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**From the Journal of S.M. Kudryavtsev, 'Record of a
Conversation with Raul Castro, Minister of the
Armed Forces of the Republic of Cuba, 16 December
1961'**

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Summary:

Raul Castro discusses the enlargement of the Cuban army and navy and Cuba's aim to strengthen ties with Latin American countries in the wake of the upcoming OAS conference of ministers of foreign affairs.

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S. M. KUDRYAVTSEV

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RECORD OF A CONVERSATION

with Raul CASTRO, Minister of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Cuba

16 December 1961

I visited Raul Castro, who arrived in Havana from Oriente a few days ago. During my conversation with him I touched upon questions of both the domestic situation as well as the foreign policy position.

<...>

It is also necessary to bear in mind, Raul Castro said further, that in the last six months the country has also become considerably stronger militarily. Just now, noted Raul Castro, after the enormous work done by the Soviet specialists, have we understood that in April 1961, at the moment of the intervention, we were essentially partisans and did not have a modern army. Right now an army has been created, and with the arrival of the torpedo cutters from the Soviet Union a navy will have been created which will reliably guard the coasts of Cuba from a possible new invasion of the aggressor.

<...>

[In English: Counterrevolutionary bands in different provinces, problems in Las Villas and Matanzas.]

Raul Castro continued, the Cuban government is taking steps to disrupt the aggressive plans of the US. In a few days Fidel Castro will receive the ambassadors of the Latin American countries, to whom he will explain the true goals of the upcoming conference of ministers of foreign affairs of OAS member countries and express the hope that the governments of these countries will remain true to the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of one another written in the OAS charter, and also not break diplomatic relations with Cuba. Fidel Castro also intends in the course of this meeting with the ambassadors of the Latin America to declare that Cuba is ready to further strengthen the friendship with its Latin American brothers. Raul Castro said further, a brief, but powerful, parade of the armed forces of Cuba will be held in Havana on 2 January on the day of the 3rd anniversary of the Cuban revolution which will demonstrate that any new intervention against Cuba will not be a military cakewalk even for the US. It is proposed to hold a second mass popular assembly in Havana on the day of the opening of the conference of ministers of foreign affairs at which a Second Havana Declaration will be adopted. As envisioned by Fidel Castro, this act should demonstrate the unity of the Cuban people with its government and will undoubtedly produce even greater sympathy toward Cuba from the peoples of Latin America. At the same time, continued Raul Castro, we are proposing to hold a conference of prominent Latin American leaders in defense of Cuba. This conference will be held both in Mexico as well as in Havana.

Raul Castro stressed, we think that this event will exert its own influence on the American imperialists and their lackeys, and somewhat cool their ardor.

<...>

[in English:]

- XXII CPSU assembly
- concerns about Albanian government

Raul Castro continued, in connection with this some Cuban comrades express fears that a weakening of the unity of the socialist camp will first of all damage the cause of the Cuban revolution inasmuch as American imperialism will unavoidably try and make use of this weakening to attack Cuba.

The Cuban leadership, Raul Castro said in conclusion, will for its part take every measure to strengthen the unity of the socialist camp so that the members of the combined revolutionary organizations and the entire Cuban public as a whole are correctly oriented on all the most important questions.

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