: Cuba ordered a general mobilization, that the Cuban people managed effectively. Approximately one million people were armed during that time. The Soviet army was put in combat readiness, without calling in reserves. Essentially, the same happened with the rest of the armies of the Warsaw Treaty. In our country also. Not the entire army [was mobilized], but at certain divisions from air defense, air reconnaissance, and also at certain land forces preparedness was ordered by our government, since in times like these, all means of defense should be available.

In connection with this, I would like to mention a fact that is certainly well known by the comrades, that in this critical situation and also in the context of these measures our army both in the senior leadership, and in the entire personnel of the army, the behavior and the attitude was commendable. There was serenity, determination, and solidarity. Similarly, the population's behavior is well known by the comrades. You all know perfectly, that comparing to the last year's tension [regarding Berlin] it can only be said that our population stood one's ground calmly and politically well. This is a crucial point in this situation. It can be said, that testimony of high skill of political maturity, consciousness, correct political behavior were shown by the Hungarian masses, the toilers, and this discipline obviously demonstrates a general and fundamental trust towards the Soviet political system, towards the policy of our party and government. People knew that the situation was serious, but they did not have knowledge of the details, the moments, the hourly changing situation, they had no information and yet the Hungarian working people behaved so honorably in this situation, which is an evidence of general and fundamental trust in the matter of the socialism, towards the forces of peace, towards the Soviet Government's policy and towards the Hungarian Government's policy. This is a rejoicing and a very significant thing!

What is to be done by responsible parties in this situation? Here I mean the affair in the afternoon of the 23rd [of October], when the ships were due to meet.

When I gave a toast on the 8th [of November] in Moscow I also mentioned that in a situation like this I would like to

be anybody but Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev. Generally we envy everybody, except the Soviet leaders, because their position is like no others'. I said, that the view here is that at a push or if we cannot find a solution in an issue we can always go somewhere, we go to Moscow, and one will surely be smarter from it. But where you go in critical situations that are hard to tackle, that's your secret. But they cannot go anywhere. It can be said that an enormous responsibility rests on the Soviet comrades, when socialism, the socialist revolution, the cause of progress, the cause of peace should be protected. In this situation the question was not the blockade, because the blockade is the blockade, that had to be there in Cuba. Actually, the issue here was the clash. The Americans were ready for the amphibious landing. A certain kind of minor clash did indeed happen. The main issue was not the blockade, between the US warships and the Soviet ships since there was a certain manoeuvring in order to delay the clash. The joined forces of the United States began the landing and the invasion of Cuba. Meanwhile, one of their reconnaissance aircraft was shot [down] over Cuba [on 27 October]. This aircraft is also significant, because in such an impulsive situation it happened for the first time—and I would say, from our side—that a weapon was used. Two anti-missile projectiles were launched—the two together means a 100% effectiveness—and the aircraft was shot down indeed. Such a situation occurred. What could be done if the options seemed like the Americans would manage the landing in Cuba or would arrive to the shores of Cuba? A strike should be launched at the United States. This is inevitable, it is not possible to fight in any other way. Furthermore, if they land in Cuba, they shall be destroyed. These two options together—this is not so difficult to figure it out—would have meant, that the main goal in this particular issue is the rescue of Cuba, or otherwise Cuba will be destroyed. That was the Third World War's seat of the fire, and in that case, that would not leave anything behind. The other [option] was that the [political] fight begins.

The Soviet comrades were thinking in that situation, and they came to the decision that is known to us. The opinion of the Soviet comrades in this issue is—and it is necessary to tell, that when we here were analyzing the situation, we were lead to the same conclusion—that the two basic goals are the protection of the Cuban revolution and the preservation of peace.

The decisions made by the Soviet Government served these two basic goals superbly. The US government declared that there were offensive weapons there and therefore they would attack Cuba in the spirit of self-defence. The Soviet Government therefore decided to pull-out these offensive weapons. Only the United States shall declare, that Cuba will not be attacked. Then the two main goals have been reached. That is what essentially happened.

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The opinion of the Soviet comrades is, that these weapons have accomplished their task, without being compelled to shoot with them. Because neither the Soviet, nor the Cuban government's plan was to deploy any weapons there and then attack the United States, but to deter the enemy and protect Cuba and the Cuban revolution. Certainly, during those hours it looked—and there were such voices in the United States—as if the Soviet Union had retreated. But after two days, these people realized too, that they have not achieved the same thing as they wanted, and started to rampage and began to attack their own government anew. How come that non-aggression will be guaranteed? If the Cuban revolution remains and the United States guarantees non-aggression, they are in the same situation as they were, indeed, in a worse situation. Because, so far—since the victory of the revolution in Cuba—they always pronounced that they would destroy it and now they had to declare that they shall respect Cuba.

This was a truly responsible, correct, and revolutionary communist measure. It has served the fundamental purpose. What is there currently? Currently, the situation is that the United States is in diplomatic hot water and the wrestling is going on with the usual devices of politics. The United States Government invented that there are some kind of bombers [i.e., the IL-28s], and those shall be pulled out, too. The reply for this was that those are basically not offensive, and this is the point where the usual political and diplomatic wrestling starts, which means, that the issue is not completely solved yet. Simply we are far from that moment now, where we were in the afternoon on the 23rd of October, when the world and mankind was on the eve of the Third World War. We are far from that now. The issue has not been solved completely yet, the usual political and diplomatic struggle is still going on—of course, the Soviet government made it clear for the US government that they may keep on complaining about these bombers if they want, but they should think it over too, because the original situation can be set back.

And from that there is nothing good for the United States. Probably this political question now roughly will be resolved. I am saying roughly, because American imperialism will remain and the Cuban revolution will remain, too. And the two countries will continue to be neighbors. So the problem will be solved in this sense. Eventually, the irreconcilable antagonism will remain.

Anyway, probably we will return to our original position and will continue the old fight. The Soviet government promised to the United States, that after the elections have finished in the US, the Berlin issue will be brought up. And this promise will be kept by them. The wrestling will continue in this question as well. Similarly, the negotiations on the termination of nuclear-weapon tests, and the conclusion of

an agreement will be put on the agenda, which is a realistic option. Currently it looks that it is realistic. It is possible that such an agreement will be concluded. Apart from that, it is quite clear to us, that from this tension the world's people have learnt a lesson and we have to continue our general anti-imperialist propaganda and fight increasingly, to continue the fight in the issue of general disarmament, the elimination of the Cold War, etc. It is certain, that the conditions for this are much better than previously. The United States with her steps resulting from aggression and panic exposed herself completely as illegitimate, provocative, offensive, etc. Therefore people know that the preservation of peace was threatened greatly by the US Government and the Soviet Government was the one who saved humanity's peace. Currently this is the situation. For us the situation is the same as it was previously, we adopt the same policy, but at the same time vigilance is necessary, a certain level of readiness is necessary and the previous fight goes on. I would like to mention too, that in the general situation there are things also that are not the most pleasing for us. For example, the Soviet government's and the Cuban government's views are not exactly the same in certain issues. The situation is that not everything could be reconciled in those critical hours. It was not like the First World War in 1914, when there were six months for the parties to mobilize the forces to begin a serious clash, here it was about half-hours and [periods of] fifteen minutes. The Cuban government has some views that are not identical with the Soviet government's views. All in all, this not a world disaster, because at the same time, on the main questions there is consensus, but still, it left a small gap, wherein immediately joined our Chinese comrades, and with their usual revolutionary behavior they are hitting the tambourine. Why retreat, etc. ...

They interpret the measures of the Soviet government as concessions. For us, this is the inconvenient aspect of the situation, but we hope that the correct opinions will fully prevail. This situation will be clear and they will understand that with blustering, with phrases, and with slogans like "down with imperialism!" the world can be brought to flames extremely quickly. And it is not the communists' task to set the world on fire. This is the same as the principle of peaceful coexistence. If it is not a correct principle, then it has a logic. If that is impossible, then the other possibility has to be applied and then the Soviet Union has to start the war. If there is no chance of resolving the conflict peacefully ... This is why the Chinese comrades' logic cannot be accepted, besides, it is not Marxist, it is not realistic, it does not reflect reality.

Regarding our Congress, the topic on the agenda this means... I ask for the compliance of the Central Committee, so we may clearly and unmistakably express that we absolutely agree—not only generally with the behavior and the deci-

sions of the Soviet government but—also with the questions concerning Cuba and that we feel absolute solidarity towards those decisions. Those meet the interests of the Hungarian people, and they also meet the interests of the Hungarian revolution as well as the interests of the international proletariat.

[...]

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, Central Committee, M-KS-288. f. 4/60. ö.e. Translated for CWIHP by Annett Szűcs and Sabine Topolánszky.*]



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## DOCUMENT No. 11

### Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Soviet-Cuban Divergence, 29 November 1962

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic  
To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter

Budapest

TOP SECRET!  
436/1962/Top Secret  
Written: in four copies

Three copies to Center

One to Embassy Archives

Havana, 29 November 1962

Subject: The appearance of a divergence of opinions between Cuba and the Soviet Union.

I still do not know what agreement between Cuba and the Soviet Union was the basis for sending the so-called "strategic arms" to Cuba in October. As a consequence, I have also no idea about what consequences the Soviet and Cuban sides reckoned with concerning the transportation of strategic arms to Cuba. But it is obvious that both sides were trying to calculate the expectable consequences and to determine in advance their position and tasks concerning them.

On the afternoon of 23 October, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez said during the visit paid to him that he, that is the Cuban leaders, thought that there was not only the possibility of war but the Cuban crisis might be solved in another way, too. As he said, there could be talks about reducing the Cuban army's armament to the defense weapons described in the well-known definition. By the well-known definition he meant the definition given by the President of the United States, the government of the United States. But the Cuban government could agree to this only if Cuba's territorial sanctity and possibility of normal life were not guaranteed only by the United States but in some form by the Soviet Union as well.

I have been informed by the Polish ambassador [Bolesław Jeleń] that there was an exact plan between the Soviet Union and Cuba concerning what they would do in case of an expectable and calculable reaction from the United States. The government of the United States reacted in such a way that was not on the list of foreseen possibilities. Consequently, such steps had to be taken by the Soviet Union and in such form that had not been calculated. Neither the Polish ambassador nor I could check the correctness of this information.

Neither I, nor the socialist ambassadors to Havana, have been able to form a clear picture of what happened from the morning of 27 to the morning of 28 October 1962. We are aware only of the following facts:

At around 10 o'clock on 27 October Saturday, a quite powerful American jet bomber formation flew over West-Cuba, Pinar del Rio county. I could not determine how many planes this quite powerful formation included, but according to some news, the number of American bombers was several hundred. At the same time from one point 600 anti-aircraft guns started firing at the formation, the bombers turned around at once and left for the USA at high speed. A quarter of an hour later a U-2. type plane flew in over West-Cuba at a great height and it was shot [down] with a missile. (In my report sent earlier it was a mistake that the U-2 had been shot in Oriente near the Guantanamo base.) After these two incursions until Sunday dawn no air activity could be experienced from the American side over Cuba. Moreover, the radar devices in Cuba showed that in Florida all air activity ceased after these two incursions. On Saturday afternoon we could hear the ultimatum-like demand of American President Kennedy, which was followed by Comrade Khrushchev's letter on Saturday night [sic; actually Sunday morning, Washington and Havana time—ed.], in which as a reply to Kennedy's promise to guarantee non-aggression toward Cuba, he announced the disarmament of missiles and their removal from Cuba. While in Comrade Khrushchev's previous letter, in which against the removal of missiles he offset the removal of American missiles from Turkey, he mentioned Cuba as a

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country whose government should approve the control in order that it could be carried out, in this later letter of his the Cuban government and the necessity of the Cuban government's approval is not present. At least it is not included in the text the Cuban organs, the Cuban press, and I have received here in Cuba.

All of us here in Havana know that neither the Cuban government, nor the Soviet ambassador, Comrade [Aleksandr] Alekseyev, was notified in advance of this letter of Comrade Khrushchev, but all of them learnt it from the press and radio.

These two letters of Comrade Khrushchev to Kennedy, that is the letter of 27 October, in which he offset the removal of American weapons from Turkey against the removal of missiles, and the letter of 28 [October], in which he acknowledged Kennedy's promise and promised to dismantle and remove the missiles at once, had the effect of cold water on the Cuban masses. From reliable sources I learnt e.g. the following minor fact: Ernesto ["Che"] Guevara, the minister of industry, one of the most important Cuban leaders, was staying in Pinar del Rio county on Saturday 27 October and was reviewing the military units on the parade. In the meantime he received the news that the radio tower was transmitting Comrade Khrushchev's letter in which he undertook the removal of missiles if the USA withdrew her similar weapons from Turkey. Enraged, he dashed his cap to earth and repeated furiously that this was perjury as he, himself, had had talks in Moscow and they had talked about a different thing. I also consider credible the other information according to which Prime Minister Fidel Castro reacted more or less the same way too. He, completely broken, told President of the Republic [Osvaldo] Dorticos to take over the conduct of affairs for some time because he needed at least one month to recover from this great blow. He wanted to be a private individual for that time.

I share the opinion with others that maybe nowhere in the world did the wide masses have such love and enthusiastic respect for the Soviet Union and Comrade Khrushchev himself as could be experienced here in Cuba right until the 27 of last October. But from the 27th to the 28th, that is, in 24 hours, the mood of the masses changed from one extreme to the other. Out of the mass of phenomena I would like to mention only a few typical ones.

In some of the military units they expressed their opinion in the following way: It is all the same who comes, whether the Americans or Russians come, we will fire, we will defend ourselves even if all of us die. Many people turned to the Soviet Embassy on the phone and in letters and asked what would come now, whether the Soviet Union would leave them alone, whether they would be defenseless against the Americans and so on. The people in the streets, on the buses,

the officials in the various ministries we talked to all expressed their feelings of despair, abandonment, and disappointment. We could hear all kinds of anti-Soviet positions, such as the Soviet Union is only a super power just like the USA and she leads power politics, or she used Cuba only as a means of solving her conflict with the United States, and so on. Many were upset by the fact that she connected the removal of missiles from Cuba with the withdrawal of American weapons from Turkey, that is, she put a sign of equality between Cuba and Turkey and used them as the objects or means of bargain between the Soviet Union and the United States. Several people protested that they talked about Turkey and not the Guantanamo American base. These voices and remarks were not limited to passers-by or minor officials of different offices, I had the opportunity to witness that in the Cuban government itself, within the national leadership of the Cuban party there were many of one or other of the mentioned opinions and turned against the Soviet Union more or less.

From government members and the members of the party's national leadership and, of course, from lower-ranking people we could hear such disappointed remarks as the Soviet Union, with this step, undermined Cuba's international prestige once and for all, she made it impossible to continue the American policy, moreover, hindered the possibility of the victory of Latin American revolutions for a long time.

The feeling of disappointment in the Soviet Union had a demoralizing effect on the one hand, and demobilized the Cuban masses on the other hand. These days the Cuban press and radio reflected this mood of the masses, and as this mass feeling was present among the leaders as well, they could not stand up against it, but by taking no position, by publishing not well-selected news and information, by keeping important news a secret, they contributed to causing a chaos and an anti-Soviet nationalist mood.

Fidel Castro, seeing this more and more sharp atmosphere, decided to stand up against it in a radio and television speech. So the speech of 1 November took place. As far as this speech is concerned, I think that it was necessary, and the form Fidel Castro told it was correct and had due influence. But I do not want to say that I agree with what happened during the preceding days, that is, what made the speech necessary in this form, nor what happened after the speech from the Prime Minister's side. Several people in Cuba, the Cubans themselves, but most of all the foreigners doubt whether it was necessary and right that in his speech Fidel Castro announced to the whole world that there was a divergence of opinions between the Soviet Union and Cuba. I think this announcement was necessary, because the mood of the masses was such that denying these divergences of opinion would not have done away with this mood but would have intensified it. On

1 November, Fidel Castro could not say more and in a warmer voice about the Soviet Union and the Soviet people than he did say, because at that moment, the people would not have accepted any more and anything warmer. But we should add that we who watched Fidel Castro on television had the impression that the statement that he trusted the government of the Soviet Union, the party of the Soviet Union, and the political leadership of the Soviet Union was difficult to make even for him. We had the feeling that he was not completely convinced about it. This could be specially noticed in his case, because he was used to saying on the radio, on television, and in the different conversations and speeches what he thought, even if it was not always political and tactical.

János Beck  
Ambassador

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 12

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Cuban–Soviet Divergence, 30 November 1962

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic

To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest

TOP SECRET!

440/1962/ top secret  
Written in four copies

Three copies to Center

One copy to Emb. Archives

Havana, 30 November 1962

Subject: The perceivable signs of the Cuban-Soviet Divergence of opinions.

The Cuban leaders personally and the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs have shown it to the outside world several

times that there is a divergence of opinions with the Soviet Union, the relations with the Soviet Union are different from earlier relations. I would like to list a few examples.

For the arrival of Comrade [Anastas] Mikoyan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not organize such a reception at the airport as they usually do to welcome not only the prime minister or vice-premier, but a lot of times the deputy minister of foreign trade as well. The diplomatic corps were not notified at all, the Czech, Polish, GDR, Romanian and Bulgarian ambassadors and I decided together to meet him at the airport in spite of the lack of any invitation. The original idea of the Cuban side was that Comrade Mikoyan would be met only by Foreign Minister [Raúl] Roa and Minister of Industry Ernesto [“Che”] Guevara. Fidel Castro decided to come to the airport at the last moment. He was really present together with his brother Raul Castro and some other leading functionaries. The reception can be considered cool compared to the usual receptions in Cuba.

The original idea concerning 7 November was that the center of trade unions would organize the ceremony. This was like that last year, too, when the ambassadors of socialist countries were invited to the celebrations and were given seats in the presidium, and there, apart from the head of the foreign department of the trade unions, the Soviet ambassador, that is, the Soviet charge d'affaires ad interim, gave a solemn speech. But this year the ambassadors of socialist countries were not invited. Then, on the morning of November 6, they changed the plan and the ORI, that is, the Party's Central Committee, became the organizer, and the ambassadors of socialist countries were notified on the phone that they would receive the invitation to the ceremony during the day. Then we were really present at the celebration, where we were seated in the first rows. The ceremony itself started three quarters of an hour late. At the presidential table numerous Cuban leaders were seated, the president of the republic and Comrade Mikoyan in the middle. But Prime Minister Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, and Ernesto Guevara were not present. As I learnt later, Fidel Castro, his brother, and the minister of industry arrived at the entrance of the theater, but then changed their minds and did not come in to the ceremony. At the celebration, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez gave a speech apart from the Soviet ambassador [Aleksey Alekseyev]. During the ceremony the president of the republic [Osvaldo Dorticos] behaved quite coolly, we must say, toward Comrade Mikoyan sitting next to him, and when Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, citing the Fidel Castro speech of 1 November, said that they trusted the government of the Soviet Union and the party of the Soviet Union, President of the Republic Dorticos did not applaud. We must say that the television that transmitted the speech was clever enough not to show him at this point and

all other parts when the president of the republic or other leaders behaved coolly or demonstratively, but we could see the applauding audience.

When the Soviet ambassador to Havana gave a dinner in the honor of Comrade Mikoyan, at which present were President of the Republic Dorticos, Prime Minister Fidel Castro, and all the Cuban leaders, the next day the press mentioned it in a hidden place with small print and very briefly, it reported only the fact with the comment that the dinner took place in friendly atmosphere. I can see in “*Népszabadság*”, which has arrived since then, that our party’s paper reported on the dinner in a more conspicuous place, in more detail.

Finally, I would mention the fact that it is true that at Comrade Mikoyan’s departure at the airport all Cuban leaders were present beginning from the president of the republic, but the diplomatic corps were not invited, and the farewell can again be called cool compared to the farewells usually organized in Cuba.

This is not a very conspicuous sign of the divergence of opinions, but I would like to mention here the following: During his tour of Europe Comrade Blas Roca was in Denmark when these events happened in Cuba. In one of his statements in Denmark he agreed with the position of the Soviet Union. This was also published in one of the papers in Copenhagen. To counterbalance it, presenting it as the news of the *Prensa Latina*, HOY published it on the first page on 31 October that in Berlin Comrade Roca, talking to the Spanish people living in Berlin, said the condition for the solution of the Cuban situation, that is the crisis of the Caribbean, was the acceptance of the five points and the article did not say a word of the Soviet position. According to my information, Blas Roca did not make such statement in Berlin at all. This was published in Cuba to counterbalance Comrade Blas Roca’s standpoint. Besides, he was called up and, as I hear, lectured and ordered back to Cuba at once. Although, according to the plans, he would have had to represent the Cuban party in Moscow at the 7 November celebrations. As a result of the ordering home, according to my information, there was no one as a delegation in Moscow from the Cuban side. When Comrade Blas Roca was waiting for an airplane in Prague to return to Cuba, he received the instruction not to return but to go to Sofia and represent the Cuban party there. And in Sofia to inform him and discuss the political questions with him, one of the functionaries of the party center at home was sent there.

János Beck  
Ambassador

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign*

*Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



## DOCUMENT No. 13

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Cuban–Soviet Divergence, 1 December 1962

Embassy of the Hungarian People’s Republic

To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest.

TOP SECRET!  
443/1962/ top secret  
Written: in four copies

Three copies to Center

One copy to Emb. Archives

Havana, 1 December 1962

Subject: The essence of Soviet-Cuban divergences  
of opinion.

Since my return from New York on 20 October I have not once managed to talk to Cuban leaders. Since then no ambassadors of the friendly countries, including Czechoslovakia, have managed to contact any Cuban leaders. As for the Czechoslovakian ambassador [Vladimír Pavlíček], being the first representative of socialist countries to Havana, he used to meet first of all Foreign Minister [Raúl] Roa several times a day and often the other leaders as well. Foreign Minister Roa first of all because in the United States Cuban interests are represented by Czechoslovakia, between the Czechoslovak embassy to Washington and the Havana embassy there is a special direct code connection and courier service. In this period he has not been able to get in to Cuban leaders and Foreign Minister Roa, who had the closest and most confidential relationship with him, has behaved toward him coolly, or even if this coolness has become relaxed in the past days, he has not been willing to say anything important to him.

As, similarly to the other socialist ambassadors, I was soon convinced that I could not get in to the higher leaders, similarly to them, I decided to turn to lower-ranking Cuban functionaries working in different places and talk to them

about the political problems. So since the end of October my colleagues and I, first of all counselor Görög and commercial counselor Sós, have talked to 20-25 middle functionaries.

I have had the closest relationship with Czechoslovakian ambassador Pavlicek since the beginning of my stay in Havana. We have often exchanged our information, we have always discussed the different problems. This relationship has become even more intensive in this period of crisis, and meant sometimes several phone conversations a day or, if necessary, meetings at night in each other's apartments. I have had almost such a close relationship with the Romanian and Polish ambassadors as well. They have met about 20-25 middle functionaries too, we have exchanged our opinions, we have discussed our conclusions, so what will follow in my report is not only my opinion but what I concluded from our conversations and their comparisons concerning the crucial issues.

I consider three factors important and I would like to deal with them one after the other. The first one is the individual attitude of Cuban leaders. I must say, when it comes to Cuban leaders, I think of three people, Prime Minister Fidel Castro, his brother Vice-Premier Raul Castro, and Minister of Industry Ernesto ["Che"] Guevara. As during the crisis it has turned out that no other than these three people have a serious and important say in the government, the party secretariat, and most of all in the party's central committee, as a matter of fact, the opinion of these three people in crucial matters cannot be successfully contradicted even by their closest colleagues. So President of the Republic Dorticos or Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, the director of the national land reform institute, could not have a significant influence on the events.

The fact that Cuba became a country independent of the United States, the greatest imperialist power, unaided, through the movement led by Fidel Castro, that Cuba could develop the fight for independence and the democratic revolution into a socialist revolution on her own, made the people especially jealous and sensitive concerning everything related to the independence, self-government, and freedom of the country. This can be understood, as it is a relatively small country enjoying the benefits of modern technology but lacking industry, a mono-culture country with colonial conditions, which was liberated after several centuries of colonial or half-colonial oppression. This sensitivity and jealousy concerning freedom, self-government, and independence is especially strongly reflected in leaders, most of all, in the mentioned three leaders.

As for the leaders, this is also complemented by the fact that they arrived at the socialist revolution, Marxism-Leninism, in a different way from all other countries. This is also coupled with the individual ambitions of leaders, which is partly the consequence of the fact that they have been

appointed to lead a historic movement and victorious revolution and such a country that is in the center of world politics at the moment.

The second factor, which plays a role at every level, in the great masses of the Cuban people as well, but is particularly strongly seen among the leaders, can be called revolutionary romantics with many petit-bourgeois and anarchist features. It can also be mentioned here that the Cuban people and, of course, the present leaders of the Cuban people have never experienced any great events shocking the whole Cuban society like a war, revolution, or natural catastrophe.<sup>50</sup> So they know nothing of the country-wide misery, decay following the great war, the participation of large masses in the revolutionary fight, or the famine striking the whole society or at least its majority or other similar blows. It is a characteristic of the great Cuban masses and, I must repeat, particularly of the leaders, the different ranks of leading layers what can be described by the Spanish expression: *inmolación*. This could be translated as self-sacrifice. Here can be mentioned the lack of knowledge and under-estimation of economic building work, of doing small jobs for a long time every day and imagining all solutions by great, heroic, revolutionary deeds.

The third and most important feature, which is, however, related to the first two, is political. In the political ideas of Cuban leaders the idea that there have been three great revolutions in the world plays an important role. The first is the Russian revolution, the main significance of which is, however, limited to Europe. The second is the Chinese, which concerns Asian people mainly. And finally, the latest, the third is the Cuban, which is crucially important to Latin America. Taking such an idea as a starting point, the Cuban leaders often judge the events of world importance not from the aspect of the world-wide victory of socialism, or from the aspect of the international world movement, but from the so-called Latin American aspect.

This point of view is not Marxist. But when Latin America is concerned, their conception, opinion diverges from or is contrary to the Marxist-Leninist conception several times. The "Second Havana Declaration" could be a good example, which judges the origin, course, and victory of Latin American revolutions differently from the Marxist way in various aspects. (The preparation of the revolution and the revolutionary fight are not carried out by the Marxist-Leninist party, but mainly the small group of partisans supported by peasants, the working class joins the fight only later, and the Marxist class analysis and class aspects are completely ignored). The Cuban leaders under-estimate the role of the party in Cuba herself, which is proved by the extremely slow organization of the party. According to my information, the official number of the members of the party does not reach

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four thousand. The reorganization is going on very slowly and since the [Anibal] Escalante case about two thousand earlier party members were excluded.

The above-mentioned explain taking offence toward the Soviet Union not having discussed her urgent steps with the Cuban leaders in the gravest moments of the crisis, this way already offending Cuba's sovereignty, for ignoring Cuba's self-government, independence during the talks with the Americans when she discussed control and other issues concerning Cuba's sovereignty. That they were unwilling to accept the solution suggested by the Soviet Union for weeks meant they did not disagree with the method only, but to some extent with the aim of the Soviet Union too, probably they always had in mind their idea about their Latin American role.

Finally I would like to present Comrade [Anastas] Mikoyan's opinion concerning the Cuban leaders, which I agree with:

The Cuban leaders are young, honest people, they are true to the revolution, the people; in a difficult situation in their country they were able to ensure a greater unity and had less chaos than other nations would have had, for this they deserve respect and appreciation, and there is every reason to trust them and the impending progress in the future.

János Beck  
Ambassador

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 14

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Anastas Mikoyan's meeting with socialist ambassadors, 3 December 1962

HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL!

Prepared in: 24 copies

Received by: members and substitute members of the Politburo, members of the Secretariat, Comrade Árpád Pulai and Imre Hollai

C o p y

of the report prepared by the embassy in Havana on 3 December 1962.

Subject: Comrade Mikoyan's meeting with socialist ambassadors.

Neither I nor the other socialist ambassadors had a chance to meet with the Soviet ambassador during the entire period of the crisis. We have not had a chance to meet with Comrade [Anastas] Mikoyan either since his arrival, except for the reception at the airport, which obviously did not give us an opportunity to speak with him. The first time we were able to meet with him was right before his departure.

On 20 November, before Comrade Mikoyan's departure, we were invited by phone to attend a cocktail party at the Soviet embassy together with our spouses. The event at the Soviet embassy hosted by the ambassador was attended by Comrade Mikoyan, the delegation led by him as well as several officials of the embassy and their spouses. The ambassadors who were invited to and attended the event included, apart from myself, the Czech, the Polish, the Romanian, the GDR, the [North] Korean and the [North] Vietnamese ambassadors as well as the Chinese, the Bulgarian, and the Mongolian ambassador's deputies.

This cocktail party conversation took place after a day earlier I had contacted Comrade Byelous, first envoy of the Soviet embassy—this being my third approach during the crisis—to ask him a few questions regarding the situation and discuss my view of it with him. At the same time, I complained to him that for several weeks we had been unable to meet either the Cuban or the Soviet leaders and we had not received any information from them. I added that several colleagues, at least the Czech, the Romanian, and the Polish ambassadors had expressed the same complaints. Comrade Byelous said he would try to convince Comrade Mikoyan that he should receive and inform all of us. This is how the cocktail party took place.

We spent at least one-and-a-half hours with Comrade Mikoyan. At the beginning of the conversation, during which we were all standing, Comrade Mikoyan informed us about the situation for about 15 minutes, which was immediately translated into Spanish by the interpreter. The essence of the information provided by him was that the Cuban and the Soviet governments, including Comrades Khrushchev and Fidel Castro in person as well, fully agreed with the evaluation of the situation and the tasks to be done. However, the information did not really cover more than what was published that day or in a few days later.

Comrade Mikoyan said that the Cuban government also agreed with the Soviet Union's view that president Kennedy's

statement on Cuba's territorial integrity meant a great victory for Cuba and the Soviet Union as well as for the entire socialist camp. I need to note that the Cuban leaders had not publicly given any sign, either on that day or since then, whether they agreed with this view.

As for the tasks to do, Comrade Mikoyan did not go beyond what was made public in a few days after the discussion took place.

I asked Comrade Mikoyan on his view regarding the confusion that had emerged among the Cuban people and in the minds of a few Cuban leaders in connection with the situation. Drawing on his own experiences, Comrade Mikoyan told us in detail about the unprecedented confusion among the people, in the communist party, and the Central Committee at the time [March 1918] of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty in the young Soviet Republic, when for a time Lenin was in a minority and managed to get his position through only by threatening to resign from all of his functions in the party and the government. At that time Comrade Mikoyan was working in Baku as a party secretary. He said there was an awful lot of confusion in this party organization too, where most members of the party committee took the wrong position. He also mentioned that for a reason he could not recall now, he took the correct position and published an article on it in the local paper. At this point I took the opportunity to repeat my question in another way, and asked him when a similar article was going to be published in Cuba. However, Comrade Mikoyan pretended that he had not heard the question and went on explaining the Soviet–Russian situation during the time of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. He concluded by saying that the government and the party in Cuba were headed by excellent revolutionaries that were loyal to the people and were able to create and maintain a unity in this extremely complex situation which would certainly have been impossible in any other place. However big the confusion may have appeared to us, it was much smaller than it would have been among other leaders in another country. He was convinced that Cuba was going to see healthy development.

The first envoy of the Soviet embassy, Comrade Byelous told Comrade Mikoyan that I had spent years in prison during the time of the personality cult in Hungary, which gave Comrade Mikoyan an opportunity to talk about personality cults in general, explaining his views and impressions on Mátyás Rákosi<sup>51</sup> and several former or present leaders of the European socialist countries. He held, first and foremost, Stalin responsible for the personality cult in the European socialist countries, so I felt obliged to say that I could not fully agree with this statement. Although Stalin himself and the prevailing international situation undoubtedly had a significant impact on the socialist world and Hungary, there were

no unlawful trials in the other socialist countries during the period of the personality cult that could be compared to what took place in Hungary and what consequences these trials had there, which demonstrates that Rákosi's responsibility cannot be seen as of secondary importance. Then Comrade Mikoyan talked at length and even provided some examples, saying that indeed, he himself had a chance to see that e.g. the Bulgarian or other leaders acted differently from Rákosi, and it was also obvious that in many cases the initiatives provided by Stalin were softened by them, while Rákosi tended to do more than what was expected from him.

During the entire conversation Comrade Mikoyan took every opportunity to give hints to and make remarks for the Chinese ambassador's deputy present regarding cooperation within the socialist camp, the coordination of actions, and real, comradesly collaboration. So, for example, when he was talking about his experiences in Hungary before the counter-revolution and then about his stay in Hungary during the counter-revolution, he stressed how strong the contact had been between them and the Chinese comrades, mutually informing and directly cooperating with each other. The Chinese diplomat did not say a single word during the cocktail party, and when Comrade Mikoyan was talking with the guests surrounding him about the period of personality cults and his own experiences in the Soviet Union, as well as about Poland, Bulgaria, or Hungary, he retired further back and didn't even ask the interpreter to translate some of the conversation.

Although apart from some details Comrade Mikoyan didn't give us actual information, the way he talked about the already known facts and the way he evaluated the Cuban situation did help both me and the other socialist ambassadors to get a better picture of the situation.

János Beck  
Ambassador

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by András Bocz.]*



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**DOCUMENT No. 15**

Hungarian Legation in Washington (Radványi),  
Report on Mikoyan's visit to Washington, 5  
December 1962

HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL!

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Received by: members and substitute members of the Politburo, members of the Secretariat, Comrades Árpád Pullai, Imre Hollai, Ferenc Szücs and Sándor Sárközi

C o p y  
of the report made by the embassy to Washington on 5 December 1962

Subject: Comrade Mikoyan's visit to Washington

Comrade Mikoyan's four-day visit (from 29 November to 3 December) was made possible and necessary by the events that had taken place prior to it: negotiations between [Soviet deputy foreign minister Vasily V.] Kuznetsov and [US negotiator John J.] McCloy in New York, recent communication between Khrushchev and Kennedy, and Kennedy's already known press conference [on 20 November] in which he announced the lifting of the Cuban blockade.

The visit had aroused considerable interest, and the comments and news on it were treated by the press as a central issue. Before the visit, the comrades announced during talks conducted at the State Department that Comrade Mikoyan would be staying in Washington for a few days as Comrade [Soviet ambassador to the United States Anatoly F.] Dobrynin's guest and during this time he would be glad to meet with American officials. After consulting President Kennedy, the State Department answered that they were pleased with Comrade Mikoyan's visit to Washington and added that the American government officials were also ready to meet with him. They also raised the possibility of receiving Comrade Mikoyan as an official state guest. Comrade Mikoyan politely evaded this opportunity.

Then the program was worked out under which Comrade Mikoyan met with President Kennedy in the White House, State Secretary [Dean] Rusk at a lunch and Interior Secretary [Stewart] Udall at a dinner. He also met with [Attorney General] Robert Kennedy at this dinner.

This latter meeting was treated very cautiously. Although the Soviet comrades announced that the meeting would take place, they did not reveal any details about it.

The former American ambassador to Moscow, [Llewellyn E.] Thomson, was appointed by the American government as a permanent attendant during Comrade Mikoyan's visit to Washington. When he arrived and four days later left, the event at the airport was attended by the staff of the Soviet embassy as well as the ambassadors of the Socialist countries to Washington, and on behalf of the American party by Ambassador Thomson and chief of protocol Thonesk. Naturally, the representatives of the press were also present.

Comrade Mikoyan had a one-and-a-half-hour unofficial meeting with them on the night before his departure.

On 29 November, Comrade Dobrynin invited the ambassadors of the Socialist countries to a dinner on the occasion of Comrade Mikoyan's visit to Washington. During this dinner, Comrade Mikoyan gave an account of his experiences gained at the meeting with President Kennedy, and made some comments on his visit to Cuba and also on China.

I. Comrade Mikoyan characterized his meeting with President Kennedy as open, honest, and objective. The main issue of the discussion was Cuba; the issue of disarmament was merely touched upon. The president wanted to talk about Laos, too, but Comrade Mikoyan evaded this issue by saying that he had not prepared to discuss it.

In regard to the Cuban issue, Comrade Mikoyan strongly demanded that, since the Soviet Union had already performed its obligations stemming from the Khrushchev-Kennedy agreement, the American party should provide formal guarantees for not attacking Cuba. In his answer President Kennedy gave two arguments. On the one hand, he referred to Comrade Khrushchev's letter of 28 October in which Comrade Khrushchev promised to implement international monitoring on the territory of Cuba. On the other, he explained that given the internal situation (public opinion, the Senate), he was not able to give formal guarantees without international monitoring.

In his answer Comrade Mikoyan called Kennedy's attention to Comrade Khrushchev's letter of 26 November in which the Soviet leader expressly stated that the Soviet Union was ready to enable the international monitoring of dismantling the Soviet missiles provided that the Cuban government also agreed to it. As an explanation, Comrade Mikoyan noted that although the missiles were in the ownership of the Soviet state, jurisdiction over the Cuban territory was obviously exercised by the Cuban government.

Kennedy gave voice to the counterarguments provided by McCloy in New York, stressing that the United States also needed guarantees that Cuba would not receive new mid-range missiles either from the Soviet Union or, in a few year's time, from China.

Comrade Mikoyan left this latter comment by Kennedy unanswered. As an interesting piece of detail, Comrade Mikoyan mentioned at this point that on his way to Havana he met with McCloy in New York and agreed on the monitoring of the missiles on sea. Then Kennedy said that certain American newspapers, relying on information from Cuban émigré sources, were writing about Soviet missiles still being kept secretly in the territory of Cuba. Comrade Mikoyan called this allegation ridiculous; he said that to his knowledge

the air and ground reconnaissance of the United States had already covered every square mile of Cuba. The president admitted that too and noted that he had given orders to the Pentagon not to violate, if possible, the Cuban air space and take photos only by flying in international air space.

Returning to the issue of the American guarantee, President Kennedy asked Comrade Mikoyan to let Comrade Khrushchev know that during his presidency the Soviet Union should not be concerned about any invasion of Cuba by the United States.

At this point Kennedy asked Comrade Mikoyan what position the Soviet Union would take if, for example, the United States decided to set up missile bases in Finland. Would people be able to sleep well in Leningrad in such a situation? Comrade Mikoyan noted that they would sleep just as well as the people in Armenia because of the bases in Turkey, since the United States is aware of the counter-strike they should expect in the case of an attack. Kennedy noted to this that by now the significance and value of the American missile bases deployed in Europe had changed a lot. The United States and the Soviet Union both have intercontinental missiles that can reach each other's territory. At the same time, the Polaris-type submarines make the bases in England, Italy, and Turkey redundant. The American party had already worked out a plan, he said, to eliminate these bases. Kennedy had already given orders to the Pentagon in this regard.

When Comrade Mikoyan told the ambassadors of the friendly countries about it, he also added that to his knowledge these missiles were outdated, and even if they were to be or had already been dismantled, they were still there.

Comrade Dobrynin said (at a later meeting) that to his knowledge the dismantling of the Thor missiles had already begun by the Americans because the Polaris submarines to replace them were already in place. The Turkish bases had Jupiter-type missiles which were also outdated.

I would like to note here that according to the information received from the Czechoslovakian ambassador to Washington [Karel Duda], one of the main reasons for replacing NATO commander-in-chief [Lauris] Norstadt was that he objected to Kennedy's plan to eliminate the missile bases in Europe. Another piece of relevant information that belongs here is what military attaché Varga obtained during a conversation from colonel Roberts, the newly appointed military air attaché to Budapest. The colonel said that the complete dismantling of the missile bases in Europe—because they were outdated—could be expected in the near future.

Kennedy and Comrade Mikoyan had a lengthy conversation on the issue of the Cuban revolution. Kennedy kept on saying that Castro was the enemy of the United States and therefore, his presence in the Caribbean region represented a danger to them.

Contrary to this, Comrade Mikoyan insisted that Castro had been made an enemy by the United States and the best course of action would be to make an agreement with him on the basis of the principle of peaceful coexistence. Kennedy did not accept this view and then asked Comrade Mikoyan in a humorous tone: after all, for how long has Castro been a Communist? Answering in the same tone, Comrade Mikoyan said Castro had been a Communist for about one-and-a-half years, adding that this course of development might be dangerous to Kennedy too. Kennedy evaded this by saying that he was immune to these kinds of dangers, although in his family [Edward] Kennedy, who had just been elected senator, also had some socialist views.

At the end of the meeting the two parties issued a mutually-agreed joint communiqué, stressing that the negotiations to settle the Cuban issue should be conducted in New York by Comrade Kuznetsov and McCloy and [US UN Ambassador Adlai E.] Stevenson. They also agreed that in addition to the Cuban issue Comrade Mikoyan would negotiate with Rusk on several major international issues and there would also be a confidential meeting between Comrade Mikoyan and Robert Kennedy.

II. During the conversation Comrade Mikoyan said that he had left for Cuba<sup>52</sup> with the task of not pushing Castro at any cost regarding the international monitoring.

On the basis of the information received it was clear, he said, that the main difficulty in the first few days would be to convince Castro. He made his well-known statement [when departing New York City for Havana] in order to achieve that, in which he supported Castro's five points [issued on 28 October] although it was clear to him that, for example, it was impossible to negotiate with the Americans on the evacuation of Guantanamo.

Castro, who originally did not wish to come to the airport, eventually came to meet Comrade Mikoyan after the communiqué mentioned above. During the first meeting Castro and Che Guevara stated openly to Comrade Mikoyan that they did not need the American guarantees. They did not have any confidence in such guarantees, so the Soviets should just leave the missiles where they were and the Cubans would defend themselves.

It took long discussion for Comrade Mikoyan to convince Castro and his companions that in the present situation Cuba could only be saved by political means. By the way, Castro and his companions received the Brazilian, Chilean, and Mexican rapprochement very well; especially [Brazilian President João] Goulart's special envoy [Gen. Albino Silva] whose action was seen by the Soviet Union positively from the point of view that it could end Cuba's isolation.

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Comrade Mikoyan characterized Brazilian president Goulart as a clever, smart and realistic politician who did not execute the American orders at one hundred percent, thereby getting ahead of Argentina and achieving a leading role in the South American region.

In regard to the internal situation in Cuba Comrade Mikoyan said that sentiment among the people was good, the leaders were honest and pure people but they had very little experience and were not shrewd enough. They often combined revolutionary enthusiasm with romantic elements. The petit-bourgeois layers of people living in the cities were worse off than before the revolution but the living conditions of the workers and peasants had improved. Some of the land had been collectivized and state farms had been set up on them; and there were plans to accelerate this process. Comrade Mikoyan advised the Cuban comrades that they should act cautiously and slowly as far as the about 50% of land still in private ownership was concerned.

As an example of the bellicose nature of the Cubans, Comrade Mikoyan mentioned that after the Americans repeatedly flew in the Cuban air space, Castro and his leaders, in accord with the Soviet comrades, set their air defense system in action. The Americans always avoided fighting in such a case. Comrade Mikoyan noted at this point that anybody who stated that the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft had been shot down by a Soviet missile—was not wrong.

III. Comrade Mikoyan spoke very negatively about China's activity in Cuba. He said that with their ultra-left-wing views the Chinese confused some of the [Cuban] leaders, especially mid-level leaders, but they practically failed to help upset the enemy. For instance, they could have occupied Quemoy [Jinmen] and Matsu [Mazu] or Macao without any real risk. Instead, they were sending hundreds of thousands of petitions and attacked India, whereby they managed to turn India, at least temporarily, into a country supporting the western camp, to disrupt the Indian Communist Party and give a chance to the Indian right-wing to gain ground, etc.

Finally, Comrade Mikoyan openly said to the Cuban leaders that the Chinese position regarding Cuba was totally wrong. Castro and his colleagues understood this view and in his message addressed to Comrade Khrushchev Castro especially emphasized that Cuba was fully on the Soviet Union's side. As an example, Comrade Mikoyan mentioned the Tibetan and the Hungarian issues. He pointed out that the Chinese, in alliance with the top-level aristocracy, created a situation in Tibet that led to an uprising and they failed to draw the necessary conclusions from it. On the other hand, the Hungarian leaders, together with the Soviet comrades, acted on the basis of self-criticism, admitting that Rákosi

and the Communists were mainly responsible for the 1956 events.<sup>53</sup>

The Cuban issue was only briefly touched upon during the meeting between Comrade Mikoyan and Rusk. They exchanged ideas in more detail on general disarmament [and] the ban on nuclear explosions, as well as on Berlin and the German issue. Essentially, the parties confined themselves to repeating their already known position. As a new element, Comrade Mikoyan noted that the Soviet Union was ready to give permission to set up sealed instrument boxes in the territory of the Soviet Union. The Soviet government also agreed that the boxes should be delivered to, set up in, and then removed from the country by an international monitoring committee to be set up later.

As far as disarmament was concerned, the issues discussed included the Brazilian proposal submitted to the UN on making Latin America a nuclear-free region and the measures to be taken in order to prevent an unexpected attack, which had already been discussed in Geneva.

As for the Berlin issue, Comrade Mikoyan raised the need for the withdrawal of troops stationed in West Berlin. Referring to their NATO obligations, Rusk said that it was not viable. Neither Comrade Mikoyan nor Rusk excluded the possibility of conducting further negotiations by representatives of the two parties on the issues mentioned above. Finally, Comrade Mikoyan suggested that the principle of progressivity, a "step-by-step" approach should be applied when discussing these issues.

János Radványi

Chargé d'affaires

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by András Bocz.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 16

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Soviet-Cuban Conflicts, 24 January 1963

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic

To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest

TOP SECRET!

36/1963/Top Secret

Written: in four copies

Three to Center

One to Embassy

Havana, 24 January 1963

Subject: The essence of  
Cuban–Soviet conflicts

Ref. No.:443/1962/top secret

The observation of events happening since my report submitted by the December mail and the various meetings taking place since then make it possible to prove what has been reported on the one hand, and to draw new conclusions on the other hand.

The Cuban position concerning the place and role of the Cuban revolution and the origin and course of Latin American revolutions is well-known. It was defined by the Second Havana Declaration, it has been completed and commented on by numerous speeches of the Cuban leaders and a series of editorials and lectures. It is not only the Soviet party and with them the European communist parties that cannot approve this position, but also numerous Latin American parties. Ambassador [Aleksandr] Alekseyev said that, in the summer of 1962, when Raul Castro visited Moscow, Comrade Khrushchev had a long conversation with him. He explained to Raul Castro that the Soviet party or himself, Khrushchev, could not interfere in the affairs of other parties and did not want to either; he could not give his opinion about the Havana Declaration, for example, but he thought that the Cuban party should have a debate with the mentioned parties if they did not agree in everything, the Latin American parties could not be neglected, and one could not make decisions instead of them. “After all, you are not the Comintern,” added Comrade Khrushchev.

I asked Ambassador Alekseyev what Raul Castro thought about this, whether he understood what Comrade Khrushchev meant. He answered: no.

Comrade Alekseyev said that the main Cuban leaders and, first of all among them Fidel Castro, despite all the Soviet efforts, had not [believed] and did not believe or understand that, in connection with the Caribbean crisis, the Soviet Union’s aim was to ensure Cuba’s independence and her rescue from invasion. They are convinced that the Soviet Union was only maneuvering and being tactical, she used the

Caribbean crisis and its solution and Cuba only as instruments in the political game with the United States.

Why do they not understand[?], I asked. He gave no answer. As the saying goes, ill-doers are ill-deemers, I continued, is that right? Alekseyev’s deputy, Byelous answered yes, it was nationalism.

I consider unnecessary to list here as evidence the facts that may be read, heard and observed day-by-day on the basis of which I came to the conclusion already earlier that in the Cuban leadership nationalism played an important role.

In Soviet-Cuban relations Cuba’s security and the Cuban ideas about it also play an important role.

Already on 23 October last year, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez told me (and at that time I also reported it) that Cuba was ready to agree to the removal of missiles and etc. if Cuba’s sanctity was ensured also by the Soviet Union.

Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister [Vasily V.] Kuznetsov, visiting Havana recently, talked to Fidel Castro as well. Comrade Kuznetsov told us (the ambassadors of socialist countries) that during the conversation, without explaining his ideas and wishes, Fidel Castro had made three or four unmistakable hints, saying e.g. that Cuba’s situation was singular because the European socialist countries are guaranteed by the Warsaw Treaty, the member-states of the Warsaw treaty looked upon this or that so, but they...etc.

This repeated hint could have served as an answer to Comrade Kuznetsov to some extent, who, during his report on his talks concerning the Caribbean crisis, confirmed to Fidel Castro that the Soviet Union considered Cuba a member of the socialist camp, that is, Cuba was guaranteed by the socialist camp.

The idea occurs that the Cuban position concerning the solution of the crisis is not only a result of non-understanding, but, to some extent, also of extortion toward the Soviet Union. Other ambassadors representing European socialist countries and I have also experienced such a train of thought on the Cuban side as could be summed up in the following way: During the crisis and its solution it was proved that, because of Cuba, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union was willing to start a nuclear war, what would happen then in case of a local war by traditional arms started directly by the USA against Cuba?

János Beck  
Ambassador

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3.d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



## DOCUMENT No. 17

Hungarian Embassy, Havana (Beck), Report on  
“The Visible signs of the Cuban-Soviet Conflict,” 25  
January 1963

The Embassy of the Hungarian People’s Republic TOP  
SECRET!

41/1963/top secret Written: in four copies

Typed by: Elemérné Vajda three to Center  
one to Embassy

Havana, 25 January 1963

Subject: The visible signs of the Cuban-Soviet conflict

Ref.No.: 440/1962/top secret

Through some conspicuous cases, I would like to show how the Cuban leading personalities, the Cuban press, radio, and television reflect the change in the Cuban-Soviet relations.

President of the Republic [Osvaldo] Dorticós’s behavior at the national cultural congress was the same as at the celebrations of 7 November.

Carlos Rafael Rodríguez continued the theoretical part of Cuban-Soviet economic talks in Moscow. During his stay in Moscow, he carried on talks with the Soviet Union’s highest leaders and with Comrade Khrushchev himself, he participated at the Supreme Soviet session, where he had a seat in the presidium together with Comrades Khrushchev and Brezhnev and the Yugoslavian President Tito. The Soviet Information Bureau gave only one photo to the Cuban press of the session of the Supreme Council, so in the Cuban papers was published the picture of the presidium of the mentioned composition. When Carlos Rafael Rodríguez returned from Moscow /I happened to be at the airport at that time/ from Cuban side he was only met by his family and from his office by a few colleagues and by no one from the government or the leadership of the ORI. On the whole, his trip was little discussed in the papers.

Comrade [Soviet deputy foreign minister Vasili] Kuznetsov came to Cuba formally at the invitation of the regular Cuban UN-representative, Carlos Lechuga. No official welcoming ceremony was organized at the airport. Foreign Minister [Raúl] Roa gave a reception in the honor of Comrade Kuznetsov, where from the Cuban side only the following people were present: Members of the government: INRA President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Minister of Communal work Osmani

Cienfuegos and JUCEPLAN President Reginaldo Boti, From the ORI leadership: Juan [Joaquin] Ordoqui, the doyen of the late communist party. There was little reaction to his stay in the press. The biggest photo and news item showed his visit to the HOY redaction [i.e., editorial headquarters—ed.] /He was together with Blas Roca in the picture/.

The delegations visiting Cuba on the occasion of 1 January were given dinner by the ICAP, where Blas Roca gave a speech. In his speech he did not even mention the Soviet Union and talked little about the socialist camp, although at the main table was sitting astronaut [Pavel] Popovich, so by the composition of the delegation, by sending non-political personalities, the Soviet Union offered the opportunity to be talked of suitably without mentioning the disputed questions or even hinting at them. The Soviet delegation, in which also participated high-ranking soldiers /e.g. the commander of the Moscow district/ as special guests, considering the local circumstances and customs, we must say, was little dealt with by the press.

At the congress of Latin-American women, the leaders of the Cuban delegation headed by the president of the alliance of Cuban women, Vilma Espin /Raul Castro’s wife/, behaved in a scandalous way toward the non-member Soviet delegate, Comrade Fyodorova /they avoided shaking hands with her, did not talk to her, seated her in the wrong place, etc./ . In a way shocking the majority, Vilma Espin and her associates delayed the telegram to be sent to Comrade Khrushchev about the solution of the Caribbean crisis, which had also been voted on according to the rules, and forced its rewording.

Instead of listing similar events, I would like to add that, at the various celebrations and meetings, they prevented the masses from singing the International as usual by transmitting e.g. the march of the 26th of July Movement on the loud-speakers. Once I was present when, after the march, someone from the crowd shouted to the tribune: “And what about the International?”

The leaders put up with the fact but do not seem to like that the masses often shout the slogan: “Fidel, Jrusciov, estamos con los dos!” *Fidel, Khrushchev, we are with you!*

In his speech of 1 November last year, Fidel Castro said that he relied on the leadership of the Soviet Union. Since then the Cuban leadership has taken a step backwards practically.

The press does not publish anything either from abroad or from inside that does not completely support the leaders’ daily positions, even if it concerns a party or government statement, greeting or a declaration made in Cuba, or a decision of a congress, etc.

János Beck

ambassador  
to Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



## DOCUMENT No. 18

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on  
Soviet Deputy Foreign Ministry Vasily Kuznetsov,  
28 January 1963

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic  
To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest

TOP SECRET!  
46/1963/t.s.  
Written: in four copies  
Three to Center  
One to Embassy

Havana, 28 January 1963  
Subject: Comrade

Kuznetsov's Report

On the evening of January 17 in the apartment of the Soviet ambassador [Aleksandr Alekseyev], Comrade Kuznetsov gave a report to the Polish, Czechoslovakian, Romanian and Bulgarian ambassadors and me. (The GDR's ambassador was back home at the party congress.)

During the report he talked about the meetings between the Soviet Union and the USA concerning the Caribbean crisis, about the talks on disarmament, the ban on nuclear experiments and Berlin. I consider it unnecessary to report on this part because Comrade Kuznetsov said that in New York there had been close cooperation between the Soviet Union and the other socialist missions concerning one group of the questions. And about his meetings with Kennedy he informed the socialist missions already in the USA.

Comrade Kuznetsov had no pre-determined program for his stay in Cuba. He had his most important, single conversation with Fidel Castro on the 17th. It lasted about two hours. Previously, on the evening of the 15th, Comrade

Kuznetsov participated at the special closing sitting of the Latin American women's congress together with the Soviet ambassador, where Fidel Castro gave a speech (I will report on this separately). Here, in the theater, he was introduced to Fidel Castro before the beginning of the special sitting, who said to him, "I do not offer you a cigar, because Khrushchev, too, gave the cigar I presented to him to Kennedy."

Comrade Kuznetsov, who had never met Fidel Castro before, was surprised at this reception. And the speech heard afterwards shocked him. He scolded his ambassador why own earth he had to be there.

After such preceding events, he looked forward to the longer talks and meetings with Fidel Castro a bit worried. By the 17th, however, Fidel Castro had calmed down and proved a completely different person during his conversation with Comrade Kuznetsov. The conversation, which was interpreted by the Soviet ambassador, consisted of two parts. At the beginning, for about 40 minutes Comrade Kuznetsov reported on the talks between the Soviet Union and the USA on the Caribbean crisis, then a lot more briefly and not mentioning some of the important details he had mentioned to us, he outlined the talks concerning other problems.

Fidel Castro listened to him very carefully, without interjections, then he said he completely agreed with the Soviet Union concerning the essence of the talks on the Caribbean crisis, and he thought that they, that is Cuba, should not do or say anything that would lessen the Soviet Union's possibilities for maneuvers. But he criticized some things concerning forms.

At first Fidel Castro contradicted the evaluation according to which the USA president formally obliged himself not to attack Cuba or allow any other American states to do so. Comrade Kuznetsov had to explain it for a long time that there were numerous ways of making agreements between states and governments, one form of talks and agreement was e.g. what had been realized by the published correspondence of Comrade Khrushchev and Kennedy. After long explanations, Fidel Castro understood it finally.

Comrade Kuznetsov did not mention any other important things that Fidel Castro would have told him, except for the repeated hints, which I am reporting on in my report No. 36/1963.t.s. submitted by this mail.<sup>54</sup>

Comrade Kuznetsov evaluated the conversation saying that Fidel Castro and the Cubans seemed to be forced by the situation to follow the correct policy.

During the conversation started following Comrade Kuznetsov's report, I told what I had heard from Blas Roca about the "details of form" Fidel Castro was criticizing. (Cf. my report No. 479 submitted by this mail.)

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Instead of Comrade Kuznetsov, but with his approval, Ambassador Alekseyev gave a reply and repeated very emphatically that Blas Roca's statements were not true basically. The Cuban leaders had received the right explanation both from him and Comrade Mikoyan, when he was here. Concerning Khrushchev's letter of 28 October to Kennedy, the situation was the following: when it was ready, it was published immediately and announced on the Moscow radio. The statement concerning it sent by the Soviet government to the Cuban government arrived three hours after the publication as a result of the necessary double encoding and listening-in. The situation, however, did not make it possible to wait for three or more hours.

Anyway, the Soviet side has explained that at that time they considered this step pre-harmonized with the Cuban government and they have the right to stick to this evaluation.

János Beck  
Ambassador

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 19

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on "Relations between Cuba and the socialist countries since the [Cuban Missile Crisis] crisis," 28 January 1963

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic TOP SECRET!

47/ 1963/ top secret Written: in four copies

Typed by Eleménné Vajda three to Center one to Embassy

Havana, 28 January 1963

Subject: The relations between Cuba and the socialist countries since the crisis.

Since the Caribbean crisis a by-stander has not been able to see any change in the relations between Cuba and the socialist countries. I could characterize the pre-crisis situation in the following way: The Cuban leadership /the party and government/ was on the right track to form such a relation-

ship with the Soviet Union and the other countries as was between us and the Soviet Union for example.

The crisis and its solution, however, brought up a lot of facts from the Cuban side that make it possible to achieve this only through a longer and more crooked development, in the long run. It has turned out that within the layer of Cuban leaders the number and, most of all, the influence of those who may be really called Marxists and communists is smaller than we believed. We can feel the impact of various nationalist or petit-bourgeois opinions and of the practical standpoints and measures originating from them. I would like to mention only a few phenomena: instead of the economic building work, they still pay the most attention to "world revolution," that is, as the Cubans put it, to the Latin American revolution; the organization of the party needs a long time undoubtedly, but its dragging-on results only from the fact that the importance and role of the party is underestimated; there has not evolved yet a form of collective leadership that can really be called collective; cooperation with the socialist countries is one-sided in the most different fields, it consists mainly of help provided to Cuba.

Before the crisis, the Cuban leaders at most different levels, beginning from the Prime Minister and the president of the republic [Fidel Castro] talked to the ambassadors of socialist countries, even if rarely, but always completely frankly and openly. It was so in the case of the delegates of different ranks visiting Cuba. These conversations did not only make the acquaintance with the Cuban situation possible, but for the Cuban leaders also the acquaintance with foreign opinions and examples, the lessons that could be learnt from them, etc.

Since the crisis Cuban leaders at all levels have avoided us and the delegations arriving from the socialist countries. If there is a conversation, it is far from being as rich in information as before, conversations are formal and empty.

But the main fact is that, without the socialist camp, mainly and first of all, the Soviet Union, revolutionary Cuba cannot go on existing even for days. The leaders are aware of this and, even if in a wavy line, they are leading the country in the direction to become a real and organic part of the socialist camp. Despite all the conflicts, individual opinions concerning the Caribbean crisis, or the divergence in various matters, they are on the side of the socialist camp and the Soviet Union. The elimination of nationalist and petit-bourgeois phenomena, however, will be achieved only by a long development.

So basically there has not been, nor can be expected, any change in the relationship of Cuba and the socialist camp.

János Beck  
ambassador

to Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 20

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Conversation with Cuban foreign ministry official re Hungarian-Cuban relations and Sino-Soviet split, 12 March 1963

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic TOP SECRET!

131/1963/top secret Written: in four copies  
Official: Erzsébet Görög three to Center  
Typed by: Vajdáné one to Embassy

Havana, 12 March 1963

Subject: The opinion of the head of the III. Political Department of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs /Socialist countries/ about the Cuban-Hungarian relations and the Soviet-Chinese dispute.

On 6 March, Comrades Görög and Sütő invited to a dinner the head of the Third Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador [José] Fuxa and the official in charge of Hungarian matters, Siomara Sánchez.

Comrade Görög asked Ambassador Fuxa if they were satisfied with the Cuban-Hungarian relations.

Ambassador Fuxa thought that the relations between the two countries were very good. He could say so both on the basis of the reports received from their embassy to Budapest and on the basis of the friendly, good relations between the Hungarian embassy to Havana and the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He has heard very good opinions about the Hungarian party congress and he has issued the instruction to compile the materials referring to it as he wants to study them more closely.

He considered that the good relations between our countries were characterized by the friendly atmosphere in

which the cultural talks had been carried out, by the useful exchanges of delegations of recent times, etc.

He mentioned that they were going to invite opera-singer András Varga, whose invitation was urged by Ambassador Quintin Pino Machado.

Siomara Sánchez, the official in charge of Hungarian matters told frankly that when he was moved to the Hungarian department, he had not been very happy about it as he had known little of Hungary, he had considered it a not very relevant small socialist country. But after studying Hungarian matters more closely, he dealt with Hungary with enthusiasm and interest. Comrade [First Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party János] Kádár's speeches, the Hungarian party congress had made him unbelievably enthusiastic, he wanted to learn Hungarian. /On the day following the dinner, Comrade Görög sent him a Hungarian-Spanish and a Spanish-Hungarian dictionary./

According to my instruction, Comrade Görög tried to get information about Ambassador Fuxa's position concerning the Soviet-Chinese argument. Ambassador Fuxa—as the Cuban state and party functionaries usually—evaded taking a position, he only answered that the dispute was unfortunate, and he asked back whether she knew if there would be an inter-party meeting between the communist parties of the SU and China.

Otherwise, the dinner took place in a really friendly atmosphere, and even if it did not provide any genuine information, it served as a good starting-point for the creation of the possibility of further exchanges of opinion between the diplomats of the embassy and the competent officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

János Beck  
ambassador

to Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 21

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on US-Cuban Talks, 31 March 1963

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Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic  
To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest

TOP SECRET!  
144/1963/Top Secret  
Written: in four copies  
Three to Center  
One to Embassy

Havana, 31 March 1963

Subject: Cuban–USA Talks

It is well known that from the American side, “lawyer” [James] Donovan participated in the talks concerning the release for compensation of the mercenaries taken captive at Playa Giron [the Bay of Pigs]. Since then, from the Cuban side, Fidel Castro himself has had talks with Donovan at the level of theory and politics, only the technicalities were discussed with Donovan at a lower level.

On “lawyer” Donovan himself, I would only like to make the comment that formally he acts as a private individual and as such did he lead the talks with the Soviet Union earlier concerning the release of [Francis Gary] Powers, the pilot of the shot [down] U-2 and his exchange for [Rudolf] Abel, the spy arrested and convicted in the USA, and it was also he who directed the exchange itself from the American side.

In connection with Donovan's frequent trips to Havana, the Western diplomats had the opinion that through him Fidel Castro carried on talks with the USA government and Kennedy himself, moreover behind the Soviet Union's back, without informing the Soviet Union. Yugoslavian ambassador Boško Vidaković, who appears such a friend of the Soviets before the socialist ambassadors that he looks more Catholic than the Pope, is saying directly that Fidel Castro is playing a double game and he is blackmailing or wants to blackmail the Soviet Union.

The public (abroad) knows only that Donovan's latest trips to Havana were aimed at getting American citizens released from Cuban prisons or their exchange for Cuban diplomats arrested in the USA.

During his conversation with the Czechoslovak ambassador [Vladimír Pavlíček] a few days ago, Prime Minister Fidel Castro, without mentioning the contents of his talks with Donovan, said the following:

He has got to know an intelligent and clever man in Donovan, who is a very hard-talking partner but, on the whole, not ill-willed. Seeing the Cuban reality, he acknowl-

edged a lot of things, the USA would lead a different Cuban policy if it were he who directed politics or had a decisive say in it. During his talks with Donovan, he—that is, Fidel Castro—provided an opportunity for the US government, that is, Kennedy, twice to take relevant steps to normalize relations with Cuba, but Kennedy did not use these opportunities. Never mind, says Fidel Castro, if Kennedy does not consider the situation right for it.

Donovan's talks with others (e.g. a Cuban under-secretary of internal affairs) were extremely violent and pointed, but they have never hindered further connections.

All I would like to add to this is (although it is a repetition) that the Cuban press and Cuban leaders have recently been making distinctions—at last!—in connection with the USA, they do not put everything and everybody in the same category. (There are not only Yankees, but also Pentagon, extreme imperialist circles, “the raging,” etc., as well.) Raul Castro has mentioned to the Romanian ambassador in the past days, and it is not likely to be his private opinion, that for Cuba among the possible presidents at present Kennedy is the best.

János Beck  
Ambassador

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3.d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 22

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Görög), Report on Fidel Castro's Television Report on his Trip to the Soviet Union, 6 June 1963

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic  
TOP SECRET!

242/1963/top secret  
Written: in four copies  
Typed by: Vajdáné three to Center  
one to Embassy  
Havana, 6 June 1963  
Subject: Some comments on  
Fidel Castro's television report  
on his trip to the SU

Prime Minister Fidel Castro's television report on his [27 April-3 June 1963]. trip to the SU was presented briefly in the

press review of 5 June, and since then the Center has probably received it in its whole length too.

I would like to complete the speech with a few things, however, that were not shown in the press review and cannot even be felt when reading the complete text.

Fidel Castro answered the questions of the journalists on the day after his arrival [in Cuba], that is, still under the influence of his SU experience. But what always fascinates Fidel Castro's listeners during his speeches apart from his unheard of oratorical skills are his basic honesty, frankness and sincerity.

This time Fidel Castro was not an orator. He had chosen the form of a television interview because he had felt—with excellent sense of politics—that this subject was not a subject to be given an orator's speech about.

Fidel Castro is a passionate, excellent orator, but I had never heard him speak with such deep and sincere emotion. When he was talking about the Soviet nation, the Soviet people, he was almost disturbed by the journalists' questions.

Anyway, he seemed to be irritated by the journalists' questions lacking logic and sometimes being even provocative / the "dangerous" lag in agriculture/. He sharply criticized the Cuban press. When he was talking about the fact that the Cuban press had published exaggerated praising articles about his reception, in a subdued voice he said to Ithiel Leon, the interviewer of the *Revolución*: "I will talk to the *Revolución* separately!" Probably he was hinting at Juan Arcocha's disgusting reports always ranking him with Lenin, which I already reported on in the previous mail.

The keynote of the whole report was given by Fidel Castro's human modesty. There have been a lot of arguments about whether there is a personal cult in Cuba, what is meant by the special Cuban "cult of hero," whether what surrounds Fidel Castro here can be called a personal cult. Independently of the fact that the essence of a personal cult cannot be seen in the externals but in the lack of collective leadership and in unlawful acts, I would like to stress that it was not out of affected modesty on his part but out of sincere conviction that Fidel Castro, who attributes a great importance to the reaction of the masses, shifted the great celebration he received in the SU to the Cuban revolution and stressed that it had concerned rather the future than the achieved results. And in his report he rejected even more firmly the effusions addressed to his person and he raised his voice only when he was talking about the mistakes.

Fidel Castro's television interview has also shown what turn the Soviet experiences and talks will mean in Cuba's economic, internal, and foreign political life and first of all, in the question of party building and the role of the party.

Erzsébet Görög  
chargé d'affaires ad interim

to Comrade Foreign Minister  
Budapest

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3.d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.*]



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## DOCUMENT No. 23

Hungarian Embassy in Moscow (Szipka), Report on Soviet-Cuban Relations, 21 June 1963

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic  
To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Budapest

TOP SECRET!

486/top secret/1963

Moscow, 21 June 1963

Subject: Soviet-Cuban  
Relations.

001254/1/top secret/1963

Official: Pál Mányik  
Written: in three copies  
Two copies to Center

One copy to Embassy

Since the victory of the Cuban revolution Soviet-Cuban relations have been characterized by continuous development. This is also a result of the anti-imperialist, socialist character of the Cuban revolution and the consistent, internationalist politics of the Soviet Union. The appearance and consolidation of the first socialist state on the American continent is due to the existence and never-ceasing continuous support of socialist countries, mainly the Soviet Union.

It is well-known that the Soviet Union has provided all help to defend the independence and restore the economy of the revolutionary country from the beginning. From the beginning the Soviet Union has fought for the rights of the Cuban people in the UN and at other international forums. The Soviet Union has sent her representatives and specialists to Cuba to assess on the spot what the Cuban people needed.

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Parallel to the Cuban progress, personal connections between the two countries are increasing. Economic and cultural delegations have visited each other's countries. It was a great help to the Cuban economy threatened by American economic blockade that the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries supported them generously and directly when they took over the surplus of sugar of the country, which has a monoculture economic structure, and they provided the most needed means and loans to rebuild the country's economy.

The visit of the Cuban government delegation headed by Raoul [Raúl] Castro to the Soviet Union last fall [sic; summer] and the agreement signed as a consequence was of historic importance too. The declaration published about the talks pointed out unambiguously and clearly that the Soviet Union undertook the responsibility to defend Cuba's independence by all means—including the most modern military technology as well—if the imperialists should attack Cuba. It is well-known that during the Caribbean [i.e., Cuban missile] crisis the Soviet Union carried out this duty by providing the country with appropriate military technology, then, replying to the aggression of the imperialists, making definite and flexible political steps, she ensured Cuba's sanctity and, by this, peace in the whole world.

In the days of the crisis and afterwards, as a result of the complicated international situation, we could observe the signs of hesitation in the statements of some Cuban leaders, which the imperialist press and the opponents of the policy of peaceful co-existence tried to exploit. At the same time, Comrade Fidel Castro and other leaders have always stressed definitely the extremely important help received from the Soviet Union and the inviolable friendship with the Soviet Union. The Caribbean crisis meant great experience for the leaders of the Cuban revolution from an international political aspect too. Since then the events following it have proved numerous times the rightness of the Soviet politics. The Cuban leaders have seen this politics justified in connection with the situation of their own country as well. This was expressed to full extent in Comrade Fidel Castro's historic trip to the Soviet Union [27 April-3 June 1963]. It is well-known that Comrade Fidel Castro's declarations unambiguously and definitely pointed out their full agreement with the foreign policy steps of the Soviet Union.

The news published about the talks and agreements of Fidel Castro and his delegation in the Soviet Union show that the relations between the two countries will develop at an even greater pace in the future and are based completely on the principles of Lenin concerning cooperation between the socialist countries. The agreements signed here determine the direction of relations between the two countries for a long time.

Both among the representatives of the competent departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and among the leading members of the Cuban embassy, we can observe the opinion that Soviet-Cuban relations are developing in a really good direction and are characterized by sincere, comradely cooperation.

There was a great reaction in Cuba to Castro's visit, which increased the unity of the two countries. The mentioned opinions, however, reflect Cuba's present economic difficulties as well. But the country's leaders can see well that these difficulties can be counterbalanced only by persistent and pre-planned work, by the complete mobilization of the people for work. The party being formed now will play a crucial role in providing foundations for this development.

Cuba's international position has become consolidated due to Castro's visit and the political reactions to it. According to the head of the Latin American Department of the [Soviet] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cuban leaders have understood that they should achieve a firm position. They have understood that they belong to the American continent, the neighborhood of American imperialism, which requires a determined but, at the same time, flexible policy. In recent times, we have seen that the Cuban leaders have reacted in a reserved and moderate manner to the USA's policy and there has been a decrease in the sharpness of the declarations against American policy in general. The Cuban leaders can see that the Americans cannot ravage around freely in the Caribbean and the Soviet Union can defend the country's sanctity. They can also witness that Kennedy has given up aggressive experiments for a time and has taken measures to control Cuban emigrants. The head of the American Department of the MID [MFA; Ministry of Foreign Affairs] has considered recently that, although the Cuban crisis cannot still be looked upon as being solved, the tension has decreased considerably in the past weeks. There are still provocations and they can expect them in the future too, but it seems that it is not so important any more for Kennedy to maintain the tension in Cuba and American politics is paying attention mainly to other international issues. Kennedy can see that the Soviet Union always stands up for Cuba and Cuba has not become isolated. Fidel Castro's visit to the Soviet Union warned even the American leading circles to take a more sober position. Comrade [Vladimir] Bazikin has said that they are not sending a high level Soviet delegation this year to Cuba's national holiday on 26 July, because Comrade Khrushchev is expected to visit Cuba in the near future. This will probably take place in August. At the celebrations of 26 July last year, the Soviet Union was represented by Comrade Nina Popova, and they are likely to send a similar delegation to Havana this year as well.

During the conversation Comrade Bazikin confirmed that the Cuban press had published the letter of the Chinese CP. It is difficult to understand why the Cuban comrades considered this necessary.

As a result of the talks of the end of 1962 and the beginning of 1963, the Soviet-Cuban goods exchange agreement concerning the year of 1963 was signed on 6 February 1963. According to the agreement, the Soviet Union is going to supply Cuba with crude oil and oil-products, black and non-ferrous metal, artificial fertilizers, chemical materials, sawn timber, cellulose, paper, cotton, various machinery, instruments, wheat, wheat flour, animal and vegetable fat, canned meat, medicine and other industrial, agricultural articles and articles of consumption to Cuba. In exchange Cuba supplies the Soviet Union with sugar, alcohol, articles containing nickel, tobacco, cigars and other articles.

The Soviet government provides Cuba with a long-term loan under the best conditions to counterbalance their advantage concerning the balance of foreign trade.

At present, the Soviet Union is on the first place in Cuba's foreign trade, about half of it concerns the Soviet Union. Such important needs of the people's economy as, for example, crude oil and oil-products, mineral artificial fertilizers, sulfur, asbestos, cotton, sawn timber, trucks and special cars, machine-tools and a lot of other important needs are satisfied completely from Soviet imports. Similarly, it is the Soviet Union that provides Cuba's population with bread and wheat flour completely.

Besides this, the Soviet Union also provides technical-scientific help to Cuba. Concerning the geological research work, the reconstruction of metallurgy works, power plants, oil-processing factories, car service stations; and concerning the building of educational institutions, the development of nickel and chemical industry, irrigation work and hospital equipment, Cuba receives considerable help from the Soviet Union.

A direct maritime and air connection has been established between the Soviet Union and Cuba. There is also a direct phone and telegraph connection between the two countries. In the Soviet Union there are a great many Cuban students, and a lot of Cuban workers attend professional re-training courses in the Soviet Union.

In 1960 an agreement was signed on Soviet-Cuban cultural and scientific cooperation. Since then they have laid down in cultural work plans the specific actions of cooperation every year. In the past three years the volume of cultural and scientific exchange has almost trebled. The work plan of 1963 signed in March (similarly to previous work plans) reflects the Soviet comrades' intention to help in all of its points. In 1963 about 350 specialists are travelling to Cuba and about

400 Cubans to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union provides Cuba with help in all spheres of culture and science, mainly in the training of specialists and in the organization of new institutions to be set up. In the near future about 120 Soviet specialists are travelling to Cuba to help with the building of a technical network, and numerous professors and university lecturers are going there to convey their experience in teaching economics. At present 100 Russian-language teachers work in Cuba and 75 would-be language teachers and translators study in the Soviet Union. This year about 360 Cubans attend the Soviet Union's higher education institutions (out of them 138 students will start their studies this year).

According to the cultural and scientific work plan, a group of 25 Soviet artists, the ballet of the Great Theater and, at the request of Comrade Fidel Castro, probably the Ukrainian Popular State Ensemble will travel to Cuba. In the Soviet Union the Cuban popular dance ensemble and popular orchestra will appear as guest-artists. They will organize the week of Cuban and Soviet films respectively to show the latest films of the other countries. The Soviet Union will send an exhibition of books, graphics; and posters to Cuba and will receive an exhibition of theatrical scenery. Besides the above, a great many directors [and] choreographers will travel on study trips to the Soviet Union. The work plan prescribes the regular exchange of publications between the central libraries; too.

The societies of artists (writers, composers, journalists, architects, theatrical and fine art artists, etc.) will exchange delegations according to the work plan. The Alliance of Soviet Fine Art Artists will send an industrial art exhibition to Cuba and will present a considerable part of the material to the Cuban comrades.

There is remarkable progress in health and sports relations between the two countries as well. At the request of the Cuban comrades, several expert physicians travel to Cuba, in the field of sports, apart from the various tournaments; the work plan includes sending Soviet trainers to Cuba.

According to the work plan, there will be a regular exchange of programs between the Soviet and Cuban radios and televisions.

The Soviet-Cuban scientific cooperation will become a lot wider through the agreement on scientific cooperation signed in Moscow recently. The Soviet comrades will provide help in the solution of various scientific problems and organizational help in the organization of a science academy in Cuba.

From the above it is clear that, in the present stage of Soviet-Cuban cultural and scientific cooperation, the most important factor is the help of Soviet comrades in training specialists in the various fields of science, education and culture and the experience they convey in the organization of the newly formed Cuban institutions.

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I request you to send a summary report on the development and present situation of Hungarian-Cuban relations so that the Soviet organs could be informed about them.

Ambassador

[József SZIPKA]

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.*]



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## DOCUMENT No. 24

### Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Görög), Report on Reactions to Fidel Castro's Trip to the Soviet Union, 23 June 1963

The embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic TOP SECRET!

255/ 1963/ top secret Written: in four copies

Typed by: Elemérné Vajda three to Center one to Embassy

Havana, 23 June 1963

Subject: The reactions in

Cuba to Fidel Castro's trip to the Soviet Union

Supplement: one

We still cannot assess the consequences of Fidel Castro's trip to the Soviet Union, little time has passed since his return.

But what are the results and reactions that can already be seen and heard?

What we have to emphasize first of all are the progress in socialist competition and the definite increase in efforts made in the field of production. Party organization has accelerated remarkably, even in the country local organizations and district committees are formed one after the other. The Cuban daily press and magazines deal with the details of the visit continuously, they always publish pictures of the visit and they deal a lot more with the SU than before. It is true, however, that the Cuban press—including the party paper, HOY [TODAY] also—published the 25 points of the Chinese party and the Chinese bulletin, the Sinhua [Xinhua, the Chinese state news agency—ed], is full of anti-Tito articles based on the Chinese press and cites the news of the Albanian press a lot, but the Cuban papers have not taken over anything since Fidel's return apart from the 25 points.

Out of the photos of Fidel Castro's trip, the party's agitation [and] propaganda committee has organized an exhibition, where the masses go as on a pilgrimage.

The public opinion is satisfied with the visit. The ordinary Cubans usually emphasize two things: the question of the price of sugar and the increase in Cuba's international prestige.

In the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs the general reaction *I have talked to 5-6 higher employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the question/* is the following: the visit has proved that Fidel Castro is not the "puppet" of the Soviets, Comrade Khrushchev talked to him as to an equal. Generally the grandiose reception has calmed down the agitation of Cuban national dignity of last October.

Reactions among the writers, artists, and the intelligentsia are quite weak, except for the more serious economic and technical intelligentsia, who were happy about Fidel's statement that the economic way of looking at things should be enhanced, people should think "in an economic way."

But the majority of writers and artists were indifferent to the visit. As they have a great fear of the SU's cultural policy, they do not like socialist realism, they worry about their "artistic freedom." I have talked to Fayad Jamis about this question, who—although he did not agree with this—said it would be completely impossible today in Cuba to apply the SU's cultural political principles. Fidel does not want to do so either.

The western diplomats accredited to Cuba stress mainly the following: Khrushchev managed to win Fidel over to his side in the Soviet-Chinese dispute. This opinion is shared by the French, English, and Egyptian counselors, [and] the Indian charge d'affaires, who recorded the fact with satisfaction. I will report on the English ambassador's opinion elsewhere.

The new Israeli charge d'affaires, who was on a first visit to me on 21 June, said that the normalization of North-American relations—despite the fact that Fidel Castro offered to do so repeatedly in his television interview—could be hardly imagined before the American presidential elections [in November 1964].

The visit stirred the Cuban anti-Communist emigration too. According to unverifiable news [reports], in the past two or three weeks there have been several attempts of landing and infiltration by small groups of 8 to 10 people without central direction. The aim of the Cuban emigration having their headquarters in Florida is to press the US government to make an official promise according to which if the Soviet army in Cuba interfered in putting down a Cuban "internal revolt similar to the Hungarian uprising of 1956," the USA would provide immediate military help.

The aim of the anti-Castro Cuban inroads is probably to provoke “Soviet interference” and to make it possible to turn to the US government with such an accusation.

I consider it unnecessary to emphasize that there is no danger of internal revolt. There are smaller active counter-revolutionary groups, but the Cuban army and militia are eliminating them one after the other.

Erzsébet Görög  
chargé d'affaires ad interim

to Comrade Foreign Minister Péter János  
Budapest

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 25

Views of Polish Leader Władysław Gomułka on the Cuban Proposal to Join the Warsaw Pact, 20 November 1963

[...]

On behalf of Cuba, Comrade Fidel Castro has suggested that Cuba should join the Warsaw Treaty. We believe that this suggestion is of great importance if it were to be put forward officially (so far it has not been).

We believe that by realizing this it would meet with total disapproval in the capitalist world. We would not support their entry and there are several reasons for this:

1) Cuba's accession would fundamentally change the present character of the Warsaw Treaty. Now, the emphasis in the Warsaw Treaty is on defense against the FRG's [Federal Republic of Germany's] militarist demands and imperialist tendencies. The treaty does not deal with the entire world, but rather primarily with West Germany. In case of the [Cuban] entry, the nature and fundamental principles of the treaty would have to be changed, and it should be expanded to the entire world. In our opinion, at present this would not be a correct move and this would not be the opportune action even against the United States.

2) The accession of Cuba would not mean the increase of her security; on the contrary, Cuba would likely provoke greater threats against the country.

3) By Cuba's joining [the Warsaw Treaty], the atmosphere of the Cold War would return and would surely influence the ongoing détente process unfavorably within the international political community.

The United States would consider this action as if the Soviet Union has stationed missiles in Cuba, it would create a war scare and would turn international public opinion against us.

Cuba is so far away geographically [from Europe] that when thinking realistically we should know that we cannot support or defend the country immediately. However, the United States would surely take more severe actions against Cuba. Our [positive] decision on Cuba's entry would be beneficial for [US President John F.] Kennedy, since by this he would feel justified and relieved from his publicly announced responsibilities concerning Cuba.<sup>55</sup>

In case of signing [a treaty with Cuba], according to the Warsaw Treaty, armed forces, Soviet armed forces, thus nuclear weapons could and should be shipped to Cuba. In this case the critical situation that occurred two years ago [*sic*: one year ago] would be repeated. Kennedy then could make the world believe that the Warsaw Treaty does not serve the purpose of defense against the Federal Republic of Germany but rather the purpose of attacking the United States.

Since [in such a case] the United States would feel that her territories are threatened, they would surely attack Cuba more severely, with diversion, boycott, stopping ships, etc. All this would influence also international trade unfavorably.

Last but not least this would strengthen unity within NATO.

Against the counter-revolutionary diversion there is no way to protect Cuba, and as a sanction—it is difficult to imagine—to throw saboteurs to Turkey or Greece or to torpedo Western ships.

Diversions of the United States are carried out by conventional weapons, as it is close geographically, alas, there is no need for nuclear weapons. We however, could not grant any support by traditional means, only by nuclear weapons. However, in principle we only apply nuclear arms for defensive purposes, surely not for attacking. We will never initiate an attack, while in case of a diversion in Cuba we wouldn't even realize who the aggressor really was. However, in case we and the United States would intervene, it would surely result in a [major] war.

If Cuba formally requests to join member-states of the Warsaw Treaty, we will decline. Unfortunately Fidel's suggestion is not new and he continues to force this idea onwards determinedly which is the reason why this issue is so serious.

The Cuban leaders somewhat feel suspicious about us and the Soviet Union. Cuba fears to be left alone. On the other hand, on certain issues they do not support the position of the Soviet Union. They did not sign the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Concerning the Warsaw Treaty, if Cuba were to take action, they will surely apply pressure, the Soviet Union will find herself in a hard situation, declining the proposition will surely be difficult. These issues were discussed between [Polish Foreign Minister] comrade [Adam] Rapacki and comrade [Soviet foreign minister Andrei] Gromiko who fully shared our opinion.

We have been informed about that comrade Khrushchev intends to return Castro's visit [to Moscow in the Spring of 1963] and travel to Cuba. Prior to this the debate [on Cuba's accession] in the Warsaw Treaty<sup>56</sup> would surface, hence our intention of discussing this issue with the Hungarian comrades.

[...]

[Source: *Notes on Władysław Gomułka's views on the issues of international politics. 20 November 1963. Minutes of the HSWP Political Committee session, 26 November 1963, MOL, M-KS-288. f. 5/320. ő. e. Translated for CWIHP by Sabine Topolánszky.*]

## Notes

1 Csaba Békés, Ph.D. is founding director of the Cold War History Research Center ([www.coldwar.hu](http://www.coldwar.hu)) and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Political Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, both in Budapest. He is also Associate Professor at Corvinus University of Budapest and a recurring visiting professor at Columbia University. His main field of research is Cold War history, the history of East-West relations, Hungarian foreign policy after World War II and the role of the East Central European states in the Cold War.

2 Melinda Kalmár, Ph.D. is an independent historian and an associate researcher of the Cold War History Research Center in Budapest. Her main field of research is the history of the Communist system and its ideology in Hungary, 1945–1990. Her recently completed monograph on the topic, based on a 25 year archival research, will be published in 2013.

3 About the Cuban missile crisis see, e.g., Vladislav M. Zubok and Constantine V. Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 258–274; and Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *“One Hell of a Gamble”: Khrushchev, Castro and Kennedy, 1958–1964* (New York, W.W. Norton, 1997). See also articles and documents on

Cuban missile crisis published in the CWIHP Bulletin, esp. issues no. 5 (Spring 1995) and 8/9 (Winter 1996/1997).

4 Earlier Khrushchev—since the facts could not be verified—did everything he could to make the world believe that the Soviet Union possessed a huge arsenal of intercontinental missiles, and thus was way ahead of the United States in this field. In an October 1961 speech, US deputy defense secretary Roswell Gilpatric made clear that in fact the reverse was the case. It turned out that in 1962 the US had four times more ICBMs than the Soviet Union. Fursenko and Naftali, op. cit., p. 171. In the following years the disadvantage continued to grow until 1967, and finally only in 1969 the Soviet Union managed to exceed the number of the United States' intercontinental missiles.

5 Due to Khrushchev's demand Kennedy secretly agreed to dismantle the American Jupiter missiles which were installed in Turkey. Since this formally required the approval of NATO, it did not happen until the following spring. About this secret Soviet–American deal only very few officials—including the President, his brother, Robert Kennedy, and Secretary of State Dean Rusk—knew in the US administration.

6 Fursenko and Naftali, op.cit., pp. 281–283.

7 Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the US Dobrynin to the USSR Foreign Ministry, 30 October 1962, CWIHP Virtual Archive, [www.cwihip.org](http://www.cwihip.org).

8 On a new concept of superpower cooperation during the Cold War see Csaba Békés, “Cold War, Détente and the 1956 Hungarian Revolution,” in Klaus Larres and Kenneth Osgood, eds., *The Cold War after Stalin's Death: A Missed Opportunity for Peace?* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), pp. 213–233.

9 See Csaba Békés: “Titkos válságkezeléstől a politikai koordinációig. Politikai egyeztetési mechanizmus a Varsói Szerződésben, 1954–1967” [“From secret crisis management to political coordination. Political coordinating mechanism in the Warsaw Pact, 1954–1967”], in János M. Rainer, ed., *Múlt századi hétköznapiak. Tanulmányok a Kádár rendszer kialakulásának időszakáról*. [Everydays in the past century. Essays on the period of the emerging of the Kádár regime] (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 2003), pp. 26–30.

10 After the Cuban missile crisis the combat readiness ended in Hungary on 22 November 1962. The tendency which started in the Spring of 1961 continued, therefore the defense expenditure was increased again in this period. According to the proposal of the Ministry of Defense in September 1962 the number of the army was to be raised to 85,000 by 1964, and 92–95,000 by 1970. In reality the increase became much more dynamic: in August 1963 the real headcount was already 106,400, and the planned number for 1970 was 120–122,000. Report of Lajos Fehér to the Political Committee, 30 August 1963. MOL, M-KS-288. f. 5/312. ő. e. See also: the Introduction to Hungary and the Warsaw Pact, 1954–1989. Documents on the Impact of a Small State within the Eastern Bloc. Edited by Csaba Békés and Anna Locher, Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact, web site: [www.isn.ethz.ch/php](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php), 2003.

11 Report from the Session of the HSWP PC, 23 October 1962, MOL, M-KS-288. f. 5/280. ő. e.

12 It was published in the HSWP's daily, *Népszabadság* on 24 October 1962.

13 Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Ministers, 25 October 1962. MOL, XIX-A-83-a-245/1962 ő. e.

14 No written records have been found on Grechko informing the Hungarians about the situation concerning the crisis at that stage, only a vague reference is available about his "oral instruction," obviously by telephone (Document 8.). It is also possible that Moscow's ambassador in Hungary provided some information to the Hungarian leaders, since according to the minutes of the CPSU Presidium meeting discussing the Cuban situation on 22 October, "the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should inform Ambassadors representing the countries in the Warsaw Treaty," A. A. Fursenko, ed., *Prezidium TsK KPSS 1954–1964* [CPSU CC Presidium, 1954–1964], Vol. 1, Chernovye protokoly nye zapisi zasedanii, stenogrammy, postanovleniya [Draft Protocols of Meetings, Stenographic Records, and Decrees] (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003). Available in English at <http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/kremlin>. Nevertheless, no record of such information has yet been found in the Hungarian archives.

15 Minutes of the HSWP Political Committee, 2 November 1962, MOL, M-KS-288.f. 5./281. ő.e., Minutes of the HSWP Secretariat, 2 November 1962, L, M-KS-288.f. 7./ 146. ő. e.

16 *Népszabadság*, 26 October 1962.

17 Speech of János Kádár at the party conference in Budapest, 31 October 1962, MOL, M-KS-288.f. 11. 1048. ő. e.

18 Information report about the reactions to [lit. "echo"] the American provocation against Cuba, 24 October 1962, MOL, M-KS-288.f. 11/1038. ő. e., Note about the reactions to the American provocation against Cuba, 26 October 1962, MOL, M-KS-288. f. 11/1041. ő. e.

19 Minutes of the special closed session of the HSWP PC, 5 November 1962. MOL, M-KS-288. f. 5./281/1. ő. e.

20 Greville Maynard Wynne (1919 –1990) published his memoirs quite soon after his release. See *The Man from Moscow: The Story of Wynne and Penkovsky* (London: Hutchinson, 1967).

21 János Kádár's account on his Moscow visit at the session of the HSWP CC, 12 November 1962, MOL, M-KS-288. f. 4/60. ő. e.

22 Raymond L. Garthoff, "When and Why Romania Distanced Itself from the Warsaw Pact," *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 5 (Spring 1995), p. 111.

23 Document No. 20. On Poland, see also Wanda Jarzabek, "Hope and Reality: Poland and the CSCE, 1964–1989," *CWIHP Working Paper* No. 56 (May 2008); Douglas Selva, "The Warsaw Pact and the German Question, 1955–1970," in Mary Heiss and S. Victor Papacosma, eds., *NATO and the Warsaw Pact: Intra-bloc Conflicts* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2008), pp. 178–192.

24 The Hungarian leadership first proposed the establishment of the Committee of Foreign Ministers as early as 1958 but the Soviets did not even reply to the suggestion at the time. See Baráth Magdolna, "Magyarország a szovjet diplomáciai iratokban 1957–1964," in *Múlt századi hétköznapok*, 79. The forming of this body was originally decided on at the first meeting of the WP Political Consultative

Committee in January, 1956 in Prague, but no action followed that decision. As is known, it was eventually established in 1976.

25 Account of János Kádár on the visit of a party and government delegation in the Soviet Union, Minutes of the HSWP PC session, 31 July 1963, MOL, M-KS-288. f. 5/309. ő. e.

26 See the Introduction by Csaba Békés to *Records of the Meetings of the Warsaw Pact Deputy Foreign Ministers, 1964–1989*, edited by Csaba Békés, Anna Locher, Christian Nuenlist, Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact, [www.isn.ethz.ch/php](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php), 2005.

27 Fursenko and Naftali, op. cit. 171.

28 Document No. 16.

29 Document No. 16.

30 Document No. 16.

31 Document No. 16.

32 Document No. 18.

33 Document No. 18.

34 Document No. 19.

35 Not published—ed.

36 Guevara actually made these documents public during his speech on 8 August 1961 to the conference in Punta del Este, Uruguay. See Guevara, "Economics Cannot Be Separated from Politics," 8 August 1961, and reproduced at [www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1961/08/08/1961.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1961/08/08/1961.htm)—ed.

37 This paragraph was added to the document later on a special sheet titled „Insertion”—trans.

38 In July 1961 three revolutionary organizations were merged to form the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI), acting as the Communist party of Cuba. Soon, in March 1962, it was reorganized as the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution (PURSC) which, eventually was renamed the Communist Party of Cuba in 1965—CB and MK.

39 Just before coming to Cuba, Ben Bella had stopped in Washington and met with US President Kennedy—ed.

40 N.P. Dagajev, Colonel General was head of the 10th group at the Soviet general staff. At the time this organ was in charge of coordination with the Warsaw Pact member states' military leadership—CB and MK.

41 The Hungarian government's statement was published in the HSWP's daily, *Népszabadság*, on 25 October. The declaration of the Hungarian government—CB and MK.

42 The Hungarian government declaration adopted on 23 October was published in *Népszabadság* on 25 October. It is worth noting that Kádár gives no explanation, why the declaration was published only on 25 October, and not the day before, if preparing it had allegedly been so urgent that an ad hoc group had to do it on behalf of the government—CB and MK.

43 Jenő Köteles, lieutenant-general—First deputy minister of defence who was acting minister while Minister of Defence Lajos Czinege was hospitalized during the crisis—CB and MK.

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44 Indeed, Kádár received the Cuban ambassador along with two journalists of the Cuban paper *Revolution* and their conversation was published on the front page of *Népszabadság* next to the Hungarian government declaration on 25 October—CB and MK.

45 A detailed account on the mass meeting, including the speeches of deputy prime minister Gyula Kállai and Cuban ambassador Quintin Pino Machado, was published in *Népszabadság* on 26 October. At the rally a message was adopted to be sent to UN Secretary-General U Thant asking for his mediation to solve the crisis—CB and MK.

46 The Soviet government declaration of 23 October was published in *Népszabadság* on 24 October—CB and MK.

47 Cardinal Mindszenty, the head of the Hungarian Catholic Church, sought refuge at the US legation on 4 November 1956 at the news of the Soviet military invasion, crushing the Hungarian revolution of 1956. He stayed at the mission for fifteen years, eventually leaving Hungary in 1971, after long and complicated negotiations among Hungary, the US, and the Vatican—CB and MK.

48 Here and below, the term “Political Committee” is used for this top-ranking party body, which was functionally equivalent to the “Political Bureau” or “Politburo” as it was called in some Communist countries, but not in Hungary—CB and MK.

49 This Central Committee meeting was dedicated to discussing the report of the Political Committee for the forthcoming 8th congress of the HSWP that was held in November 1962—CB and MK.

50 Beck is obviously talking about the lack of experience of the current, post-World War II generation in Cuba and when making general comments on the country’s history, he fails to remember the long struggle for independence from Spain in the nineteenth century. His claim that the present leaders know nothing “the participation of large masses in the revolutionary fight” clearly indicates that he regarded the Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro as more a coup d’état than a genuine popular uprising—CB and MK.

51 Mátyás Rákosi—Head of the Hungarian Communist Party and the Hungarian Workers’ Party from 1945 through July 1956—CB and MK.

52 Mikoyan talked about his visit to Cuba in the first days of November 1962—CB and MK.

53 This was a serious obfuscation. While the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party indeed placed Rákosi and his clique on top of their “four reasons of the counterrevolution” list in December 1956, in official Soviet propaganda the main instigators of the 1956 events were the “Western imperialists”—CB and MK.

54 See Document No. 16.

55 An evident allusion to Kennedy’s political commitment not to invade Cuba in exchange for Khrushchev’s agreement to remove Soviet missiles from Cuba—ed.

56 Eventually no such debate took place and the Cuban proposal was never discussed in the Warsaw Pact—CB and MK.