

**August 15, 1968**

**Information from Bulgarian Ambassador in Havana  
Stefan Petrov to Bulgarian Leader Todor Zhivkov on  
the Domestic and Foreign Policy of Cuba**

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**Summary:**

Bulgarian Ambassador to Cuba Stefan Petrov analyzes Cuba's domestic and foreign policies in an informational report to Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov. Petrov criticizes Cuban Communist Party policies and claims they are incompatible with Marxism-Leninism (e.g. Cuba's focus on conflict between imperialism and national liberation rather than socialism and capitalism). Cuba has adopted an anti-Soviet attitude and believes Cuban leadership is the vanguard of communism. Petrov reviews Cuba's conflicting relations with Latin American communist parties and Cuba's support to guerilla movements in the region. Petrov notes that Bulgarian-Cuban relations remain positive.

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## INFORMATION

RE: CUBA'S DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY [1]

[Bulgarian Ambassador in Havana Stefan Petrov[2]]

In our opinion the materials sent by our embassy provide a realistic picture of Cuba's internal situation and its international status; they realistically describe Cuba's domestic and foreign policies on the most topical contemporary issues.

Upon analyzing Cuba's leaders' policies, and seeking the reasons behind their approach towards solving various problems, the following considerations must be taken into account:

First, for the last three or four years the Cuban government has conceived its own views and conceptions about the most essential problems of modern life, which are incompatible with Marxism-Leninism.

These views and conceptions diverge from our party's views and assessments.

Second, the Cuban Communist Party is basically a newly established party, set up along the principles of uniting the "July 26th" movement, the old communist party and the "13th March directorate." The "July 26th" movement has managed to gradually usurp all key party and government positions; it has managed to impose the global revolutionary process as a concept and its own model of building socialism on the present leadership of the Cuban Communist Party.

The present leadership of the Cuban Communist Party has actually taken over power. In the past, prior to the Cuban revolution, all members of the present leadership used to be revolutionaries with not well-established ideological views; many of them were anti-communists, or at least had adopted views, quite different from the communist ideology. These were mostly intelligentsia, participants in the students' movement, and followers of Marti's ideology, that had mixed views and conceptions. All this impacted the party's policy, which, though referred to as communist, is not a well-established communist party yet.

Step-by-step, within the 1962 to 1968 period, after the January plenary session, Castro managed to do away with the old communist party and establish, at his own discretion, a new one in its place.

Sectarian mistakes and blunders on the part of Escalante and other party leaders, who failed to get properly oriented, motivated Castro. Mistakes were made both during the revolutionary struggle and after it.

Third, without taking into account certain traits of Castro's personality, it will be difficult to analyze Cuba's domestic and foreign policy. It is Castro that has been shaping it so far.

In his activity Fidel Castro is an idealist, and, in many cases, an adventurer. He would like to establish a new social order, ignoring socialism's basic laws, and the CPSU's experience, and seeking an independent "peculiar" manner of solving both international and domestic problems.

Despite the fact that he calls himself a Marxist-Leninist, he is unable to make a Marxist analysis of all facts and events. His leadership obsession and self-confidence and self-conceitedness, [as well as] the over-estimation of his own strengths and merits, prevent him from being able to study the others; such features of his character determine the adventures he is likely to get involved in, especially under more complicated circumstances.

Castro's development as a revolutionary reveals his close relations with the intelligentsia, the students' movement, and his distance from the working class. His petty bourgeois background has strongly affected his personality.

The revolution's triumph and his leadership are the factors that enhance his negative features: narcissism, adventurism, and obsession with being the leader; therefore he tends to consider himself the leader of all Latin American peoples, along with being Cuba's leader. Being unable to carry out a Marxist analysis of the actual circumstances that predetermined the successful end of Cuba's revolution, he readily generalizes his revolutionary experience, considering it as mandatory for Latin America in general; hence the mistakes he makes.

[...]

Fourth, Castro's anti-Soviet attitudes. He cannot appreciate the USSR's part in the winning of Cuban independence. He can neither understand, nor appreciate the USSR's part in the world revolutionary process. He has adopted a similar stance towards both American imperialism and the Soviet bloc.

Castro's attitude towards the Soviet Union is cold and distanced, often even hostile. For quite some time now the Cuban leaders have adopted a policy of denying and undermining the CPSU and the USSR's role and significance. The process of distancing from the USSR has become more significant.

Such a policy is hazardous, and therefore surprises are likely to take place.

Fifth, the manifestations of nationalism among Cuba's leaders. Although they are constantly talking about internationalism, their actions are essentially nationalistic.

All these circumstances affect our relations with Cuba, and set up obstacles to the further progress of political relations.

Notes on certain aspects of Cuba's foreign policy and its attitude towards the international communist movement

For the last five or six months there has been no visible change in Cuba's foreign policy.

[...]

The different opinions relate to almost all basic issues of the communist movement. On the international communist movement issues.

For the last two years the Cuban conceptions about their "own" way of development and the international communist movement have been clearly shaped. Within a short period of time the gap between Cuba and the international communist movement has seriously widened, affecting a number of core present-day issues; this gap actually set a new trend in their relations and was a result of the peculiarities of the Cuban revolution.

These trends are the following:

Cuba claims to have a leadership role in guiding the world revolutionary process;  
Cuba wants to enforce its own policies and conceptions upon Latin America's communist parties, employing [various means] from exporting [its own] revolution to supporting factions within [other communist] parties;  
Cuba underestimates and denies the CPSU's role;

it declares that the international communist movement's methods and strategy are outdated and useless;

it is an opponent of the socialist countries' policies, especially in moments of acute collisions in the international arena;

These trends have become the basic points in the policy adopted by the Cuban leaders. The attempts made to apply these views in real life have resulted in economic difficulties and have hindered relations between Cuba and the brotherly parties.

These trends determined certain activity of Cuba's leaders.

The OLAS conference of July 1967 did not yield the expected results. It actually turned out to be a failure. The conference's bodies have been dissolved. The conference granted to Cuba the position of secretary general of the elected commission at OLAS. However no person has yet been appointed. OLAS's commission has neither been set up, nor has it convened. The only practical result has been the growing tension between Cuba's leaders and the brotherly parties.

Guevara's death was a terrible blow to Cuba's policy. Until his group's defeat, Cuba tried to stimulate revolution on the continent; it actually organized about 40 small guerilla groups within different Latin American countries. Yet all these attempts failed. Other failures followed in 1967: Regis Debray, the famous proponent of the Cuban conceptions, was captured by the enemy and was forced to disclose many things.

Three Cubans were captured as they were trying to unload a group of guerillas along Venezuela's coast.

A group of Cuban comrades died in Bolivia.

Douglas Bravo made efforts to split the party, and these were attempts to make the party give in. On the other hand, there were unscrupulous/ruthless attacks coming from Cuba. All these attacks against the party--organized by people outside Cuba and people within Cuba completely failed. These attempts proved to be futile. His guerilla group's action showed no development or success.

The Guevara plan, according to which a powerful guerilla base was to be established in Bolivia, and serve as a point from which military and armed groups were to be sent to all countries on the continent, proved to be a complete failure as well. Guevara's name is related to Cuba's most mass-scale attempt to implement its policy on the continent. Yet Guevara's death proved the futility and wrong course of the Cuban Communist Party's policy.

For quite a long time the Cuban comrades have not tried to conceal the growing gap [between them and the leaders of other] communist parties. On the contrary--they have been emphasizing [the deteriorating relations with] these parties and point to that as the ground for carrying out certain activities.

They refused to send a delegation to the German Unified Socialist Party's congress, justifying their decision by stating, that they had conflicting stances on definite issues of our contemporary development, and that they were therefore unwilling to cause problems to Cuba's relations with the socialist countries. Cienfuegos maintained that the communist parties turn their congresses into tribunes of the international communist movement; these forums are used as places from which attacks against Cuba's ideological conceptions are triggered (the Bulgarian Communist Party's ninth congress was provided as an example in this respect; another example was the visit

of [Mario] Monge [Molina], until recently First Secretary of the Bolivian Communist Party, to Cuba in January 1967; he was informed of Castro's disapproval of the ninth congress of the Bolivian Communist Party, and the fact that Jesus Faria has been given the floor, for he attacked Cuba's leaders). Cuba's unwillingness to spark such a debate gave rise to its leaders' decision not to send any delegations to such congresses in the future.

The Cuban leadership makes no effort to seek ways of overcoming its ideological differences with the international communist movement. On the contrary, Castro has made it clear, that Cuba has taken its own road of development, and that it is determined to follow it, despite all risks that it might be exposed to.

Top-level Soviet comrades, such as Gromyko, Masherov, Rashidov, and others have visited Cuba; during their talks Cuba's leaders have manifested their unwillingness to have a frank discussion and to seek by Cuba the appropriate ways to overcome the differences. That attitude was demonstrated by Cuba during the talks with Kosygin. For months on end, the Cuban comrades have been putting off answering comrade Andropov's request to visit, thus actually canceling it.

There have been cases of representatives of the other fraternal parties, secretaries of the Central Committees of the Mexican, Columbian or Venezuelan parties, coming to Cuba to have talks on debatable issues; Castro would keep them waiting for 10 or 15 days in Havana and finally would not have any meetings with them.

[...]

There follows a brief account of the ideological differences between the Cuban leadership and the international communist movement:

on the nature of the major antagonism of the contemporary age. Cuba is of the opinion that it is the antagonism between imperialism and the national liberation movements rather than between socialism and capitalism;

the world can be divided into two types of countries: poor and rich, irrespective of their social order;

on the nature of peaceful co-existence. The latter is considered by Cuba's leaders as a conciliation with imperialism; therefore they favor the idea of having "the first, second, third...many Vietnams..."

the driving forces of Latin America's revolution. The role of political parties is rejected. Debray's theory is essentially aimed at establishing the petty bourgeoisie's leading part in the revolutionary process. Hence the practical conclusion arrived at: the revolution is viewed as the fruitful result of a couple of convinced people's courage and bravery rather than the logical result of class struggle;

The USSR's and the socialist countries' experience in building socialism is denied; thus the USSR is underestimated and undermined.

Lenin's theory can not be further developed;

The international communist movement's significance is refuted, for its strategy and means of struggle are considered outdated.

Here are some facts that attest to these differences. Cuba is known to have taken part in the Budapest Conference of the fraternal parties; however its press gave no releases on this conference. Yet the Cuban CP CC's bulletin published all of the telegrams revealing the conference's weaknesses, as well as the comments of the western press. Materials on the statements made by Romania's delegation were published. Upon the conference's closure, there was a special edition of the same bulletin, which published all of the Romanian delegation's materials and documents, [as well as] the conference's resolutions and comments in favor of the behavior of the

Romanian delegation.

For the last several years Cuba's policy has increasingly distanced [itself] from the international communist movement, and has even openly opposed it at times.

[...]

Cuba's leaders are not choosy in selecting their friends - among them are pro-China, Trotsky's proponents, bourgeois revolutionaries, anti-communists, etc. What matters only is that these friends support Cuba and make official statements in favor of the Cuban Revolution; they must openly state that the latter provides the correct solutions to all contemporary problems, the revolution and the building of a new society; they must maintain that the communist movement has been experiencing a deep crisis and is outdated and has no significance and thus is unable to guide and govern the struggle; a new theory and [new] ideological weapons are necessary.

Cuba's leaders consider themselves the modern Leninists and they are determined to struggle to attract parties and communists to their cause. They hope that our parties, including the CPSU, will undergo ideological changes.

[...]

Cuba's leaders are looking forward to establishing new contacts with the fraternal parties, and will therefore be working actively in the places, where success may be anticipated. Its relations with [North] Korea, [North] Vietnam, a specific attitude to the German Democratic Republic, and Romania, show Cuba's orientation towards smaller countries, and countries situated in strategically important spots. Cuba's policy is targeted at setting up such a political bloc, comprising of smaller socialist countries and of those that tend to distance themselves from the standard ideological postulates.

There is evidence that shows that such a policy is adopted to distract our attention from the USSR, and this bloc is established to oppose the USSR; thus Cuba wants to show that it is getting along well with all other countries, except the USSR.

Cuba's relations with the communist parties in Latin America.

It is well known that the Cuban leaders have undertaken a mass-scale attack against Latin America's communist parties during the preparation of the OLAS conference. Since then, the attacks in the press or in the leaders' speeches are not so frequent. Yet their relations and attitudes have not changed much. Whenever Venezuela is talked about, a remark is always made about the Venezuelan communist party. The relations with Guatemala's Labor Party and the Dominican Communist Party have become complicated to some extent.

On its relations with Guatemala's labor party. We recently informed you that under pressure from Cuba, a group of guerrilla chiefs, under the leadership of Cesar Montez, opposed the party, denouncing its leaders as unreliable, and as accomplices to the opposition in committing much wrong-doing; they have set up a commandment for a unified political and military command of the guerrilla groups. Venezuela's example was followed. Then the groups united with Ion Sosa's squad, when Sosa was elected first officer-commander, and Montez--second officer-commander. These attacks against the party brought about a crisis in their relations with the Cuban leaders.

On its relations with the Dominican communist party. The Kaamaño case undermined relations of mutual trust. After unity was reached within the party, and they adopted a common program for action with democratic Dominican leaders and leftist organizations, the Cuban leaders organized Kaamaño's transfer to Cuba, against the

party's will; he was then trained to act independently with Cuba's help, thus following the manner of the operation [carried out] in Bolivia.

Fabio Vazquez's efforts were aimed at imposing Cuba's policy on Colombia's revolutionary movement; his guerillas are now painstakingly trying to separate Marulanda from the party and make him follow Fabio Vazquez's behavior or actions.

Cuba keeps training Latin American military groups, so that they may be transferred to their respective countries. We have information about the training of groups from Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua. The latter are members of the pro-China group in Nicaragua.

These facts are indicative of the fact that there has been no significant change in Cuba's policy, nor in the political means [by which it attempts] to implement its strategy in Latin America, although it has become less influential.

Latin America's communist parties share a negative attitude towards Cuba. The criticism of certain communist parties about their lagging far behind the events, the lack of an active leadership and the outdated methods used is based on facts. However, denying these parties' role in the struggle, Cuba's brutal intervention in their internal affairs and stimulating adventurism, has nothing to do with the brotherly concern about their position and attempts to assist them in their work.

Therefore, as a result of the pressure they have been exposed to by Cuba, and their objective development, these parties face the necessity of having to reconsider their ideology and make a serious analysis, on the one hand, and having to restructure their work, on the other; they will therefore be able to strengthen their avant-garde role and increase their active participation in the revolutionary struggle.

At present Latin America's communist parties face two major threats:

There is a threat of being pressed by Cuba to adopt its adventurous policies; this course may be brought to pass by the younger generation of the parties, or by a separate member of the party leadership; another factor that may provoke adopting such a political course may be the guerrilla groups that have been established within the countries, despite the disapproval of the communist party.

This threat is more than probable. Many communist parties such as Venezuela's, Guatemala's, Honduras's, Nicaragua's have actually been affected by such a policy. After the conference of OLAS and Guevara's death, parties have been strengthened and are likely to resist such adventurism. However, should Cuba's leaders keep organizing guerilla squads in the countries of Latin America and [keep] attacking the communist parties there, then more problems will arise, and these countries may yield to the pressure they are subject to. Hence the danger and threat of undertaking adventurous actions and thus weakening the parties' unity and the revolutionary movement.

Another threat is their underestimating the changing environment on the continent. Unless the party leaders respond to these changes adequately, showing their activity, flexibility and skill in uniting and consolidating the democratic and revolutionary forces, the problems within the parties are likely to be aggravated. An example of this is the situation in some of the parties in the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Brazil, and some others. There is a tendency towards a renewal that unfortunately is beyond the party leaders' control; this renewal does not always comply with the party norms. It is often accompanied by extremism both in terms of action and ideas.

On the Cuban leaders' attitude to the USSR

Even with the new Soviet Ambassador to Havana, [Alexander Alexeyevich] Soldatov, taking office, the situation has not changed much. The Cuban CP's [January 1968] plenary session struck a terrible blow at relations between Cuba and the USSR. Insinuations about the USSR's exerting pressure on Cuba have been maintained in a hidden form. Insinuations about the USSR's exerting pressure on Cuba can still be assumed.

Some Cuban leaders still argue that Cuba does not conduct an anti-Soviet policy, and that the present situation is transitional and a result of a micro-faction's action. However that is not so. There is evidence that the distancing from the Soviet Union is becoming a well-considered policy of the Cuban leaders.

At a recent meeting between the new Soviet ambassador to Havana and Fidel Castro, the latter maintained that the Soviet Union is unwilling to help Cuba and that it has adopted an incorrect policy towards Cuba. He [Castro] was very distanced and did not show any willingness to seek ways to improve contacts and normalize relations. There was no press release about this meeting.

The lack of tribute paid to the USSR's role and the disgracing of the Soviet Union has lasted for years. This negative attitude was enhanced with the Caribbean crisis.

Tension has artificially been built up along the following lines:

a) The strategy and tactics of Latin America. The Cuban leaders insist that the parties adopt their [Cuban] assessments, methods and forms of struggle. According to the Cuban perspective, the Cuban Revolution will be exposed to the risk of being invaded by imperialism, unless the revolution is triumphant on the whole continent. Even when there are no prospects for a successful end to the armed struggle, the latter still deprives the USA of its opportunities to attack and invade Cuba.

The policy of intensifying the trade relations and economic cooperation between the Latin American countries and the socialist countries is considered a blow behind Cuba's back. This policy totally contradicts Cuba's policy in Latin America. We have been blamed not only for helping people that kill the partisans, but for the regimes that are boycotting Cuba as well.

Cuba opposes the policy of peaceful co-existence, considering it a form of reconciliation with imperialism.

The draft of the Treaty on Nuclear Arms Proliferation, that was tabled for discussion before the UN, was yet another reason for Cuba to attack the Soviet Union's policy and consider it analogous with the USA's.

It must be noted that recently there has been a marked difference in Cuba's attitude towards the European socialist countries and the USSR.

Cuba keeps maintaining that it is much easier to achieve understanding with the smaller socialist countries; that we have many things in common, and that our experience might well be the guiding light for Cuba building socialism.

Or as Castro pointed out in his speech of 30th May, the countries that are exposed to the danger of imperialism, such as Cuba and the German Democratic Republic, have to work in close cooperation.

[...]

III. On our work in Cuba and the further development of our relations.



The development of relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union will determine Cuba's future relations with the socialist countries. Moreover, these relations will determine the future policy adopted by Cuba's leaders.

The problems in the relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union arose during the Caribbean crisis. It is a well-known fact that Cuba has not yet come to terms with the missiles being moved from its territory; therefore the Caribbean crisis brought about the distrust of Cuba's leaders towards the Soviet Union. The negative attitudes were supposed to fade away and be overcome with time.

In 1964 Fidel Castro visited the Soviet Union for a second time. The documents signed gave rise to confidence that problems resulting from the Caribbean crisis were being overcome.

At the end of 1964 the conference of the Latin American communist parties was held; this conference was positively regarded as an important step forward to further improving the relations between the CCP and the communist parties of the other countries on the continent.

[...]

On the further development of our relations in the present situation

All circumstances, outlined so far, will obviously determine the further development of our relations.

As we have already pointed out, Cuba's leaders have manifested a positive attitude towards our country and party. They are looking forward to Todor Zhivkov's visit. The Cuban leaders take an interest in this visit. This visit will strengthen its authority and prestige both within the country and abroad. Our party is popular in Cuba. Georgi Dimitrov's name is well known.

Another factor that determines Cuba's positive attitude is the high-quality work of our specialists there.

[1] This confidential report was delivered directly to the Head of Zhivkov's Office Milko Balev in connection with Zhivkov's visit to Cuba, postponed for 1970.

[2] Ambassador to Cuba (1967-1969) and to Algeria (1976-1981).