

October 29, 1962

**Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet
Foreign Ministry AA Gromyko and Carlos Olivares
Sanchez**

Citation:

"Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Foreign Ministry AA Gromyko and Carlos Olivares Sanchez", October 29, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Archive of Foreign Policy, Russian Federation (AVP RF), Moscow; copy obtained by NHK (Japanese Television), provided to CWIHP, and on file at National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.; translation by Vladimir Zaemsky. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/112631>

Summary:

Conversation between Gromyko and Sanchez where Sanchez asks the Soviet opinion on a number of issues, including the US blockade of Cuba and Castro's recent speech.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

At the request of Olivares Sanchez [I] received him at 16.00. [4 p.m.]

The Ambassador asked [me] to inform him about our assessment of the international situation created as a result of the naval blockade around Cuba, announced by the USA administration.

[I] Responded to him that we, the Soviet Government, consider to be a good one the outcome of the recent events in the Caribbean. As a result of the efforts undertaken by the Soviet and Cuban sides there have been received guarantees on the part of the USA administration of non-aggression against the Republic of Cuba, which will be officially formalized after the end of negotiations with the participation of Mr. U Thant, Acting UN Secretary General. In our opinion the result is also a further strengthening of the international position of the Republic of Cuba. Nowadays the Cuban people is seen even more than before as a heroic people who has convincingly demonstrated to the whole world its resoluteness to defend--arms in hand--the liberty and independence of its motherland.

Olivares asked about our opinion regarding the statement made by Fidel Castro on October 28 of the current year.

[I] Responded to him that this statement has received the full comprehension and support of the Soviet Government.

Speaking of time limits for the withdrawal from Cuba of the "Soviet weapons for strategic defense" the Ambassador asked to be informed if those armaments would be returned to the Soviet Union before the Americans fulfill the Cuban government's demand for liquidation of the USA navy base in Guantanamo.

[I] Responded to him that, in our opinion, the solution of the question of the liquidation of the Guantanamo base, apparently, will require a long time and therefore the presence of certain types of Soviet armaments in Cuba during that period will hardly contribute to solving it positively.

Olivares asked if this meant that the Soviet armaments would be withdrawn from Cuba before the USA administration satisfies other demands listed by Fidel Castro in his statement: to end the economic blockade, subversive activity, piratical actions, and incursions of whatever kind into the air space or territorial waters of Cuba.

[I] Responded to him that when we are speaking about the return of Soviet armaments from Cuba to the USSR we mean only a certain kind of armaments, but not armaments in general. Regarding the fulfillment of the above-listed demands of the Cuban government, we see it as a process that requires a certain time to satisfy all the demands mentioned in the cited statement by Fidel Castro.

Having made a reference to a note received from the Embassy of Sudan and other available data, Olivares informed [me] that a series of neutral countries accuse Cuba of violating the Belgrade Declaration, explaining their conclusions by the accepted fact of the presence of a "Soviet military base" in Cuba.

[I] Told Olivares that such assumptions do not have the slightest grounds. Each country can use the right not only for individual, but also a collective defense against aggression. It is clear that being the object of continuous aggressive provocations on the part of the USA and even having already been a victim of invasion, Cuba cannot become like a frog voluntarily jumping into the boa's jaws. Measures undertaken by the Cuban government to strengthen its national defenses are in full accordance with international law and do not contradict a single commonly accepted international norm.

At the conclusion of the conversation Olivares expressed his desire to broaden contacts between officials of the MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] of the USSR and those of the Cuban embassy in such circumstances. He spoke about his interest to receive from the MFA a more complete information [report] about the most important decisions adopted in Moscow and referring to Soviet-Cuban relations, for his own orientation and in order to have the possibility to inform his government personally.

[I] Responded to him that I do understand such an interest, adding that the Ambassador's desire would certainly be taken into account. [I] Explained that during the recent events we were obliged, in order to save time, to use communication lines of our Embassy in Havana, which ensure an uninterrupted, secure, and quick transmission of reports to Cuba. The Ambassador said that he entirely understands this and agrees with this. He gave me to understand that from the point of view of reliability (code) the communication through our Embassy in Havana is a more suitable method than through the Cuban embassy in Moscow.

In parting Olivares expressed deep gratitude to the peoples of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Government for continuous support of the Cuban people's struggle for the independence of their motherland.

[I] Thanked Olivares for these sentiments.

At the conversation were present: A. Gonzales, Ambassador's translator, and V. Chernyshov, Second Secretary of the Latinamerican Department.

A. GROMYKO

[Source: Archive of Foreign Policy, Russian Federation (AVP RF), Moscow; copy obtained by NHK (Japanese Television), provided to CWIHP, and on file at National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.; translation by Vladimir Zaemsky.]