

**May 18, 1960**

**Note on the Conversation between Ambassador  
Zvonko Grahek and Prime Minister Fidel Castro at a  
Dinner at Minister Roa's, April 26, 1960**

**Citation:**

"Note on the Conversation between Ambassador Zvonko Grahek and Prime Minister Fidel Castro at a Dinner at Minister Roa's, April 26, 1960", May 18, 1960, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Arhiv Jugoslavije (Archives of Yugoslavia), Belgrade, KPR, I-5-b/61-1. Contributed and translated by Radoslav Yordanov.  
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/300987>

**Summary:**

Fidel Castro talks about Cuba's relations with Yugoslavia, the United States, and other countries in Latin America.

**Original Language:**

Serbo-Croatian

**Contents:**

Transcript - Serbo-Croatian  
Translation - English

## ZABELJEŠKA

o razgovoru ambasadora Zvonka Graheka sa predsjednikom vlade Fidel Casrom na večeri kod ministra Roa, 26 aprila 1960 god.

Razgovor je trajao 6 sati.

Prenio sam Kastru pozdrave druga Pretsjednika.

Primio je srdačno, ali nije zatražio da i ja prenesem pozdrave.

Poslje pozdrava predao sam mu Atlas NOB na španskom. Odmah se zainteresovao, pregledavajući ga detaljno. NOB je postala tema razgovora oko jedan sat, pri čemu je se detaljno interesovao za način organizovanja ustanka, način ratovanja, u kojim je krajevima ustanak bio najintenzivniji, itd.

Razgledajući slike o boravku kubanske delegacije na Kongresu SSRNJ, Kastro se interesovao za njegov karakter i program. Che Guevara je tom prilikom pomenuo da su dobili od delegacije vrlo interesantan izveštaj. Medjutim, o sadržaju nije ništa rekao. Kaže samo da su prilikom pomena imena Fidela bile prave ovacije.

Interesovao se za naše odnose sa crkvom. Osjećaju da će tu da dodje do teškoća. Oni mnogo vode računa o tome da sa svoje strane ne daju povoda za bilo kakva razmimoilaženja. (Napomena: imaju isti principijelan stav prema crkvi kao i mi).

Na moje pitanje odgovorio je da očekuju neku formu invazije uz moguću asistenciju SAD. Do takvih procjena dolaze deduktivno. Ekonomska blokada ne može da bude efikasna, jer su uspjeli da se probiju na vanameričko tržište. Unutrašnje miniranje putem pete kolone, koja ne može da se organizaciono oformi, ne može biti efikasno. Slična intervencija kao u Gvatemali 1954 ne može da se primjeni u kubanskom slučaju. Pošto SAD nisu spremne da prihvate revoluciju kao gotovu činjenicu, a svaka od navedenih mjera posebno i sve uzete zajedno ne mogu da je ugroze, oni očekuju i prlpremaju se za neku vrstu invazije.

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SAD su u odnosi na Kubu pravilo grube političke greške, koje su oni uspjeli dobro da iskoriste. Medjutim, u posljednje vrijeme došlo je do pormjena u političkoj akciji. Poslije eksplozije broda sa oružjem nema vise nadletanja aviona, prave se "prijateljski" gesti, ambasador SAD se pojavljuje na raznim manifestacijama, obilazi Kubu, cesto posećuje MIP, itd. Direktna antikubanska akcija prešla je iz SAD u druge zemlje LA. Osnovna linija političke akcije SAD je sada na formiranju pete kolone u Kubi. S druge strane, pokušava se izolirati Kuba od ostalih zemalja LA na antikomunističkoj platformi s ciljem da se na taj način pripremi teren za akciju protiv Kube primjenom interameričkih ugovora.

I SAD iskorištavaju njihova greške. Na primjer, u jednoj izjavi na televiziju zaletio se i kazao da Kuba ne priznaje one interameričke ugovora koje nije potpisala. To su naveliko eksploitalisali, iako je naknadno dat zvanični demant.

Medjutim, planovi im se brkaju nekim neočekivanim događajima. Pomenuo je Kongres za slobodu i demokratiju koji je sazvan u Venecueli u cilju osude Kastrovog ekstremizma, a izglasao je rezolucije o podršci kubanskoj revoluciji. Roa je tom prilikom primjetio da su tamo uputili svoje ljude koji su to izborili. Bio je i on pozvan ali je, naravno, odbio. Dogadjae u Koreju i Turskoj je, takodje, ocenio kao povoljne za kubansku situaciju.

Kaže da se spremaju tako kao da će invazija odmah da usljedi. Uvežbavaju trupe u Siera Maestri za gerilsko ratovanje, organizovali su miliciju i ubrzano je obučavaju. Najvažnije je to sto oni u isto vrijeme popularnim mjeruma sve vise vezu narod za sebe (Napomena: Naročito u provinciji Oriente diži škole, bolnice, stanove, veliki školski grad za 20.000 djaka i studenata itd. kao da ocjenjuju da će ova ustanička provincija i u slučaju novih teškoda biti glavno uporište). [...] Zatim je na moje inte-

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resovanje detaljno objasnio karakter njihova agrarne reforme. Kaže da su nastupali vrlo oprezno, postupno su precizirali svoje namjere. Zato su ih, na primjer, latifundisti podržavali i svak je na svoj način interpretirao njihovu opštu parolu agrarne reforme.

Prvim zakonom iz te oblasti još u Sierra Maestri rekli su samo da svi oni seljaci koji u raznim formama zakupe drže posjede manje od 5 kavaljerija (1 caballeria = 13,46 hektara) postaju automatski vlasnici tog posjeda. Time su učvrstili podršku seljaka a pitanje agrarnog maksimuma je ostalo otvoreno. Po dolasku na vlast pripreman je Zakon o agrarnoj reformi. Niko nije bio u principu protiv. I pored otpora uspjeli su da se prihvati agrarni maksimum od 30 kavaljerija.

Naročito je ukazao na to da je njihova praksa radikalnija od zakona, suprotna očekivanjima na osnovu sličnih iskustava. Zadrugarstvo je osnov njihove reforme. Iako su proklamovali podjelu zemlje seljacima, nisu rasparčavali latifundije. Samo u ozakonili postojeće stanje rasparčanosti nekih veleposjeda na kojima su radili seljaci u raznim formama zakupa. Podvukao je da oni time nisu stvarali sitni privatni posjed nego su samo dali pravo vlasništva nad parcelama od 5 kavaljerije onim seljacima koji su te parcele inače već obradivali ali nisu bili vlasnici. Inače, latifundije koje su obradivalu poljoprivredni radnici, pretvorili su u kooperative.

U pogledu raznih prigovora da se njihova revolucija odvija bez ideoloških koncepcija on objašnjava da je njihova parola: "Revolucija se izgrađuje etapno na konkretnim djelima, a ne na teoretskim diskusijama." Ovo ne zbog toga što rukovodstvo nema jasne perspektiva već zbog toga što im politički takve diskusije danas mogu samo da štete. Glavna njihova parola je jedinstvo Naroda, a teoretske diskusije u današnjoj situaciji politički bi se svodile na pitanje za ili protiv komunizma. Pri tome treba imati u vidu istorijski razvoj situacije u Kubi, s koji je sličan u čitavoj Latinskoj Americi. Naime, godinama se ovdje putem svih mogućih sredstava razvijala vrlo snažna antikomunistička kampanja, koja je ostavila dubokog traga u narodu. Slikovito je to objasnio na slijedeći način: Ako se presječnog Kubanca pita da li je za agrarnu reformu,

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odgovoriće pozitivno; odgovoriće isto tako pozitivno na pitanje da li je za sve druge društveno-ekonomske reforme. Medjutim, ako ga se zapita da li je za komunizam, on će isto tako odlučno odgovoriti — ne. Prema tome, stvoreno je takvo mentalno stanje kod ljudi koje se može izmjeniti samo postupnim, konkretnim djelima. Tako se paralelno sa razvojem Revolucije vrši i revizija pojmova. Danas se već ljudi počinju da pitaju: ako je ovo komunizma - kako tvrdi antikubanska kampanja - onda taj komunizam nije loš, on je prihvatljiv za nas. Ljudi počinju da razmišljaju o istinitosti svega onoga što im se ranije serviralo. Medjutim, taj proces mentalnog preobražaja ljudi će još dugo trajati.

Ha pitanje Guevari kako je uspio da uštedi za 4 mjeseca 70 miliona dolara, odgovorio je duhovito Fidel - "Pogledajte po radnjama pa ćete naći odgovor. Ako pitate ima li putera i drugih stvari odgovoriće da nema". Sve njihove mjere ekonomske politike su antiinflationog karaktera.

Na moje pitanje o tome kada se može očekivati njegov susret s drugom Pretsjednikom, Kastro kaže da treba da ide u UAR, Jugoslaviju i SSSB. Ima želju da to bude u ljeto ove godine. Medjutim, situacija je ovdje takva da je neophodno da on svakih 15 - 20 dana govori narodu. To bi bio vremenski maksimalan rok za posjetu navedenim zemljama. Roa je ubacio Veliku Britaniju. Želi da obavezno vidi mjesta gdje su se vodile borbe u Jugoslaviji, jer je njihova oružana borba na Kubi bila minijaturna prema veličini NOB. Borba jugoslovenskih naroda mu je čitavo vrijeme njihove borbe bila pred očima.

Sa interesovanjem je prihvatio diskusiju o potrebi njegovog većeg angažovanja u svjetskim pitanjima. Priznaje da u njegovim govorima skoro potpuno dominira problematika Kube i njenih odnosa ga SAD i LA. Napominje da je istupao o Alžiru nekoliko puta i da je prilikom posjete Mikojana govorio i o širim pitanjima međunarodne politike. Ne smije da se zaleti, moraju da imaju u vidu pripadništvo Kube Interameričkoj organizaciji. Ali, podvlači, svakako će postepeno tim problemima više poklanjati pažnju. Uz podršku Roa nabačena je mogućnost izjava u tom smislu prilikom posjete Sukarna. Sa stanovišta te šire međunarodne afirmacije Kube govoreno je o potrebi posjete Kastra zemljama kojima je već najavljena posjeta i drugima.

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Interesovao se za druga Pretsjednika. Gaji veliko poštovanje prema njemu. Predložio sam mu pismeni kontakt što je primio na odobravanjem.

Kastro je pitao kada drug Pretsjednik namjerava da posjeti Kubu. Rekao sam da bi on želio da posjeta Kubi poveze sa posjetom jos nekim zemljama Latinske Amerike. Na njegovo pitanje da li već postoje neki službeni pozivi odgovorio sam da zasada još ne postoje. On je tada počeo da govori o Venecueli i Braziliji. Od prve ne dobivaju takvu podršku kakva se mogla očekivati. Dali su bezrezervnu pomoć Betankuru za vrijeme nedavnog pokušaja vojnog udara uključujući i prijedlog za vojnu pomoć, ali ovaj nije ne samo zahvatio nego nije ništa ni odgovorio. Prije nekoliko dana je poslao pismo Dorticosu u kojem zauzima negativan stav prema učešću Venecuele na konferenciji nerazvijenih zemalja. Tom prilikom je za Betankura upotrebio izraz: marioneta. O vladi Brazilije je govorio vrlo negativno. Drugim rječima, indirektno je izrazio sumnju da će druge vlade zemalja LA pozvati, odnosno izrazio je bojazan da u odsustvu ostalih poziva i posjeta Kubi ne bude dovedena u pitanje.

Beograd, 18 maj 1960

## NOTE

on the conversation between Ambassador Zvonko Grahek and Prime Minister Fidel Castro at a dinner at Minister Roa's, April 26, 1960.

The conversation lasted 6 hours.

I conveyed the greetings of Comrade President to Castro.

He received it cordially, but he did not ask that I also convey my greetings.

After greetings, I handed him the NOB [People Liberation Struggle] Atlas in Spanish. He was immediately interested, examining it in detail. NOB became the topic of conversation for about an hour, during which he took a detailed interest in the method of organizing the uprising, the way of warfare, in which regions the uprising was most intense, etc.

Looking at pictures of the stay of the Cuban delegation at the SSRNJ [Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia] Congress, Castro became interested in its character and program. On that occasion, Che Guevara mentioned that they received a very interesting report from the delegation. However, he did not say anything about the content. He only says that when the name of Fidel was mentioned, there was a real ovation.

He was interested in our relations with the church. They feel that there will be difficulties. They take great care not to give rise to any disagreements. (Note: they have the same principled attitude towards the church as we do).

To my question, he replied that they were expecting some form of invasion with possible US assistance. They arrive at such estimates deductively. An economic blockade cannot be effective, because they managed to break into the non-American market. Internal blasting by the fifth column, which cannot be organized, cannot be effective. A similar intervention as in Guatemala in 1954 cannot be applied in the Cuban case. Since the USA is not ready to accept the revolution as a fait accompli, and each of the mentioned measures separately and all taken together cannot threaten it, they are expecting and preparing for some kind of invasion.

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The USA made gross political mistakes concerning Cuba, which they managed to make good use of. However, lately, there has been a change in political action. After the explosion of the ship with weapons, no more airplanes flying over, "friendly" gestures were made, the US ambassador appeared at various events, toured Cuba, often visited the MFA, etc. Direct anti-Cuban action moved from the US to other LA countries. The main line of US political action is now on the formation of a fifth column in Cuba. On the other hand, an attempt is being made to isolate Cuba from other LA countries on an anti-communist platform to prepare the ground for action against Cuba through the application of inter-American treaties.

And the US is taking advantage of their mistakes. For example, in one statement on television, he ranted and said that Cuba does not recognize those inter-American treaties that it did not sign. They largely exploited this, although an official denial was subsequently given.

However, their plans are confused by some unexpected events. He mentioned the Congress for Freedom and Democracy, which was convened in Venezuela to condemn Castro's extremism, and passed resolutions supporting the Cuban revolution. On that occasion, Roa noticed that they had sent their men there who won it. He was also invited but, of course, he refused. He also assessed the events in Korea and Turkey as favorable for the Cuban situation.

He says that they are preparing as if an invasion will follow immediately. They are training troops in the Sierra Maestra for guerrilla warfare, they have organized a militia and are rapidly training it. The most important thing is that at the same time, by popular standards, they are increasingly binding the people to themselves (Note: Especially in the province of Oriente, they are building schools, hospitals, apartments, a large school town for 20,000 pupils and students, etc. as if they estimate that this

insurgent province will also in case new difficulties to be the main stronghold).

[...] Then, to my interest,

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he explained in detail the character of their agrarian reform. He says that they acted very cautiously, they gradually specified their intentions. That is why, for example, the latifundistas supported them and everyone interpreted their general slogan of agrarian reform in their own way. The first law from that area, back in the Sierra Maestra, only said that all those peasants who in various forms of lease hold properties of less than 5 caballeria (1 caballeria = 13.46 hectares) automatically become owners of that property. With this, they strengthened the support of the peasants, and the question of the agrarian maximum remained open. After coming to power, the Law on Agrarian Reform was prepared. No one was against it in principle. Despite the resistance, they managed to accept the agrarian maximum of 30 cavalry. In particular, he pointed out that their practice is more radical than the law, contrary to expectations based on similar experiences. Cooperatives are the basis of their reform. Although they proclaimed the distribution of land to the peasants, they did not break up the latifundia. Only in legalizing the existing state of fragmentation of some large estates on which peasants worked in various forms of lease. He underlined that they did not thereby create a small private property, but only gave the right of ownership over plots of 5 cavalry to those peasants who otherwise already cultivated those plots but were not the owners. Otherwise, they turned the latifundia, which were cultivated by agricultural workers, into cooperatives.

Regarding the various objections that their revolution takes place without ideological conceptions, he explains that their slogan is: "The revolution is built step by step on concrete works, not on theoretical discussions." This is not because the leadership does not have a clear perspective, but because such discussions can only harm them politically today. Their main slogan is the unity of the People, and theoretical discussions in today's situation would be politically reduced to the question of being for or against communism. In doing so, one should bear in mind the historical development of the situation in Cuba, which is similar throughout Latin America. Namely, for years a very strong anti-communist campaign was developed here using all possible means, which left a deep mark on the people. He vividly explained it in the following way: If the average Cuban is asked if he is in favor of agrarian reform,

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he will answer positively; will also answer positively to the question of whether he is in favor of all other socio-economic reforms. However, if he is asked if he is in favor of communism, he will answer just as firmly - no. Therefore, such a mental state has been created in people that can only be changed by gradual, concrete actions. Thus, in parallel with the development of the Revolution, there is a revision of concepts. Today, people are already starting to ask themselves: if this is communism - how hard is the anti-Cuban campaign - then that communism is not bad, it is acceptable for us. People start to think about the truth of everything that was served to them before. However, this process of mental transformation of people will take a long time.

When Guevara was asked how he managed to save 70 million dollars in 4 months, Fidel replied wittily - "Look around the shops and you will find the answer. If you ask if there is butter and other things, they will answer that there is none". All their economic policy measures are anti-inflationary.

To my question about when we can expect his meeting with the President, Castro says that he should go to the UAR [United Arab Republic], Yugoslavia, and the USSR. He wants it to be in the summer of this year. However, the situation here is such that he must speak to the people every 15-20 days. That would be the maximum time limit for visiting the mentioned countries. Roa brought in Great Britain. He wants to see the places where the fighting took place in Yugoslavia because their armed struggle in Cuba was tiny compared to the size of the NOB. The struggle of the Yugoslav people was in front of his eyes the entire time of their struggle.

He accepted with interest the discussion about the need for his greater involvement in world affairs. He admits that his speeches are almost completely

dominated by the issue of Cuba and its relations with the USA and LA [Latin America]. He notes that he spoke about Algeria several times and that during his visit to Mikoyan, he also spoke about broader issues of international politics. It must not be rushed, they must take into account Cuba's membership in the Inter-American Organization. But, he underlines, he will certainly gradually pay more attention to those problems. With the support of Ro, the possibility of statements in this sense was raised during the visit of Sukarno. From the point of view of that broader international affirmation of Cuba, it was discussed about the need for Castro to visit the countries to which he has already announced a visit to others.

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He was interested in the other President. He has great respect for him. I proposed to him a written contact, which he received upon approval.

Castro asked when the Comrade President intends to visit Cuba. I said that he would like to connect the visit to Cuba with a visit to some other Latin American countries. To his question whether there are already any official invitations, I answered that there are none yet. He then started talking about Venezuela and Brazil. From the beginning, they don't get the kind of support that could be expected. They gave unreserved help to Betancourt during the recent attempted military coup, including a proposal for military aid, but he not only did not take it, he did not even respond. A few days ago, he sent a letter to Dorticos in which he took a negative stance towards Venezuela's participation in the conference of underdeveloped countries. On that occasion, he used the term: marionette for Betancourt. He spoke very negatively about the government of Brazil. In other words, he indirectly expressed his doubt that LA will invite other governments, that is, he expressed his fear that in the absence of other invitations and visits to Cuba, it would not be called into question.

Belgrade, May 18, 1960