

March 22, 1961

**From the Journal of S.M. Kudryaytsev, 'Record of
Conversation with Minister of Foreign Affairs Raul
Roa, 24 February 1961'**

Citation:

"From the Journal of S.M. Kudryaytsev, 'Record of Conversation with Minister of Foreign Affairs Raul Roa, 24 February 1961'", March 22, 1961, Wilson Center Digital Archive, AVP RF, F. 0104. Op. 17, P. 118, D. 3. ll. 94-97. Contributed by James G. Hershberg and translated by Gary Goldberg. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/188122>

Summary:

Raul Roa discusses Cuba's response to the murder of Patrice Lumumba and events in the Congo. Roa states that Cuba will be sending notes on foreign policy to Latin American governments in an attempt to counter US diplomacy against Cuba and assert its status in the OAS and Latin America.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

from the journal of
S. M. KUDRYAVTSEV

Top Secret. Copy N° 1
22 March 1961
N° 110

RECORD OF A CONVERSATION
with Minister of Foreign Affairs Raul ROA

24 February 1961

Today I visited Raul Roa and held a conversation with him about the 14 February statement of the Soviet government in connection with the murder of Patrice Lumumba. I presented the content of our statement in detail and expressed the hope that the Cuban government would support the proposal of the Soviet government presented in this document.

Raul Roa said in reply that the Cuban government, just like the Soviet government, was deeply offended by this crime and thinks that it cannot remain unpunished. During discussion of the question about the situation in the Congo in the second part of the 15th UN General Assembly session, Raul Roa stressed that the Cuban government will speak in favor of handing Mobutu and Tshombe over to a court and halting the so-called UN operation in the Congo. We will act together with the Soviet delegation and also demand the removal of [Dag] Hammarskjold from the post of UN Secretary-General, and vigorously condemn Belgium, which bears direct responsibility for the murder of Lumumba. Raul Roa continued, the Cuban government intends to henceforth give comprehensive support to the legal government of the Congo. Cuba has already recognized the government of Gizenga and will support it in the UN.

Raul Roa said, the question of the policy of the Cuban government at the upcoming UN General Assembly session which opens in March was considered at yesterday's meeting of the Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers has charged me, as leader of the Cuban delegation, with maintaining the closest contact with the delegation of the Soviet Union, and also with the delegations of the Afro-Asian countries on the question of the Congo.

Raul Roa continued, at the Council of Ministers meeting a general political guideline was adopted that in its future activity the Cuban government should step up its relations with the Afro-Asian countries, and also with the neutral countries. Then Raul Roa noted that the Council of Ministers had charged him with holding a discussion of the question of the aggressive actions of the USA against Cuba. It is obvious that the Cuban representative to the UN will take part in the discussion of the question of the Congo. However, considering the importance of the question of the Congo, said Raul Roa, I myself would prefer to hold its discussion in the [General] Assembly. I will try to talk with Fidel Castro about this question. Raul Roa let it be understood unambiguously in this connection that it would not be a bad thing this thought were hinted to Fidel Castro or [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos from our side if the occasion arose. Raul Roa stressed that personally he gives the question of the Congo no less importance than the Cuban question, and prefers to consider them in close relationship. Raul Roa asked who will head the Soviet delegation and whether Cde. A. A. Gromyko would take part in the second part of the Assembly session.

Then Raul Roa informed me about the upcoming foreign policy steps of the Cuban government in connection with the impending threat of the intervention of the forces

of external counterrevolution. Raul Roa said that according to information at the disposal of the Cuban government the military preparations of the counterrevolutionary bands in Guatemala have been notably stepped up recently. These bands allegedly intend to act against Cuba at the end of February or the beginning of March. Raul Roa said further, it is clear to everyone that the landing of assault groups of the external counterrevolution in Cuba can only be accomplished with the direct support of the USA.

The Cuban government knows that the Kennedy Administration has organized a rapid stepping-up [of diplomatic activity] among the governments of the Latin American countries, trying to get agreement from them to support the actions of the counterrevolutionaries against the legal government of Cuba. Our ambassador to the OAS [Organization of American States], [Carlos] Lechuga, Raul Roa continued, reported that, by organizing an invasion of Cuba by forces of the external counterrevolution, Kennedy intends to create a small bridgehead on Cuban territory in which the formation of a puppet government can then be proclaimed. Kennedy wants to present the matter to world public opinion such that there would purportedly be two governments in Cuba and that the counterrevolutionaries already have territory in their hands which they control. In reality, after the invasion by forces of the external counterrevolution Kennedy intends to create a puppet government in exile which will be in Florida or Guatemala. [Former Cuban Prime Minister José] Miró Cardona is believed to be appointed the head of this government.

Raul Roa noted that the US government recently organized so-called pro-Castro acts [vystupleniya] in a number of Latin American countries with the aid of its agent network. Then the fault for these acts was shifted to Fidel Castro's "agents," who allegedly were striving "to overthrow" the legal governments of the Latin American countries.

With the aid of these provocative methods Kennedy is striving to stir up the governments of a number of Latin American countries against revolutionary Cuba in order to incline them to take part in joint actions against the government of Fidel Castro.

Taking this into consideration, in its meeting yesterday the Council of Ministers of Cuba decided to send the governments of all the Latin American countries a note which presented the basic principles of the independent foreign policy of the Cuban government to assure them that revolutionary Cuba desires to live with everyone in peace, does not threaten their independence, and does not intend to [serve as] a base for an attack or aggression against other countries. Raul Roa stressed, we think the Americans' preparations of provocations against Cuba will at least be made difficult with the aid of the note, if not paralyzed beforehand.

In the aforementioned note of the Cuban government, Raul Roa continued, it will also stress that Cuba will vigorously repel any aggression by itself and will make use of the aid of those countries which are ready to unselfishly support it so that it can defend Cuban independence and territorial integrity.

Raul Roa stressed, the Council of Ministers also charged [him with] pointing out in the note that the revolutionary government of Cuba respects the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and does not intend to export revolution, but at the same time will fight against the export of counterrevolution with all its resources. It should also be declared in the note that, as before, Cuba will remain within the OAS in spite of all the bad experience of this organization, and that Cuba is ready to cooperate with all other Latin American countries. At the same time, continued Raul Roa, the note expresses the gratitude of the Cuban government to all those governments and peoples of Latin American countries who state their solidarity with Cuba, refuse to take part in the economic

blockade being conducted by the USA right now, and condemn the American policy of force they are conducting with respect to Cuba. The note will also denounce the recent hostile maneuvers of the USA with respect to Cuba.

In accordance with these instructions of the Council of Ministers, Raul Roa said further, the Cuban MFA prepared such a note to the governments of the countries of Latin America. This note was delivered to the ambassadors of these countries today, 24 February. A copy of this note will be send to the Chairman of the UN General Assembly and the General Secretariat in the next two days for distribution among all UN members as an official document among all UN members. At the same time a copy of the note will be distributed to all representatives of the OAS.

Thus, Raul Roa said in conclusion, we think that this note will serve as a unique basis for the development of a discussion about the Cuban question in the Political Committee and the UN General Assembly. It is possible that in the event an urgent need arises the Cuban question will also be raised in the Security Council. The note of the Cuban government to the countries of Latin America will be published in the press on 28 February. At the end of the conversation Raul Roa gave me for information a copy of the aforementioned note to the governments of the countries of Latin America (attached).

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR IN THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA
(S. KUDRYAVTSEV)