

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

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Summary:

Memorandum of conversation between Soviet Ambassador Vorotnikov and Fidel Castro

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From diary of V.I. Vorotnikov

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Record of Conference

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

25 June 1979

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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