

October 23, 1962

**Record of Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED)
Central Committee Politburo Meeting**

Citation:

"Record of Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) Central Committee Politburo Meeting", October 23, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, DY 30/J IV 2/2/853, Die Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (SAPMO), Berlin; obtained by Hans-Hermann Hertle, translated for CWIHP by Regina Schmidt-Ott. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115389>

Summary:

A meeting between the Politburo members of the East German Central Committee (CC GDR) concerning US imperialist actions against Cuba, meaning the economic sanctions and blockade. The GDR Politburo members express their strong support of Cuba.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party
Internal party-archives
Records of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee

Tuesday October 23rd, 1962 in the conference hall of the politburo

Agenda: 1) Visit of comrade Gromyko, Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union;
2) US aggression against Cuba

Rapporteur: comrade Ulbricht

Present members: Ulbricht, Matern, Stoph, Ebert, Leuschner, Honnecker, Warnke, Norden

Present candidates: Mewis, Verner, Hager, Kurella Grüneberg, Apel

Others present: Mittag, Axen, Kiefert

Absent (excused): Grotewohl, Neumann, Mückenberger, Fröhlich, Pisnik, Baumann, Ermisch Reimann

called in:

ad 2): Florin, Stibi

chair : Ulbricht

keeper of the minutes: Mittag

beginning: 10 am

end 11.15 am

Items:

1) Visit of the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union comrade Gromyko Rapporteur :
Ulbricht

The information about the arrival and the visit of comrade Gromyko is noted.

2) US-aggression against Cuba:

Comrades Norden, Florin and Stibi will work out the general lines for our
mass-propaganda dealing with the US-aggression against free Cuba.

(annex nr. 1)

Area administrations and district committees are to be informed about the decisions.

[signed] Ulbricht

Annex number 1 for record 46 of October 23rd 1962

Socialist Unity Party of Germany

Berlin October 24th, 1962

Central Committee

To the First Secretaries of area administrations and district committees

Comrades!

On October 23rd, 1962, the politburo decided on the following directive:

Concerning the provocation of US-imperialism against Cuba

In the night of October 22nd to 23rd, the US-Administration imposed a blockade on Cuba which President Kennedy had announced in a speech full of anti-Soviet invective.¹ This is to be considered a crass violation of international law, a blow against freedom of the seas, and against free trade, it is impudent interference with the very national affairs of Cuba and with all nations entertaining normal relations with Cuba.

In its note of October 23rd, 1962 the Government of the USSR protested against the aggressive intentions of the US. This note is to be read and commented on in all firms and LPGs [Cooperatives of Agricultural Production]. A large protest movement against the flagrant violation of International Law, the Charter of the United Nations and against the threat to peace must be organized. The arguments against American imperialism acting as international policeman against the freedom of nations is to be linked with concrete arguments against revisionists and militarists in Western Germany.

Imperialist circles in the US mean to dictate to Cuba its political course, the establishment of its political system, and which arms it may own for its defense. In the note of the Soviet Union special emphasis is put on the right of all nations, be they big or small, to self-determination, to decide on their way of life and to take the necessary steps to safeguard their security.

Imperialists in the US are not willing to accept the fact that the Cuban people have cast off the dominance of US monopolists and big land-owners. They intend to force Cuba again under the imperialist yoke although Cuba has made use of its right to self-determination.

The United States of America, the most powerful State of the capitalist world, many times bigger than little Cuba and with thirty times more inhabitants, is pretending to feel threatened by the Cuban people! This State of all States, having military bases in Japan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Western Germany and many other countries, even in Cuba, that constitute a permanent threat to peace, this State means to dictate to Cuba which steps to take or not to take to safeguard national security and security of its citizens! This is definitely an attempt at violating the sovereign rights of free and independent Cuba. Not only are the US-imperialists illegally keeping their powerful military base in Guantanamo, Cuba, which dates back to colonial times, not only are they staging armed attacks against Cuban villages, they are now trying to strangle little courageous Cuba with an outrageous blockade.

After attempts of economic blackmail by imposing a trade embargo, and after the attempts of bandits, paid and trained by the US, to land in the Bay of Pigs had failed, and after threats and pressure to halt navigation to Cuba had been of no avail, the US are now resorting to a blockade, exerting direct aggression.

The US-imperialists have taken steps against free Cuba. This is an obvious blow against the program of general and complete disarmament as initiated by the Soviet Government and supported by most nations in the world.

The very US-Government that so often is speaking of "self-determination" is now imposing a blockade on free Cuba; Cuba that has fought for its right to self-determination and national independence! But the Cuban people have taken security measures to safeguard Cuba's independence. Repeatedly Cuba had declared itself willing to settle all differences of opinion between the US and Cuba by way of peaceful negotiations. The US all of a sudden has now imposed a blockade!

It is typical of the aggressive and violent character of US-imperialism that it does not think it necessary to consult with its own allies. On the contrary, its allies had simply been presented with a fait accompli to drag them into the military adventure-policy of US-imperialism against Cuba.

The US-Administration does not approve of the Cuban Government taking the necessary safety measures against continuing American threats and provocations and against recurring attacks of military bandits. Acting in the national interest of its people the Cuban Government asked the Soviet Government for delivery of arms for defensive purposes only. The request of the US that the Cuban Government should remove military defensive arms from Cuban soil can only be considered as an invitation to the Cuban people to expose itself unarmed to the imperialist sharks. In its note the USSR was quite right to emphasize the fact that it had several times suggested to withdraw all foreign troops from foreign regions. But so far, the US administration has opposed these suggestions. There will be nobody so gullible as to believe that it is in the interest of peace for Cuba to renounce its defensive weapons.

Once again Bonn imperialists are the first to side with the aggressors and enemies of peace. The Bonn Government as well as the West-Berlin Mayor [Willy] Brandt hastened to applaud the American US-imperialists and promised them support for their dangerous enterprise. Their political intention is disturbance of peace. Numerous neutral countries responded with indignant outrage to Washington's new attack against world peace. The protest includes some of its own allies, as it is reflected in comments of quite a few bourgeois [news]papers and public personalities. Clearly the peoples of the world oppose neo-colonial arrogance and disturbance of peace. They are against the American imperialists' wish to act as world-policeman.

All freedom-loving people are disgusted at the methods the US-oligarchy is using to establish its tyranny in free Cuba. The first reactions of many countries in the world show that the new aggressive acts of the US result in its further isolation.

Forty-four years ago the attempt of imperialists, in particular of the Americans, failed to defeat the young Soviet Union by blockade and military intervention. They also failed in their imperialistic aggressions against Egypt, Algeria, etc. The peace-loving world will succeed in defeating this new provocation, too.

A broad campaign has to be set up with slogans like "hands off Cuba", "stop US-Aggression against free Cuba", "protect the Cubans' right to self-determination", "break the Yankee-blockade of free Cuba." Peace-loving people all over the world side with Cuba. Cuba is fighting for a just cause, that's why it will be victorious in the end. The peoples must be more vigilant to preempt the aggressors.

In connection with the campaign against the American aggressor it is important to explain the existing balance of power. There is a power as strong as the US. This is the Soviet Union. It assists nations fighting for their freedom and allows them to determine how to lead their lives. The Soviet Union is conducting a far-sighted policy. It is necessary to demonstrate that in the current international climate powerful weapons, for instance missiles and nuclear arms in the hands of the Soviet Union, are the decisive means to prevent aggressive imperialistic forces from unleashing an apocalyptic world-war.

Making use of the above-mentioned key-words the National Front must organize solidarity-rallies in cooperatives, institutions, universities and schools and send a solidarity-message to the Cuban Mission in Berlin.

Workers, scholars, and other intellectuals, artists, women, young people, pastors should speak out in public. On Thursday there will be a big central demonstration on August-Bebel-Platz.

This campaign is to be linked with the mass-competition concerning preparations for the 6th [SED] party-conference. Competition will strengthen our Republic, our socialist fatherland and free Cuba in every working-place. Industrial and agricultural productivity will increase the power of the socialist camp, and hence the power of

peace. The GDR will be made stronger by mass-competition and aggressors will be defeated.

Anything that could increase the war-psychosis incited by the United States should be avoided. Our tone has to be firm and prudent. Our security and strength depend on the unity of the socialist camp, on peace-policy, and continuous growth.

With calm and with nerves of steel we in the GDR will continue our peace-politics of socialist progress.

With socialist regards

Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany
Politburo

1 Ed note: US President Kennedy actually announced the blockade ("quarantine") of Cuba in a televised speech beginning at 7 pm, Washington time (after midnight in Germany), on Monday evening, 22 October, but it did not actually go into effect until 10 am Wednesday, 24 October.