

**December 6, 1962**

**Memorandum of the Conversation between Cuban  
President Osvaldo Dorticós and Chinese  
Ambassador to Cuba Shen Jian**

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**Summary:**

Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticós and Chinese Ambassador to Cuba Shen Jian discuss a wide range of topics, from The Selected Works of Mao Zedong to China's economic situation to American military interventions.

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Chinese

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Dorticós: Glad to see you go back here again.

Ambassador Shen: Before I left China to return to Cuba, Chairman Mao, Chairman Liu Shaoqi, and Prime Minister Zhou Enlai asked me to forward their greetings to Comrade President.

Dorticós: Thanks very much. How are Comrade Mao Zedong, Comrade Liu Shaoqi and Comrade Zhou Enlai?

Ambassador Shen: Very well. Our 10th plenum of the our party's central committee, which they [Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai] started to prepare and direct a long time ago, successfully opened this September. Now the issue at stake has become how to implement those policies produced at this meeting.

Dorticós: I have been keeping an eye on this meeting and read quite a few relevant documents and reports. What is the general situation of China?

Ambassador Shen: Now China's economic situation is very good. As Comrade President knows, China has been hit, intermittently over recent years, by natural disasters. But the harvest of 1961 was better than that of 1960, and this year's turns out to be even more encouraging than last year's. One can say the darkest period of economic difficulty due to natural disasters has now passed. The fact that within such a short period we gradually overcame difficulties proves the righteousness of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and Comrade Mao Zedong. Opting for a socialist construction blueprint, the Great Leap Forward, the institution of People's Communes, is undoubtedly correct. Based on lessons and experiences of the past, our central committee now has devised a detailed implementation plan. With a correct direction and a series of fitting general polices already in position, the Chinese people feel that there is no reason that they won't do better in future socialist constructions. Naturally, because of China's vastness, it is an arduous way ahead, before we reach the stage of total electrification, mechanization, and modernization. Being a big country has a lot of advantages but also has some difficulties.

Dorticós: I'm happy to learn that the Chinese comrades overcame difficulties and are making progress. I know that the darkest period of China's economic difficulty is now over. We are quite concerned about the Sino-Indian conflict, on which we have kept a close eye. I have finished your booklet (On Nehru's Philosophy based on the Sino-Indian Conflict) and a copy of Prime Minister Zhou Enlai's letter, the one of 15 November 1962. In fact, I have read all the materials you have sent to me.

Ambassador Shen: I remember that before I left Cuba, Comrade President expressed his wish to discuss with me the Sino-Indian border problems on my future arrival. I am prepared to introduce this topic now, if Comrade President has the time today.

Dorticós: Of course I have time, and I am very much looking forward to it.

Ambassador Shen: This is the 4th volume of The Selected Works of Mao Zedong, which I brought from Beijing as a gift to you.

Dorticós: This is a very precious gift. I will definitely read it. It is well decorated. So when did this volume start and end?

Ambassador Shen: From 1945 to 1949, prior to the over-all national liberation.

Dorticós: Comrade Mao Zedong's works are the ones that we often read. I have personally collected almost all of Comrade Mao Zedong's works published in Spanish. I also have the Spanish edition of the 1st and 2nd volumes of The Selected Works of Mao Zedong.

Ambassador Shen: These are the contribution of Argentine comrades [who translated them]. We plan to translate and publish, by ourselves, the Spanish version of volumes 1, 2 and 3.

Dorticós: In that case, Comrade Ambassador owes me a debt. Do send me a copy of volumes 1, 2 and 3 after publication.

Ambassador Shen: This is the Chinese version of Prime Minister Fidel Castro's work, recently published by us, which of course Comrade President would find incomprehensible. We present you [this copy] as a gift. This is "History Will Absolve Me." These are... (ten volumes all together).

Dorticós: I have learnt this news [of the PRC publishing Castro's works in Chinese] from the newspaper. This is a great gift. You have made an excellent choice. These are all Comrade Fidel's most important works.

Ambassador Shen: To make them reader-friendly, we have published these works in the form of booklets. Circulated nation-wide, they have gained popularity from the people. This is Comrade Fidel's television speech on 1 November, this year. On the very night of this speech being broadcast, our people chose to walk to the street, rallying and demonstrating, to express their support for Cuba.

Dorticós: We have seen the news knowing that China organized a large number of marches and demonstrations. We thank you for your support, the significance of which is very much understood.

Ambassador Shen: This was our internationalist duty. Now I'm ready to brief you the situation along the Sino-Indian border.

(Briefing on the Sino-Indian border problems)

Dorticós: Was [Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal] Nehru behind the Tibetan rebellion?

Ambassador Shen: It was hatched by Nehru and American imperialism. And I could share with Comrade President [the secret] that Nehru played a major role, because only via India could American imperialists conduct their subversive activities in Tibet. Via its consulate consul located in Tibet, India has managed to collude with Tibetan slave-holders. This [collusion] has now been proven by the following fact that the Dalai Lama, the major boss of the rebels, fled to India after the rebellion was vanquished. Until now, Nehru uses them to conduct his sabotage activities. On one hand, Nehru voted for us in the United Nations, supporting [the proposal of] admitting us into the UN, on the other hand, he tried to sell the [the idea of] so-called "Tibetan Independence." By this practice Nehru has confused many people, which was in fact his plot. (Continuing the presentation on the Sino-Indian border dispute.) This is a brief introduction to the Sino-Indian border dispute. I'm happy to answer, by exhausting my knowledge, any question from Comrade President, if you have [any].

Dorticós: I have been listening carefully to your introduction. Thanks very much, for your presentation gives me a more complete understanding of the Sino-Indian border problems. In general, I have absolutely no doubt of the righteousness of China's position in the Sino-Indian border dispute. Only one thing concerns me: Would this

border conflict lead to a war of a wider scale? Naturally we understand that China is not to blame. But since India is [because of this conflict] receiving more military aid from the Americans, it is entirely probable for it to lean, totally, to the imperialists.

Ambassador Shen: Recently Pakistan has publicized a document. Since it has a military treaty with the US, Pakistan protested against the American military aid to India. In response, the Americans showed Pakistan a secret military treaty, which was signed by Nehru and the US in 1951. Pakistan, then, released it to the press. So Nehru has fallen for the imperialists for a long time. At the heart of the complexity of the Sino-Indian border dispute is the fact that British and American imperialists together have thrown their weight behind Nehru.

Dorticós: I fully understand.

Ambassador Shen: We have done our utmost to strive for the possibility of the Sino-Indian border dispute being solved peacefully. Our [military] retaliation, therefore, came only after we were pushed [by Nehru] into the last corner. This [military retaliation] is the minimum action that a sovereign country would take. Otherwise we could only hand over [to Nehru] a huge chunk of territory. But [we're confident that] once he obtained one [chunk of territory], he would ask for another. No one could twist the arms of capitalists as to make them part of the imperialist camp. In fact, they would submit to imperialism, whatever concessions [that we] made to them. In contrast, revolutionaries would never, regardless of being pushed or not, lean to the imperialists. Cuba, for example, faced an extremely difficult situation in which it had to stand up to the powerful American imperialists, [and] at the same time resist pressures from the other side [i.e., the Soviet Union]. But sticking to its five demands, Cuba flatly rejected any inspection that might damage Cuba's prestige, sovereignty, and independence. Therefore, revolutionaries are revolutionaries. Those, who wish to submit to the imperialists, would submit to the imperialists anyway. This is not because of being pushed by someone. [Nor is it the case that,] had we offered more concessions, they would have not submitted to imperialism. Comrade President attended the meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement [in Belgrade in September 1961], at which time the Sino-Indian border dispute had yet to become a serious issues. But in fact, he [Nehru] had already defected to imperialism. Comrade President had a face-to-face struggle with him, of which I should speak no more.

Of course, it does not mean that we shall abandon proper tactics in this struggle. Still we should separate him from imperialism. Furthermore, fighting in this complex and intricate battle will bring the Indian people to the truth, raise their consciousness.

Dorticós: I understand perfectly all these concerns. We hope that the Sino-Indian border problem could be resolved peacefully. Naturally, to reach this goal depends, not at all, on Chinese leading comrades' good will.

Comrade Ambassador mentioned that I have met Nehru in person. In fact, not only have I met him, I have also come to know his character from his actions. His tactic in the Belgrade meeting [of the Non-Aligned Movement] failed due to the firm position of the Cuban delegation. In that meeting, we noticed that Nehru's position of neutrality appeared dubious. And the reality has brought us to the [true] nature of his position.

I would love to talk to Comrade Ambassador about Cuba's situation. There is not much I wish to tell the Ambassador about, because I'm sure that you must have mastered Cuba's situation, though you weren't in Cuba at that time [of the missile crisis].

We once thought that an American invasion would come at any minute. Now the

threat of direct military intervention has become less imminent, though the possibility remains. To secure Cuba and the peace of the Caribbean Sea, the five demands raised by Castro [on 28 October] are in fact the minimum conditions. The US, judging from the current negotiation in New York, appears not in a position to accept Cuba's five demands. Also in this crisis emerged the conflict between us and the Soviet Union. Indeed, we [always try to] maintain friendship with the Soviet Union. We appreciate [the USSR] very much for its economic, military, and technological aid. I have talked with the Soviet Union, but the division between us continues. What divided us is the fact that the Soviet Union decided to withdraw, without prior consultation with Cuba in the first place, its missiles deployed in Cuba as stipulated by the Soviet Union-Cuban military treaty. Furthermore, it permitted the on-site inspection of the missiles' removal without obtaining our agreement. In this struggle, Cuba did not adopt small bourgeoisies' romantic attitude; on the contrary, we have insisted on the correct Marxist-Leninist revolutionary position and defended Cuba's sovereignty. In the course of the Cuban-Soviet negotiations, we made the opinion extremely clear and firm to Anastas Mikoyan, the representative of the Soviet Union. Cuba firmly insists on its five demands, and stands against any attempt to conduct unilateral inspection in Cuba. Not even an inch would Cuba budge from this position.

Now the Soviet Union expresses its respect towards our position. In the Security Council, the US and the Soviet Union have reached an agreement. They together have published a statement, in which the Soviet Union confirmed the withdrawal of its missiles from Cuba and a guarantee of no deliberate attempt in the future to transfer weapons of this kind into Cuba. In this statement, the US promised only not to invade [Cuba].

Our side sees no value in this hollow promise; nor do we trust Kennedy's words. The American guarantee applies only to a circumstance in which Cuba ceases to act as a missile base. It could still invade us with the excuse of Cuba remaining a base for subversive activities targeted at the United States. Such a guarantee, besides, will not stand in the way of the US pressuring other countries to economically blockade and politically isolate Cuba, devising diplomatic conspiracy, conducting infiltration and espionage, operating pirate-like naval assaults alongside the Cuban coast like the one that happened the day before yesterday.

Our willingness to negotiate is unquestionable, but we need concrete evidence of a guarantee. We actually do not feel so optimistic towards the ongoing New York negotiations.

Ambassador Shen: Has Cuba acquired any information on the negotiation between Mikoyan, Kennedy, and [US Secretary of State Dean] Rusk?

Dorticós: Yes, we have. As far as we know, the Soviet Union did try to defend Cuba's five demands, which were dismissed and refused by the Americans to be included in discussion. Until now no agreement has been reached. We are very much doubtful that it will be reached any moment in the future. Had this consensus emerged between the US and the Soviet Union, Cuba would express its willingness to participate [in the negotiations], for we have our independent position on this matter. This agreement, highly limited in a sense that it confined its content only to issues appearing in the correspondence between Khrushchev and Kennedy, would not include Cuba's five demands. Cuba will issue an independent statement in the Security Council, in order to express Cuba's own view towards development of the entire crisis. The Soviet Union is expected to support Cuba by issuing a separate statement and publicizing the agreement with the Americans—note, this is very confidential. In other words, the Cuban problem, the Soviets believe, could be solved via two stages: stage one, reaching the Soviet-American agreement as I have mentioned previously; stage two, opening a negotiation focusing on Cuba's five demands, in the hope of resolving the Caribbean crisis once for all.

Yet, according to our observation, there is no great hope for attaining the stage-one agreement. And such an agreement, even if being reached, still means nothing to Cuba.

Yesterday, we sent a delegation to the Soviet Union, to deal with economic and trade matters. After the negotiation with the Soviet Union, [Minister of Foreign Trade] Comrade [Alberto] Mora [Becerra] will lead another delegation to China. We wish to discuss economic and trade matters for the 1963 fiscal year, and economic relations between the two countries in the future. For the upcoming 1963 fiscal year, our export situation tends to be in extremely bad shape, with export income shrinking noticeably from the 1962 level. Because our foreign trade will not start to bounce back until 1964, we badly need foreign financial aid for the upcoming 1963 fiscal year. 1963 will see a great improvement in the supply of staple foods and other necessities. [On top of that] our export income is also expected to rise dramatically from 1964 onwards. It is because although we have expanded the area for sugarcane planting this year, we could not use it next year [to generate profits from exporting]. We could start to reap profits from it only in 1964.

We fully understand that the Chinese comrades are facing a difficult time, too. But we wish that the two countries should work hand-in-hand and to our utmost, to make the 1963 bilateral trade bring both sides the most profitable outcome. We are convinced that this negotiation will strengthen the friendship between the two peoples, two governments, as well as leaderships. As Comrade Ambassador knows, the friendship between us is true friendship.

Ambassador Shen: Thanks for all this information, Comrade President. As Comrade President is aware, the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese people and the Chinese government have a consistent policy of supporting Cuba's revolution. Recently, our government has issued a series of statements indicating our support to Cuba. [We] support the five demands raised by Prime Minister Fidel. We support Cuba in rejecting of any form of inspection that leads to the damage of Cuban independence, sovereignty, and prestige.

Cuba has followed a correct Marxist-Leninist position in this struggle. [Your performance in this struggle] provides a shining example, not only to the Cuban people but also to the people of Latin America and of the world as a whole, of how a nation defends its independence.

Our friendship has grown with the collective struggle [against imperialism] and in the joint efforts [to pursue socialism]. I fully understand Cuba's situation in general and fully understand the several difficulties that Cuba faces. I'm expecting an upgrading of our relations, both economic and political, to be realized by mutual assistance. After all, this is the target of all my efforts as an ambassador.

Dorticós: Your efforts have already made very valuable achievements. You know how much we cherish all these efforts!

Ambassador Shen: We have a delegation to set off for Cuba within days. They will attend a cultural congress and activities intended to celebrate the anniversary of the victory of the revolution. The delegation is headed by comrade Zhou Yang. As an alternate member of the central committee and deputy minister of central propaganda department, comrade Zhou Yang has carried out a lot of work in the area of cultural and ideological struggle. The delegation also includes comrade Lin Mohan, who is the deputy minister of both the Propaganda Department and Cultural Department.

Dorticós: We are happy to receive this delegation. Their presence will be our honor. I

wish to meet and greet them in person.

Ambassador Shen: One could also exchange experiences and learn from each other. Please forward my greeting to the President's wife.

Dorticós: Please also say hello for me to your wife.

Cc: member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, comrades of the Secretariat, Biwu (Dong Biwu) He Long, Dinyi (Lu Dinyi), Boda (Chen Boda), Kong Yuan, FANG Yi, Li Tao (4), Central Secrecy Office, Party Foreign Office (5), Central Propaganda Office (2), Central Liaison Office (5), Central Investigation Office (4), Military Intelligence Office (2), Ministry of Public Security (2), Ministry of Foreign Trade, Headquarters of the General Staff (9)

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