

**June 27, 1972**

**Record of Conversation between L. I. Brezhnev and  
Fidel Castro**

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**Summary:**

Brezhnev warmly welcomes Castro to the Soviet Union. Castro speaks of positive developments within Soviet-Cuban relations and explains the historical trajectory of Cuba in terms of the global fight for communism. The leaders discuss Cuban economic prospects and the revolutionary situation of countries throughout Latin America.

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Nº 1]

RECORD OF A CONVERSATION

[between] Cdes. L. I. Brezhnev, N. V. Podgorny, and A. N. Kosygin  
and Cdes. F. Castro and K. R. Rodriguez

27 June 1972

L. I. Brezhnev in the name of the CPSU CC Politburo, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, and the Soviet government I would like to most cordially welcome your arrival in the Soviet Union, and to express our best wishes to Cuba, a fraternal socialist country, to the Cuban leadership, and to you personally, Cde. Fidel Castro.

Not just the leadership of our Party, but also all Soviet Communists and all our people are experiencing deep feelings of love and respect toward the Cuban people. This love is not a sentimental phenomenon. It is a deserved love and respect, because the Cuban people have made a revolution and have chosen the path of the development of socialism, a difficult but noble path. This respect is also deserved because in their development the Cuban people are overcoming enormous difficulties. A considerable part of this love and respect belongs to the Cuban leadership and you personally, Cde. Fidel.

I would like to ask Cde. Fidel especially not to attack me. Yesterday he called me half-Cuban, but I was not offended because he is right. I envy his comrades who feel completely Cuban. Cde. Kosygin is a Cuban, Cde. Podgorny is a Cuban, Cde. Novikov is a Cuban, Cde. Patolichev is a Cuban, and Cde. Katushev is a Cuban. In general, all are Cubans. But all is not yet lost. I have a great advantage: I can seek a trip to Cuba. This is not a joke. It is no accident that a majority of the leadership of our Party has been in Cuba. This is a demonstration of deep respect for Cuba.

We have repeatedly spoken about our relations with Cuba in one form or another at congresses of our Party and the congresses of fraternal Parties, at plenums of the CPSU Central Committee, at sessions of the USSR Supreme Soviet, and in many other of our statements.

I would like to stress that we regard you, Cde. Fidel, and the leadership of fraternal Cuba with great trust, we believe what the Cuban leadership says about the development of socialism, about friendship with the socialist countries, and with the Soviet Union. It is completely natural that our people and our Party are not indifferent to how the Cuban friends regard our relations. For our part, we think that strong political ties and broad and useful economic cooperation exist between our Parties and our countries.

I don't know whether economic questions will be discussed during our current talks or whether this will be done at some other time. But even before the arrival of Cde. Fidel the CPSU CC Politburo studied the questions raised by the Cuban leadership very closely and has certain views for their solution. It might be agreed for someone from your side, for example Cde. Rodriguez, and from ours, Cde. Kosygin, to study these proposals separately, and then decide whether we will include them in a communique. I don't think that these questions ought to be discussed and to talk about figures right now. If Cde. Fidel agrees with this, then we can find a suitable form for this.

F. Castro Yes, I agree.

L. I. Brezhnev Good. And last. I would like to stress that, based on our principled position outlined by the Party, we have a desire to further strengthen and develop the fraternal relations between our Parties, our governments, our peoples, and our socialist countries.

We naturally have one ideological basis, it is Marxism-Leninism, proletarian internationalism. We would also like to continue to develop our relations on this basis. This is the opinion of our Party and our government, the desire of all of our people.

Possibly Cde. Fidel wants to say something for his part about our talks. Following a tradition we have developed we give the floor to our guest if, of course, Cde. Fidel has no objection.

F. Castro Agreed. We share your opinion that our relations are developing well. As is well known, previously there were problems, there was insufficient mutual understanding. I wouldn't like to talk much about this right now. The comrades from the Soviet leadership know when these problems arose. They also know about the reasons which cause a lack of trust. Not even that. I wouldn't like to use this word. I would call this a dissatisfaction which threw a shadow on our relations which before this were developing normally. They developed so because certain conditions existed in which the revolution was made. Soviet support and aid had decisive importance in this matter.

The Soviet leaders know Cuba well, especially its recent past. In Cde. Brezhnev's speech, the text of which we have familiarized ourselves, it speaks of the independence of Cuba and the role of Jose Marti in the war against Spain. As is well known, Cuba was the last country liberated from Spanish colonial dependence. The remaining colonies were liberated at the beginning of the last century, approximately at the same time as the Russian people were fighting against Napoleon. A struggle over an enormous territory was going on then in Latin America. After the Restoration Spain tried to get its colonies back, but in the end, it did not continue this war. And the liberation of Latin America came. Bolivar and the other leaders of the struggle for independence also intended to liberate Cuba. However, the United States of America, which opposed sending an expedition to Cuba, interfered in this.

Cuba remained under the control of Spain, and slavery existed there until the end of the last century. The Americans wanted to annex Cuba. They seized Florida, the West, and took away half of Mexico's territory. They were almost confident that Cuba would become a possession of the US. The slaveowners were the most zealous advocates of this. Then the Civil War began in the US. And only after it, in 1868, did the people in Cuba first rise up with weapons in hand to fight for freedom. The war lasted 10 years. This was a very savage and heroic struggle, without any support, without any aid with weapons. This war ended with an armistice which was explained by the differences which arose among the rebels.

The war resumed at the end of the century. This was the same war which Marti organized. Marti created a party to manage the war. He had very clear criteria on this question. His world view was very progressive. Then he already understood the danger which the US represented for Cuba. He even tried to begin a war as early as possible to hasten the process of liberation. In his opinion, it was necessary to do this before the United States of America gained strength.

The savage war lasted three years. Spain had 300,000 soldiers in Cuba. Finally, Spain was weakened and then the United States intervened. This was an easy war for them. Then they acted outwardly as allies of Cuba and occupied the country for four years. The US seized Puerto Rico and the Philippines. The fight against Spain in the Philippines was not widely waged. But when the US occupied the country the war took on very savage forms. Hundreds of thousands of Filipinos died. In the final account the American defeated them. As a result the Philippines were enslaved by the United States.

When the Americans were forced to leave our country they outwardly treated its independence with respect from the formal point of view because Cuba's struggle for independence had found great international support, even inside the United States of America. But in leaving Cuba they left us the "Platt Amendment", which provided the United States of America the right to intervene. They had completely occupied Cuba, seized the best lands in Cuba, and taken the sugar industry, mines, and transportation into their hands. The American had developed production of sugar cane here [*u nas*], intending on getting cheap sugar. Thanks to this they established their economic and political dominance in Cuba. Even in our history textbooks the authors engaged in apologetics for the United States of America. They presented the United States of America as the liberator of Cuba. This was a historical lie.

A. N. Kosygin Probably the Americans planted this themselves.

F. Castro From the very start the Americans established a government which served

them. The rebel army was disarmed. The most outstanding leaders were removed. They left a government which served them. All education in Cuba was put under their control. Any domestic struggle, any revolutionary process provoked the intervention of American Marines. Moreover, these interventions were "legitimate" and "legal". All this arrested the development of the revolutionary process in our country. The national movement was slowed because a powerful force hung over Cuba. And such a situation continued until the great crisis at the end of the '20s and the beginning of the '30s of this century.

An acute social struggle arose during these years. A Communist Party appeared in Cuba. This was in 1925, already after the October Revolution. On a whole the October Revolution exerted a great ideological influence on us, on the worker's movement. A period of large strikes and violence began, caused by acute famine in the country. However, the threat of intervention continued to hang over us.

It is curious that during this time the Americans did not send their troops to Cuba, they acted through diplomatic channels - they changed the government. But in spite of everything an uprising of sergeants occurred in the barracks and in the troops. The rebellion was mainly caused by the government's refusal to increase wages. The officers lost prestige and the sergeants took leadership into their hands. The students who were taking part in the revolutionary movement at that time joined with them, and for the first time in Cuba there appeared a nationalist government. This government pursued a number of social laws and won prestige among the masses.

At this moment the Americans were coming out of a difficult situation with the aid of Batista, who was one of the leaders of the sergeants' uprising. They liquidated the nationalist government and there came the epoch of the domination of the military, who were at the service of the United States.

Roosevelt made some changes to the political style. And, in addition, with the aid of other Latin American countries managed to achieve a repeal of the "Platt Amendment", which gave the legal right to intervene to the United States.

Then fascism appeared and the Nazi threat arose. Roosevelt's policy increasingly went to the left. Popular fronts appeared in the struggle against fascism. All this, of course, also exerted an influence on Cuba. Batista outwardly strived for legality. He even joined the anti-fascist front, but continued a policy to suit the Americans. That was until about 1944. In 1944 a change of government occurred in the elections, but the people who came to power were corrupt people. They had managed to win because they had earned prestige during the period of the nationalist government in 1933.

Then the "Cold War", the persecution of Communists, and the takeover of the trade unions began. This policy, which is known among us under the name of "constitutional", continued for about seven years.

A military coup organized by Batista took place in 1952. In 1953 a new phase of the struggle against Batista began.

We who organized the attack on the Moncada Barracks in 1953 had a definite Marxist culture, we had Marxist concepts, had read "The State and Revolution", knew about class struggle, and understood the importance of the struggle of the masses. This was the basis which guided us in our struggle. Without this there would have been no Cuban revolution.

Of course, at that time our program was not yet socialist, but it was the most advanced that it could be in those conditions. Our relations with the Communist Party of Cuba were good. We were new people in the political arena and the Party had an influence on us. The socialist literature which we got in Party libraries influenced us. We pursued general work among the students.

At that time Communists were isolated in the country on the whole. This was the result of the "Cold War" and the propaganda of anti-Communism. Enemies managed to isolate Communists from the masses.

Our relations with Communists were always good. We had ties with them. After the Batista coup we began to wage the fight together. We always strived to create the broadest anti-Batista front with the participation of all forces. As anti-Communists the bourgeois parties were constantly active, tried to seek support from the Americans, and played a political game.

We decided to act. This was the idea of Moncada. At first they did not understand our actions in Moncada. Sometimes they said that this was a putsch. Our task was to seize the barracks, stir up the people, and wage a mass struggle. We headed for the province of Oriente, just because this province has martial traditions. In addition, the geography there helped the fight. We suffered defeat, many revolutionaries were killed, and we landed in prison. A struggle for amnesty developed in the country. Those who survived the attack on Moncada and ended up in prison were released. This was helped by the fact that Batista was striving to legalize his position.

After release we headed to Mexico. Then the landing with "Granma" followed. We had very little left after the landing and we went into the mountains.

Why did the Americans not intervene in Cuba in the course of these events? Because we had a very small group. At a certain moment we had a total of seven people left. Batista made a declaration at that time that all of us had been killed.

However, the struggle gradually developed and we gained strength. Our influence among the people grew. The people no longer believed any political parties, and their entrusted their hopes to our group. Public opinion increasingly moved to our side. Our strength and influence among the masses grew.

There were two wings inside our movement. One wing was under great petty bourgeois influence. This wing saw in the guerilla struggle only a means of agitation. They thought that victory could be achieved with the aid of the support of the army. We saw a developing force in the guerilla movement which would liquidate the dictatorship of Batista with the support of the broad masses.

The war lasted 25 months, and in its course various concepts fought. Our guerilla strength grew and in the middle of 1958 we smashed the last important offensive of Batista's troops. And this was achieved after the defeat of the general strike which the "26 July Movement" had imposed on us. This strike was poorly organized. Its defeat led to a decline of the revolutionary struggle and helped Batista's supporters begin the offensive against us.

Batista mobilized 10,000 soldiers for the offensive. At that moment we had a total of 300 men against these 10,000, but these 300 men already had great combat experience. Over the course of 70 days this offensive fizzled out. We managed to completely destroy several enemy units. We seized more than 500 weapons and, already having about 1000 soldiers, we went over to the counteroffensive.

Detachments or so-called columns waged the counteroffensive. Che was at the head of one column. He headed for the province of Las Villas at the head of 140 men. Camilo with 100 men also arrived in the province of Las Villas. These were small columns but they moved rapidly. They should have gone 400 km by foot. The Batista troops and aircraft pursued them. We sent another column to Camaguey. Raul Castro was the head of the second front in the north of the province of Oriente. By the way, this is the first column we created. Headed by Raul Castro it was transferred to the north of Oriente even before Batista's offensive. When the Batista forces made their offensive this was the only detachment which we did not turn back, because they were deployed so distantly. The column opened a second front there.

After the failure of the offensive of the Batista troops we concentrated our forces throughout the entire province. The Americans did not really understand what had happened. They saw the general unrest, sabotage, and instability, but they believed what Batista said. They sent their journalists to us. They saw our troops in the mountains and thought about us, something like we were Robin Hoods, but nothing more. They were not very concerned, thinking that all the problems in Cuba can be solved by military coups.

During September and October all our detachments occupied the departure positions. At that moment Batista held elections. The people abstained from them en masse. But the supporters of Batista nevertheless won. Between 10 November and 31 December our forces went over to the offensive on all fronts. The offensive was so strong that on 31 December we cut the island in two. In the province of Oriente 17,000 Batista troops were encircled. At that time we had 3,000 men under arms. We seized all the highways and encircled all the cities, which surrendered one after the other.

The military command understood that they were beaten. General Cantillo, the Chief

of the Operations Department, met with me. Admitting that they had lost the war he said that it was necessary to find some way out of this situation. We then set three conditions to the military. First, no coup d'état. Then, don't let Batista flee. Of course, Batista could flee himself, but I presented a demand to them so that they did not facilitate this. And third, no contacts with the American embassy. Cantillo agreed with these demands.

We encircled the garrison in Santiago. There were 5,000 soldiers there. They had tanks. I suggested that these troops in Santiago join us.

Cantillo did not keep his promise. Returning to Havana he entered into contact with the American embassy, called Batista to flee, and made a coup d'état in Havana.

At the end of November the Americans finally felt the approach of a crisis.

Eisenhower, who played too much golf, sent his emissary to talk with Batista. He set a condition for Batista for him to hand power to another person. The Americans were already frightened. They were not confident that we were Communists but they had great doubts about us. The Americans knew about the sentiments of a considerable part of our rebels and they began to worry. Therefore they decided to make a change of government to prevent a crisis.

Batista asked them for permission to stay in power until February. It was in February that his term ended. He proceeded from personal considerations of prestige. The Americans agreed to wait until February. But great changes occurred in the situation between 10 November and 31 December, as I have already told you. A military coup took place on the 31st. Then we advanced the slogan of a general strike. Life in the country was completely paralyzed. What happened was exactly what we were thinking then on 26 July 1953, which was what we were striving for. In spite of the fact that the official worker's movement and its leadership were with the government the mass movement was on our side, and the entire country froze. All our armed forces were given the order: no armistice - continue the offensive.

Using the demoralization of the soldiers we disarmed the entire army within 48 hours. All the garrisons were seized. We forced the garrison of the city of Santiago to surrender. Inasmuch as they had tanks which they were able to control we suggested that they join their troops to ours. The troops in Santiago did not recognize the coup d'état and switched over to our side.

On the 2nd or 3rd of January, the latest, we already had control over the entire country. We had seized all the weapons of the Batista army, Our army grew by leaps and bounds.

We had won. We liquidated Batista's army. The complete and unconditional support of the masses was on our side. An end was put to the parliament. The United States of America was dealt a harsh moral blow.

The role of Cuba in the political struggle will undoubtedly continue to grow. This role of Cuba will grow in the conditions of peaceful coexistence. We are next to the United States.

From the point of view of Marxism Cuba is almost a miracle, a political miracle. A country where the ideology and culture of imperialism had completely dominated was turned into a socialist country, a Communist country. Into Communist, as they call us, meaning our political doctrine.

The United States tried to politically isolate Cuba, and tried to undermine its political prestige. They could not do this inside Cuba because all the people supported us Communists. Then the US tried to create a cordon so as not to let our ideas penetrate Latin America. At certain moment they managed to get a reduction of the influence of Cuba with the aid of propaganda and other reasons. But right now? A new growth of the influence of Cuba on the Latin American masses is occurring. This is a surprising phenomenon.

Right now the Latin American masses no longer support Cuba as simply fighting against the dictatorship of Batista, as a country waging a struggle for its national liberation. They support Cuba as a socialist country. Anti-socialism, anti-Communism, anti-Sovietism, all this is crumbling. You will see that even Catholics favor Cuba. Imperialism has always relied on the army and the Church. And now already 2,000 priests in Latin America favor socialism, and their influence is growing.

L. I. Brezhnev These are Catholics?

F. Castro Yes. These people have the best relations with Cuba, and are oriented toward Cuba. The fact is that we have not shot one priest nor have we closed a single church. When any priest is involved in counterrevolutionary activity we arrest him, but then release him. Why? Not because of Cuba. We could have quietly closed all the churches. We thought about Latin America, because there the Church has great influence among the people. We have also displayed patience from these considerations. This is providing its own results. Consciousness is also growing among the military.

I didn't know how the Chilean population would react to my visit. For so many told so many tales about Cuba and the US conducted such a broad campaign against us.

L. I. Brezhnev We published your statements in Chile.

F. Castro If you have time, you could look at my conversation with the priests. I polemicized with them several times with respect to socialism and about the Soviet Union. These were very good polemics.

Returning to our topic, I want to say that at the first stage of our revolution the US began to maneuver. They recognized the new government of Cuba and sent their ambassador, hoping to solve this problem.

We had developed a situation when real power was in the hands of the rebel army, enjoying the absolute support of the masses. But our movement had two trends: one trend was rebel guerillas, but the other, which dominated among the leaders at that time, was the "valleys [*dolin*]" movement, as they said then. Guerillas in the mountains, and the others in the cities. And we had differences.

A huge mass of the people did not understand socialism. And even fewer of this mass could speak about Communism. Why? By virtue of the huge ideological influence of the United States. This was the consequence of McCarthyism and anti-Communism. If you leave aside the newspaper of the Communist Party - Carlos Rafael [Rodriguez] was just the manager of the newspaper at that time - all the newspapers then were pro-Yankee, anti-Communist. This also included all the radio stations, all the TV stations, all the motion pictures, all the books, everything that was written, the schools, etc. The prestige of the United States played its role: their nuclear weapons, their technology, their role in the fight against fascism, which the propaganda organs exaggerated, and the war in the Pacific Ocean. All our political parties except the Communists were anti-Communist and pro-Yankee.

Our group which organized the armed struggle saw the need to bring the masses to the movement very clearly. However, this needed to be done in accordance with the condition of political consciousness which they had. It was necessary to bear in mind the desire to defend the constitution, the discontent with Batista, and the dissatisfaction with the military regime. Unrest existed in the country. The peasants and the workers were being harshly exploited. Huge unemployment existed - half a million people did not have work. These were the people who did the *zafra* [Translator's note: the sugar cane harvesting season] at that time. The sugar industry is a cyclic industry. It operates four to five months a year. We had 100,000 prostitutes. One hundred thousand women in Cuba lived off prostitution!

Tourism on the basis of casinos, cabarets, and prostitution, all this was imposed by the United States. All this is our import, everything beginning with a pencil, ending with anything, all this came from the US.

Thus, the social conditions in Cuba were very bad. We had no class self-consciousness. The people ascribed everything to bad or good governments. All misfortunes were ascribed to the fact that governments engaged in embezzlement. The people did not understand the essence, the social essence of the existing situation. However, the dissatisfaction led to the struggle and the people entered the struggle. They took part in the armed struggle, in the revolutionary struggle.

Then a very peculiar situation developed. The bodies of the bourgeois state were liquidated. But a political consciousness, the social consciousness did not exist. It was necessary to organize a broad ideological struggle.

At first the Americans unleashed their own campaign against Cuba, making reference to the executions which we had. We shot war criminals. This fact was used by the

United States to unleash a campaign against Cuba. We strived to gain some time, because there existed great sympathy for the Cuban revolution among the public of the United States of America. Of course, they had in mind a romantic revolution against Batista, who was a tyrant and a murderer. We tried to gain some time because we understood that the situation was difficult.

I remember that once an invitation came from American journalists and visited the United States of America. I met with the journalists there and I spoke about those crimes which were committed in our country, and told about the destitution, about the exploitation, and the poverty. I did not meet with Eisenhower and was not interested in this meeting. I used this trip to conduct a campaign inside the United States of America. There is a large Cuban émigré community in the United States, economic emigrants. And these emigrants supported us.

At that time I got to know Nixon. He was then Vice President of the US. Then he was a relatively young man and even seemed to me a "fashion plate [*stilyaga*]". Some members of Congress invited me and Nixon asked for a meeting. He spoke with me for an hour and a half. I told him about Cuba and how the US helped Batista, sent weapons, and how American military specialists helped his army. I told about the crimes which were committed, about the famine, the unemployment, and the underdevelopment. I told him about all of this. I told him that we would conduct agrarian reform and other measures to which our people had a complete right. But the lands were American. The best sugar mills in Cuba with plantations, the largest landholdings belonged to Americans. It seemed that Nixon listened with great interest. I said that our people have the right to such a policy. I didn't tell him about any socialism. Then we found out that after this meeting Nixon wrote a memorandum to Eisenhower declaring that I was a Communist. Possibly his far-sightedness had an effect. And he recommended an intervention in Cuba. Nixon played a very active role in everything: both in organizing the attack on Playa Giron [the Bay of Pigs] and in the economic blockade of Cuba.

We began to get our first weapons in capitalist countries, in Belgium and Italy. But at that time the anti-Communist campaign was already in full swing. We were waging a double struggle. We had to act against the right wing in our movement. We tried to move the majority of our rebels to revolutionary positions. We continued to seek the support of the broad masses. And we did not achieve this with just the aid of one statement or another. We passed revolutionary laws.

A class struggle developed in Cuba. We lowered the payment for telephones and electricity, took American companies under control, and lowered apartment rents. All this offended enormous strata of landowners. Agrarian reform hit the Americans hard. Some American companies owned up to 200,000 hectares of land, but the law set a maximum of 400 hectares. Five hundred or 600 Americans who owned enormous parcels of land were touched by the reform. All this unleashed a fierce struggle. Initially everyone praised the fight for independence, but here they began to speak against the revolution, and an anti-Communist campaign was launched. Then we mobilized the workers. We took the newspapers away from our enemies. We took all the newspapers, all the radio stations, and all the TV stations into our hands. We gradually deprived the bourgeoisie and imperialism of all resources: at first we eliminated army from them, then the parliament, then we took the mass media into our hands and beat [them] on the basis of their economic might.

We accepted the challenge of the United States of America. Our people wanted a revolution. They increasingly came to our side. However, socialism was not proclaimed in Cuba until 16 April 1961. Some people did not understand why we began to talk about socialism. A broad international campaign was waged in the course of which they said that the revolution had been betrayed. They created such a tale. But when a bombardment was made on 15 April 1961 we proclaimed the socialist nature of the revolution at the funerals of the victims in the presence of tens of thousands of armed workers. And people went to fight at Playa Giron under the banner of socialism. By this time [we] had managed to attract all the people, all the workers, and all the soldiers to the ideological positions of socialism. Ninety-five percent of those who fought, that is, of the guerillas, workers, and peasants, the majority of the people, a huge majority of the people moved to the positions of socialism in the course of this fight.

Thus, it could be said that the ideological struggle was won in two or three years and the position has been becoming increasingly stronger up to the present time. And right now we can assert that our people have a socialist consciousness which is increasingly consolidating. The overwhelming majority of our population has accepted socialism.

Different processes have had an effect in this matter: first, the bourgeoisie, the landowners, and the merchants left Cuba. The United States initially used economic sanctions against us and tried to act militarily to some degree. They thought that they would thereby lead us to shock. They thought that it was worth it for them to reduce the sugar quota and Cuba would not survive. They deprived us of all credits and the sugar quota.

In the first year the US kept an eye on us and tried to put diplomatic pressure on us. All the time they operated through their ambassador, and gradually they lost all hope. Then they switched to economic measures, beginning at the same time to work to create military counterrevolutionary groups. When we bought the first consignment of Soviet oil they used this as a pretext to deprive us of fuel. The American companies in Cuba refused to refine Soviet oil. Then we took these companies into our hands. They then deprived us of oil supplies. At this moment the Soviet Union made its first decisive contribution to our cause. The Soviet Union replaced the United States as the supplier of oil.

All this occurred at the height of a political and ideological struggle to bring the masses to revolutionary positions. Both domestic social laws as well as international support were factors which helped our strengthening and helped eliminate anti-socialism and anti-Communism.

After this the Americans took steps with respect to sugar. And then for a second time the Soviet Union exerted its influence in decisive fashion. The Americans did not immediately eliminate the entire quota. At first they eliminated it partially. Then the Soviet Union decided to buy this part. Then the US reduced it again and again, and then eliminated it totally. But in response to each step from their side we answered with our steps which hit their interests. Gradually the industry which had been in American hands was nationalized. But the nationalization had the form of retaliatory measures to each of the aggressions of the United States of America. And we ended with nationalizing all the property of the Americans. The people were radicalized in this process.

Then the Americans adopted a second measure in order to economically hinder the development of the revolution. All our transport, all the trucks, all the steam locomotives, any motor, machine tools – all these were made in the United States, all our power plants were American. Everything that was consumed in the country was an American product – rice, haricot beans, fats, all everyday items, even pencils, all these came to us from the United States. And other problems existed along with this. A microconsumer society [*mikroobshchestvo potrebleniya*] was created inside Cuba. An insignificant minority of the population created the consumer society. The big bourgeoisie, aristocracy, the aristocracy of the working class, and merchants joined it. There were 300,000 automobiles in conditions of a lack of culture and massive unemployment! Part of these automobiles belonged to taxi drivers. Many of these automobiles were imported as contraband at low prices. But this meant very high prices for spare parts, for paint for the automobiles, for rubber, and for fuel. And all this came from the United States of America. And here they completely halted the supply of spare parts. But there was practically no mechanical industry in Cuba. It is not understood how in these conditions our workers were able to support industry in a functioning state. It is hard to believe how our workers at enterprises got out of the situation. Having some iron, having a lathe, they ground out the parts. We managed to supply some by contraband, in a roundabout way, so to speak.

This equipment was not in the socialist countries. They have a different industry. Many goods which we needed were not easy to get, for their product range is very wide. To this it is necessary to add that the socialist economy was developed in a struggle with the imperialist blockade. The Soviet Union did not develop its own industry to enter the world market, it developed it to solve domestic problems. Such was the situation in the first years of the revolution.

Yes, I completely forgot to talk about other contacts with the socialist camp. When

both the Belgians and Italians did not begin to work with us, we suggested the Yugoslavs sell us weapons. They answered us - no. Why? Because this would have created a problem for them in relations with the United States. However, we then found documents which demonstrated that at one time the Yugoslavs sold weapons to Batista. In November and December of 1958, that is, two months before Batista's fall, they sold him weapons. They refused us weapons, but then we found documents in the archives that talks had been held with Batista two months before his fall about a sale of weapons to him. These two factors taught us much. Then we established contact with Czechoslovakia and with the Soviet comrades. The first weapons we received came from Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. The first military specialists appeared.

Thus, at first we received oil from the Soviet Union, then weapons. The Soviet Union also started to buy our sugar. Then the Soviet Union started to supply us with everything that was most needed, that which we could not get in the United States and in the other capitalist countries. At time US influence in Europe - in Britain, in France, in Italy, and also in Japan - was very great. The FRG broke off relations with us because we recognized the GDR and established diplomatic relations with it. They then took a very uncompromising position with respect to us. The FRG joined the blockade of Cuba.

Cuban-Soviet relations were born at such a difficult moment for our people that this aroused its great sympathy. No other relations were established in such a revolutionary, internationalist aspect as relations between the Soviet Union and Cuba. And these relations developed and grew. When the attack on Playa Giron began the Soviet statement which you made at that time had great importance. This statement shook Kennedy. Our relations grew stronger until the moment of the Caribbean Crisis. I don't think we need to discuss the Caribbean Crisis. One day, possibly simply by virtue of historical interest, my personal interest, I would like to find out, but not right away, where the idea of missiles came from. What were the actual goals of this suggestion[?] I know only part of all this, part of how this decision arose.

When Marshal Biryuzov came to us there was just a smell of an attack on Cuba in the air. He asked me what to do in this situation, how to foil an attack. I told him that the United States respected the Soviet Union. I thought that it was necessary to do [things] so that the United States knew that the Soviet Union supported Cuba and that an attack on Cuba included a risk of a confrontation with the Soviet Union. I told him this in response to his question.

At that moment Biryuzov already had authority to suggest the stationing of missiles to us. In addition, he had doubts that we would agree to this. He then told me that security could be achieved if there were missiles in Cuba. I replied to him that I was confident that our leadership would agree to this, but give me the chance to discuss this question. Then I informed him that we agreed to this proposal.

When we were posed with this question we saw two aspects here. One aspect was security, but the other aspect was political, inasmuch as then in the whole world they would begin to say that Cuba is a Soviet base, and this was at a time when we were conducting a campaign against the American base in Cuba. I met with the comrades from the leadership and told them about our discussion with Cde. Biryuzov. I told them that, bearing our security in mind, we could discuss whether or not it was worth stationing the missiles. But there is one question which we could not discuss. I think that this action strengthened the socialist camp. And I said that we cannot lay claim the solidarity of the socialist camp if we are not ready to meet their requests. After this I told Cde. Biryuzov that if the measure they proposed was directed at strengthening the might of the entire socialist camp and at the same time would promote a strengthening of our positions we would agree to the placement of any missiles you want without any hesitation or doubt. You obviously know the rest.

Then various contradictory explanations arose. You remember the exchange of letters with the Americans where it spoke of Turkey and Italy. There was also another letter where this was not mentioned. Khrushchev showed me this letter. Then they read the translation to me. Probably documents about the talks of Ambassador Thompson in Moscow and also with Robert Kennedy have been stored in the archives. There is one point there in which the Americans say that they removed missiles from Turkey and Italy as a result of the crisis.

I want to say one thing. If it is necessary to do something, if it is necessary to remove missiles and they explain to us why and how to do this, we will agree. We will always agree with everything that promotes the growth of the socialist camp, a strengthening of the positions of the socialist camp. We will never take national risk into account. We are a small country, and we know that in overall revolutionary values we should follow the collective interest, the general interest, and put this above our private interests. The first priority is the overall, collective [interest].

We were always ready for cooperation in this aspect, without any hesitancy. Any question can be raised before Cuba. And this is confirmed by facts. Whenever the question is raised of our cooperation in military terms we never refuse anything. We have never said no. It is natural that what we would like to seek, regardless of the goal which is raised, is for this goal to be openly explained to us.

The question of the Caribbean crisis does not have actual meaning right now. If sometime you want, talk with me, right now or five years later or 10 years later. If you don't want to talk about this, you needn't talk about it. It's already passed. Why is this important? The only importance of this is that it was a watershed [*rubezh*] - first missiles, then aircraft, then the withdrawal of divisions. In return we were given a promise. Of course, I don't want to disparage the value of the promise..

L. I. Brezhnev The promise [of] Kennedy?

F. Castro Yes. I don't want to disparage the promise not to attack Cuba that Kennedy gave. They told us about this. At first you withdrew the missiles, then you went on to withdraw the IL-28 aircraft, then you began to withdraw the troops. In reply you told us about Kennedy's promise. I don't want to disparage its importance. But at that time we did not at all know where it would end, where this process would stop. The American flew over our territory at treetop height and demoralized our people. We had to make a decision to shoot at the aircraft because these actions exerted a strong psychological influence on the soldiers and the population. They were flying at an altitude of 40 meters. After we shot down one aircraft we managed to get them to begin to fly high. We finally got a Soviet regiment to remain. I think that any country in our situation would have behaved the same as we did.

If Soviet divisions began to leave the GDR during the Berlin Crisis I think that this country would not feel itself confident. We saw how the troops left. I want to frankly say that we have been not thinking about our security egotistically. If one fine day they tell us that we have to sacrifice ourselves for the sake of socialism we will agree with this. The form in which all this occurred made us upset. I applied great efforts to understand all this and to support all this so no deep breach was formed between us. Because in the final account we understood that our enemy is imperialism.

We well understood that only imperialism would gain in the event of any problem between us. It is necessary to struggle for good relations, to maintain good relations. Therefore I supported all this, although it was not easy for me. In the depths of [my] soul I didn't agree with this. But I did not make the decision on my own. I understood that it was necessary to find a solution. I was agreed with these searches. But we thought that it was possible to find a better solution and at the same time without war. It was necessary to devote more attention to form. Even at that moment a better political solution could be achieved, naturally avoiding war. A war could not solve this problem. In no event. This is all very clear.

Thus, all this determined the watershed. Kennedy gave his promise. However, then he began a reorganization of the pirate bases throughout all of Central America. Piratical attacks began. We have 3,000 km of coastline. It is very difficult to do anything. The CIA ships are located in international waters. They attack us at night on a high-speed launch and a high-speed boat. We have made a lot of effort to intercept them. We have used radars, but it is very difficult to attack them at night in the open sea.

A Soviet marshal helped us in this. It was very difficult to solve this problem. And we did not have a single reconnaissance aircraft which could reach these bases. All this caused irritation and provoked a crisis in our relations. And for a long time all this complicated the situation. It is possible this occurred because we were too idealistic. Evidently we had idealized our relations and any little thing affected us. Obviously we needed to be more realistic and less idealistic, and to display greater patience. But

these factors had an effect. Of course, we were also guilty, inasmuch as we had then yielded to irritation and, of course, part of the responsibility for the worsening of our relations rested on us.

Then there came such a moment when our relations started to improve thanks to efforts from both sides. Great experience and great experience evidently also facilitated this.

If there hadn't been such problems, if there hadn't been such a form in which the events had occurred, there wouldn't have been that confusion which developed around all these questions - never, never would the slightest question have arisen in relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union. We had no hesitations.

Located next to the United States and having the problem of the security of Cuba we could have thousands of excuses to take some positions of neutralism, and to seek some concessions to ensure our security. But never did the slightest thought come into any of our heads. Our position is next to the United States and against the United States. There is no hesitation in this position. Our cooperation with the Soviet Union for all these years shows that in any area in which we have dealt with them, we have always responded positively from principle at any time and in any circumstances. If the Soviet Union needs Cuban territory for any purpose - scientific, for communications, strategic, or military, [you] can always count on this in any event. This is our policy, the policy of our revolution. The position of our people is always firm from the political and ideological point of view. And this is known. There might be some different points of view, some nuances, but the Cuban revolution has followed a single policy and will follow this policy.

The Soviet Union does not have and will never have in the future an opportunity to doubt that we are adhering to this policy. I would like to stress this. The Cuban revolution has been able to instill these principles in the popular masses. And this shows the great importance of political and ideological work. We have the ability to strongly withstand the attempts of the ideological influence of imperialism and its propaganda and to withstand the ideological infiltration of imperialism.

We are not rich. Our country has survived, but we live in a very restricted manner and our lives will be restricted. We will struggle to strive for an improvement of the people's living conditions. Our people have received a great education, great social support, medical service has been improved, athletics have been developed, the opportunities for leisure have been expanded, and culture has grown on the whole. We have eliminated prostitution and poverty. Our people have obtained dignity. For the first time they enjoy the benefits of peace after a long struggle to survive. For many years we had 300,000 men under arms. This meant enormous expenses; we were forced to spend 500 million pesos a year for the army. This is not counting that you were supplying us with weapons and ammunition, and also uniforms.

Like our socialist friends, for a long time we have focused on surviving in the center of attention, surviving militarily and politically.

We never had economic development at the center of our attention. We never planned to discuss the problems of the economic development of the country seriously and deeply. We never conducted such an analysis.

Why did a plan to produce 10 million tons of sugar appear? This was our idea. It was not a Soviet idea. An elementary analysis of the economic situation of Cuba showed that the import of rice and the export of sugar remained unchanged. The export [is] of sugar and minerals which we produce. And we did not have an ability to increase exports to the Soviet Union. We do not have coal, nor fuel, nor hydropower, and we do not even have wood, steel production, nor a mechanical industry. The only natural resource which we have is nickel. But enormous capital investment is needed to produce it and no one could think of doing this. That left only sugar. We could try to increase the exports of sugar to the Soviet Union. We make a calculation - such-and-such quantity of sugar, based on its cost of four cents, such-and-such quantity of nickel. We saw how much this provided in total and how much exports were increased, bearing in mind the need to make certain capital investments. When we did this we intended an increase of the consumption of a growing population. So we arrived at the conclusion that we would be able to solve the problem only via sugar. We would prolong the time of operation of the sugar mills and re-design these

mills in order to increase their productivity and eliminate bottlenecks. Based on this we put forward the task of producing 10 million tons of sugar. This was a theoretical argument. Logical, but theoretical.

However, it turned out that this was an unrealistic measure. First, the situation required the mechanization of the harvesting of sugar cane. Everyone thought that this problem could be solved faster than in fact. When we brought up this plan of producing 10 million tons, we thought we would solve the problem of mechanization. We thought that by 1970 part of the [sugar] cane harvest would already be done mechanically. We began to develop the production of sugar cane. We managed to see that in principle there was sufficient cane in the stalks [*na kornyu*] to produce 10 million tons of sugar. We made more capital investment in the re-design of the sugar industry. But the re-design itself let us down. We did not cope with it.

How is one to develop the Cuban economy and on what basis? We made certain efforts in the area of the sugar industry and the production capacity of many mills rose. Now we are trying to make maximum use of these capacities. The mechanization of the harvest has not been solved. This is the second problem. We should have 350,000 cutters of cane. The number of professional cutters of cane dropped during the years of the revolution. Many of them became soldiers, others retired on pension, and yet others turned in to mechanizers, that is, the number of professional cutters increasingly shrank. And with each year we had to mobilize an ever greater labor force from other sectors to harvest the sugar cane: we sent industrial workers, students, even soldiers to cut the sugar cane, which harmed the combat training of the army. We sent students of military training institutions.

We made very great efforts to achieve a production of 10 million tons of sugar. We concentrated all the forces of the country on this. And by 1970 this efforts of ours brought damage to all the rest of the economy. Of course other factors need to be added to this. The Party was entirely plunged into this work. We forgot about the mass organizations. In 1970 we came to the idea that all this needed to be reconsidered: the work of the Party and mass organizations, and to analyze the question of increasing efficiency. The question arose of introducing the setting of work quotas. We began all this in 1970.

I won't talk about weather conditions. Generally speaking if one talks about fairness a literally catastrophic situation has developed with us in this regard. The years 1970 and 1971 stood out as the most difficult. Two years of a constant and very severe drought.

L. I. Brezhnev But how are things this year?

F. Castro This year is good. We have already planted 300,000 hectares of new [sugar] cane. Dorticós has informed me that the condition of the [sugar] cane is very good right now. We have managed to achieve an improvement of the situation in all sectors. If we increase the production of sugar next year we will not have a lag in any of the sectors of the economy.

C. R. Rodríguez According to calculations next year there will be 60 million tons of sugar cane for processing.

A. N. Kosygin This comes to about seven million tons of sugar.

F. Castro If all this is processed, then yes. But we calculate that we will have 6.3 million tons. The current zafra takes place in a rainy period and this has reduced the yield of sugar by 20%.

We have a notable improvement in the area of sugar cane. We are also trying to improve the work at the sugar mills. We have already reduced the number of cane cutters. Right now we have 150,000 fewer people working on the harvesting of cane than previously. But in the next zafra the number of cutters will obviously grow all the same. In 1971 we built 300 new procurement centers which will help increase the labor productivity of the cutters. Why? Because the cutters working for a procurement center do not clean the cane of leaves and only cut it at the root.

Historically the way for Cubans to earn money for life was very difficult. We are totally dependent on agriculture. Pay attention to Chile, for example. They have 30,000 workers working in the copper industry. And right now they don't need large capital

investment there and don't need large transportation expenses, and expenses for fuel are not great. The 30,000 workers in the copper industry produce one billion dollars of product, 30,000 workers provide one billion dollars. In Venezuela 25,000 workers work in oil production. They provide three billion dollars of product a year. In Algeria fuel and natural gas come directly from the wells to the enterprises. Less than 10,000 workers are employed there, but they produce one billion dollars of product. In Cuba half a million workers produce a total of \$600-700 million of product.

We have created a workshop to produce bus chassis. We take a Soviet chassis and import the remaining materials. Such a half-primitive enterprise yields \$20,000 of product a year per worker. In nickel production per worker is \$30,000. However, our economy mainly depends on the work of people who have very low productivity.

We have never found a way out, have never found a solution within the bounds of this situation. What should be a realistic way out, how should the Cuban economy develop? And not to become rich. We cannot raise the question of a developed socialist society right now. We also cannot raise questions which Bulgaria, the GDR, and Czechoslovakia are raising right now. We understand that our goals should be much more modest. I have told you that the situation of our people in the area of social security, education, and medicine has much improved. We are doing much housing construction. We are counting on a modest improvement in the field of the supply of clothing and shoes. By the way, we have already achieved considerable success in the area of shoes. We are trying to improve the food and we are trying to improve the supply of durable items. I have refrigerators in mind. We have also imported some quantity of televisions from the Soviet Union. We are trying to improve collective transport. We will continue to improve the business of public education.

We are trying to achieve growth each year, although modest, but growth. We should proceed from reality, from those resources which we have today, from the level of our industrial development. Such things as the availability of metal also limit us. A chemical industry is practically non-existent. We are trying to develop the production of fertilizers. A new plant has been built in Cienfuegos. Another plant is being built in Nuevititas with Soviet aid. We have a plan for the development of energy production in which the Soviet comrades are taking part. We are reconstructing rail transport, doing much road construction, and much work in the area of hydraulic structures. The amount of water resources has grown approximately 100-fold. This is being done to expand the irrigation of land in every possible way. We have a program to increase the production of rice. We are conducting a big program for the production of citrus fruit. We are counting on solving the labor problem at citrus fruit plantations with the aid of students.

L. I. Brezhnev What citrus fruit are you growing?

F. Castro All kinds: grapefruit, tangerines, and oranges. The main thing for us in this field is the labor problem, the labor force. How do we solve it? We tie the school to production. Cde. Kosygin was in one such school. And we think that this is a successful decision. In the school where you were we set ourselves the task of 95% of the students moving to the next class, that is, for no more than five percent of the students remaining for a second year, although on the whole only 70% in the country moves to the next class.

We have created construction brigades. Now we are in a position to build 500 dairy farms a year. All this on the basis of precast reinforced concrete. We are doing mechanized construction. Schools are also being built this way. The schools have direct ties with agriculture or industrial production. We are counting on enlisting a million students in production work by 1980 in terms of tying schools with production. We have in mind creating a polytechnic school around each sugar mill. We will create schools at new large enterprises. The students will grow citrus fruit and vegetables, and will take part in agricultural work.

Our situation in construction has improved. In 1971 construction rose by 50% compared to the previous year. We finished the construction of a new cement plant. Our reinforcing iron enterprises are operating at full capacity.

A. N. Kosygin Is there sufficient raw material for the production of cement?

F. Castro. Yes, yes, we have good raw material. Last year we produced one million

tons of cement. This year it will be 1.7 million tons and the next year 2.3 million tons.

L. I. Brezhnev But what are your needs in cement?

F. Castro. The needs are growing. We are holding negotiations with the GDR right now about the construction of one more plant. They will begin to supply us with equipment in 1974. We have long been holding talks with the Romanians about the construction of a cement plant.

A. N. Kosygin Right now it is necessary to switch to the new, dry method in the production of cement.

F. Castro. This is correct. It so happens, these two plants provide for the dry production of cement.

L. I. Brezhnev This means of production appeared about two years ago.

F. Castro. We don't want the old method inasmuch as it requires great expenditures of fuel. We are holding talks about the construction of plants according to the dry method. We didn't want to go to the Soviet Union on this question inasmuch as we already have enough questions with you. Therefore we are holding talks with the GDR and Romania. As concerns the Romanians, I don't know how it will be. They are studying the question, but inasmuch as the situation in Romania is known, we do not know how all this will turn out.

Each of these plants will produce 1,200,000 tons. But we won't have new capacities in cement until the second half of 1975. We have a broad program of housing construction. We have been very laggard in this field. We will create a cooperative of industrial workers. Part of the workers of industrial enterprises are going to a construction site, and the rest will fulfill their work norms at the enterprises. We will build 30,000 dwellings this year by such a method. We are providing the machinery and doing the excavation. A group of 25-30 people is being created at a plant where, let's say, 1000 people work. The rest fulfill their norms, but these 25-30 people work at a construction site. They work superbly, with great enthusiasm. Cde. Kosygin was in Cuba and he saw some of this. Then he talked with the workers, and the workers treat this very seriously.

L. I. Brezhnev Are you building large or small buildings?

F. Castro Large. Multi-apartment buildings. Not so large as here, but large. Five-story. They are even being built in the neighborhoods of a school.

Previously buildings were constructed by professional construction workers. Now they are building factories, dams, farms, and public buildings.

A. N. Kosygin The construction of a dairy farm in Cuba is inexpensive compared to our conditions.

F. Castro Our labor productivity in the field of construction has increased a great deal. In 1970 we built 5,000 apartments. This year, 30,000. By the end of 1973, if the same growth rate continues, we will have already meet the targets which were previous set for 1975.

We are confident that we will perform the construction of the planned enterprises, in particular, the power stations. At one of these they are working around the clock. This is in Tallapiedra, where the construction will be completed this July. Cde. Kosygin, you visited it when you were in Cuba.

You know that right now we are working on a three-year plan: we are holding talks about deliveries which will be made during these three years. Then we will begin to develop a five-year plan for 1975-1980. All the conditions have been created so that, finally, a solution will be achieved to the question to which so much concern has been displayed by the Soviet comrades - the planned element, to work in accordance with a plan. We are seeking to coordinate our plans with the plans of the socialist countries.

We have comprehensively analyzed the situation, and have studied the imbalance which exists in our trade relations. We have been seeking a form to solve this problem: how to balance our trade, and what needs to be done to achieve this. The question of prices exists. All this is being analyzed right now.

This situation is determined by the real condition of our economy, its weakness. It is necessary to find an answer to how Cuba should be developed. What are the natural

resources on the basis of which the economy can be developed? How can industry be developed so as to achieve changes in the interrelationship between agriculture and industry? Eight-five percent of our exports are from agriculture. This creates preconditions for instability. There can be a difference between a normal year and a drought year of 40%, for example in sugar cane. In a normal year one can get 10 million tons of sugar, in a drought year, six million tons. The level of production in industry is more stable. We are developing the production of citrus fruit as an important sector on the basis of technical achievements; we are doing this on irrigated land. Nevertheless a great deal in our economy depends on agriculture. No socialist country in Europe depends on agriculture to such a degree. Bulgaria has the greatest dependence: agricultural production plays a great role in their exports. But in Bulgaria there is a more stable climate, a good technical level, and a high degree of mechanization. Their agriculture is very mechanized. I have seen how things are in this plan. It is very interesting. They have achieved much. I was in a field and saw everything with my own eyes. They have wonderful achievements in the field of labor productivity. In addition, Bulgaria also has a developed industry.

Frankly speaking, I have never seen such a developed agriculture as in Bulgaria. Neither in Hungary nor in Romania. But they also have a well-developed machinebuilding industry, they produce metals and are developing chemistry. In Bulgaria a change is envisioned in the long run in the interrelationship in favor of industry compared to agriculture.

L. I. Brezhnev This is on the basis of integration with us.

F. Castro Yes, this is so. Thus, all the countries are developing industry. To some degree all are developing the production of metals and their processing. To one degree or another all are developing chemistry. Of course, Cuba cannot develop a mechanical industry for export. We have no experience. This would neither be natural nor logical. It also cannot develop a chemical industry for export. Cuba cannot develop the production of common steels in order to make them the basis for export. We have no coal.

What does Cuba have? In what could we specialize? In Cuba nickel, iron, cobalt, aluminum, and chromium are mixed – five elements in one ore. We have the largest reserves of nickel in the world. Therefore I think that the production of special steels can be developed in Cuba. Of course, the production of special steels is being developed in all countries. But many socialist countries spend hard currency to buy special steels in capitalist countries. The natural resources exist in Cuba. A technical decision is needed and large capital investment is required.

A. N. Kosygin A large amount of electric power is needed to produce nickel.

F. Castro Yes. But the prices for these steels are high. Of course, we can produce a small quantity of common steels for our domestic needs. The food industry needs sheet metal for the production of canned goods. Collective transport – buses need rolled metal, and the production of agricultural machinery, combines, and other things are also needed. We have started to need some minimum of steel. And [we] do not have any solution to this yet.

One more question – cellulose. We have the natural raw material for this – bagasse. We are using it for fuel right now.

Thus, we have two natural resources which are worth thinking about, to think just on the basis of integration. Of course, the question of cooperation with Latin American countries will arise in the distant future: we are located next to them. However, a revolution in these countries is needed for this. When the appropriate political conditions appear we should of course be integrated with Latin America. We won't be integrated with the United States. With Latin America, yes. But this is a question of the distant future.

What are we to do with Cuban in current conditions, how is it to be developed? We are ready to hand this question over to researchers and economists for consideration in order to get an answer for the socialist countries to find an answer to these questions. Our economic situation is far more serious than they think. We should spend \$30 million in convertible currency just on transportation. This is not counting the shipments done by the vessels of the Soviet Union. Our merchant fleet has 50 ships and carries only seven percent of the cargo. The average distance of the

shipments is 15,000 km. This leads to an increase in freight costs. Our cargo is bulky – we ship raw material for industry and spare parts.

It has been hard for us to solve all the problems. We'll take the question of the prices for sugar. For many years sugar cost from two to two and a half cents per pound, but this is our main source of foreign exchange [*valyuta*]. The Americans are blocking the sale of our nickel. Spain is the main market of our tobacco, but we do not conduct trade with them on a clearing basis.

L. I. Brezhnev What do you get from Spain in exchange for tobacco?

F. Castro A whole series of products. Some industrial equipment, transportation equipment, some raw material, fishing ships, and merchant vessels.

A. N. Kosygin What are the prospects for the production of citrus fruit which can be counted on, and on what quantity of citrus fruit? What will be the production of citrus fruit in this five-year plan?

F. Castro According to our calculations by 1980 a harvest of 40,000 hectares [SIC] will come from the 80,000 hectares of citrus fruit plantations. In 1975 we will be able to export 20,000 tons of citrus fruit to the Soviet Union.

A. N. Kosygin After what time will the citrus plants begin to bear fruit?

C. R. Rodriguez They begin to bear fruit after the fifth year, but the plantation really develops by the 15th year.

F. Castro We are devoting very great attention to citrus fruit right now. I myself am following this question personally. We are working on the Isle of Pines, in the province of Pinar del Rio, and Matanzas. There are plantations in all the provinces. I am trying to impose the maximum requirements and I demand the maximum efforts from the workers. In the future we will have a good production of citrus fruit.

A. N. Kosygin Fidel, why do you not develop the production of bananas? They also grow quickly and bear good fruit.

F. Castro. I will explain right now. Bananas are very demanding of the soil, but our best land is for sugar cane. This is not like citrus fruit. Citrus fruit grows in sandy soil. It can grow where sugar cane does not. We have determined that 200,000 hectares in our country can be devoted to citrus fruit. I think that we can work together on the question of the production of citrus fruit. We have good natural conditions for this. In our opinion we can broadly collaborate with you in the field of citrus fruit inasmuch as the socialist countries need this product. We can also devote the maximum attention to this.

A. N. Kosygin. This year we will buy 400,000 tons of citrus fruit. We have unlimited needs.

L. I. Brezhnev There is a shortage of citrus fruit in any country of Europe.

F. Castro I think that in principle we can realize a program in far greater dimensions than we are speaking of right now. The main thing is the workforce. This is problem number one. We are solving it with the aid of the schools. Right now we have great abilities for the construction of schools.

We should develop the production of citrus fruit, draw up a good plan, and use equipment. Soviet specialists might study this problem. We can work together in this sphere. We are already making great efforts. Now, when the plantings of the sugar cane are already in a good condition and our cultivated grassland is in a good condition, I am demanding attention to citrus fruit and I am demanding great efforts in this matter.

The entire Cuban economy needs to be looked at as a whole. A modest growth of production needs to be put in place and to determine what sectors should be developed. Should we engage in petrochemistry? Should we develop the production of special steels? What needs to be done to satisfy our demand for metal? Our food industry needs sheet metal to can fruits. In no way can we say that we have solved the problem of metal for our mechanical industry. I think that all this needs to be deeply studied and to look at the Cuban economy in its totality.

There is one more question. I think that we should keep to the principle of moving modestly, but moving forward every year. To consolidate what has already been achieved in social terms. Progressively improve the situation in the main areas, [but]

don't arouse illusions and excessive ambitions in the population which would not be in accord with our reality. We should continue to make efforts in the political and ideological area.

We know the Cuban people well. With the aid of the Cuban people we are solving the housing problem, and improving education, medical support, leisure, and collective transport. We are improving the supply of clothing and other consumer goods. By this I want to say that our revolution is guaranteed in its development. We will come to 1980, to 1990, and to 2000. This is guaranteed.

We should also think about the future, about the future of Latin America, about a future community in Latin America. We will train specialists, engineers, and doctors to cooperate with the Latin American countries in the future. In spite of the economic difficulties which occur because Cuba is not a rich country, that we do not have light [*legkie* - SIC] resources, its social and political achievements are enormous compared to other countries. For example, we have trained many doctors. When a big earthquake occurred in Peru Cuban construction workers built a hospital there. We have great achievements in sports. If one looks there is everything in Latin America, oil, energy resources, everything.

In the other socialist countries I have explained the difference which exists between the socialist countries in Europe and us. They obtain oil and natural gas through an oil pipeline, the rail lines are connected, and the power lines are looped [*zakol'tsovany*]. These are wonderful conditions.

A. N. Kosygin. But the biggest work in these terms would need to be, for example, to build thousands of kilometers of pipelines.

F. Castro However much you want, you won't build an oil pipeline to Cuba, and you won't lay power lines. And even if there is integration in Latin America no one will be able to build an electrical transmission line to Cuba, nor a gas pipeline, nor an oil pipeline. The geographic position of Cuba prevents this.

We should not complain of this. I think that every people should adapt themselves to what there is. If we [only] had oil as in Venezuela and Libya! We need to solve our problems proceeding from our conditions and to search for a rational and moral solution. Moral in the sense that we should instill in the people a consciousness that our natural conditions are limited. It needs to be shown what goals socialism sets in our country. Fortunately, we have achieved success in this. When there are great riches one can provide more benefits and less politics. When you are rich you give fewer benefits and more politics.

Sometimes I ask myself the question - do the new generations in the socialist countries understand, do they imagine, how much their lives have improved[?] They are guaranteed security, peace, and education. I see how the healthy children grow there. They are well-clothed and the state gives them a marvelous education. We see new cities such as Katowice, Dresden, and Halle.

A. N. Kosygin. Politics is the concentrated expression of economics.

F. Castro This is understood. What do I want to say? These countries have greatly improved the condition of the masses. But, as it seems to me, their political education is not at the same high level and not at the those high rates. A strong ideological base, a base of consciousness, still needs to be put under a good material base.

A. N. Kosygin. They have a strong material base because they are very closely tied to us. They do not have great natural resources. They get raw material and fuel from the Soviet Union.

F. Castro I will cite one more example which relates to Halle. Previously a war was waged for raw materials. Now oil from the Soviet Union arrives in Halle. This is the result of direct international collaboration, internationalism. The Soviet Union is the primary supplier of the main resources without which the socialist countries of Europe could not exist. This phenomenon is undeniable, everyone who has been there sees it.

A. N. Kosygin. In Bulgaria there are also no natural resources - no oil, no natural gas, but in spite of this the Bulgarians feel good and they are going forward in their economic development. The metallurgical industry of Bulgaria is developing on the basis of our coals and mineral ores, but the distance between Bulgaria and us is

relatively small.

F. Castro Returning to the question of the situation in Latin America I want to say that right now everything there that has been built by the United States of America for so many years is falling down. At the beginning of the revolution they supported Cuba, not associating it with socialism and Communism. Right now Cuba is completely personified with socialism and Communism. There is a great difference in this, however the masses in Latin America support Cuba. A great difference exists between the support of Cuba in 1959-1960 and its support right now.

During the trip to Chile I met with almost all the division commanders. This didn't get into the press. I saw great interest in Cuba on their part, in the revolutionary struggle, in our military equipment, in the battle at Playa Giron, great interest in everything. They displayed interest in a great range of questions.

L. I. Brezhnev Is their equipment old?

F. Castro Yes, old. They have something in the fleet. There are British ships.

I told them - you're unarmed. You are more unarmed than the Indians when the Spanish arrived. We live in a nuclear age, in an age of a scientific and technical revolution, spaceflights. I asked them the question, what place does your country take in the world? A small country competing with bordering countries. What role does the military play in a society divided into the rich and the poor? What might happen in the event of war? A complete unity of the people like we have is needed in the event of war so that workers, peasants, and students all be together. During a war you will be alone. I developed the idea of the need for a community of the Latin American countries to be able to put their resources together and to be able to use these resources on the basis of a social revolution, on the basis of the development of science. The Latin American countries should unite to create a community which could play a role in the world.

I spoke to them about the role of the soldier, about the role of the professional soldier in a revolution. I told them about the historical responsibility which they bear. I stated all these ideas to the Chilean military. These ideas found a great response among them, although they have been educated by the Americans, although Prussianism [ *prussianstvo*] has great influence among them. Why Prussianism? Because the Chilean army was founded and created by German military men from Prussia.

All this found a response among the professional military men. I said to them that we had disbanded parliament, liquidated the bourgeois freedom of the press, and all that sort of thing inasmuch all these institutions were corrupted and had caused confusion. We eliminated the bourgeois state, but we did not eliminate the army. We created a revolutionary army connected to the people. We have the largest, excellently-equipped forces in all [our] history. Imperialism does not give you weapons, we told them. You are simply policemen in the service of imperialism. Well, of course, I spoke of this delicately, about this role of theirs.

L. I. Brezhnev Also delicately, like here at this table?

F. Castro I told them that imperialism assigns them such a role.

My goal was for the military to establish close relations with the Popular Unity [Party]. How will they solve this problem in Chile? The army there is for constitutionality, parliament takes right-wing positions, and the newspapers, radio, and means of mass propaganda are in the hands of rightists. Popular Unity is in a difficult position. A majority of the people are not for them although they have a quality - the workers are on their side. The Americans have created corrupted strata of the population in the country among whom economism dominates. On the whole economism has been developed in Chile. Frei has left a debt of four billion dollars. They bought automobiles, refrigerators, and televisions and owe for this. They wanted to present Christian Democracy as a panacea for the solution of all problems, as a panacea against socialism. They left the country in debt and left the new government a very difficult economic legacy. Popular Unity could not oppose all this because it needed the votes of the Christian Democratic voters. It should have pursued a conciliatory policy. There was a moment of an upturn. Possibly if a plebiscite had been held at that moment and the question of the nationalization of copper and some other similar questions had been raised perhaps Popular Unity would have won the plebiscite and then other opportunities would have arisen. The possibilities for peaceful

development would have been extended.

The situation in Chile is serious right now. At a certain moment I thought that Popular Unity would be able to win the armed forces to its side. During the trip I exerted maximum effort for this myself. I talked with all the parties, all the forces, and told them of the need for unity. I pointed to the fact that the rightists, the fascists, were striving to win the street. I tried to do everything so as to draw the military to Popular Unity. But such a result could not yet be achieved – their forces are too diverse. Such is the situation in Chile.

The Chileans want to make a revolution and they are undertaking great efforts. However, the whole problem is that the main positions of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine say that it is impossible to make a revolution without a mass movement. How can one make a revolution without a dictatorship of the proletariat? How can one make a revolution without control over government bodies? How can one make a revolution without confiscating the main mass media, without a change of that culture which capitalism has left? This is very hard to do.

L. I. Brezhnev Yes, the situation in Chile is very complex.

F. Castro Chile is isolated. On the one side is the Pacific Ocean, and on the other, unfriendly countries. The US is not far away. If they were there where Yugoslavia is or at least Italy or Austria, they would have other possibilities.

The situation in Peru is improving. They will soon establish relations with us. I also had a very good meeting there.

In Ecuador the authorities stationed 7,000 soldiers around the airfields so that everything would be in proper order during our visit. There were tank crew members and parachutists there. The military men came to the aircraft on which we had flown. They requested that one of the Cuban military men speak to them and tell about the Cuban revolution, what it is. This was something incredible. This was not to mention the workers and peasants. Clergy, soldiers, everyone displayed great interest. This was the situation in the masses, in public opinion.

The influence of the United States is still very great for now. The newspapers and radio are in their hands. It is necessary to prepare for the fact that in Chile there might be a defeat, perhaps a retreat, maybe a military or political coup. This has already happened in Bolivia.

The Bolivian events had a big effect on Peru. There is a group of military leftists in Peru, those who had made a coup d'état at one time. They have somewhat lost their influence right now. The Americans acted very adroitly. They relied on the right-wing forces, on the press, and on anti-Communism. The US is waging an anti-Communist campaign, giving some loans [*kredyty*], and supporting certain people.

The situation in Ecuador is uncertain. There is a revolutionary cell, but in Ecuador rightists predominate among the military. On the day when we were in Ecuador President Velasco Ibarra, the minister of the oil industry, and representatives of mass organizations and left-wing parties came to us for a meeting. Saad was then the leader of the Communist Party there. Oil questions in particular were discussed at this meeting. Colossal reserves of oil that do not contain sulfur have been discovered in Ecuador. Every 10 wells produce oil. This is something incredible. And here in the course of the conversation Saad stood up and said: "Fidel, this government has taken some steps and we support it, but in the area of oil policy we do not support it because they are handing this oil over to the Americans". The President and the minister of oil industry were sitting there and I said to them: "Listen, what are they accusing you of here?" Velasco said, "Let the minister explain this". And all the military chiefs were there. And among these military chiefs there was one who is now President in Ecuador. According to information I I have almost all the military men who were present at the conversation took good positions. The one who is President right now took a dubious position.

Very serious differences with the US are developing in Panama. We maintain contacts with the Panamanians. These contacts are secret. For the time being they fear them going further.

The Panamanians have sent us a delegation in connection with our seizure of the pirate ships which sailed under the Panamanian flag. We made a gesture – we returned the sailors. We talked much with this delegation. I even told it that the

Panamanians should not expect a struggle for the Panama Canal – this is a short-term struggle. They want to take a heroic position, to make public statements. If the problem of the Canal is not solved, they said, then we should seize the Canal at the head of the people. I explained to them that such statements place great responsibilities on them, that it can lead them to a dead end at a certain moment, with no way out. I told them: “You are unarmed, you will simply have several hundred people killed, and you’ll solve nothing. This can only lead to failure”.

The Americans need a second canal. I therefore told them, therefore don’t hold secret talks because secret talks play into the hands of the Americans. Publish the materials about the talks, and take a tough position on the question of a new canal.

I told them that in the future it is necessary to also address international responsibility because the entire world is interested in this Canal; it serves the interests of the trade of the entire world. I pointed them to the various resources which they can use politically against the Americans, and warned that they not pursue the matter to [the point of] a clash. This is the easiest. The Americans will simply commit another massacre.

In the conversation with them I stressed that they should consolidate a domestic front, keeping in mind that this struggle will be prolonged. The big landowners [*latifundisty*] and big merchants, I told them, will be against you, and the capitalists and big bourgeoisie will be against you; you should carry out a social revolution. This will be more painful for the Americans than you sending your troops to the Canal. I talked with them a lot and at length, and I hope that this played some role. They didn’t make such statements any more. They have not yet published the materials of the talks, but have already reported the fact of secret talks with the Americans.

A. N. Kosygin. But are the negotiations between the US and Panama about the Canal continuing?

F. Castro. Yes, they are continuing. The Panamanians have no way out – the Americans have bases there and the Americans do not want to make any concessions. The only new canal which could be built for large ships should be built only on Panamanian territory. The current Canal is already obsolete, and at some time it will become a complete anachronism. Nevertheless serious differences revolve around this Canal.

The Panamanian military are in touch with the military of other countries and perform their work there. In El Salvador a group of military men with leftist sympathies who have enough serious strength have almost decided to take power into their own hands. They even entered into contact with us before this.

Political stability is lacking in Mexico. The current government wants an improvement of relations with us and the development of trade. Mexicans would like to visit Cuba. We are sympathetic to this, but we are not rushing them. We don’t want Cuba to be used as an instrument in a domestic struggle, in domestic politics. We are approaching this very cautiously.

Summing up, I would like to say the following. We favor the growth of political consciousness in Latin America so that this process is not precluded. We expect nothing in the short term. But we hope to achieve results in the long term. This might be achieved in various forms. It might be a Peruvian form, it might be some other form. However, the Latin American countries will be liberated from the domination of the United States.

Another question. The influence of the Cuban revolution is growing among young people and among intellectuals inside the United States itself. Every year hundreds of American young men and women come to work in Cuba. At one time Angela Davis was among them. They come from the most diverse universities. And we noticed that they pursue political work on returning to the US. This is the reality.

What do we think? Our situation is different from the situation in Europe. We sympathize with the European problems. We have seen Berlin and other things with our own eyes. We should see the difference in that role which Cuba is playing right now in the new international situation, in the situation of *détente*. But Cuba is taking on great importance in the ideological and political struggle. It is already unimportant to the Americans right now that there is a socialist government in Cuba. This question no longer affects them. Initially they wanted for us to have a government of the

Yugoslav type, that is, they were agreed for the Yugoslav version of socialism to exist in Cuba, a sort of nationalistic socialism. Then they said that Cuba should break its military ties with the Soviet Union and stop subversive activity. Now the forms are changing. In Latin America defiance [*nepodchinenie*] of the US on the Cuban question is rising. Now three countries already have relations with us: Mexico, Chile, and before long, Peru. There will also be more countries which establish relations with us. What significance does the establishment of relations with us have? It goes against the desire of the United States of America. In other words, the establishment of relations with Cuba is an act of affirmation of independence for the country which establishes these relations,

When Nixon came to power, possibly by virtue of the advice of one of those crafty people whom he has around them, he possibly tried to conduct a diplomatic offensive. He tried to begin talks with us and tried to sound out such an opportunity. But we saw his visit to Romania. We clearly understood that this visit pursued a certain political goal, the goal of supporting nationalism, the goal of division. This is a policy which Nixon has publicly announced. Then the US established contact with China. We also saw in this an anti-Soviet maneuver on the part of the United States, an attempt to use the existing differences, an attempt to use China, and we rejected this diplomatic offensive of Nixon because it was essentially an anti-Soviet maneuver. On the other hand, this was also a maneuver against Latin America, an attempt to neutralize our revolution so that the steps of Latin American countries would not seem directed against the United States of America in this question.

Finally, from the domestic point of view a movement is growing in the United States in favor of Cuba, a demand to normalize relations with Cuba, and a sentiment against the blockade of Cuba. There are people there in the most diverse parties with such a sentiment. And we have come to the conclusion that it was correct not to go into talks with the Americans. I said this to Cde. Kosygin. He then asked whether we can sell shrimp to the United States of America. Remember, we talked about the export of shrimp?

A. N. Kosygin. Yes.

F. Castro. This is the policy which we decided to follow. The role of the Soviet Union and the role of Cuba are completely different. Their weight in world affairs is different. Our role is limited. Our political and ideological goals are in Latin America. Our attitude toward Nixon should be that we should not be in a hurry in this matter. Let the blockade, the base in Guantanamo, and the subversive activity which they pursue against us be eliminated. There is no question of war or peace in Cuba right now.

I think that relative calm exists in the region of Cuba right now. There were piratical attacks, and we seized two ships. The US then said that they had issued an order to defend the ships in similar situations. Of course, we should and will avoid conflicts with them, properly pursuing our business. We also understand that Cuba should play a big role in the ideological and political struggle in this region, maintaining a firm, principled policy. Not to give any concessions to the United States of America, not to give them any pretexts, not to create the conditions for them for them to be able to resolve the differences which they have with Latin America.

There is one more question. Unfortunately, there are many negative trends by virtue of the confused situation which exists in Latin America. Sometimes Chinese, Trotskyite, sometimes Yugoslav tendencies, sometimes tendencies of the Romanian type. All these tendencies deviate from the Marxist line and are encountering some response. For example, in Latin America sometimes Yugoslavs climb in, sometimes Trotskyites, for example in the Peruvian government. They speak and sow ideological confusion. I think that the role of Cuba is to be an uncompromising defender of the Marxist line against all these tendencies. We should avoid in Latin America what happened in the Arab world: nationalism, pseudorevolutionarism, political opportunism, and neutralism. We are a negation of all this. We are not neutralists, we are not nationalists, we are not opportunists, and we are not beggars here and there. Economic relations with the US might provide some economic advantages, of course. But this is not a determinative phenomenon. We have already passed the most difficult times.

We don't want American tourism in Cuba. This would be a conflict with our

consciousness, with the general spirit which exists in our country. We cannot accept American tourists, because even the leftist young people who come to us from the US to cut cane sometimes have long hair and appear bizarre. People look at them with mistrust. No, we cannot accept tourism.

Tourism is a source of hard currency. Previously it gave us \$50 million. But we cannot use it. We could have some trade exchange. It would give us something, of course. But this trade would not be decisive. Therefore we don't have to rush. We will wait.

What is happening in the US? For the US is so far claiming to having the right to intervene in Santo Domingo, play the role of gendarme, and pursue subversive work. That's all they do. They have bases. Where they are able to hold their positions they by no means retreat. The struggle is going to be long. The US has great influence in Africa, Latin America, and in Asia. It is necessary to continue to fight them.

As long as the US plays the role of gendarme in Latin America we should not enter into relations with them. On the contrary, we should demand they respect the rights of the peoples and demand that they stop performing the role of gendarme. We have neither the military nor other material resources to stop this, but we have great political power. And this is a wonderful weapon. We offer principles against them and will remain in this position. We cannot improve relations with the US as long as the US pursues a policy of [acting as a] gendarme in Latin America, exercises pressure, and threatens.

We have created economic concern for the Soviet Union, as we are a reason for diplomatic, political, and military efforts. But we have endured the most difficult times. We will find a solution to all questions in the long term. We will find a solution for the economic questions without great ambitions. These will be modest decisions. Our point of view is that we should wait and play our political role. If the United States normalizes relations with us, then it will be the easiest matter for all the rest to establish relations with us. But as long as the United States opposes these relations every Latin American step in the direction of Cuba has great political importance. Peru is making such a revolutionary step right now.

We are telling the US that they should stop performing the role of gendarme and should halt the interference and intervention. We will wait until there is a more realistic government capable of this. We can wait five or six years. We are deeply convinced that it is better to wait. It is worth waiting. This is our attitude toward the question of relations with the United States of America.

I won't say any more, much time has already passed.

L. I. Brezhnev Thank you very much. We should thank Cde. Fidel for the interesting and detailed information about Cuba, about the problems of a political as well as economic nature with which it is faced. Everything [you] said is not simply interesting for us, your information will help us in cooperation with Cuba. The information about Latin America is also of great interest. We have more contacts with Latin America than you have. We also know enough about Latin America, but possibly do not always get the nuances right as you do. In this sense your information is of great political importance for us.

What did today's meeting show? We have just begun the talks and obviously ought to think about paying more attention to holding working meetings.

Considering that today we have another, rather interesting, event ahead of us, I would like to end the talks right now. Twenty minutes before the start of the official dinner we could meet in Yekaterinsky Hall, where Nikolay Viktorovich Podgorny will present you with an award in accordance with a decision of the Central Committee of our Party.

If Cde. Fidel has any comments, we will hear them with pleasure.

F. Castro I think that the exchange of speeches during the presentation of the order will be brief. I have not been writing my speech at the dinner for this occasion and I should work on it some more. In this speech I want to show the role of the Soviet Union which it plays in our time in condensed form and broad strokes, that is, to combine in one statement everything that I have been saying in part in various places. I will touch on international questions, and I will tell of those socialist countries where we have been. I will have to say something about Vietnam.

I want to touch on the question of Vietnam, but so that no thought arises that some divisions [or] differences exist between us. I will talk about the heroism of the Vietnamese people, just referring to that paragraph which you have in the speech. I will talk of the need for moral and political support to Vietnam. I want to do all this so that no one will think that any differences exist, so there are no [perceived] subtleties. The Vietnamese comrades are very interested in such statements. Such statements invigorate them. We have not talked about the Vietnamese question in detail. We will do this later, but I think that I should touch on this question.

L. I. Brezhnev Yes, this question is also touched upon in my statement.

F. Castro Good.

L. I. Brezhnev Do you have any comments about the draft of our statement?

F. Castro I don't know how you will treat this but it seems to me that it would be good to add some other phrase to the paragraph which is devoted to Vietnam, to make it a little broader. Of course, the positions are clear, everything there is presented very clearly and correctly, but possibly it would be worth adding something, expanding this part so that the Vietnamese theme occupies a little more space in the general context of the statement. Not in substance, but in form, in place, and in volume. There was an article in Pravda in which it was pointed out that a solution of the Vietnamese question is an unacceptable condition for a relaxation of international tension. One might add to this thought here. I very much liked this argument then. It could be used to pressure the Americans.

L. I. Brezhnev. Good

The conversation was recorded by

[signature]

O. Darusenkov

V. Man'ko