

March 23, 1963

**From the Journal of A.I. Alekseyev, 'Record of a
Conversation with Fidel Castro Ruz, Prime Minister
of the Republic of Cuba, 20 February 1963'**

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Summary:

Fidel Castro expresses concern over US efforts to isolate Cuba from other Latin America countries, including Brazil, and proposes an initiative to expand economic ties with Canada.

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from the journal of
A. I. ALEKSEYEV

RECORD OF A CONVERSATION
with Fidel CASTRO RUZ Prime Minister
of the Republic of Cuba

20 February 1963

I met with Fidel Castro at the latter's apartment.

[in English] Letter from Khrushchev
. Soviet troops are leaving Cuba
. Vatican contacts
□□
<...>

[Translator's note: the text of Alekseyev's report about the first three points is presented separately under the same message number]

[BRAZIL]

During the conversation Fidel Castro touched on many questions of the policy of the Cuban government and openly expressed himself about them; however, realistic assessments close to our own predominated in his statements with regard to the international situation and the prospects for the Cuban revolution. Fidel has begun to more correctly understand the contradictions of imperialism, allowing the opportunity to maneuver and use these contradictions. It is even felt that he has begun to be comfortable with the possibility of the re-election of Kennedy, although he fears that under pressure from the reactionaries Kennedy might dare a military adventure against Cuba for the purpose of winning votes.

□□

In Castro's opinion, a war is being waged between the US and Cuba in which each side is trying to strike a blow on their enemy's weak spot, at the same time avoiding the possibility of provoking a large conflict. The US is striving to isolate Cuba from the other Latin American countries and urge them to an adventure against Cuba. Cuba is responding to this by strengthening relations with the leading countries of the continent: Brazil, Canada, and Mexico. When doing so, it makes use of the differences which exist between these countries and the US. With respect to Brazil, for example, Cuba is doing everything possible to support Goulart and promote the strengthening of his foreign policy. In particular, Fidel Castro proposes recommending that F. Juliao, the Chairman of the Peasant Leagues, who is coming to Havana soon, pursue a more cautious policy with respect to Goulart's government, and to orient the masses to revolutionary actions not against the current government, but against those reactionary elements which might seize power. Castro thinks that Brazil and possible Mexico will resist American attempts to isolate Cuba in the OAS.

Fidel Castro said further that Cuba will undertake attempts to expand economic ties with Canada, using the differences between this country and the US. A provisional agreement has been reached about organizing direct air and sea links with Canada

and the mass tourism of Canadians to Cuba. There also exists an agreement with large private Canadian firms about granting them fruit plantations in Cuba for processing [fruit], the harvest from which will be exchanged in Canada for vegetables in short supply in Cuba.

Touching on the question of organizing sea links, Fidel Castro asked whether a passenger steamer could be leased from us in the future or exchanged one for one with the new cargo steamers which were built in Canada and recently transferred to the Cubans.

Fidel Castro also said that the Cuban government is trying to pursue a flexible policy with respect to Mexico and Chile.

At the same time, stressed Castro, Cuba cannot remain passive in response to the subversive and aggressive actions of the US and not help the revolutionary elements in Latin America. And if in current conditions the Cubans cannot supply the revolutionaries with weapons [so as] to not fall into the trap of a provocation, then they do not intend to abandon the waging of revolutionary propaganda, and in individual cases to give financial aid to revolutionary groups.

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USSR AMBASSADOR IN THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA (A. ALEKSEYEV)