

Record of Conversation between N.S. Khrushchev and Prime Minister of Cuba Fidel Castro

September 20, 1960

New York

Fidel Castro said he was very happy to hear that N.S. Khrushchev would come for a visit, despite all obstacles. Such an important person as the head of the Soviet government would be the first to visit the Prime Minister of such a small country as Cuba. This is very important for the Cubans and for public opinion as a whole.

N.S. Khrushchev replied that he has been waiting for this opportunity for a long time, and it is a great pleasure to meet with Fidel Castro. "The powers do not treat us very well," N.S. Khrushchev continued, "but this should not trouble us. We are cheerful and inspired when our enemies are raging in anger. The American government's attitude is a manifestation of their powerlessness. They do stupid things and all sensible people condemn their behavior."

Next, N.S. Khrushchev said that he would like to use this opportunity to express his deep respect for Fidel Castro personally and through him for the heroic Cuban people as a whole.

F. Castro noted that the poorest people in New York are the Hispanics and blacks. Despite the anti-Cuban, anti-revolutionary propaganda in TV, film, and print media in the United States, they understand the truth and are sympathetic to the revolution in Cuba. The Hispanics enthusiastically greeted the Cuban delegation at the airport. The U.S. authorities tried to deceive them, claiming that the plane with the delegation would land at another airport.

N.S. Khrushchev said all Latin Americans understand that Cuba's new government is doing everything for the people. He noted further that [Adlai E.] Stevenson said in a recent article that the State Department should protect America from Communism, but the communists are already in New York, so [the State Department] has to put up defenses in Manhattan.

"You," N.S. Khrushchev continued, "made a very good move by transferring to a hotel in Harlem – a neighborhood where ordinary people live. It was very well received here."

F. Castro noted that they relocated to the hotel at night, and still at that late hour a big crowd gathered and shouted welcoming slogans. Enemies of the revolution will not come to this neighborhood. The blacks said they will protect the delegation from ill-wishers and they will do it without the help of police. They also favorably received N.S. Khrushchev's visit to the area and will remember it for their entire lives.

"It is common knowledge that your first visit to the United States," Fidel Castro said, "made a huge impression and is well understood by the people. I read the statement you made upon arriving to the U.S. and I must say you are very aware of the needs of ordinary people. You speak their language. I am sure that after a second visit to the U.S., they will have an even better opinion of you."

Further, Fidel Castro said he decided to lead the Cuban delegation only because it was announced that N.S. Khrushchev would lead the Soviet delegation to the XV session of the General Assembly. This is a very important session and it is very good that N.S. Khrushchev will take part in its work.

If imperialist countries do not change their position, they have no future. People all over the world will regard us more and more favorably. The imperialists are trying to create a coalition against us in the UN, but they will not be able to. They have nothing to counter the compelling and persuasive arguments of Chairman Khrushchev. People do not want war; consequently the peaceful aspirations and efforts of the Soviet government are recognized worldwide. The struggle for peace is a very strong argument.

N.S. Khrushchev replied that imperialist powers think they still have control over us, that they can do whatever they want. However, the imperialists can no longer dictate their terms to us, either militarily or economically. We are not dependent on them for anything. We are developing our economy and technology completely independently, and this is the most important thing. Our ideas have always been stronger, and now they are backed by material and technical factors. One must always have the means to support one's ideas, and we have these means.

Our politics, our slogans are clear and relevant to all people – peace, friendship, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states.

F. Castro said that this is the most persuasive argument. People understand this very well and that is why they have a high regard for us, despite the position of the U.S. State Department.

N.S. Khrushchev said that after the conversation with Fidel Castro he would like to tell the reporters that he visited Castro to express the deep respect of the Soviet people and government for the Cuban people, who under Fidel Castro's leadership defeated the forces of tyranny and were victorious.

Further, N.S. Khrushchev said he hopes this is not the last meeting, and when Fidel Castro comes to visit the Soviet government at any time that is convenient for him, they will be able to have a more detailed discussion with no outsiders listening in.

F. Castro said that N.S. Khrushchev is highly respected by the Cuban people, who are very grateful to the Soviet government for its assistance. When N.S. Khrushchev comes to Cuba, Fidel Castro will personally make sure that the Cuban people give him a heartfelt reception.

N.S. Khrushchev thanked Fidel Castro for the warm words and a friendly conversation.

The conversation lasted 40 minutes. Present at the conversation were: F. Castro's adviser [Antonio] Núñez Jimenez, V.S. Lebedev, A.I. Adzhubei, P.A. Satyukov.
Recorded by: [Signature] (V. Vinogradov)

[Source: F. 52, Op. 1, D. 512, ll. 2-5, Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii, RGANI), Moscow; obtained by James G. Hershberg; translation by Svetlana Savranskaya (National Security Archive).]