

November 20, 1963

**Minutes of the HSWP Political Committee Session -
Views of Polish Leader Władysław Gomułka on the
Cuban Proposal to Join the Warsaw Pact**

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Summary:

Władysław Gomułka views of Cuba's proposal to the Warsaw Pact are recorded in the minutes of a HSWP Political Committee session. He explains why Poland opposes Cuba's entry into the Warsaw Pact. The statements include concerns over the Federal Republic of Germany, nuclear and conventional weapons, and counter-revolution.

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[...]

On behalf of Cuba, Comrade Fidel Castro has suggested that Cuba should join the Warsaw Treaty. We believe that this suggestion is of great importance if it were to be put forward officially (so far it has not been).

We believe that by realizing this it would meet with total disapproval in the capitalist world. We would not support their entry and there are several reasons for this:

Cuba's accession would fundamentally change the present character of the Warsaw Treaty. Now, the emphasis in the Warsaw Treaty is on defense against the FRG's [Federal Republic of Germany's] militarist demands and imperialist tendencies. The treaty does not deal with the entire world, but rather primarily with West Germany. In case of the [Cuban] entry, the nature and fundamental principles of the treaty would have to be changed, and it should be expanded to the entire world. In our opinion, at present this would not be a correct move and this would not be the opportune action even against the United States.

The accession of Cuba would not mean the increase of her security; on the contrary, Cuba would likely provoke grater threats against the country.

By Cuba's joining [the Warsaw Treaty], the atmosphere of the Cold War would return and would surely influence the ongoing détente process unfavorably within the international political community.

The United States would consider this action as if the Soviet Union has stationed missiles in Cuba, it would create a war scare and would turn international public opinion against us.

Cuba is so far away geographically [from Europe] that when thinking realistically we should know that we cannot support or defend the country immediately. However, the United States would surely take more severe actions against Cuba. Our [positive] decision on Cuba's entry would be beneficial for [US President John F.] Kennedy, since by this he would feel justified and relieved from his publicly announced responsibilities concerning Cuba.[1]

In case of signing [a treaty with Cuba], according to the Warsaw Treaty, armed forces, Soviet armed forces, thus nuclear weapons could and should be shipped to Cuba. In this case the critical situation that occurred two years ago [sic: one year ago] would be repeated. Kennedy then could make the world believe that the Warsaw Treaty does not serve the purpose of defense against the Federal Republic of Germany but rather the purpose of attacking the United States.

Since [in such a case] the United States would feel that her territories are threatened, they would surely attack Cuba more severely, with diversion, boycott, stopping ships, etc. All this would influence also international trade unfavorably.

Last but not least this would strengthen unity within NATO.

Against the counter-revolutionary diversion there is no way to protect Cuba, and as a sanction-it is difficult to imagine-to throw saboteurs to Turkey or Greece or to torpedo Western ships.

Diversions of the United States are carried out by conventional weapons, as it is close geographically, alas, there is no need for nuclear weapons. We however, could not

grant any support by traditional means, only by nuclear weapons. However, in principle we only apply nuclear arms for defensive purposes, surely not for attacking. We will never initiate an attack, while in case of a diversion in Cuba we wouldn't even realize who the aggressor really was. However, in case we and the United States would intervene, it would surely result in a [major] war.

If Cuba formally requests to join member-states of the Warsaw Treaty, we will decline. Unfortunately Fidel's suggestion is not new and he continues to force this idea onwards determinedly which is the reason why this issue is so serious.

The Cuban leaders somewhat feel suspicious about us and the Soviet Union. Cuba fears to be left alone. On the other hand, on certain issues they do not support the position of the Soviet Union. They did not sign the [Partial] Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Concerning the Warsaw Treaty, if Cuba were to take action, they will surely apply pressure, the Soviet Union will find herself in a hard situation, declining the proposition will surely be difficult. These issues were discussed between [Polish Foreign Minister] comrade [Adam] Rapacki and comrade [Soviet foreign minister Andrei] Gromyko who fully shared our opinion.

We have been informed about that comrade Khrushchev intends to return Castro's visit [to Moscow in the Spring of 1963] and travel to Cuba. Prior to this the debate [on Cuba's accession] in the Warsaw Treaty[2] would surface, hence our intention of discussing this issue with the Hungarian comrades.

[...]

[1] An evident allusion to Kennedy's political commitment not to invade Cuba in exchange for Khrushchev's agreement to remove Soviet missiles from Cuba-ed.

[2] Eventually no such debate took place and the Cuban proposal was never discussed in the Warsaw Pact-CB and MK.