

December 15, 1970

Memorandum Regarding Bulgarian-Cuban Relations

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Summary:

In a memorandum, Konstantin Tellalov, Head of the Foreign Policy and International Relations Department of the Central Committee of BCP, and Foreign Minister Ivan Bashev evaluate Cuban-Bulgarian relations. Tellalov and Bashev contextualize Cuba's development both nationally and internationally. Cuba's primary concerns are related to its economy (re: housing, rationing, embargo). Cuba's leadership continues to display a limited understanding of Marxism-Leninism, scientific planning (central planning), and the importance of COMECON. Taking into consideration the Bulgarian delegation's recent visit to Cuba, they stress the importance of Cuba's success and the need for a radical, all-embracing commitment to relations.

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MEMORANDUM

About: putting forward a draft resolution in Politburo about the all-embracing relations between People's Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Cuba

The visit of our party-governmental delegation, led by comrade Todor Zhivkov in Cuba in July 1970, marked a new and higher stage in the development of the all-embracing relations between Bulgaria and Cuba. The delegation determined that the positive process of rapprochement with the USSR and the socialist community, which was being observed in recent years, continued to develop and to intensify. [...] The main problem of the Cuban leaders is the economic development of Cuba, along with resolving the issues [related to] building socialism in the country.

[...]

The economic development of the Republic of Cuba after the revolution in 1959 marks constant advance. The socialist sector strengthened its basic position in the economy of the country and the collective state property became leading in almost all branches in the national economy.

[...]

However, the unresolved problems are many. The difficulties are still big and they additionally complicate the severe conditions in Cuba, resulting mostly from the highly underdeveloped economics, the economic embargo, the provocations, the diversions and the sabotages of the North American imperialists. The problem with supplying the population [with goods] is not resolved and there is no close prospect for abolishing rationing [in Cuba]. The problem with housing is acute; there is a lack of qualified personnel and so on.

Resolving Cuba's problems is impeded first of all by the circumstance that the leaders still have not fully mastered Marxism-Leninism, and because of this they make a lot of mistakes:

- They do not do everything necessary to prominently display the role of the party [in order to] resolve all problems of development.
- They have not completed the construction of all bodies of the dictatorship of the proletariat and more precisely, of the local bodies of state power.
- A real scientific planning is lacking.
- The role of the economic factors is seriously belittled - there is no distinct position in relation to the material interest.
- There are still reservations towards the documents from the Moscow meeting and towards the significance and the role of organizations, such as COMECON.

Despite these weaknesses, it should be acknowledged that the Cuban leaders have walked quite a long revolutionary road, they are loyal to the cause of the revolution, and they are staunch opponents of imperialism. They enjoy the confidence of the people and have set to build a socialist society with great energy, and strive to develop comprehensive cooperation with our countries.

The bilateral Bulgarian-Cuban relations are developing successfully. The economic and the scientific-technical cooperation mark a constant advance. Cuba occupies fifth place in the foreign trade exchange of PRB with the socialist countries. The Cuban leaders especially appreciate the work of the Bulgarian specialists and the assistance, which our country renders in the training of personnel for the different sectors of the people's economics. During the last years the relations along the party and the state line also expanded. The relations between the public organizations of the two countries expanded, as well. The relations and the cooperation along the culture line are constantly developing, too.

However, the opportunities for the further expansion and intensification of our bilateral relations at the current success [level] are not fully utilized, [a fact] which was determined by the party-governmental delegation, led by comrade Todor Zhivkov.

One of the reasons about this is that the information about the situation in Cuba was incomplete and one-sided. The Cuban reality was assessed purely from our [own] position. It was approached from our viewpoint and experience for the construction of a socialist society and the specific peculiarities of the conditions in Cuba were almost not taken into account. The positive things, which were done there, were not assessed sufficiently. An important factor was neglected, namely that the adoption of Marxism-Leninism is a continuous and difficult process, which requires time, and a more special approach and substantial assistance on behalf of each of the brotherly parties of the socialist countries is required.

Nevertheless, the economic relations of PRB with Republic of Cuba expanded considerably in the past few years and the commodity circulation for the period 1966-1970 is expected to amount to about 240 million dollars against 136 million dollars during the last five-year period, the [level that was] attained is not sufficient in comparison with the true capacities. Besides, a lot of mistakes have been made and are being made on behalf of our economic units and enterprises, while fulfilling their obligations towards Cuba with respect to the mutual commodity circulation. The agreed upon deadlines are not observed in the shipment of commodities and in [the completion of] comprehensive projects, a great deal of our products are sent with lower quality indices than the negotiated ones, the spare parts for the machines which we have sold are not delivered on time and so on. All this creates difficulties for the Cuban comrades and there is a danger that our country may lose the positions already won on the Cuban market, especially for agricultural machines.

A particularly important problem in the economic relations between Bulgaria and Cuba is that we still have not come to an agreement with the Cuban party on its request for the continuation and observation of the clause, agreed upon with the signing of the long-term trade treaty between PR Bulgaria and Republic of Cuba for 1965-1970, for veto of export and re-export of sugar from Bulgaria. Our interpretation of that clause has exerted and will exert restricting influence on the development of the relations between Bulgaria and Cuba.

The contacts at the government level are unsatisfactory. Not enough initiative is exhibited for establishing lasting relations between the Bulgarian and the Cuban ministries and departments and for the quicker drawing in of Cuba in the coordination of the positions of the socialist countries in the international organizations.

Weaknesses are also encountered in the implementation of cultural relations. Sometimes in the musical and artistic exchange, the respective institutions are guided mainly by commercial interest and thus create difficulties for the normal development of the cultural relations between the two countries.

All this requires a radical turning point in our relations with Cuba. It is our international duty to assist the consolidation of the first socialist country in America with all possible means, which has a historical significance mostly for the development of the revolutionary process in Latin America.

In the future, the relations between our country and Cuba should be built and bolstered on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialist internationalism and on mutual respect and trust as well. Our goal should be to turn them into an example of relations between two fraternal socialist countries, making efforts for further expansion and intensification of the political, economic and cultural relations with the Republic of Cuba, for its full incorporation in the socialist community.

With a view of attaining this goal and implementing the assessments and conclusions of the delegation unanimously approved by Politburo, the "Foreign policy and international relations" Department of CC of BCP and the Foreign Ministry suggests to Politburo to approve the enacted measures for the expansion of the all-embracing relations between PR Bulgaria and Republic of Cuba. The measures are prepared in accord with the motions and the recommendations of the ministries, the departments, the institutions, and the organizations concerned with the expansion and the intensification of the relations between the two countries.

15 December 1970

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Foreign Minister: Ivan Bashev