

## US-Cuban Relations and the Cold War, 1976-81: New Evidence from Communist Archives

*Editor's Note: The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union ended years ago, but it thrives in two places: on the Korean peninsula, where communist North confronts capitalist South across the 38th parallel in a tense armed standoff; and between the United States and Cuba, where Fidel Castro remains in charge almost four decades after the revolution he led came to power in 1959—still passionately committed to socialism and still the nemesis of Washington, which refuses to recognize and regularly lambasts his government. Even as such Cold War landmarks as the Bay of Pigs and Cuban Missile Crisis recede into history, relations remain as problematic as ever, and as likely to become entangled in U.S. domestic politics. Presidents from Kennedy to Clinton have maintained an economic embargo on and refused to establish diplomatic relations with the Castro regime, and given at least rhetorical support to a Cuban emigre community in the United States that openly calls for its overthrow. Havana, in turn, has regularly denounced Washington as an imperialist bully seeking to strangle, subvert, and topple the Cuban revolution.*

*The past year (1996) provided ample evidence that Cold War-era acrimony continues to flourish across the narrow straits separating Cuba and Florida, as exemplified by the enactment in the United States of the "Helms-Burton Amendment" (a controversial law, sharply criticized in Europe, designed to punish firms or individuals doing business with Cuba); the fatal shooting-down by a Cuban air force fighter of a plane piloted by a U.S.-based anti-Castro Cuban emigre group; and fervent anti-Castro declarations by both major presidential candidates in their election campaigns.*

*The translated East-bloc documents below, dealing with U.S.-Cuban relations during the Cold War period*

*of 1976-1981, thus constitute a source of potentially valuable insights both for historians and for analysts of current and future interactions between Washington and Havana. Although scholars (with few exceptions) still lack access to Cuban archives which might allow a more accurate and perceptive reconstruction of Cuban decisions, policies, and motives, the opening of other archives in the former communist world offer new opportunities to probe what was happening on "the other side" of the U.S.-Cuban impasse, and of Cold War events in which Cuba played a part. Elsewhere in this issue of the CUIHP Bulletin, for example, appear translations of Russian on the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and Russian and East German documents on the 1977-78 Horn of Africa events (as well as a rare instance of Cuban archival documents that **have** emerged, in this case relating to Havana's policies in Africa obtained by Prof. Piero Gleijeses).*

*All but one of the documents that follow were obtained from the Russian archives in connection with the "Carter-Brezhnev Project," a series of oral history conferences on U.S.-Soviet relations and the collapse of detente in the mid-1970s organized by the Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University in cooperation with the National Security Archive, the Cold War International History Project, and other academic and archival partner institutions. These documents, obtained from the Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation (TsKhSD) (the archival repository for records of the former Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1952-1991) and the Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF), both in Moscow, include:*

*\* a background report on Cuban-American relations, 1976-1979, prepared by the Soviet Embassy in Havana in the spring of 1979;*

*\* a record of a June 1979 conversation between the Soviet ambassador to Cuba and Fidel Castro regarding the recently-held Vienna summit between Jimmy Carter and Leonid Brezhnev;*

*\* documents on the September 1979 "Cuban brigade" controversy, in which a political furor erupted in the United States over reports that a Soviet military brigade was stationed in Cuba; although the flap died down after it became evident that the Soviet force was a residual presence dating from the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis rather than a newly-deployed "combat" force (as some alleged), the episode side-tracked Congressional consideration of ratification of the just-signed SALT II treaty and exacerbated Soviet mistrust of the Carter administration;*

*\* a December 1979 analysis of current trends in U.S.-Cuban relations privately presented to the Soviet ambassador in Havana by the head of the responsible department of the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee;*

*\* the transcript (provided by the*



the behest of Carter, Representatives F. Richmond and R. Nolan visited Cuba and expressed to Castro the president's concern in connection with the "growing Cuban intervention" in Ethiopia. In February 1978, the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs S[antiago]. Roel Garcia, secretly visited here at the instructions of President L[opez]. Portillo and conveyed to Castro an oral message from [U.S.] Vice President [Walter] Mondale expressing the concern of the American government about the presence of Cuban troops in Ethiopia. Through the intercession of Portillo, the position of principle held by Cuba on this question was communicated to Carter. It was represented that, in the case of necessity, the Cuban military specialists located in Ethiopia would take part in military operations only on the territory of that country.

In May 1978, during the course of the well-known events in the Zairian province of Shaba, which the Americans attributed to the Cuban presence in Africa, Fidel Castro met with the head of the American Interests Section in Havana, L[yle]. Lane, and through him transmitted to Carter an oral message in which he emphasized that Cuba "has no ties whatsoever" to the events in Shaba.

The USA government attempted to diminish the tensions arising in relations between the two countries during late 1978 in connection with the propaganda campaign in the USA centering around the issue over the supply of Soviet MiG-23 fighters to Cuba. In Havana, during a closed meeting between Fidel Castro and representatives of the Carter administration, the latter attempted to justify the resumption of flights over Cuba by USA reconnaissance aircraft on the grounds that the appearance of the MiG-23's had provoked significant anxiety in the United States and that the president had been forced to adopt a "position which would permit him to assure the American people that everything was being done to ensure the security of the country." The Americans also declared that the training of naval forces taking place off the Cuban coast was being carried out in the traditional region and was not being directed against Cuba. The Cuban side took this explanation under advisement.

Notwithstanding the developments outlined above, a certain amount of progress continued in connection with several specific questions regarding bilateral relations. In late 1977, in connection with the expiration of the temporary agreement on the delimitation of the maritime economic zone, the Americans proposed to conduct new negotiations. In December an agreement

was struck that conclusively strengthened the maritime boundaries between the two countries. In January 1978, an agreement was reached between the coast guards of the two countries calling for the rendering of assistance to vessels in distress in the Straits of Florida, common efforts against the trafficking of narcotics, and a halt to terrorist activity by Cuban counterrevolutionaries on USA territory.

The Cubans were permitted to open accounts in American banks, which was necessary, in part, for normal operation of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, which was also granted the right to transmit consular payments to Havana. Cuban emigres, living on USA territory, were permitted to send their relatives in Cuba up to 500 dollars every three months. American tourists visiting Cuba received the right to bring back into the United States goods having a value of up to \$100 per person.

In response to these "gestures" from the Carter administration, the Cuban government freed three Americans who were serving sentences for espionage activity (out of eight). Readiness was declared to favorably examine the question concerning the remaining Americans being detained under the condition that the USA, for its part, would release the Puerto Rican freedom fighters Lolita Lebron and her three comrades [imprisoned for involvement in a No-

were not related to the economic blockade and that Cuba would not conduct negotiations on those questions in exchange for its lifting. "Cuba," Castro emphasized, "is not China and is not Egypt. It has nothing in common with those countries which can be pressured or bought."

All the same, in the course of these contacts with the Cuban side an obvious degree of flexibility was demonstrated. A readiness was declared to include, in the general discussion of normalizing relations, as a condition to the lifting of the economic blockade, the issue of compensation for the nationalized property of Americans, claims for which were calculated at 1.8 billion dollars (considering interest at 6% for 18 years, that sum will almost double). The Americans were apprised that Cuba, in turn, has counterclaims for losses resulting from the economic blockade, and that only on this basis could negotiations on that theme be conducted.

The Cuban leadership has stimulated interest on the part of certain business circles in the USA in studying the possibilities of future trade and economic ties. The organization "Business International" conducted a seminar in Havana with the participation of leaders of major corporations from the USA, Japan, and several West European countries. It was made particularly apparent that the participants wielded broad influence in USA political circles and were in a position to exert pressure on Congress necessary from Cuba's perspective.

In late 1977, Cuban Minister of Foreign Trade M[anuel] Fernandez visited the USA at the invitation of the Council on East-West Trade. He attended a conference in Washington in which the leaders of more than 80 USA trade and industrial firms and representatives of the Commerce Department and State Department participated. The minister announced that in the event the economic blockade were lifted, Cuban-American trade could reach several hundred million dollars per year. Cuba would be interested in acquiring USA grain, feedstock resources, medicines, chemical products, light and heavy metals, construction materials, turnkey factories, miscellaneous equipment and other goods.

Groups of American business leaders and businessmen from the states of New York, California, and elsewhere, have visited Havana. The Cubans believe that there are American companies who are seriously interested in the conduct of business in Cuba. These companies are even prepared to waive their claims for compensation of their nationalized property.

Notwithstanding, the economic block-

ade continues to be maintained essentially in its entirety. The prohibition on exports of American goods, imports of Cuban products, issuance of commercial and financial credits to Cuba by governments and private financial institutions, and activity by banks of the USA and other countries containing American capital, accounts and dollars, continues in force.

At the same time, the USA has been forced to implement modifications in those aspects of its policy which had related to trade with Cuba by foreign countries. The ministries of finance, trade and state department have been permitted to issue licenses for transactions concluded with Cuba by companies of those countries which are controlled by American monopolies. They are able to export nonstrategic materials and import Cuban products. Exports to Cuba of goods from third countries containing up to 20% in components of American manufacture are also permitted.

On the other hand, subsidiaries of American monopolies located in third countries are not permitted to maintain accounts with Cuba in American dollars, to issue it credit for a period of more than one year, or to transfer technology.

In sum, according to data of the USA Interests Section in Havana, from October 1975 through January 1979 the USA Commerce Department has issued licenses to subsidiaries of American firms in third countries for the export of nonstrategic materials in the amount of 450 million dollars, although not all applications for export licenses have been realized, and the share of goods directly produced in the USA is not greater than 5-6%.

Licenses have been granted for such products as electric motors, industrial scales, tractors, light and heavy automotive equipment, equipment for the paper industry, pharmaceuticals, florescent lamps, herbicides, locomotives, textile machines, boilers, etc. Exports of navigational systems, computers, communications, electrical distribution equipment, construction machinery, electronic experimental equipment and so forth, are prohibited. Up to 50% of applications for the issuance of licenses have been granted to subsidiaries of American companies located in Canada and Argentina.

It should be borne in mind that a lifting of the economic blockade would not automatically result in the development of trade between the two countries. Cuba would first of all have to comply with the provisions of the USA Trade Act of 1974 requiring it to guarantee the right to emigrate from the country and to conclude bilateral trade agreements. Failing this it will

not be granted most favored nation trading status, nor will it be eligible for credits from the Export-Import Bank or the USA Commercial Credit Corporation. Without such status, products for Cuban export will be subject to high customs tariffs (for example, cigars at \$4.50 per pound plus 25% of their value).

The USA has attempted to apply the provisions of the embargo to imports of Cuban nickel by Japan, Italy, and France. These governments have been informed that the USA will not permit the import of special steels using Cuban nickel. At the same time, in the course of Cuban-American contacts in 1977-78, according to data provided by "Business International Cooperation," five leading USA nickel companies announced their interest in cooperation with Cuba after the lifting of the economic blockade in the sphere of nickel production and trade.

A new and recent significant step in Cuban-American relations is the decision of the Cuban government to release more than three thousand political detainees (not less than 400 persons per month) on the condition that they go to the United States; and to permit the departure of Cubans wishing to reunite with their families abroad and visits by Cuban emigres to their relatives. This decision, adopted on the basis of a comprehensive analysis of the domestic situation regarding emigration, marks a fundamental reexamination of the previous policy on that question. At the negotiations which took place in Havana in November and December of 1978 with representatives of the Cuban emigre community, Castro confirmed this decision and emphasized that up to 500 political detainees will be released each month. However, implementation will depend in the final analysis on a decision by the USA to admit them into the country.

In a closed meeting with representatives of the American administration in late 1978, Castro stated that the "primary factor" making possible the adoption of these decisions was the policy of the Carter administration, which had "ceased to encourage terrorist and subversive activity and intervention in the internal affairs of Cuba." This, in his words, had created a new environment, making possible a new approach to the emigration issue.

The United States turned out to be totally unprepared for Cuba's proposal, which scored a serious moral and political victory - the American administration was deprived of its trump card consisting of the supposed violation of human rights. The USA was confronted by the need for a response to the Cuban initiative. Moreover, the American

administration was subjected to strong pressure from representatives of the Cuban emigre community. Under the circumstances, the USA officially announced that it would accept all of the political detainees (up to 3,500 individuals), to be released at the rate of 400 persons per month, together with their families. In order to examine this problem, special commissions from the USA Justice Department came to Havana. In October 1978, the first group of political detainees and their families departed for the USA. This March, the Americans introduced a new simplified procedure for the issuance of visas to political detainees in order to facilitate the conditions for the admission into the USA of up to 400 persons every month.

In the beginning of this year, Cuban emigres began to arrive on visits to their relatives. According to accounts of friends, the number of such persons in 1979 will exceed 100,000 individuals. During the first three months of this year around 20,000 Cuban emigres have arrived.

The Cuban leadership understands the need to intensify its ideological work in the country relating to the new policy in connection with emigration. This question occupied an important role in presentations by Castro at the recent Seventh Plenum of the Central Committee of the party and at a national conference of party leaders last February. In accordance with conclusions reached by the Division of Revolutionary Orientation of the Central Committee of the party, measures have been worked out to neutralize the negative influence from a massive arrival of emigres for meetings with their relatives. Party organizations at all levels have been authorized to explain to the workers the basis for the present policy in relation to the Cuban emigre community.

Cuban-American contacts have achieved a definite development in the spheres of culture, science, and sport. The improvement of these contacts is serving as one of the methods for achieving a mutual understanding between the two countries, as well as an additional source for the receipt of hard currency. Thus, on the commercial front, the National Ballet of Cuba completed an extended tour of the USA in 1978. Its performances in Washington and New York were attended by around 100,000 spectators. The director of the ballet, A. Alonso, was elected as an honorary foreign member of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Her essay on Cuban ballet was published in the USA.

Last year and again this year, the musical groups "Iraqueres," "Moncada," "Manguardi," "Los Papines," and "Aragon" toured in the United States, along with the

composer-performers A. Brouver, S. Rodriguez, P. Milyanez, and the singers T. Martinez, E. Burke and others.

American artists and choreographers participated in the Sixth International Ballet Festival in Havana. Last March, in the large concert hall here named after Karl Marx, three joint concerts by American and Cuban musicians and singers were held. They were attended by members of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba C. R. Rodriguez and A. Hart, and by member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the party A. Peres Efferia.

Cuban Minister of Culture A. Hart had discussions in Havana with the vice president of the firm "Columbia Broadcasting Systems" about the possibility of releasing a recording of Cuban music in the USA.

In 1978, 35 film critics were invited from the USA. Based on their examination of Cuban films and meetings with colleagues, they published a series of positive materials in the American press about Cuban cinematography. This ensured the success of the Cuban Film Week, organized in Washington, New York, San Francisco, Chicago, and Los Angeles, which was attended by a delegation of cinematographers under the leadership of the director S. Alvarez. It met with leading representatives of the American cinema, as well as university students and professors.

An American rental company is now acquiring Cuban films for display in cinema houses and on television. The journal "Cuban Cinema" will be re-published in English in the United States. In 1978, 16 American films were purchased through an interme-





either to the GDR or to the USSR. They said this to H. Ortega. He answered that he shares their fears, but explained Montiel current situation and said that he was already promised trips to Cuba, Arab states, and Europe, and once again affirmed that what was proposed was only an unofficial, private, exclusively "informational" visit. After this second request by H. Ortega, considering that they themselves suggested to the Sandinistas that they make the former Somoza officer defense minister, the Cuban leaders decided to turn to the Soviet side on this matter.

R. Castro also commented that the Nicaraguan foreign minister, Miguel D'Escoto, who was also in Cuba, was a former Jesuit priest, but apparently one of a small number of "red priests" in Latin America. He is educated and has a grasp of many issues, but his political views cannot be called clear and well-founded. However, he has conducted himself very well at the session of the OAS on Nicaragua and now at the conference of ministers of foreign affairs of the NAM in Havana. His appointment to the position of minister of foreign affairs of the FSLN also followed the advice of F. Castro to include several priests in the government. The minister of culture is a second priest in the government.

I thanked R. Castro for the information he conveyed.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR  
TO THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA  
(V. Vorotnikov)

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 5, op. 77, d. 833, ll. 63-67; trans. by Elizabeth Wishnick.]

**Minutes of CPSU CC Politburo  
Meeting, 27 September 1979 (excerpt)**

Top Secret  
Only copy  
Working Transcript

MEETING OF THE CC  
CPSU POLITBURO

27 September 1979

Chaired by Comrade BREZHNEV, L.I.  
Attended by Coms. Grishin, V.V., Kosygin, A.N., Suslov, M.A., Ustinov, D.F., Chernenko, K.Y., Demichev, P.N., Ponomarev, B.N., Solomentsev, M.S., Tikhonov, N.A., Gorbachev, M.S., Dolgikh, V.I., Zimianin, M.V., Kapitonov, I.V., Rusakov, K.V.







Havana

Wednesday, 28 May 1980

(Beginning: 9:45 a.m.)

Fidel Castro: Dear Comrade Erich Honecker! Dear German comrades!

Your visit, dear Comrade Honecker, has long been on our agenda, long before it came to the problems of the recent past, long before the military maneuvers [scheduled by the U.S. at its Guantanamo Bay naval base for May, but cancelled--ed.]. But now it has a special meaning that your visit is taking place right now, at a time of increased activity of the USA and the other enemies of our revolution.

Hostility and aggression, of course, did not come all of a sudden, but there are reasons for this: the liberty of Ethiopia, events in Nicaragua, the situation in Central America; then there was the conference of the nonaligned countries [in Havana in September 1979], and aggression gradually increases in this whole situation. During the conference of the nonaligned countries, they were very angry and started a malicious campaign. At that time, they discussed the issue of the Soviet brigade, exactly at the time of the conference of the nonaligned countries. We corresponded with the Soviet comrades regarding this issue. We took the view that this should be called a brigade. But when we explained all that to the Soviet Union, it was called a study center. Of course, the Soviet comrades did not want to aggravate the international situation any further, and since SALT II still had to be discussed in the Senate, there was no other option than calling it a "study center." Thus, the brigade was called study center no. 12. Once this had been said, we had to stick to that term.

I have expressed this in a special way on the USA-TV and in the USA-press: what you call a brigade and we call a study center is something that we have had for 17 years now.

This unit came here after the October [1962] Crisis. Actually, we strongly resisted a total withdrawal of troops. Finally, we managed to have one brigade stay with us, and for 17 years, this brigade has been here. These troops were not included in the agreements following the October Crisis. The October Crisis affected the missiles, the bombers, and the nuclear weapons, but not the troops. When the brigade stayed with us, no agreements were concluded.

In any event, we always would have liked to see these troops called a brigade for one reason: we must not relinquish our right to have Soviet brigades here. We did not

relinquish that right. If we call this a study center for moral reasons, then we relinquish the right to have a brigade. At the May 1 demonstrations, I said that we have got study center no. 12, but that we would like to have numbers 13, 14, 15. But the malicious campaign started with that brigade. All USA presidents knew that we have a brigade here. One can hide a pen, but not an entire brigade with tanks, guns, with 2,000 to 3,000 men. Everyone knows this. The CIA tries

the warmest salutes [*die herzlichen Kampfesgruesse*] from the CC of the German Socialist Unity Party, the State Council, the Council of Ministers, and the people of the German Democratic Republic to you, the members of your delegation, and the party and state leadership.

We are very pleased to have the opportunity to visit revolutionary Cuba, the American island of liberty, at the present time because we know - as you have already pointed out - that this visit has special importance. First, this visit takes place at a time when the USA apparently is trying to increase tensions at the international level. In this context, it goes without saying that the measures the USA has taken against Cuba in the Caribbean are of particular importance. It is obvious that this USA exercise has been drawn up according to a long-term plan. It has become clear that detente, which has its primary basis in Europe, does the imperialist circles no good.

In the meantime, the Americans not only have been kicked out of Vietnam, but the Vietnamese also managed to counter China's aggression. In addition, the Americans had to leave Iran because of the Iranian people's revolution. Of course, this an uncomfortable matter for the USA's political elites; since the stake is not only the oil, which does not belong to the American imperialists, but also an outpost at the southern border of the Soviet Union.

Moreover, there were the events we could witness on our trips through Africa, such as Angola, Zambia, Mozambique, Ethiopia, South Yemen. We had meetings with the South African national liberation movement, with SWAPO [the Southwest African People's Organization], with the ANC [African National Congress], and also with the Organization for African Unity in Addis Ababa. The OAU Secretary General, [Edem] Kodjo - in presence of all African ambassadors - presented me a copy of the OAU charter and gave a speech of anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, and anti-racist character. He expressed strong solidarity with the socialist German Democratic Republic and thanked us. It became clear that Africa - and not only the socialist countries - is heading off for new shores, which are not those of imperialism.

The scheme of Camp David, which basically did not solve any problem concerning the Middle East, was declared doomed to failure. Except for Egypt, all countries - including Saudi Arabia - are against the Camp David agreement. The resolution of the Near East conflict is dashed by Israel's imperialist stance, which is strongly backed by USA monopolies.

The situation in the Caribbean has to be seen in this context. The USA, albeit very reluctantly, would have tolerated Cuba, since they understand that because of the then-concluded agreement, the Soviet Union stands behind Cuba. They know that the whole socialist community stands behind Cuba, that behind the slogan "Hands off Cuba!" stands the power of socialism.

Through the powerful manifestation of revolutionary Cuba within the last couple of weeks, the mobilization of the Cuban people, they felt that the revolutionary regime and the government of Cuba led by Fidel Castro are very solid.

I completely agree with Fidel Castro: they feel that Cuba is not alone, that it is virtually the lighthouse of socialism in America, that it provides a stimulus for the anti-imperialist revolution in Latin America. They had to swallow the fact that Cuba is revolutionary, but Nicaragua came as a great surprise to them. As we all know, events in Nicaragua did not fall out of the blue, and they felt that the Nicaraguan revolutionaries had the moral and material support of Cuba. Add to this the events in El Salvador.

The USA imperialists have a strong interest that all is quiet in their "backyard." But there is a new revolutionary wave in Latin America. As Comrade Fidel rightly pointed out: Kennedy kept quiet about the so-called Soviet brigade, as did Johnson, Nixon, and Ford. In the beginning, Carter did not feel like broadcasting it. However, we have seen that there are powerful elements within USA imperialism that don't like detente at all. They reached the conclusion that cooperation with the Soviet Union benefits the socialist movement in Europe and Asia and the national liberation movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. For a long time, they have been preparing a blow against the policy of detente, in order to go over to a policy of confrontation

It is not yet clear whether they will take the crucial step, that is, the step from confrontation to war; because a military attack on Cuba means world war, as does a military attack on the GDR. They know that the Soviet Union, after the forced American withdrawal from Iran, did not permit them to compensate through the occupation of Afghanistan or the strengthening of USA influence there. Thus a situation was created that is reflected by various actions and in the development that Comrade Fidel Castro has pointed out.

The US-Americans aim at increasing tensions on the international level. Certain elements have an interest to dramatize the situation, to make it seem as if the outbreak of World War III is imminent. We have seen

that they can't ignore the power of the Soviet Union and its allies. For the first time ever, war would be carried to directly to the USA. In the past, the USA has always sent merely an expeditionary corps across the Ocean when the war was almost over. Now

i.e. disarmament, to detente, they have adopted the long-term defense program, in spite of opposing resolutions passed by the UN.

NATO's [December] 1979 Brussels missile deployment decisions [to deploy medium and intermediate range missiles in West Germany and elsewhere in Western Europe] are a provocative step. At the same time when disarmament is on the global agenda and Carter, at the signing of SALT II in Vienna, talks about the existence of a rough balance of military power on the global level, they raise an outcry over an alleged Soviet threat and pass this defense program in Brussels.

Basically, the production of new American intermediate nuclear forces and their deployment in Western Europe is an attempt to undermine the results of SALT II. They want to offset the fact that Soviet missiles can reach the USA. This is supposed to be achieved through the deployment of American intermediate-range (nuclear) missiles having a range beyond Moscow up to the Urals. While it takes 20 to 30 minutes for the missiles that are deployed in the USA to reach the Soviet Union, they only need 5 minutes when deployed in the Federal Republic, Belgium, and Great Britain, except for the so-called wing missiles [*Fluegelraketen*], which would also violate the neutrality of such states as Sweden.

Hence, this a large scale, long-term attempt to tip in favor of American imperialism the rough balance of military power that currently exists in the world. This is supposed to put pressure on the Soviet Union and the socialist countries, including Cuba, on countries like Nicaragua, and others, and on the national liberation movement. They want to foster anything that leads to an alliance of the USA, Japan, China, and, if possible, the FRG, too, against Real Socialism and the national liberation movement. For us, a very interesting aspect is that China supports the so-called reunification of Germany, i.e. the elimination of the GDR.

It is necessary to recognize this situation. On the other hand, the situation certainly is not like the reactionary imperialist circles would have it. Of course, Real Socialism is strong enough to defy the USA. It is perfectly possible to shatter the USA imperialism's attempt to conduct a large-scale offensive against the socialist countries and the national liberation movement.

In this context, we regard socialist Cuba, the American island of liberty, as playing a very important role. Our country's citizens, the citizens of the Soviet Union, and those of all socialist countries, see it as a

banner that is waved by the Cuban people under the leadership of its communist party and that of Fidel Castro.

Likewise, our struggle, too, the GDR's and the CSFR's [Czechoslovak Socialist Federal Republic's] struggle, is a banner for all peace-loving people in the world, since we don't allow imperialism to take any step against our borders. I am mentioning the CSFR because, together with us, it is fighting in the front line.

In the aftermath of [the 1975 East-West accords at] Helsinki, the West German imperialists have attempted to build up a fifth column in the German Democratic Republic. To this end, they addressed not only counter-revolutionary elements, which, of course, still exist in our country, too, but also the reactionary, the unsteady, and the uncertain. All this took place under the slogan of human rights.

They placed their hopes in the Protestant and the Catholic Church, which have 8.5 and 2.5 million members, respectively. These churches and their bishops were supposed to act in our country as guerillas of the West. With the help of the 6,000 Western citizens, who, as a result of the international recognition of the GDR and the ensuing establishment of Western embassies, came to our country, they undertook subversive activities. The American, the Federal German, and other embassies established contacts with our artistic intelligentsia in particular. One million copies of a so-called manifesto against the GDR party and state leadership have been published, allegedly written by leading SED functionaries. Under the slogan of human rights, it has been tried to set up committees for the "protection of human rights" and the "protection of workers' rights."

Various elements have been given the opportunity to use the FRG's TV and radio to influence the GDR. All around the clock, 24 hours a day, 35 FRG radio stations are broadcasting political commentaries. The three Western TV channels were also used for interviews with certain authors and other GDR people, which were conducted "on behalf of the SED against the SED leadership." On behalf of socialism in the GDR, they spoke out against the SED's alleged dogmatism. They disguised themselves as socialists, but all their efforts were in vain.

In May of last year, our republic held municipal elections. There were mass rallies all over the country, where all issues were discussed. More than 99 percent of the citizens voted for the candidates of the national front, despite the fact that the Western media had asked the people either not to vote at all or to vote against these candi-

dates.

In Berlin, we organized a big rally of the GDR's youth. 700,000 FDJ [Free German Youth] members marched up. This left even the Western correspondents flabbergasted. After all, there are only 1.2 million people living in the capital. 700,000 FDJ members marched into Berlin and dominated the city at the time.

(Fidel Castro: From all over the country?)

Yes, from all over the country.

(Fidel Castro: How were they accommodated?)

In tents, in schools, in apartments, or in other peoples' homes. This was a big campaign. They didn't have much time to sleep, but they all had a place to stay. Some families hosted up to 7 teenagers. The family slept in the kitchen, so that the FDJ members could sleep in the bed and living-rooms. There was huge attendance. We never had had something like this before.

During these four days, the Western journalists were not subjected to any restrictions in their interviews. Moreover, some 200,000 people from the Federal Republic and West Berlin came to the capital to discuss with the FDJ members. In any case, none of them managed to report something negative. They were surprised that this youth is different from what they thought.

Along a wide front, we prepared for the 30th anniversary of the GDR [in October 1979]. 250,000 young people marched in Berlin. Comrades Brezhnev, [Polish leader Edward] Gierek, [Czechoslovak leader Gustav] Husak, [Bulgarian leader Todor] Zhivkov, [Hungarian leader Janos Kadar], [Mongolian leader J.] Zedenbal, and others were there. In any case, we gave our adversary such a thrashing that he lost all his interest in continuing his shameless propaganda against the GDR with the same ferocity as before.

At this time, the Chancellor of the FRG, Helmut Schmidt, requested a meeting. This means that while adhering to their revanchist attitude towards the GDR, they were forced to accept that socialism has a solid basis in our country.

Then, at the transition from 1979 to 1980, there was the heightening of international tensions.

(Fidel Castro: One question before we continue. In which month did this marching up of the 700,000 young people take place?)

This was in May 1979, and in October, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary, there were 250,000. The demonstration in May, at Whitsun, was the big response to our adversary's campaign which claimed

that the GDR youth does not support the regime. Since then, they keep quiet or say that it has to be admitted that the enthusiasm was not organized.

Then, dear Comrade Fidel Castro and dear Cuban Comrades, there was the apparent heightening of international tensions in late 1979/early 1980. We have reacted with great level-headedness to this situation. On January 9 we had a reception for the diplomatic corps. There, I expressed the GDR's hope that it would be possible to reduce international tensions because there is no alternative to the policy of peaceful coexistence. Only the American ambassador did not attend the reception since our politburo and the Council of Ministers had made a statement in support of the entry of a limited contingent of Soviet troops into Afghanistan following the Afghan government's request. A couple of days later we had a hare-hunt for the diplomats.

We have continued our policy of socialist buildup with great popular support, and I expressed to Chancellor Helmut Schmidt my readiness to meet him for a talk in 1980.

They all were surprised that the GDR, together with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, reacted so calmly to Carter's confrontational course. Indeed, the citizens of our republic stand firmly behind the policy of the party and the government, which is directed against Carter's confrontational course and stands up for peaceful coexistence and international cooperation. We have activated our ministerial exchange with the FRG, but also with Belgium, the Netherlands, France, and Austria. While one has to proceed from the assumption that the Western governments, particularly with respect to the boycott of the Olympic Games [in Moscow in summer 1980], will show a certain class solidarity with the USA, they still hesitate to identify entirely with the hardened policy of the USA administration.

Thus, it came to the meeting [on May 19 in Warsaw] between Leonid Brezhnev and Giscard d'Estaing, about which you are probably informed. Finally, there was the long delayed meeting [on May 16 in Vienna] between the new Secretary of State in the Carter administration, [Edward S.] Muskie, and [Soviet Foreign Minister] Comrade [Andrei] Gromyko. Today, the GDR newspapers report that on June 30 and July 1 the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Helmut Schmidt, is going to meet with Comrade Brezhnev in Moscow.

During my stay in Belgrade, on the occasion of Tito's funeral [8 May 1980], I had talks with several statesmen.

Many expressed the desire to talk to

me. Of course, the first meeting I had was with Comrade Brezhnev, wcsmen.mana0T rea(many)780j 0 -1.167 palomrcus no abackthe



international situation leads to Cold War, also leads to an increased danger of local conflicts, including the Caribbean. On the other hand, the peoples' revolutionary movements have examples in the form of other countries, as Cuba here in Latin America; but they are objectively determined. If a subjective factor is added to that, then such welcome events as in Nicaragua take place. Of course, the USA now endeavors to prevent a second Nicaragua in El Salvador, and their actions in South Korea also demonstrate their determination to defend the status quo. On the other hand, there are such events as those mentioned by Comrade Fidel Castro, e.g. Grenada in the Caribbean.

As far as the African region is concerned, you are under heavy pressure of the USA because of your military operations in Angola and Ethiopia. But we are sitting in the same boat, even though we don't have any troops there. We only have technical experts there. The USA is very curious about what the GDR does in Africa, be it in Angola or Ethiopia, in Zambia or Mozambique, Namibia or South Africa. We have a lot of cadres there who are active in various fields, and we train cadres for them. This is why the USA is currently tightening its policy towards the GDR. Above all, they bring their influence to bear on the banks in order to hurt us, in order to create economic problems in the GDR.

However, our economy is sound, we have enough allies. In addition to the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, there are also imperialist monopolies that want to trade with us. For example, we are expanding our economic relations with France, Italy, Scandinavia, and Belgium. After this visit, Comrade Mittag will go to Mexico. This year or next, President Portillo plans to visit the GDR.

We have met the Cuban comrades in Angola and Ethiopia. I would like to thank you, Comrade Castro and the other comrades for the extensive security measures that you have provided; a whole Cuban batallion in Luanda.

Fidel Castro: Yes, I remember. We asked our comrades there to provide comprehensive support for Comrade Honecker's trip.

Erich Honecker: We felt this support everywhere, and I would like to thank you on behalf of our delegation and of our republic as a whole.

Fidel Castro: I believe it was a very good initiative of the GDR's party and government to send such a delegation to Africa.



afraid before the decision, because the missiles that can reach you in the Federal Republic are not at issue here at all. The group of the Soviet armed forces has got them, and the NPA [National People's Army of East Germany] has got them, too. We can destroy Bonn with missiles at any time, or even the whole Federal Republic. The missiles, however, that you want to deploy, they are



have solved the problem by next year; because this plague has brought us into a very difficult situation. Other countries were hurt, too. In Jamaica, the whole tobacco production has been destroyed, in Canada, too, and perhaps the USA will be affected as well. It's blue mould [*Blauschimmel*].

On our sugar plantations we also had a very serious plague, but it affected only one type. 30% of our sugar plantations have been planted with this type of sugar. This led to a loss of some 1 million tons of sugar. We fight against this plague by replacing this type of

dependent on the USA. Brazil seeks to increase its independence. Without any doubt, this is a very reasonable government, but the situation is different from that in Mexico. Mexico can be seen more as an ally, as a friend.

The Yankees have asked the Mexicans to do them some service here, in order to solve their problems with us. We told the Mexicans that we would agree, if the goal is to solve all problems at the same time, not only those that are of interest to the USA. They Mexicans said that they agree with that.

When the Mexicans, the Yankees, and we sit at a table, the relation will be two to one on some issues. The Mexicans have invited representatives from Panama, and we have said that it is better to have more Latin Americans. Maybe it is better for us if the Mexicans participate in these talks. Therefore we agreed. We don't know what is going to happen and where it is going to happen because the Yankees are quite constrained in their actions because of the campaign. Before the elections, Carter must make no concessions at all. Therefore, the situation is not going to change before the elections. On no account, can we help Carter solve his own problems. What guarantees is Carter going to give us? And what if he loses the elections? They don't talk about Angola and Ethiopia any more, now they talk about solving the problem in the USA's interests section which is full of counter-revolutionaries, and in Iran, they demand their hostages. They were afraid that our people would attack the consulate. Before our demonstration, they were very concerned, and Mariel is the second issue that they are very concerned about.

There, we are the ones who issue the exit visas. They are afraid of Latin America, of the people from Haiti, Mexico, and the next problem is the hijacked plane. They are interested in agreements and they are concerned about that.

However, they always find something new. At the time, they talked about subversion in Latin America, now there are new issues. In this pre-election period, it is very difficult for them to make concessions. Hence, we remain at the present point as long as the elections have not taken place.

This was a broad outline of the current situation. We will provide further information about Cuba, but these were the main issues.

Erich Honecker: Comrade Fidel Castro, thank you for your explanations. It is quite obvious that there are no issues between us that need further discussion.

As far as we know, the communique

has been prepared. All questions have been settled, and we have expressed our opinions on international issues.

We consider the conclusion of the treaty on friendship and cooperation very important.

(Fidel Castro: This is our first treaty.)

The people of the German Democratic Republic will be delighted when they learn about it, and it is certain that this will receive great attention; just as our stay here already receives great international attention. The conclusion of this treaty will outline all that what we, even more so than before, will have to live up to in our mutual cooperation.

Despite all agreement with regard to economic and other issues, there will be a whole string of additional possibilities to develop the cooperation of two countries that are so much joined together in friendship as are the German Democratic Republic and the Republic of Cuba.

We in the GDR follow with great pleasure with how much energy you implement the decisions taken at the 1st Party congress of the Communist Party. We follow with deep sympathy your efforts concerning the preparation of the 11th Party congress, about which you have just informed us.

The remarks you made in the context of the Party congress regarding the effectiveness and quality of your work are very familiar concerns for us. We, too, devote increasing attention to these issues given the conditions of our development. Moreover, in our activities we proceed from the assumption that revolutionary Cuba commands great authority and conducts a very active, principled foreign policy in full accordance with the Soviet Union and the countries of the socialist community while certainly taking into consideration your country's specific situation.

It is obvious that in the preparation of your 11th Party congress you are concerned with a whole string of issues that we also have to deal with in preparing for our Xth Party congress. Recently our Central Committee held its 12th conference. Supplementing the Politburo's report on the organization of our Xth Party congress, I held a speech there. The Xth Party congress has been scheduled for 11-16 April 1981. We publicized the agenda and at the same time we announced that motions to be considered by the Party congress have to be proposed before the end of March. In the context of the summoning of our Xth Party congress the entire country will engage in a great debate about the future shaping of the German Democratic Republic's developed socialist society. Of course, this will be re-

lated to the continuing carrying through of the GDR's foreign policy.

As far as foreign policy is concerned, the problems are quite obvious. The cooperation with the Soviet Union is the cornerstone of our foreign policy. We coordinate our foreign policy with the socialist brother nations. Concerning foreign policy, there is agreement as to the basic issues, the issue of the further consolidation of the unity and indivisibility of the community of socialist countries, the issue of defending the achievements of detente, its supplementing with arms reductions, and active support for national liberation movements. In this process, we pay great attention to the development of the nonaligned countries about which Comrade Fidel Castro has informed us in the context of the Havana conference and the subsequent events.

Although all these issues concerning the future development of our foreign policy are understood, the citizens of the GDR certainly face a lot of problems. World events are highly complex, so that the Party has to be very active in this area; this all the more so since the enemy seeks to deceive the people through the mass media and to disguise its aggressive policies, particularly that of the USA. We have created a solid basis regarding these issues. The comrades now are increasingly capable of thinking for themselves and clarifying these issues in dialogue with the people.

In January of this year we held big talks with our party's first district secretaries (*1. Kreissekretäre*) under consultation of the local government secretaries (*Sekretäre der Bezirksleitungen*).

Fidel Castro: How many districts are there in your country?

Erich Honecker: There are 136 districts (*Kreise*), but also a whole string of indus-

our dynamic economic policy under changed international economic conditions in combination with the execution of our socio-political program. These questions are certainly not only of theoretical importance; above all they concern the masses and hence the Party.

We believe that we can compensate for the changed international economic conditions, which find expression in increasing prices, in inflationary tendencies, through higher labor productivity. You know our development, therefore I don't have to go into detail. The main problem we face is to combine the advantages of the socialist social order with the scientific-technical revolution. This means, among other things, especially a more efficient management of natural resources. We have great supplies of brown coal in our country. Within the framework of the plan, we are currently making it our task to extract 300 million tons of brown coal a year instead of the 240 million tons we have produced in the past. Of course this is a huge task, since it involves the opening of new coal mines.

Fidel Castro: How many kilocalories does coal have?

Erich Honecker: 2,000 to 3,000, it varies. However, given the increase in world prices, this is a very important natural resource.

Fidel Castro: How many tons of brown coal are necessary to substitute 1 ton of oil? I am talking about the type of brown coal that you produce.

Erich Honecker: Practically, we use brown coal for our carbochemical industry. Relatedly, it is the source material for various raw materials, plastics, rubber (elastomers?), for the production of gas. We just have opened a new factory near Buna. Near Leuna we then saw the old plant, which works in the field of carbochemistry. The new one works on the basis of oil. Initially, we intended to abandon carbochemistry because at that time oil was cheaper than brown coal. We wanted to switch completely to petrochemistry. But now we are developing a stronger carbochemical industry, and the new plant produces 100,000 tons of PVC per year on the basis of brown coal, rock salt, and lime. This leads me already to the answer to your question. 4 tons of brown coal are necessary to substitute one ton of oil. However, this is not the crucial issue. Crucial is the fact that we have brown coal, but not oil. This is why we now support brown coal and develop the carbochemical industry to produce plastics and rubber. The second way of exploiting brown coal consists of using it as a source of energy. Currently our grid has a capacity of 22,222 TWh industry to total, bourgeois production of 1 TWh - 1. TWh\* skier: Practically, rubber, elastomers (0 TWh -), O bc urseh -0 wtr.032 TWh basis of oil. Inil f3s-



tions, which perhaps can be answered later in more detail. These questions concern problems in the development of the GDR. Just like the comradeship between the Cuban Communist Party and the German Socialist Unity Party is the centerpiece of our friendship, the Party is the decisive force in





After the missile crisis, we went through a long period of tensions. The situation improved at the end of 1969, even in spite of the conflict in Vietnam and the role of the Soviet Union in that conflict, which was major, candidly speaking, major. I was located there at that time and believe that Americans came to the conclusion that matters in that situation were handled improperly. That was an attempt to resolve a problem arising exclusively out of conceptions of a struggle for so-called social justice between two parts of Vietnam, at the same time as it was necessary to approach the problem from the point of view of relations between the superpowers who, in essence, made the war possible. Americans drew from this the conclusion that domestic [internal? indiginous?--ed.] forces should create the conditions - either by peaceful means or through the shedding of blood - to provide for their future. Just operating exclusively on their own resources - well-founded or otherwise - they can express their concerns and the state of mutual relations among the people. I can say that the United States adheres to exactly this position in relation to Central America.

I do not believe that President Reagan has some kind of preconceived notion regarding the social system in Cuba. This must be determined by the people of Cuba.

Our capability for coexistence, notwithstanding ideological conflicts, is manifested most graphically in relations with other Communist regimes: China, Yugoslavia and the growing number of countries in Eastern Europe. Notwithstanding all of the Soviet rhetoric to the contrary, the problem is not here. In other words, in their judgment about everything, they ascribe our difficulties with you to ideological dissatisfaction on the part of the United States in relation to the political system in Cuba.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. It is good that we are here together (spoken in English).

Alexander Haig. I was saying that we are looking at the relationship between the global activity of the Soviet Union and the local activity of Cuba.

We are capable of arithmetic and know that one third of your resources are provided by the Soviet Union: everything that relates to transportation, equipment, materials, all of the assets and means necessary for sustenance of the Cuban economy.

On the other hand, in 1975 we were witnesses to a situation which subjectively led us to conclude that the Soviet leadership assessed the changes which took place in our country as changes of a geopolitical character - I am talking about Watergate and the war in Vietnam. This was abundantly

clear in the widening of activity in Africa, Southeast Asia, and in Northwest and Western Asia. In this manner, there exists a tendency - correct or mistaken - to believe that an agreement exists between Moscow and Havana in connection with various international activities, at least a tacit one, if not explicit. All this has created a mood in the United States which brought Mr. Reagan to power.

We are closely following public opinion polls, and I can assure you that the mood of the people in the United States is definitely militating toward a change in our relations with Cuba, a change that is not positive for Cuba, but which regards Cuba as a threat. I assume that there is room here for some subjective misstatement, but this is the fact of the matter.

I suppose that any leader comes to power having certain fixed opinions about things, and President Reagan is no exception. Maybe he will turn out to be an exception, if you consider the recent past, and his understanding of how to fulfill his mission. But I can assure you, that he is a man of peace, a man who wants to relieve the people from the burden of armaments, a man who does not oppose social transformations. His approach to the conflicts at the Cancun Conference, and his initiative in connection with the basic direction of developments in the Caribbean Basin, should serve as a reference point. Pursuant to his instructions, I have met with the leaders of Eastern Europe and representatives of the Angolan regime. In my opinion, all of this attests to the fact that we are talking not about ideology, but about a geopolitical problem. And specifically, due to this understanding, he is ready to pursue matters to the most dangerous line. In recent months he has been occupied with an examination of this problem. We are thoroughly familiar with the reality of Cuba in the area of security, economics and defense. We understand well the vulnerability of Cuba. We have discussed this problem with the Soviet Union for a long time. They understand perfectly well the meaning of these discussions and are aware of the limitations on activities, transgression of which could lead to confrontation between the superpowers, for which we are prepared.

At the same time, we have analyzed with great care the needs of Cuba, in the sense of its hopes for the future. It seems to us that the Cuban people have suffered a great deal from sacrifices imposed from abroad. We believe that the possibility still exists for a normalization of its relations not only with the United States, but with all of this hemisphere.

You are aware, Mr. Minister, that in the developing countries of the so-called "Third World," there are many leaders who today are turning away from the Soviet Union's arms, its technical assistance, and trade with it, from participation in economic relations, where the reward is measured on a scale of sacrifice. You yourselves suffer from this reality and have a right to participate in international trade, including trade with the United States. I know that President Reagan considers trade with Cuba a possibility. We must discuss this in the atmosphere of mutual respect to which you referred, which must be the goal of an independent peace, and to do this it is necessary to account for geopolitical reality.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. Thank you very much.

I have listed with great interest to the exposition of principals laid forth by the esteemed Secretary of State. At the outset I will speak to two points. First of all, to your words about the position of Reagan on the question of bilateral relations with Cuba and its common position on the problem of peace and problems confronting humanity today.

We have keenly felt the danger of the approach to this problem by Reagan and his group of leaders from an ideological point of view. Speaking candidly, in the public pronouncements, first and foremost of Reagan, we perceive a great ideological content. And we have been greatly surprised by its manifestation in the declarations of the Secretary of State as well. And we have been surprised more than once because, judging from information received from prominent European leaders, we had gained a different impression about the positions of Mr. Haig on international questions, which we had considered to be more pragmatic. That does not mean that they are not based on principle, only that they are more pragmatic, not so much determined by the influence of ideology.

What we have heard gives us cause for reflection.

The second element that I consider to be important inheres in the treatment of the mutual feelings of the people of the United States and Cuba. I am fully in accord with that.

Despite 22 years of continuous sharp exchanges, there is no anti-American sentiment in Cuba. It does not exist among the people, and we, the leaders, similarly do not rule with anti-American sentiments. We can say this absolutely categorically. This is seen in the course of any meetings of Americans with our people, irrespective of their posts and positions.

I am satisfied with the opportunity -

after the words just spoken by the Secretary of State - to attribute the current intensification of our conflicts to geopolitical reasons. And I would hope to possess all of the necessary eloquence, within the short time available to us, in order to attempt to prove that the geopolitical reality is not what it is made out to be in this case.

I am aware that the Secretary of State is a great lover of philosophy. Thus, even in the seventeenth century, since the time of Hume, it has been considered proven that the factual appearance of "B" following the appearance of "A" does not signify that "A" necessarily is the cause of the appearance of "B." I will attempt, in the briefest of fashion, in order to avoid tiring you, to describe our interpretation of events, beginning in 1975.

We became involved in Angola without the slightest wish to establish our military presence there. Speaking of military presence, I have in mind the presence of regular troops. In sending the first 150 people to Angola, we had absolutely no conception of what would become of the events in that country. This I can state to you unequivocally.

We had long maintained our ties with the MPLA [Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola] in its struggle against Portuguese colonialism. President [Agostinho] Neto requested our assistance in the preparation of groups which led to organization of the Angolan army. With this aim we dispatched 150 persons in three schools: one located in the south, the other in the northeast, and the third around Luanda. The subsequent development of events ensued as follows: suddenly we received news from Neto that they had been attacked by forces from Zaire and troops of Holden Roberto from the north, and by South Africa from the south.

I can assure you unequivocally, inasmuch as I played a direct role in this matter, that when the decision to dispatch Cuban forces into Angola was made, we communicated nothing about it to the Soviet Union. We were not even aware of its point of view on that account. And we had absolutely no idea of the number of troops that it would be necessary to send. In this manner, the first group was dispatched when the forces in the southern theater advanced more than 400, almost 500 kilometers from the Namibian border, approaching Lobito and Benguela, and the forces of Zaire were located 30 kilometers from Luanda. In this situation we sent at first not regular troops, but rather groups of commandos.

It is true that subsequently an agreement was reached between Cuba and the So-

viet Union regarding the activity of the forces, inasmuch as the Soviet Union already had an obligation to Angola to supply arms and it became necessary to speed up its implementation. As a result, we reached an agreement, and we don't deny this, under which the Soviet Union proceeded to dispatch certain types of weapons, and we sent people who were capable of using them.

And thus it was. When we became involved in the events in Angola, we had absolutely no concept of the geopolitical conceptions about the importance of Angola in light of the interests of the Soviet Union. We saw in Angola a friendly country, a group of revolutionaries struggling against colonialism, against South Africa, and embarked on all of this.

And then Ethiopia stepped to the front of the line. How did all of this happen there?

We established relations with Ethiopia at the request of Somalia. We had maintained no diplomatic ties with Ethiopia, and we harbored serious doubts in relation to the process that was taking place in that country. At the time, the leader of the revolution was not Mengistu. Power was in the hands of Teferi Bante. And I was personally assigned to establish contact in Colombo [Sri Lanka], where I headed the Cuban delegation at a conference of the heads of state and governments of the non-aligned countries [in August 1976], to establish contact with Teferi Bante and Ali Bukarom, at that time Vice President of Somalia, for the purpose of attempting to reconcile them among themselves, which turned out to be impossible because of the refusal of Teferi Bante.

Subsequently, Vice President [of Somalia Gen. Mohamed Ali] Samantar, simultaneously occupying the post of Minister of Defense of Somalia, came to Cuba. I was in charge of the preliminary negotiations with him. In their course he addressed himself with a request for military assistance from Cuba for an attack on Ethiopia, claiming that that country represented the greatest danger to socialism in North Africa. At that moment we had no idea that our troops would ever end up in Ethiopia. We had a group in Somalia, which was rendering assistance in the creation of a militia, and the Soviet Union had armed forces in Somalia and was utilizing the Somali port of Berbera as a base for its navy. This is how the close cooperation with Somalia came about.

Samantar had a discussion with Fidel and Raul Castro, who counseled in favor of restraint and the conduct of negotiations.

During his visit to Africa [in March 1977], Fidel Castro met first with Siad Barre and then in Ethiopia with Mengistu, and agreed with them to conduct a historic meet-

ing in Aden. That meeting was attended by Mengistu and his assistants, Siad Barre and his assistants, Ali Rubayi, who at that time was the president of [South] Yemen, Fattah Ismail and Ali Nasir, who is now the president of South Yemen, and Cuba was represented by Fidel Castro and myself. Fidel worked - and when I say Fidel, it is because he was at the center of that meeting - from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 in the morning, trying to achieve a consensus among the parties. However, this proved impossible to attain, because Siad Barre unequivocally rejected all of the suggestions presented at the meeting. While the meeting did not lead to an agreement, nevertheless Siad Barre promised not to attack Ethiopia. And then, when Siad Barre attacked Ethiopia, we considered ourselves obligated to Mengistu, whom we had persuaded to attend the peace conference which had taken place in Aden.

One fine day, all of this will come to light. You can believe me or not, but some day this will be common knowledge.

The outward geopolitical character of these events is completely at odds with the essence of the true facts. I had the privilege to accompany Fidel Castro at the time of his meetings with the leadership of the Soviet Union. These were attended by Brezhnev, Kosygin, Podgorny, who had just returned from Africa, Gromyko, and







tion to these problems. Otherwise, we will be required to pursue a different course, which, I believe, after my discussions with you here, would not be desirable for you. I know that the United States also does not want this, but it is prepared, after many years of not being in a position to take any measures, is ready to take them very quickly. Therefore, I am speaking to you of the need to immediately find a solution. I can assure you, that these solutions would not impinge the honor, sovereignty, or integrity of Cuba or the Cuban people. Nobody wants that. That would be foolish. And it is an objective fact, that it would be much easier to achieve this by force, but that is not our intention. However, frankly speaking, we believe that time is slipping away.

We have not disclosed to the American public our data or the information that is available to us. You have seen the "White Book," but we have another fifty of them. We have volumes, records of radio broadcasts, data from technical reconnaissance, we have photographs.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. A good factory for "White Books."

Alexander Haig. It's just the first chapter.

Carlos R. Rodriguez. But I understand that you have a good factory for "White Books."

Alexander Haig. Notwithstanding, the President does not want to do this, although he is prepared to do it and very soon. This would incite great enmity, and would stir up emotions even more. I insist that you take seriously what I have told you, and on an assessment that any sound-minded American will be compelled to make in the face of the events I have described. This does not mean that your involvement has not been exactly as you have described it; however, we regard this as a serious threat to our vital interests and the interests of peace and stability in the hemisphere.

If you share my opinion that stability and peace are desirable in the hemisphere, then you can work out a solution that does not compromise your dignity. How could this be accomplished so that nobody even asked you about that? I have already said that it would be necessary to extol the firmness of Cuba and its spirit of self-sacrifice. However, the basic problem in this matter remains the same, about which we are engaged today in the whole world: peaceful changes in the framework of acceptable legality, and not through bloodshed, arms, and not by the means of instigating terrorism and revolution.

And so, if the Cuban Revolution has matured to this point, then that is fine. If, and viases point which evoa patalthoughb theIble le-at? t b so[(my)69ret b so[(mmt thdocu our in-)Tj 0 -1.22

understandings can arise.

I do not want at this time to commence a discussion about the facts, although at some point we can also discuss whether there or not there is falsification. When General Walters comes to Cuba, I think that it is important for him to bring with him as much data as possible in order to examine it for the purpose of interpreting these facts.

I remember that the "Bay of Pigs" was brought about by information from people located in Cuba that led the CIA to a mistaken conclusion. As regards your reference to aircraft, I can tell you, that everybody knows what is taking place in Cuba. We have no factions in the government. We have a division of labor. However, the members of the Politburo know everything that the military is doing. And I can assure you that you are telling me things with which I cannot in the slightest bit agree, frankly speaking, not in the slightest degree. About Angola, about Ethiopia. They ask, why are we still located there[?] Because they want us there, and the same in Angola. If, as a result of what is happening there now (we already know about the results of the meeting of the contact group, about the decision of the foreign ministers of Africa, we see that there is an opportunity to achieve a consensus on Namibia, and that there are visible signs of progress), if as a result of a solution to the Namibia issue the Angolans allow us to withdraw our forces, then we are ready to leave there. There is no doubt about this whatsoever. But I am concerned by the fact that we have in Angola not only several thousand soldiers, several tens of thousands of soldiers, but also several thousand construction workers and civilians.

And the information that you are spreading about Nicaragua is a complete falsification. We can discuss all of this with General Walters in detail in the course of several days. We can discuss this, and we can give you all of the details that are of interest to you, because we do not want a confrontation to arise because of a mistake.

We are also prepared for a confrontation. We know that such a confrontation will be traumatic for our people. We have no doubt about this. But neither are we afraid of a confrontation. What we fear is an unnecessary confrontation, in which, as a result of errors by both sides, as a result of an absence of contacts, thousands of Americans and hundreds of thousands of Cubans will perish. This worries us. And I am worried by other elements of interpretation which, I believe, we must discuss. If necessary, I can on any day leave for New York and organize a different, more detailed meeting. But several of your personal interpretations

which, as you say, are also consistent with the interpretations of the President of the United States, cause me great anxiety. For example, I do not believe that the United States has any right to interfere in matters related to the presence of Cuban teachers in Nicaragua. This, and what they are teaching, is a question for the Nicaraguan government to decide. I can assure you, that these are elementary school teachers who can hardly teach Marxist-Leninism. I don't know whether you have ever attempted to read any books about Marxist-Leninism, but it would be very difficult for our 2,700 teachers to teach Marxist-Leninism to little Indians. However, we believe that only the government of Nicaragua, and no other, must decide whether or not they need our teachers. I am convinced of this, because I have had enough discussions with the Nicaraguan leadership and I have also spoken with Fidel, and I know from other discussions, at which I have been present, that the Nicaraguans do not have the slightest desire or interest to intrude in Honduras. They understand perfectly well that this would lead them into a confrontation with the United States, and there would be nothing worse for Nicaragua, than to be pulled into a confrontation with the United States.

We can and must continue our discussion about all these things. You say that time is slipping away from us. Let us use it to the maximum extent. I want to say one thing: Cuba never lies, and Fidel never lies. That which we say, we can prove. I have stated to you what we are prepared to do, where we can achieve a consensus, and where we cannot achieve a consensus. When we say "We are obligated to do it," we are obligated.

You spoke of Colombia. You do not know how these members of M-19 ended up in Cuba. [Colombian] President [Julio-Cesar] Turbay [Ayala] had a telephone conversation with me in which he requested me - requested me! - that we accept in Cuba members of M-19, inasmuch as they had seized a group of ambassadors in the embassy of the Dominican Republic. As a result, they came to Cuba. They were in Cuba, they underwent preparation, just as thousands of others who come to Cuba. Any Latin American who comes to Cuba - member of the intelligentsia, poet, military person - wants us to teach him to use firearms. And we have taught thousands. That is true. And we never conceal the truth, but we have had nothing in common with the training of the group that infiltrated Colombia, and had nothing to do with its arming. The countries who have spoken about this are fully aware of who trained them, who gave them

weapons, and who organized them. I can assure you that Fidel Castro exerted efforts to prevent this adventurism, not for the sake





lateral Soviet concession to the United States.

Other important areas of disagreement between the Soviets and the Cubans become evident in the minutes of the 23 November 1981 meeting between Cuban Vice-President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez and U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig.<sup>3</sup> The text makes it clear that the talks were not successful. Nonetheless, the minutes show a perhaps surprisingly accommodating opening gambit from Haig, followed by his lack of understanding of one key point that Rodríguez was communicating. Haig's principal concern was the close connection between Cuba and the Soviet Union in backing Cuban overseas operations. Rodríguez kept telling Haig, in effect, that it was fine for the United States to blame Cuba but, please, do not blame the USSR.!

Rodríguez first asserts: "I can assure you unequivocally, inasmuch as I played a direct role in this matter, that when the decision to dispatch Cuban forces into Angola was made [in 1975], we communicated nothing about it to the Soviet Union. We were not even aware of its point of view on that account." Next, Rodríguez discusses the Ethiopian war (1977–78): "I had the privilege to accompany Fidel Castro at the time of his meetings with the leadership of the Soviet Union. . . . And it was we who insistently urged the need to render military assistance to Ethiopia. This was the situation, to be distinguished from that in Angola, because in this case preliminary negotiations were taking place. But in these negotiations it was Fidel Castro himself who first advocated military assistance." Finally, Rodríguez turned to the troubles in Central America: "Certain American leaders are always expressing the opinion that the Soviet Union acted as a hostile influence between the United States and Cuba, that it fermented in Cuba hostile feelings toward the United States. I could tell you that the opposite is true. Many of the conflicts that we have had with the Soviet Union were occasioned by the acts, words, and positions of Cuba, which did not correspond with the intentions of the Soviet Union in this portion of the world."

These three statements are quite consistent with everything that had been known about the nature of Cuban-Soviet relations in general, and specifically on these issues. The only exception is that Rodríguez claims a larger role for Cuban initiative in making the decision to enter the Ethiopian-Somali war on Ethiopia's side, whereas scholars had believed that the Soviets had had a considerably greater impact in making that original decision. The key point that Haig, and others, missed is that the USSR had a restraining effect on Cuba in the late 1970s, and that serious differences occurred between the Soviet Union and Cuba because the latter was much more militant. To be sure, Cuba could not have conducted such a far-ranging foreign policy were it not for the massive Soviet political, economic, and military backing, and on this central issue Haig was right to challenge Rodríguez.

The attached documents also feature other interesting aspects of Soviet-Cuban relations. For one, they demonstrate a thorough and competent knowledge of Cuban affairs and policies by Soviet embassy officials. They show a very close communication between the two governments on large and small issues that concern them. The minutes of the Soviet Politburo meetings underscore the importance Soviet leaders accorded to securing Fidel Castro's agreement on the proposed joint course—even if Castro's views did not prevail in the end.

The documents also shed light on the role of several key Cuban officials, some of whom remain important players in contemporary Cuba. Rodríguez was long a thoughtful and cosmopolitan influence at the peak of the Cuban government, and his encounter with Haig—though ultimately unsuccessful—confirms his reputation for statesmanship. José Antonio Arbesú has been for many years a senior Cuban government and communist party decision maker and analyst with broad responsibilities for U.S.-Cuban relations; the 27 December 1979 document illustrates his broad competence in analyzing U.S. affairs. Raúl Valdés Vivó has repeatedly been given high responsibility by Cu-

ban government officials, and has repeatedly produced nefarious results. The 4 July 1979 document cites Fidel Castro's judgment that Valdés Vivó "failed to discharge the functions entrusted to him and was unable correctly and precisely to fulfill his assigned task in a recent trip to a number of African countries." Valdés Vivó "raised a host of doubts and false rumors not only among our Soviet friends, but among the Africans as well." In 1996, Valdés Vivó, then heading the School of Political Science at the University of Havana, took the lead in launching an assault on the highest-quality semi-autonomous Cuban research think-tanks, intolerantly and dogmatically criticizing their research on Cuba.<sup>4</sup>

The documents conclude with a timeless statement about Cuba's approach to international affairs. Though not always honored, it remains an important signpost for governments that must still deal with Fidel Castro's government: "There is no obligation that we have taken upon ourselves with any country, group, or government that we have failed to honor."

<sup>1</sup> I have written about these issues in Jorge I. Domínguez, *To Make a World Safe for Revolution: Cuba's Foreign Policy*

office. On 23 November 1981, Haig did just that, sitting down for a secret meeting with Cuban Vice-President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez in Mexico City to discuss the issues that divided the United States and Cuba.

Of all the American presidential administrations that have dealt with Fidel Castro since 1959, Reagan's seemed the least likely to engage in a dialogue with Cuba's communist government; and of all the hardline officials in the Reagan Administration, Alexander Haig seemed the most unlikely choice for such a mission. "I want to go after Cuba," Haig told his then deputy Robert McFarlane in early 1981 as he demanded a plan for U.S. military pressure against Castro. As McFarlane reported in his memoirs, "it was as though Haig had come into office thinking, 'Where can we make a quick win?' and judged that place to be Cuba."<sup>1</sup>

For that reason, the Haig-Rodriguez talks stand as an extraordinary episode of U.S.-Cuban diplomacy at the height of the Cold War in the Western Hemisphere.

Extreme secrecy surrounded preparations for the talks: Reagan and Haig kept most of the U.S. government out of the loop; an unmarked car was used to ferry Haig from the U.S. Embassy to the private home of Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda; and Haig and Rodriguez agreed this would be an "unofficial, secret meeting." Yet it quickly leaked to the Spanish magazine *El Pais*, and then to the Mexican and U.S. press. In a televised interview with CBS News in January 1982, Reagan admitted that such a meeting had, in fact, occurred.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, since the 1984 publication of Haig's memoirs,<sup>3</sup>

