

At this time, Mr. Chairman, it would be appropriate to note that another member of the Cuban consulate staff who was present when Oswald allegedly applied for a visa was Senor Alfredo Mirabal Diaz. Senor Mirabal succeeded Senor Azcue as Cuban consul in Mexico City. Senor Mirabal was born August 11, 1923.

It would be appropriate at this time, Mr. Chairman, to call Senor Mirabal.

Chairman STOKES. Will the witness please stand. Raise your right hand and be sworn.

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you give before this committee is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God.

[The testimony of Senor Mirabal was given through the interpreter.]

Senor MIRABAL. I do.

Chairman STOKES. Thank you. You may be seated.

# **TESTIMONY OF SENOR ALFREDO MIRABAL DIAZ, ACCOMPANIED BY MR. HERVAS, INTERPRETER FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT**

Chairman STOKES. The Chair recognizes counsel, Michael Goldsmith.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Mirabal, when did you assume your position as Cuban consul in Mexico City?

Senor MIRABAL. September 2, 1963.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. How long had you worked in that capacity?

Senor MIRABAL. Eleven months.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. What hours of the day was the Cuban consulate open to the public?

Senor MIRABAL. Ten in the morning to two in the afternoon.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. And what days of the week were these hours observed?

Senor MIRABAL. Monday through Friday.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. Was the consulate open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays?

Senor MIRABAL. No.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. Mr. Mirabal, while you were Cuban consul in Mexico City, did you ever see Lee Harvey Oswald?

Senor MIRABAL. Twice, on two occasions, when he was at the consulate processing his visa application.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. Did anything unusual happen when Oswald was applying for his visa?

Senor MIRABAL. Yes; since he first came for the visa, I must note that I do not know English, and therefore it was my colleague Azcue who took care of him, though he had in fact concluded his responsibilities in the position. When I arrived, he stayed on to help me out and he, together with the secretary, took care of this visitor.

From inside my private office I could hear loud voices, and I came out of my office several times to see what was happening in the area where the secretary worked. I asked my colleague, Azcue, who was taking care of the visitor, I did not know who the visitor was. But my colleague Azcue told me that the visitor was in need

of an urgent visa, that he was in a great hurry to travel to Cuba. However, as our own procedures dictated, and as our instructions from the Ministry of Foreign Relations provided, we were not authorized to issue a visa, and therefore the visa was not issued.

He continued in this discussion.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. Did Mr. Oswald get involved in arguments with Mr. Azcue on both occasions that he, Oswald, visited the consulate?

Senor MIRABAL. Yes; on both occasions there were discussions or arguments to such an extent that from the very first moment it appeared to me as if this instance could be a case of a provocation. I sensed that there was an intent to create some kind of a scandal, of a disturbance. That was my feeling.

The second time the same thing happened.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. Approximately how long did these arguments last?

Senor MIRABAL. Today I could not be exact or precise; 15 years have gone by since then. Some time, 15, 20 minutes.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. And you had occasion to see Mr. Oswald on both of these occasions?

Senor MIRABAL. Yes. I had an opportunity to see him. But it was from my private office where I stuck my head over and had a look at him from that vantage point.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. How far away from you was Mr. Oswald during these two visits?

Senor MIRABAL. About 4 meters away.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. Do you recall when Mr. Oswald made his visits to the Cuban consulate?

Senor MIRABAL. It was at the beginning or shortly after my arrival.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. At this time, Mr. Mirabal, I would like to refer your attention to what has been marked as JFK exhibit F-408. That is the second exhibit from the right. And I believe you have just been handed a copy of that exhibit.

Mr. Mirabal, does the date on that application refresh your memory as to when Oswald visited the Embassy?

Senor MIRABAL. Yes; it is close to the date of my arrival. Yes, in addition the visa applications are filled in at the very time that they are being requested, and this would be on the second occasion.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. Mr. Mirabal, please look at the picture that appears in that application. Is the person whose picture appears in this visa application the same Lee Harvey Oswald who visited the Cuban consulate requesting a visa?

Senor MIRABAL. I really did not observe him with any great deal of interest. He for me was one of many who visited the consulate. The image that I have of him, I believe that the answer is yes, that he is the same person.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. Mr. Mirabal, after the assassination of President Kennedy, was there ever any discussion at the Cuban consulate or Embassy concerning whether the Oswald arrested in Dallas was actually the same person identified as Oswald who visited your consulate requesting a visa in September 1963?

Senor MIRABAL. Yes; on the day following the assassination it is my own secretary that communicates this information to me in the morning when I arrive at the consulate. At that point, she advises

me of the fact that the assassination has occurred. Later, and I cannot recall exactly how late or how soon thereafter, she communicates to me the fact that the alleged assassin is the same person that came to the consulate.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. Mr. Mirabal, at this time I would like to read to you a quotation from Comer Clark's article. He attributes the quotation to President Castro. I believe that Mr. Hervas has been given a copy of that.

"Lee Oswald came to the Cuban embassy in Mexico City twice," Castro went on. "The first time—I was told—he wanted to work for us.

"He was asked to explain, but he wouldn't.

"He wouldn't go into details.

"The second time he said he wanted to 'free Cuba from American imperialism.'

"Then he said something like: 'Someone ought to shoot that President Kennedy.'

"Then Oswald said—and this was exactly how it was reported to me—'Maybe I'll try to do it.'

Mr. Mirabal, do you recall Mr. Oswald making the remarks that are allegedly attributed to him?

Senor MIRABAL. I feel that what has just been read is totally absurd, it is incredible. In addition, it is completely false, it is a lie, and it is impossible to imagine that that has been stated.

Mr. GOLDSMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Mirabal.

I have no further questions at this time.

Chairman STOKES. Does any member seek recognition?

Mr. DODD. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman STOKES. The gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. Dodd.

Mr. DODD. Mr. Mirabal, let me just follow up the one line of questioning I had for Mr. Azcue, and that is with regard to how the photo on the visa application got there.

Can you enlighten us at all as to how that photograph got on the application, what either the normal operating procedures were or if there were any unique operating procedures in this case which would explain how that photograph ended up on that visa application?

Senor MIRABAL. The entire matter of the processing of the paper work relating to the application was entrusted to the secretary. I did not participate in any manner. She was most efficient, and we trusted her in this task.

Mr. DODD. In other words, you never saw the visa application when it was in the consulate in Mexico.

Senor MIRABAL. Yes, I did. In fact, there is a footnote with a series of remarks or a remark or observation that I included or I made.

Mr. DODD. Do you recall that photograph as the photograph of the man that you saw, granted not all that clearly, during the 30 minutes or so, the total period of time that he was in your office back in September of 1963?

Senor MIRABAL. I know that this was the photograph that was affixed to the request of the application, but at no point did I verify whether this photograph was in fact that of the person who submitted the application, because this was not a matter that I took care of. It was the secretary who was responsible for this, and when she brought these documents to me, I assumed that everything was in order.

Mr. DODD. Fine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman STOKES. The gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Sawyer.  
Mr. SAWYER. Yes, I just have one question.

You stated that the statement attributed to President Castro as to the statements made in the consulate by Lee Harvey Oswald were not correct and were a lie or something to that effect.

At that time, I understood you could not speak English and did not understand English; is that correct?

Senor MIRABAL. Yes, it is true. I did not speak English at that time. However, my colleague, Senor Azcue, and the secretary would, without any doubt, have informed me if he had stated anything of such a nature. I have complete trust in my colleague, Azcue, and in the secretary, and obviously because of the unusual and extremely alarming nature of any observations or statements of that kind, I feel sure that they would have advised me had they heard them.

Mr. SAWYER. I just wanted the record to be clear that you are repeating what the other two told you rather than stating an observation as to what he said yourself. You are nodding your head yes.

Senor MIRABAL. Yes; I don't understand English. Even if I heard it in English, I wouldn't have understood it—yes, it was my colleague, Azcue, and the secretary who took care of the application submitted by Lee Harvey Oswald. It was also them who provided me with all of the information that enabled me to add the observation contained in that footnote to the effect that he was requesting at the same time a visa to go to the Soviet Union.

In fact, I noticed that he presented a card or credentials as belonging to the Communist Party of the United States. I understand, or it is also my understanding, that the Communist Party of the United States stated that he never belonged to the party. I was surprised by the fact that the card seemed to be a new card.

I must say that I also have been a Communist for a number of years and that generally we do not use credentials or a card to identify ourselves as members of the party. Rather, we are identified to ourselves as Communists by our own behavior and by our own ideas. I was surprised by his unusual interest in using identification as a Communist.

I would think it would be interesting to know how he obtained the card. It did have his name, and it did coincide with the same name that appeared in the other document. And, as I indicated, it was my colleague, Azcue, who brought all these documents and all this information to my desk for my report. It is then that I talked with the Soviet consul, and when I mentioned this to him, he told me that Oswald had in fact requested a visa for the Soviet Union but that he had been told that it would take about 4 months to obtain a response, and that is the reason that I included that information in the footnote that was to be sent to Havana.

Mr. SAWYER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman STOKES. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. Mirabal, was it standard operating procedure for an applicant to affix his signature to the application in the presence of a consulate official?

Senor MIRABAL. That was normal. And it was always applied in that manner.

Chairman STOKES. Were there ever any occasions when an application form would be signed in blank?

Senor MIRABAL. During the 11 months that I was there, that was never done.

Chairman STOKES. And under the procedure as you knew it, were applicants ever permitted to take the application forms out of the consular office?

Senor MIRABAL. To my knowledge, no. The ministry did not allow that to be done. I could not authorize it, and as far as I know, it was never done.

Chairman STOKES. Thank you, Mr. Mirabal.

Is there anything further?

The gentleman from Tennessee, Mr. Ford.

Mr. FORD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Could I get Mr. Mirabal to describe Mr. Oswald's demeanor, please?

Senor MIRABAL. What I recall, and this, of course, is not only an image that time has eroded, but also I looked at him without concentrating great attention on him. At that time his appearance was not a cause of concern, but rather the events that were taking place at that time, the loud conversation, et cetera.

As I recall him, he was a rather small man, medium height or somewhat less, narrow shoulders. I believe he was wearing a coat, short hair. I do not recall him having a moustache. He did have a serious expression on his face. He appeared hard or tough, someone who is upset or unhappy. That is the image that I retain of him.

Chairman STOKES. The time of the gentleman has expired. Is there anyone else seeking recognition?

Mr. Mirabal, at the conclusion of a witness' testimony before our committee, he is entitled under the rules of this committee and of the House to address the committee for a period of 5 minutes in the event he desires to in any way clarify his testimony or expand upon it or explain it. I would at this time extend to you 5 minutes for that purpose if you so desire.

Senor MIRABAL. Thank you. I would like to state to the members of the committee that in connection with this entire process of the two visits that he made to the consulate, my impression from the very first moment was that it was in fact a provocation. He insisted on the urgency of his need for a visa. He indicated that he was being persecuted. He indicated that he could not stay long in Mexico, that he had an urgent need to travel to Cuba and therefrom to go to the Soviet Union.

On the first day he was not given the visa because he did not fulfill the necessary requirements, requirements that are asked of all individuals who are visa applicants.

On the second time he came to file the application, and yet he insisted that he needed to have it processed rapidly with great urgency. It was because of these demands of his that the argument with Mr. Azcue and with the secretary followed, and in fact during the argument he accused us all of not being true revolutionaries, of not being sensitive to the fact that he was being persecuted.

I must say that from the very beginning I considered this a provocation, and I assured that in the manner in which we handled the case we followed the directives of the Foreign Ministry in the

sense that all individuals have to follow certain procedures in order to obtain a visa.

I would also like to say personally that as far as I am concerned, it is a source of great satisfaction to be present here before the committee because in the first place I consider this a very important investigation in itself and also because we are very interested in its successful outcome.

I am individually—and my government wants to insure—that things will be perfectly cleared up as a result. We feel that there have been efforts at making propaganda, at conducting campaigns, and Cuba has been, attempts have been made to link Cuba to this horrendous assassination.

From the reports that have been read here, apparently even I had been linked to this event, and I can assure that neither Cuba nor I in any manner whatsoever participated in something that we very strongly repudiate, as was clearly stated by Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

Chairman STOKES. Thank you very much, Mr. Mirabal.

We also want to thank you for having volunteered to be here today and to testify before this committee, and we are deeply appreciative for your appearance.

Does counsel have any statement to make?

Mr. STANDARD. Just this, Mr. Chairman. In anticipation of your incorporating in this record the 4 hour approximate transcript of the interview with President Castro, I ask that you incorporate into the record and make it a part of it a series of articles which are referred to but not with specificity by date or name.

First, a series of three articles by the French journalist, Jean Daniel, one which appeared in L'Express in French and two articles which appeared in the magazine, The New Republic.

Second, in the course of the interview several references are made to Ambassador William Atwood. Those statements describe his role in contacting the Cuban Government at the behest of President Kennedy. And I ask that those be included as well.

Chairman STOKES. Without objection, counsel's request is hereby granted.

JFK exhibit F-685 may be entered into therecord at this point.  
[The information follows:]

Nov 28, 1963 L'EXPRE

LES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES

## CUBA

## Avec Castro à l'heure du crime

*Dans la pièce où est Fidel Castro, on capte la radio de Miami. La nouvelle arrive. Castro se lève et parle à Jean Daniel...*

Il était aux environs de 13 h 30, 1 heure de Cuba. Nous étions en train de déjeuner dans la salle de séjour de la seule résidence nationale que Fidel Castro possède, sur la magnifique place de Varadero, à 120 kilomètres de La Havane. Pour le dîner, nous ne nous sommes pas précipités au leader cubain les détails des négociations avec les Russes avant l'installation des fusées l'an dernier. La sonnerie d'un téléphone a retenti : un secrétaire en tenue de gentillier a annoncé que le président de la République Dorticos voulait parler d'urgence au Premier ministre. Fidel a pris l'appareil et je lui ai entendu dire : « Como ? Un atentado ? (Comment ? un attentat ?) ». Il s'est adressé à nous pour nous dire que Kennedy venait d'être abattu à Dallas. Il a repris la conversation et a déclaré tout haut : « Herido ? Muy gravemente ? » (Blessé gravement ?).

Il est revenu assis après avoir fait la fête à manger et il a répété très fièrement : « Una mala noticia » (Une mauvaise nouvelle). Puis il est redevenu silencieux pendant un moment. Il attendait un autre coup de téléphone et plus de détails. Il a dit ensuite qu'il y avait dans la soirée une proposition américaine de désarmement et que ce pouvait être, nous, avec lui, d'un bon que d'un mauvais. En Vietnam du Nord ? Ou un membre du Ku Klux Klan ? Le second coup de téléphone est arrivé : on croyait pour sûr lui annoncer que le président des États-Unis était mort en avion et qu'on espérait le sauver. La réaction immédiate de Fidel Castro a été de dire : « Ahora, il est roto ». Il a prononcé cette phrase avec satisfaction.

## Un réquisitoire

Cette phrase faisait suite à une conversation que nous avions eue l'avant-veille, pendant la nuit du 27 au 28 octobre, pendant 10 heures du soir à 4 heures du matin. Une bonne partie des entretiens avait tourné autour des impressions dont je lui avais fait part sur une audience que m'avait accordée le président Kennedy le 24 octobre dernier sur ses réactions de Fidel Castro à ces impressions. Il s'était livré alors à un implacable réquisitoire de la politique des États-Unis, ajoutant qu'en plus le gouvernement américain avait eu toutes les chances, dans un passé récent de normaliser les rapports avec Cuba et qu'en fin de compte il avait tué ce que la CIA, entraîne une équipe et organise la contre-

révolution. Il m'avait dit qu'il n'était en rien sollicité par le danger d'un coup militaire et que d'être une victime des États-Unis augmentait son rayonnement dans l'Amérique latine, comme dans le monde socialiste. Il parlait, distrait, du point de vue des intérêts de la paix dans les deux continents américains. Pour cela, il fallait que passe aux États-Unis un homme capable de comprendre la réalité explosive de l'Amérique latine et de s'y adapter.

## L'annonce fatale

Soudain, ensuite, il s'était détendu : « Cet homme, m'avait-il dit, ce pourrait être encore Kennedy. Il a garde encore toutes les possibilités de devenir, aux yeux de l'histoire, le plus grand président des États-Unis. Seul qui comprendrait enfin qu'il faut à avoir une coexistence entre capitalistes et socialistes, même dans la zone américaine. »

« Ce serait alors un président supérieur à Lincoln. Je sais que, pour

Krouchtchev par exemple, Kennedy est un homme avec qui l'on peut parler. C'est l'impression que j'ai recueillie de toutes mes conversations avec Krouchtchev. D'autres m'assurent que, pour cela, il faut attendre un colloque. Moi, je le crois responsable de tout cela, je vais vous dire, je crois qu'il a compris pas mal de choses depuis quelques mois et puis aussi, en fin de compte, je suis persuadé qu'il n'importe que d'autre serait pire. »

Puis Fidel a ajouté avec un grand rire d'adolescent : « Si vous le voyez, vous pouvez lui dire que je suis prêt à déclarer que Goldwater est mon ami, si cela doit assurer sa réélection. »

Cette conversation datait du 19 novembre. Maintenant il était 2 heures environ, et nous nous sommes levés de table pour nous installer devant une radio. Le commandant Valero, son médecin, aide de camp et ami intime, a facilité pour l'émission en anglais du relais de la N.R.C. à Miami. Au fur et à mesure de l'arrivée des nouvelles, Valero les traduisait à Fidel. Blessure à la tête. Poursuite de l'assassin. Meurtre d'un policier. Enda l'annonce fatale : le président Kennedy est mort.

Alors Fidel s'est levé et m'a dit : « Tout est changé. Tout va changer. Les États-Unis occupent une telle position dans le monde que la mort d'un président de ce pays affecte des millions de gens dans tous les coins du globe. La guerre froide, les relations avec la Russie, l'Amérique latine, Cuba, la question noire, tout est à repenser, je vais vous dire une chose : Kennedy était un ennemi auquel on s'était habitué. C'est une affaire grave, très grave. »

Après un quart d'heure de silence observé par toutes les stations de radio américaines, nous nous sommes réinstallés devant le poste : le silence n'avait été interrompu que pour la retransmission de l'hymne national américain. Cela procurait une étrange impression de s'entendre retentir cet hymne dans la maison de Fidel Castro au milieu des visages préoccupés.

Maintenant, devait dire Fidel, il faut vite, très vite, qu'ils retrouvent l'assassin, sinon, vous allez voir, je les connais, ils vont essayer de nous

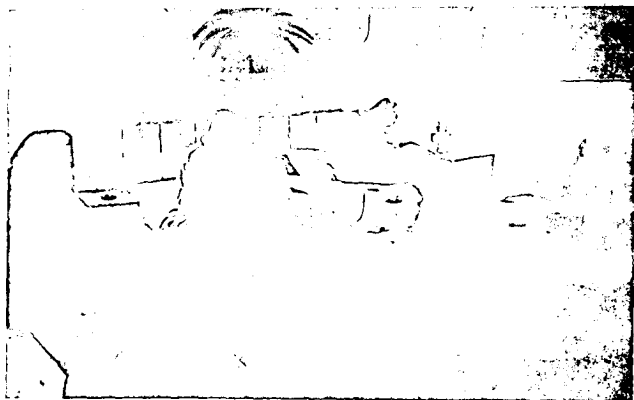
mettre ça sur le dos. Mais, dites-moi, cela fait le quatrième président des États-Unis qui est assassiné sur son poste ? 36 ? C'est incalculable. A Cuba, il n'y en a pas un seul. Vous savez, j'aurais aimé être dans la Sierra, il y avait des gens (pas dans mon groupe, dans un autre) qui voulaient tuer Batista. Ils croyaient qu'on pouvait en finir avec un régime en le décapitant. Moi, j'ai toujours été furieusement hostile à ces méthodes. Par calcul politique d'abord, parce que, en ce qui concerne Cuba, si on avait tué Batista, il aurait été remplacé par un militaire qui aurait prétendu faire payer aux révolutionnaires le meurtre du dictateur. Mais par tempérament aussi car, au fond, ce genre d'assassinat me répugne. »

## Quel moment ?

Les émissions ont repris. Un reporter croit devoir parler des difficultés que Mink Kennedy trouve à se défaire de son bas transatlantique. Fidel explique : « Que mentalité », il répète plusieurs fois : « Quelle mentalité », après tout c'était une différence de civilisations, à l'homme que vous êtes comme ça, en Europe ? Pour nous, les lignes d'écriture, la mort, c'est quelque chose de sacré, non seulement c'est le fin de l'hostilité, mais cela impose la dévotion, la dignité, le respect. Il y a des voyous qui devraient s'aligner devant la mort, à propos cela ne fait penser à quelque chose, si vous écrivez tout ce que je vous ai dit hier contre la politique de Kennedy, maintenant ne s'en va pas non, parlez de la politique du gouvernement des États-Unis. »

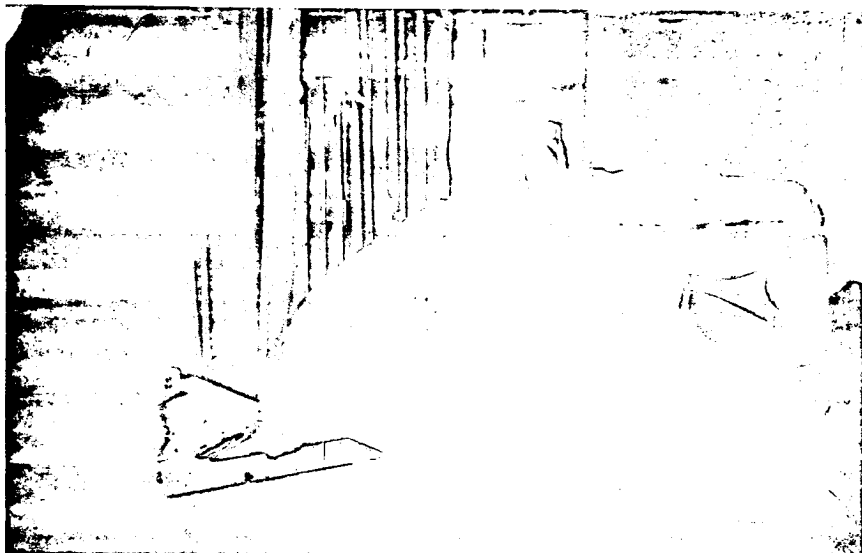
Quand il a prononcé cette phrase, j'ai pensé au crucifix qui était resté dans la chambre que l'on m'avait réservée. J'ai pensé aux églises catholiques, aux temples protestants que j'avais vus, empiés de fidèles le dimanche matin précédent à Santiago. Je me suis souvenu que tous ces révolutionnaires célébraient religieusement la naissance, le mariage,

(\*) À gauche, Fidel Castro. De droite, marqué d'une croix, Jean Daniel, derrière, l'écrivain cubain Juan Krouchev. Au fond, le commandant Valero.



CASTRO DANS LES CHAMBRES DE L'HOTEL HAVANA-RIVERA (\*). « Maintenant, ça est si ça va être mon tour. »

(Mort libérée d'Espagne)



FIDEL CASTRO ET JEAN DANIEL.  
« C'est le quatrième Président des États-Unis assassiné. C'est inquiétant. »

(Marc Ribaud-Magnum)

et la mort. J'ai pensé à cette phrase d'un ministre cubain : « N'oubliez jamais que cette révolution socialiste parle l'espagnol. Vous ne pourrez la connaître vraiment que si vous êtes un familier du « Romancero », du « Cid » et de « Don Quichotte ». Moi, j'ajouterais qu'il faut aussi être un familier de l'Afrique depuis que j'ai entendu chanter l'« Internationale » par des petites filles devant la maison où l'on célébrait un « chengo » qui est une sorte de vaudou cubain.

Vers 5 heures, Fidel Castro a déclaré que, puisque nous n'y pouvions rien, il fallait tout de même essayer de respecter l'emploi du temps. Il tenait à ne faire visiter lui-même une « granja de pueblo » (terme d'État) dans laquelle il s'était livré à des expériences personnelles. Son obsession actuelle, c'est l'agriculture. Il ne lui que des études agro-nomiques. Il parle avec lyrisme du sol, de sa fertilisation et des possibilités que donnera à Cuba la canne à sucre. En 1970, d'acquiescer une complète indépendance économique.

#### Un « admirateur »

Nous avons pris la voiture et ouvert la radio. On était sur la piste de l'assassin de Dallas. « C'est un espion russe », dit le reporter. Correction cinq minutes après : « C'est un espion marié à une Russe ». Fidel dit : « Maintenant, ça y est, cela va être mon tour ». Pas encore. L'assassin est un déserteur marxiste. Ensuite on entend en effet qu'il s'agit

d'un jeune homme, membre du « Fair Play Committee for Cuba ». C'est un admirateur de Fidel Castro. Fidel déclare : « S'ils avaient des preuves, ils auraient dit un agent, un complice, un tueur à gages. S'ils disent simplement un admirateur, c'est simplement pour tenter de lier dans l'esprit des gens le nom de Castro et l'épuration suscitée par l'assassinat. C'est la méthode de la publicité, c'est la méthode de la propagande. C'est terrible. Mais vous savez, je suis sûr que tout cela va se dégonfler très vite. Il y a, aux États-Unis, trop de polices concurrentes pour que les intentions de l'une d'elles puissent être imposées à toutes, très longtemps. »

Nous arrivons à la « granja de pueblo » où les paysans accueillent Fidel. Au même moment, un speaker de la radio annonce avec une voix étrange par l'assassin est un « pro-castro-marxiste ».

Les commentateurs se succèdent, ils deviennent de plus en plus ennuis et de plus en plus agressifs. Fidel s'exécute alors : « Il faut abandonner la visite de la ferme ». Nous allons vers Malanaza d'où il pourra téléphoner au président Dorticos. En chemin il pose des questions : « Quel est Lyndon Johnson ? Quelle réputation a-t-il ? Quel rapport avait-il avec Kennedy ? Quel rapport avait-il avec Kennedy ? Avec Krouchtchev ? Quelle était sa position au moment de la tentative d'invasion à Cuba ? Quelle autorité, enfin et surtout, a-t-il sur la C.I.A. ? » Et puis, soudain, il regarde sa montre, vérifie qu'il nous faut une demi-heure pour arriver à Malanaza et comme sur commande, il s'endort.

Si je peux en juger par les temps qu'il m'a consacré pendant ces trois jours, il n'avait pu dormir auparavant que quelques heures à peine.

#### L'ironie de l'histoire

Après Malanaza d'où il devait ordonner l'état d'alerte, nous sommes revenus à Varadero pour dîner. Il a dit, étant le propos qu'une femme lui avait tenu peu avant, que c'était une ironie de l'histoire pour les Cubains, dans la situation qui leur avait été faite depuis le blocus, d'avoir à déplorer la mort d'un président des États-Unis. « Après tout, a-t-il ajouté, il y a peut-être des gens dans le monde que cela réjouit, les guerilleros du Sud-Vietnam, par exemple, et aussi, au fait, j'y pense, Mme Min. » Je pense, en effet, au peuple de Cuba habituée à voir des affiches comme celle qui représente l'armée rouge en surimpression derrière des maquisards et sur lesquels on peut lire : « Alto Mr. Kennedy, Cuba no está sola... ». À tous ceux que l'on a conduits à lier leurs privations à la politique du président des États-Unis. Mais ce peuple cubain est égaré. Il se demande ce qui va lui arriver encore. Ce peuple cubain est aussi un peuple léger, je dis cela dans la meilleure acception du terme. Les Espagnols ici n'ont pas été imprégnés de la gravité indienne comme au Mexique. Ils sont imprégnés de la jovialité africaine. C'est le peuple du rythme et la haine ne repose pas au rythme.

Au dîner, j'ai pu reprendre toutes mes questions. Comment Castro

avait été amené à mettre en danger la paix du monde avec les fusiers ? Quelle était la dépendance à l'égard de l'Union Soviétique ? S'il s'était pas possible d'envisager des rapports avec les États-Unis, comme la Finlande en a avec les Russes ? Comment le passage d'est fait de l'humanisme de la Sierra Maestra au marxisme-léninisme de 1961 ? Fidel Castro, à nouveau en pleine forme, a expliqué sur tout. Ruc'ni m'a questionné à nouveau sur Kennedy et chaque fois que je faisais un éloge des qualités intellectuelles du président assassiné, j'évoquais chez lui le plus vif intérêt.

Les Cubains ont vécu avec les États-Unis dans cette intimité cruelle, et que je connais bien, des colonies avec les colonisateurs. C'est tout de même une intimité. L'événement qui frappe les hommes frappe en même temps les autres. Dans cette si sédaine ville de La Havane où nous sommes retournés dans la nuit, tandis que brillaient les enseignes lumineuses des slogans marxistes qui ont remplacé la publicité du Coca-Cola et du dentifrice, au milieu des expulsi- ons soviétiques et des camions tricolores, une certaine émotion américaine vibrât dans l'air, faite de ressentiment, de trouble, d'ansie, mais tout de même aussi de je ne sais quel imperceptible rapprochement. « Après tout, ce président américain s'est mis d'accord, pendant sa vie, avec nos amis russes », m'a dit, au moment de mon départ, un jeune intellectuel cubain, comme pour s'excuser de ne pas se réjouir de l'assassinat.

JEAN DANIEL.



LE TESTAMENT  
DE KENNEDYLe  
dernier  
dialogue

*Les conclusions  
de Kennedy sur  
de Gaulle et  
Castro confiées  
à Jean Daniel.  
Et la vérité  
sur l'affaire  
des fusées.*

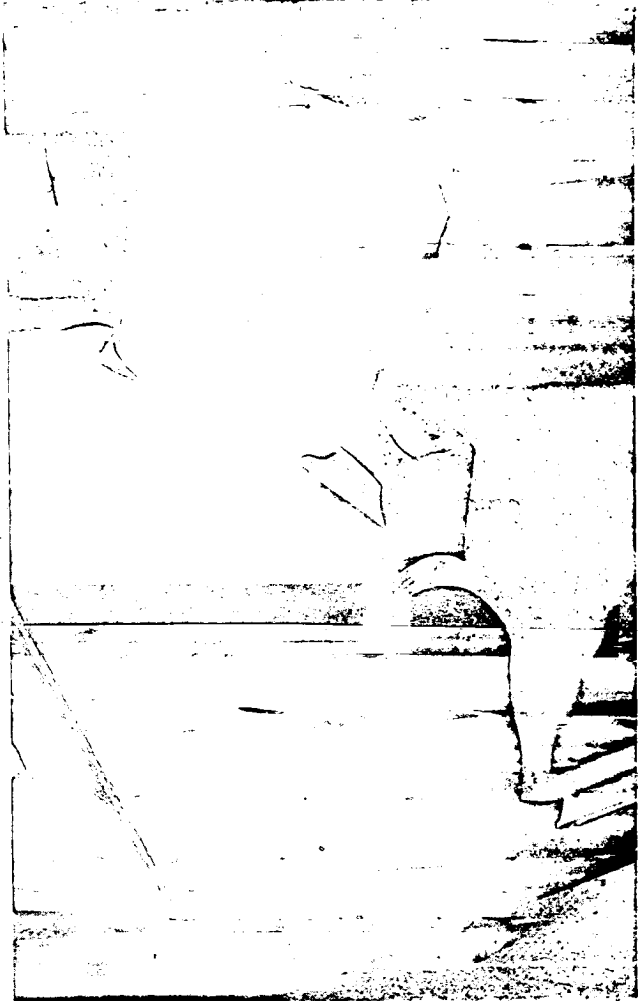
J'ai été reçu à la Maison-Blanche par le Président Kennedy, le jeudi 24 octobre, à 17 h 45. Le rendez-vous m'avait été fixé à 17 h 30. J'ai attendu pendant un quart d'heure dans la salle des Conférences de l'abîme, salle contiguë au célèbre bureau du Président des États-Unis. Au bout d'un quart d'heure, c'est le Président lui-même qui est venu chercher pour m'introduire dans son bureau. Il s'est excusé de m'avoir fait attendre, non pas pour être courtois ou pour m'accorder quelque importance, mais pour donner une explication au léger trouble apporté dans un emploi du temps dont l'organisation paraissait très stricte. En passant dans la petite pièce où se tient la secrétaire, nous avons vu sortir par une porte-fenêtre Mme Jacqueline Kennedy, qui se dirigeait vers les jardins privés de la Maison-Blanche. Le Président l'a rappelée pour que je puisse lui être présenté.

C'était encore, à Washington, l'indian Summer : il faisait très chaud et le président, comme Mme Kennedy, était très légèrement vêtu, ce qui ajoutait à l'extrême impression de jeunesse, de charme et de simplicité que l'on était surpris de ressentir en accédant à cette solennelle enceinte. Le Président (allure sportive et élégante, gestes rapides et courts, le regard mobile mais qui, à certains moments, se figeait dans une immobilité inquiétante, je dirai presque globuleuse) m'a fait assaillir sur le canapé semi-circulaire qui se tient au milieu de son bureau. Lui s'est assis, en face de ce canapé, sur un fauteuil à bascule. L'entretien devait durer de vingt à vingt-cinq minutes. Il ne fut interrompu que par un bref coup de téléphone.

## D'accord sur rien

Le Président Kennedy m'a aussitôt demandé comment évoluait la situation française. Après ma réponse, il m'a parlé de général de Gaulle.

Il l'a fait de façon détournée comme un homme qui a voulu trouver confort dans l'indifférence après avoir été aussi exaspéré que fasciné. John Kennedy était l'homme qui savait comprendre vite et résoudre plus vite encore. Avec de Gaulle, ce n'était pas possible. C'était plus difficile (à moins d'être Krouchtchov). Un jour, impatienté de ne pas comprendre, et sachant à peu près qu'il avait téléphoné directement au général de Gaulle. En vain. Mais, fait singulier,



John Fitzgerald Kennedy.  
« J'ai téléphoné directement à de Gaulle... »

depuis la visite récente de M. Courvoisier, le Président Kennedy était moins préoccupé par les relations franco-américaines. Il avait décidé de ne plus s'en préoccuper. C'était, selon lui, une inutile perte de temps.

« Nous avons vérifié, M. Courvoisier et moi, m'a-t-il dit le Président, que nous n'étions d'accord sur rien, et nous sommes convenus que ce désaccord total ne devait pas nuire à l'amitié entre deux grands

pays occidentaux. Ce que j'ai ramené, c'est que la stratégie du général de Gaulle, que je comprends mal, nécessite d'une certaine façon, comme les États-Unis, il semble que sans contestation pourrait redonner aux Européens l'envie de penser par eux-mêmes et de ne plus compter passivement ni sur les dollars ni sur l'impuissance politique des États-Unis. Mais nous n'allons plus donner à la France des occasions de créer cette tension. »

## La notion d'indépendance

Le Président Kennedy a poursuivi en ressumant, avec concision et vigueur, les désaccords entre les États-Unis et la France.

Sur l'Allemagne, la politique nucléaire, l'Europe, la notion d'indépendance, il m'a dit ce qui, depuis, a été publié partout. Il a cependant ajouté que la France avait une sin-

gulière façon de manifester son indépendance, à propos, en particulier, du Vietnam et du Cuba. Il était justement impatienté de ce que le chef de l'État français puisse lui donner des leçons sans prendre aucun risque. Il m'a dit que son avis que lui n'appartenait pas, comme les informations qu'il lui avait fournies, mais qu'il les avait obtenues d'un autre canal, que les amis qui les lui procuraient étaient, eux-mêmes, engagés dans l'action.

J'ai alors demandé au Président Kennedy ce que l'on pouvait attendre du voyage aux États-Unis projeté par le général de Gaulle en février prochain. Il a répondu : « Absolument rien. »

Mais il a aussitôt précisé avec un large sourire, et comme s'avouant à l'avance le plaisir de la future rencontre : « Ce sera tout de même très excitant, le général de Gaulle est que



Non ? Vous voyez que cela ne compte pas, l'honneur en politique ? Sous sembler des romantiques ? Peut-être. Pourquoi pas ? En tout cas, nous sommes des initiés. Bref, nous nous sommes mis d'accord sur l'installation des fusées.

« Alors, au mois de juin 1962, Khou, mon frère, et Che Guevara sont allés à Moscou pour discuter des modalités de la mise en place des fusées. Le convoi est arrivé par mer en trois semaines. Les États-Unis sont parvenus à savoir qu'il s'agissait d'armes, bien sûr, mais ils ont mis deux mois pour découvrir qu'il s'agissait de fusées. Deux mois, c'est-à-dire davantage que ce que nous avions calculé. Car il est bien évident pour tout le monde qu'il s'agissait d'intimider et non d'agresser.

« Maintenant, nous allons parler de l'Alliance pour le Progrès, de ce que vous direz dans un certain sens, c'était une bonne idée, cela a marqué un progrès. Même si on peut dire que c'est tardif, tardif, que cela a été fait à chaud, sous la contrainte, malgré tout cela, l'acte de dire, je conviens que l'idée en elle-même constituait un effort d'adaptation au cours extraordinairement rapide des événements en Amérique latine.

### Les pétroles argentins

« Quand nous apprenons par exemple (vous avez vu les journaux ce matin) que l'Argentine nationalise le pétrole ! Le gouvernement argentin ! Non, mais vous vous rendez compte ? A la Bourse de New York, cela a dû faire plus de bruit que le catholicisme ! Les conservateurs catholiques et militaires de l'Argentine, les hommes les plus liés aux intérêts américains ! Ici on parle de nationalisation, là de réforme agraire, bon, si l'Alliance pour le Progrès provoque cela, ce n'est pas mauvais, cela va dans le sens des aspirations populaires.

« Lorsque je pense qu'entre les États-Unis et nous, du temps d'Eisenhower, ou plutôt de Nixon, tout a commencé lorsque nous avons décrété une réforme agraire qui ne visait, écoutez bien cela, que les propriétaires de plus de 200 000 hectares ! Mais qui ? 200 000 ! Mais alors la réaction des frustes avait été terrible. Aujourd'hui, pour les autres, et parce qu'on agit l'épouvantail communiste, la réaction des frustes américains est en apparence plus ha-



FIDEL CASTRO.  
« C'est le rapport d'Aboubeil ».

ble. Ils vont choisir des hommes de paille, pour gouverner indirectement. Mais les difficultés vont commencer.

« C'est pourquoi les bonnes idées de Kennedy ne pourront rien donner. C'est très facile à comprendre et lui, en ce moment, il doit s'en apercevoir, parce que je vous l'ai dit, c'est un homme réaliste : depuis des années et des années, la politique américaine, c'est-à-dire non pas le gouvernement, mais les trusts et le Pentagone, s'appuie en Amérique latine sur des oligarchies. Le prestige, les dollars, la puissance passent par les mains d'une classe dont Kennedy lui-même vous a dit ce qu'elle était en parlant de Batista.

« Tout d'un coup, un président arrive qui prétend s'appuyer sur une autre classe (qui n'avait entre les mains aucun des leviers de commande) pour que les peuples aient l'impression que les États-Unis s'appuient plus les dictateurs et que l'on a plus besoin de faire des révolutions à la Castro.

« Qu'est-ce qui se passe alors ? Les trusts voient leurs intérêts compromis (à peine, mais tout de même), le Pentagone pense que les bases stratégiques sont en danger, les oligarchies puissantes de tous les pays d'Amérique latine alertent leurs amis américains, elles sabotent la nouvelle politique, bref Kennedy a tout le monde contre lui. Sur place, les quelques présidents libéraux, ou prétendus tels, que l'on a choisis comme instruments de la nouvelle politique,

ou bien vont balayer comme Bush à Saint-Domingue, ou bien se transférer, détachés, à Cuba pas un Batista, si l'est devenu ?

Je devrais à Castro où est l'issue ? comment la situation peut-elle évoluer ?

« Même si les États-Unis utilisent contre vous ce que vous appelez l'aide du communisme, il reste que vous avez rompu le communisme, que votre économie et votre défense ou votre sécurité dépendent de l'Union Soviétique, et que, même si vous n'y êtes pour rien, les États-Unis considèrent que vous faites partie d'une stratégie internationale, que vous constituez une base soviétique dans un monde où le paix dépend du respect d'un partage facile des zones.

« Si les États-Unis posent le problème comme vous l'avez posé, alors, franchement, c'est vrai, il n'y a pas d'issue. Mais qui est perdant ? A la fin du compte ? On a tout essayé contre nous, tout, absolument tout, et nous vivons encore, de mieux en mieux. Nous sommes debout, et nous allons fêter avec un état plus grand que d'habitude, la 1<sup>re</sup> janvier 1964, le cinquième anniversaire de la Révolution cubaine. La politique d'isolement des États-Unis est chaque jour moins efficace.

### Ni dollars ni banquiers

« Je viens de vous parler en révolutionnaire cubain. Mais si j'ai dû vous parler comme un homme amoureux de la paix et qui considère que les États-Unis sont un pays trop important pour ne pas influencer la paix dans le monde, alors, évidemment, je ne peux pas m'empêcher d'espérer qu'il se trouve un homme en Amérique du Nord, un homme pour braver l'impopularité, lutter contre les trusts, dire la vérité et surtout lâcher les papiers, agir comme ils l'entendent.

« Je ne demande qu'une chose : ni des dollars, ni une aide, ni des diplomates, ni des banquiers, ni des militaires, rien sauf la paix, qu'on nous accepte tels que nous sommes. Nous, nous sommes socialistes, les États-Unis sont capitalistes, les pays d'Amérique latine choisiront ce qu'ils voudront. Tout de même, à l'époque où les États-Unis vendent du blé aux Russes, où le Canada approvisionne la Chine, où de Gaulle respecte Ben Bella, pourquoi serait-il impossible de faire comprendre aux Américains que le socialisme conduit pour eux non pas à l'hostilité, mais à la coexistence. Pourquoi ne serais-je pas Tito ou Sekou Touré ?

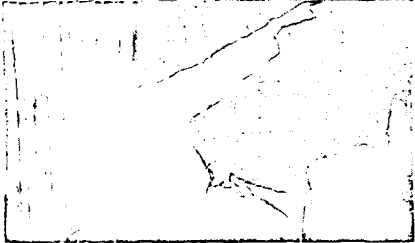
« Vraiment, je crois qu'un homme comme Kennedy peut découvrir que l'intérêt des États-Unis n'est pas de poursuivre une politique qui ne mène qu'à des échecs. Avec nous, sur la base du respect réciproque des souverainetés, tout peut se normaliser.

Fidel Castro s'est levé et m'a dit encore, pour conclure : « Puisque vous allez revoir Kennedy, soyez un messager de paix. Je précise bien, je ne veux rien, j'attends rien et, comme révolutionnaire, la situation actuelle se me déplaît pas. Mais comme homme, comme homme d'État, j'ai le devoir d'indiquer où peuvent être les bases d'une bonne entente.

« Deux jours après, Kennedy était assassiné. J'ai revu Fidel Castro. Il était bouleversé.

JEAN DANIEL.

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« Pourquoi ne serais-je pas Tito ou Sekou Touré ? »

Dec. 7, 1963 *New Republic*

# When Castro Heard the News

Havana

It was around 1:30 in the afternoon, Cuban time. We were having lunch in the living room of the modest summer residence which Fidel Castro owns on magnificent Varadero Beach, 120 kilometers from Havana. For at least the tenth time, I was questioning the Cuban leader on details of the negotiations with Russia before the missile installations last year. The telephone rang, a secretary in guerrilla garb announced that Mr. Dorticós, President of the Cuban Republic, had an urgent communication for the Prime Minister. Fidel picked up the phone and I heard him say: "*Como? Un atentado?*" ("What's that? An attempted assassination?") He then turned to us to say that Kennedy had just been struck down in Dallas. Then he went back to the telephone and exclaimed in a loud voice "*Herido? Muy gravemente?*" ("Wounded? Very seriously?")

He came back, sat down, and repeated three times the words: "*Es una mala noticia.*" ("This is bad news.") He remained silent for a moment, awaiting another call with further news. He remarked while we waited that there was an alarmingly sizable lunatic fringe in American society and that this deed could equally well have been the work of a madman or of a terrorist. Perhaps a Vietnamese? Or a member of the Ku Klux Klan? The second call came through: it was hoped they would be able to announce that the United States President was still alive, that there was hope of saving him. Fidel Castro's immediate reaction was: "If they can, he is already re-elected." He pronounced these words with satisfaction.

This sentence was a sequel to a conversation we had held on a previous evening and which had turned into an all-night session. To be precise, it lasted from 10 in the evening until 4 in the morning. A good part of the talk revolved about the impressions I recounted to him of an interview which President Kennedy granted me this last October 24, and about Fidel Castro's reactions to these impressions. During this nocturnal discussion, Castro had delivered himself of a relentless indictment of US policy, adding that in the recent past Washington had had ample opportunity to normalize its relations with Cuba, but that instead it had tolerated a CIA program of training, equipping and organizing a counter-revolution. He had told me that he wasn't in the least fearful of his life, since danger was his natural milieu, and if he were to become a victim of the United States this would simply enhance his radius of influence in Latin America as well as throughout the socialist world. He was speaking, he said, from the viewpoint of the interests of peace in

both the American continents. To achieve this goal, a leader would have to arise in the United States capable of understanding the explosive realities of Latin America and of meeting them halfway. Then, suddenly, he had taken a less hostile tack: "Kennedy could still be this man. He still has the possibility of becoming, in the eyes of history, the greatest President of the United States, the leader who may at last understand that there can be coexistence between capitalists and socialists, even in the Americas. He would then be an even greater President than Lincoln. I know, for example, that for Khrushchev, Kennedy is a man you can talk with. I have gotten this impression from all my conversations with Khrushchev. Other leaders have assured me that to attain this goal, we must first await his re-election. Personally, I consider him responsible for everything, but I will say this: he has come to understand many things over the past few months; and then too, in the last analysis, I'm convinced that anyone else would be worse." Then Fidel had added with a broad and boyish grin: "If you see him again, you can tell him that I'm willing to declare Goldwater my friend if that will guarantee Kennedy's re-election!"

This conversation was held on November 19.

Now it was nearly 2 o'clock and we got up from the table and settled ourselves in front of a radio. Commandant Vallero, his physician, aide-de-camp, and intimate friend, was easily able to get the broadcasts from the NBC network in Miami. As the news came in, Vallero would translate it for Fidel: Kennedy wounded in the head; pursuit of the assassin; murder of a policeman; finally the fatal announcement: President Kennedy is dead. Then Fidel stood up and said to me: "Everything is changed. Everything is going to change. The United States occupies such a position in world affairs that the death of a President of that country affects millions of people in every corner of the globe. The cold war, relations with Russia, Latin America, Cuba, the Negro question . . . all will have to be rethought. I'll tell you one thing: at least Kennedy was an enemy to whom we had become accustomed. This is a serious matter, an extremely serious matter."

After the quarter-hour of silence observed by all the American radio stations, we once more tuned in on Miami; the silence had only been broken by a re-broadcasting of the American national anthem. Strange indeed was the impression made, on hearing this hymn ring out in the house of Fidel Castro, in the midst of a circle of worried faces. "Now," Fidel said, "they will have to find the assassin quickly, but very quickly,

otherwise, you watch and see, I know them, they will try to put the blame on us for this thing. But tell me, how many Presidents have been assassinated? Four? This is most disturbing! In Cuba, only one has been assassinated. You know, when we were hiding out in the Sierra there were some (not in my group, in another) who wanted to kill Batista. They thought they could do away with a regime by decapitating it. I have always been violently opposed to such methods. First of all from the viewpoint of political self-interest, because so far as Cuba is concerned, if Batista had been killed he would have been replaced by some military figure who would have tried to make the revolutionists pay for the martyrdom of the dictator. But I was also opposed to it on personal grounds; assassination is repellent to me."

The broadcasts were now resumed. One reporter felt he should mention the difficulty Mrs. Kennedy was having in getting rid of her bloodstained stockings. Fidel exploded: "What sort of a mind is this!" He repeated the remark several times: "What sort of a mind is this? There is a difference in our civilizations after all. Are you like this in Europe? For us Latin Americans, death is a sacred matter; not only does it mark the close of hostilities, but it also imposes decency, dignity, respect. There are even street urchins who behave like kings in the face of death. Incidentally, this reminds me of something else: if you write all those things I told you yesterday against Kennedy's policy, don't use his name now; speak instead of the policy of the United States government."

Toward 5 o'clock, Fidel Castro declared that since there was nothing we could do to alter the tragedy, we must try to put our time to good use in spite of it. He wanted to accompany me in person on a visit to a *granja de pueblo* (state farm), where he had been engaging in some experiments. His present obsession is agriculture. He reads nothing but agronomical studies and reports. He dwells lyrically on the soil, fertilizers, and the possibilities which will give Cuba enough sugar cane by 1970 to achieve economic independence.

#### "Didn't I Tell You?"

We went by car, with the radio on. The Dallas police were now hot on the trail of the assassin. He is a Russian spy, says the news commentator. Five minutes later, correction: he is a spy married to a Russian. Fidel said: "There, didn't I tell you; it'll be my turn next." But not yet. The next word was: the assassin is a Marxist deserter. Then the word came through, in effect, that the assassin was a young man who was a member of the "Fair Play for Cuba Committee," that he was an admirer of Fidel Castro. Fidel declared: "If they had had proof, they would have said

he was an agent, an accomplice, a hired killer. In saying simply that he is an admirer, this is just to try and make an association in people's minds between the name of Castro and the emotion awakened by the assassination. This is a publicity method, a propaganda device. It's terrible. But you know, I'm sure this will all soon blow over. There are too many competing policies in the United States for any single one to be able to impose itself universally for very long."

We arrived at the *granja de pueblo*, where the farmers welcomed Fidel. At that very moment, a speaker announced over the radio that it was now known that the assassin is a "pro-Castro Marxist." One commentator followed another; the remarks became increasingly emotional, increasingly aggressive. Fidel then excused himself: "We shall have to give up the visit to the farm." We went on toward Matanzas from where he could telephone President Dorticós. On the way he had questions: "Who is Lyndon Johnson? What is his reputation? What were his relations with Kennedy? With Khrushchev? What was his position at the time of the attempted invasion of Cuba?" Finally and most important of all: "What authority does he exercise over the CIA?" Then abruptly he looked at his watch, saw that it would be half an hour before we reached Matanzas and, practically on the spot, he dropped off to sleep.

After Matanzas, where he must have decreed a state of alert, we returned to Varadero for dinner. Quoting the words spoken to him by a woman shortly before, he said to me that it was an irony of history for the Cubans, in the situation to which they had been reduced by the blockade, to have to mourn the death of a President of the United States. "After all," he added, "there are perhaps some people in the world to whom this news is cause for rejoicing. The South Vietnamese guerrillas, for example, and also, I would imagine, Madame Nhu!"

I thought of the people of Cuba, accustomed to the sight of posters like the one depicting the Red Army with maquis superimposed in front, and the screaming captions "HALT, MR. KENNEDY! CUBA IS NOT ALONE. . . ." I thought of all those who had been led to associate their deprivations with the policies of President John F. Kennedy.

At dinner I was able to take up all my questions. What had motivated Castro to endanger the peace of the world with the missiles in Cuba? How dependent was Cuba on the Soviet Union? Is it not possible to envisage relations between Cuba and the United States along the same lines as those between Finland and the Russians? How was the transition made from the humanism of Sierra Maestra to the Marxism-Leninism of 1961? Fidel Castro, once more in top form, had an explanation for everything. Then he questioned me

DECEMBER 7, 1963

once more on Kennedy, and each time I eulogized the intellectual qualities of the assassinated President, I awakened the keenest interest in him.

The Cubans have lived with the United States in that cruel intimacy so familiar to me of the colonized with their colonizers. Nevertheless, it was an intimacy. In that very seductive city of Havana to which we returned in the evening, where the luminous signboards with Marxist slogans have replaced the Coca Cola and toothpaste billboards, in the midst of Soviet exhibits

and Czechoslovakian trucks, a certain American emotion vibrated in the atmosphere, compounded of resentment, of concern, of anxiety, yet also, in spite of everything, of a mysterious almost imperceptible rapprochement. After all, this American President was able to reach accord with our Russian friends during his lifetime, said a young Cuban intellectual to me as I was taking my leave. It was almost as though he were apologizing for not rejoicing at the assassination.

JEAN DANIEL

# Unofficial Envoy

## *An Historic Report from Two Capitals*

by Jean Daniel

*A recent trip to the United States, followed by a journey to Cuba, made it possible for me to establish a "dialogue" between the late President Kennedy and Prime Minister Fidel Castro. Since my arrival in Mexico, where this article is being written, I have been asked whether the impressions I derived from these interviews could shed any light on the assassination of the President and on future relations between Lyndon B. Johnson and Castro.*

*Last week in these pages I answered the first question by describing the relations of Fidel Castro, with whom I was visiting at the time, to John Kennedy's death. Here I shall explore the second question by reconstituting the Kennedy-Castro dialogue from the viewpoint of one who was a witness to it.*

THE AUTHOR

President Kennedy received me at the White House on Thursday, October 24. My appointment had been scheduled for 5:30. I waited in the Cabinet Conference Room, and at 5:45 the President, following his usual custom, came to look for me himself so that he could escort me into his office. He apologized for the delay, not so much as a courtesy or to flatter me, but to explain the scheduling of his time, which seemed to be very strictly organized. As we passed through the small room where his secretary was working, we caught a glimpse of Mrs. Kennedy leaving by a French window on her way to the private garden of the White House. The President called her back to introduce me.

It was still Indian summer in Washington. The weather was very warm, and both the President and Mrs. Kennedy were very lightly dressed, thus enhancing the impression of youth, charm, and simplicity which was in rather surprising contrast to the solemnity of entering these august chambers. The President (athletic looking in his well-tailored suit, speaking with quick, abrupt gestures and a mobile expression but, at times, freezing up and becoming disconcertingly, almost, I would say, completely expressionless) invited me to be seated on the semi-circular sofa which was in the middle of his office. He sat in a rocking chair opposite the sofa. The interview was to last from 20 to 25 minutes, and it was interrupted only by a brief telephone call.

The President immediately asked me how the French situation was developing. After my reply, he spoke about General de Gaulle. He talked in a relaxed fashion,

like someone who has at last found solace in indifference after having long been exasperated and fascinated. John Kennedy was a man who liked to get to the heart of a matter quickly, and make decisions even more rapidly. But this was not possible in dealing with de Gaulle, who is more difficult to handle than Khrushchev. One day, impatient at not understanding the General's reasoning and intent upon convincing him, Kennedy telephoned de Gaulle direct. All in vain. Oddly enough, however, since the recent visit of de Gaulle's foreign minister, Couve de Murville, to Washington Mr. Kennedy had ceased to be so deeply concerned about Franco-American relations. The truth is, he had made up his mind not to worry about them any more. According to him, it was a waste of time.

"Mr. Couve de Murville and I both verified that we didn't agree on anything," the President told me. "And we agreed that such total disagreement was hardly calculated to create a flourishing friendship between two great Western nations. I came to the conclusion that General de Gaulle's strategy, which is rather incomprehensible to me, requires a certain amount of tension with the United States. It would seem that only through this tension is it possible to restore to Europe the desire to think for itself and renounce its torpid dependence on American dollar aid and political guidance!"

President Kennedy went on to sum up, with conciseness and vigor, the points of disagreement between the United States and France. On the subject of Germany, nuclear policy, Europe, the idea of "independence," he told me what has since become public

knowledge. He added, however, that France had a strange way of manifesting its independence, particularly, for example, on the subject of Vietnam and Cuba. It seemed ironic and irritating to him that the French Chief Executive was apparently bent on telling him how the United States should proceed, without assuming any risks himself. He told me that no one was more appreciative than he of advice, information, and even criticism; but that these were all the more valued if the friends proffering them were themselves committed to a program of action.

I then asked Mr. Kennedy what could be expected from General de Gaulle's proposed visit to the United States next February. He replied: "Absolutely nothing." But he followed this up immediately and with a broad grin, as though savoring in advance the pleasure of the impending meeting: "It will be exciting, just the same. General de Gaulle is an historic figure; he is decidedly the strangest great man of our time."

#### *Relations with Cuba*

Taking the initiative at this point, I brought up the subject of Vietnam and Cuba, saying that the Gaullists were not the only ones in France who deplored certain mistaken US policies. I pointed out that the first time I had the opportunity of meeting John Kennedy, he was a Senator and had just made a resounding speech on the subject of Algeria. Had the ideas set forth in that speech been faithfully applied in Saigon and Havana? Here my notes are very specific, and I shall let the late President speak through them:

"We haven't enough time to talk about Vietnam, but I'd like to talk to you about Cuba. Incidentally, our conversation will be much more interesting when you return, because Ben Bradlee [of *Newsweek*] tells me you are on your way to Cuba now.

"Every now and then I read articles in the European press pointing out that we Americans were blind to what was happening in the Cuban situation. I have just learned that General de Gaulle himself regarded Communism in Cuba as nothing but the accidental and temporary form of a will to independence from the United States. Of course it is very easy to understand this 'will to independence' around President de Gaulle."

John Kennedy then mustered all his persuasive force. He punctuated each sentence with that brief, mechanical gesture which had become famous:

"I tell you this: we know perfectly what happened in Cuba, to the misfortune of all. From the beginning I personally followed the development of these events with mounting concern. There are few subjects to which I have devoted more painstaking attention. My conclusions go much further than the European analyses. Here is what I believe.

"I believe that there is no country in the world, including all the African regions, including any and all the countries under colonial domination, where economic colonization, humiliation and exploitation were worse than in Cuba, in part owing to my country's policies during the Batista regime. I believe that we created, built and manufactured the Castro movement out of whole cloth and without realizing it. I believe that the accumulation of these mistakes has jeopardized all of Latin America. The great aim of the Alliance for Progress is to reverse this unfortunate policy. This is one of the most, if not *the most*, important problems in American foreign policy. I can assure you that I have understood the Cubans. I approved the proclamation which Fidel Castro made in the Sierra Maestra, when he justifiably called for justice and especially yearned to rid Cuba of corruption. I will go even further: to some extent it is as though Batista was the incarnation of a number of sins on the part of the United States. Now we shall have to pay for those sins. In the matter of the Batista regime, I am in agreement with the first Cuban revolutionaries. That is perfectly clear."

After a silence during which he was able to note my surprise and my interest, the President continued: "But it is also clear that the problem has ceased to be a Cuban one, and has become international – that is, it has become a Soviet problem. I am the President of the United States and not a sociologist; I am the President of a free nation which has certain responsibilities in the Free World. I know that Castro betrayed the promises made in the Sierra Maestra, and that he has agreed to be a Soviet agent in Latin America. I know that through his fault – either his 'will to independence', his madness or Communism – the world was on the verge of nuclear war in October, 1962. The Russians understood this very well, at least after our reaction; but so far as Fidel Castro is concerned, I must say I don't know whether he realizes this, or even if he cares about it." A smile, then: "You can tell me whether he does when you come back. In any case, the nations of Latin America are not going to attain justice and progress that way, I mean through Communist subversion. They won't get there by going from economic oppression to a Marxist dictatorship which Castro himself denounced a few years ago. The United States now has the possibility of doing as much good in Latin America as it has done wrong in the past; I would even say that we alone have this power – on the essential condition that Communism does not take over there."

Mr. Kennedy then rose to indicate that the interview was over. I apologized for keeping him to ask two quick questions. The first: Could the United States tolerate economic collectivism? He answered: "What about Sekou Touré? And Tito? I received Marshal Tito three days ago, and our discussions were most posi-



DECEMBER 14, 1963

tive." Second question: What does the American government expect to gain from the blockade? Is the economic isolation of Cuba a punishment or a political maneuver?

Kennedy's reply: "Are you suggesting that the political effectiveness of the blockade is uncertain [smile]? You will see when you go to Cuba whether it is or not. In any case, we can't let Communist subversion win in the other Latin American countries. Two dikes are needed to contain Soviet expansion: the blockade on the one hand, a tremendous effort toward progress on the other. This is the problem in a nutshell. Both battles are equally difficult." (Silence.) Then, a last comment: "The continuation of the blockade depends on the continuation of subversive activities."

The interview was over. I did not really wish to suggest anything, since I had never been to Cuba and, on the other hand, I had heard from all sides tales of the privations the Cuban people were suffering owing to their isolated economic situation. But I could see plainly that John Kennedy had doubts, and was seeking a way out.

That same evening I recounted this conversation in detail to an American colleague – an intimate friend of President Kennedy, through whom I had obtained this interview – and to the editor of *The New Republic*. Both my confidants, who knew the President a thousand times better than I, agreed that John F. Kennedy had never before expressed himself so specifically and with such feeling on his understanding of the first phase of the Castro revolution. They hesitated to draw any political conclusions from his remarks. However, they were not surprised at Kennedy's invitation to come and see him again when I returned from Cuba.

In effect, John Kennedy displayed two basic characteristics in his exercise of power: first, an overwhelming degree of empiricism and realism. A man without a particular doctrine, he reacted decisively to events, and only to events. Nothing but the shock of collision with a problem was sufficient to make him come to a decision, and because of this, his decisions were unpredictable. At that point he had a consuming need for information, and this need had increased a great deal since experience had taught him not to rely solely on official channels.

After this, I went to Havana.

#### Night Session

In the "Pearl of the Antilles, rum-perfumed and steeped in triumphant sensuality," as Cuba is described in those American tourist folders still lying about in the hotels of Havana, I spent three closely packed and intensive weeks, but thinking all along that I would never get to meet with Fidel Castro. I talked with farm-

ers, writers and painters, militants and counter-revolutionaries, ministers and ambassadors – but Fidel remained inaccessible. I had been warned: he was snowed under with work; as a result of the hurricane, the Cuban government had been obliged to revise its whole planning program; and then, above all, he no longer had any desire to receive any journalists, least of all Western newsmen. I had practically given up hope when, on the evening of what I thought was to be my departure date (the capricious plane which links Havana with Mexico happily did not leave the next day after all), Fidel came to my hotel. He had heard of my interview with the President. We went up to my room at 10 in the evening and did not leave until 4 in the following morning. Here, I shall only recount that part of that interview which constitutes a reply to John F. Kennedy's remarks.

Fidel listened with devouring and passionate interest: he pulled at his beard, yanked his parachutist's beret down over his eyes, adjusted his maqui tunic, all the while making me the target of a thousand malicious sparks cast by his deep-sunk, lively eyes. At one point I felt as though I were playing the role of that partner with whom he had as strong a desire to confer as to do battle; as though I myself were in a small way that intimate enemy in the White House whom Khrushchev described to Fidel as someone with whom "it is possible to talk." Three times he had me repeat certain remarks, particularly those in which Kennedy expressed his criticism of the Batista regime, those in which Kennedy showed his impatience with the comments attributed to General de Gaulle, and lastly those in which Kennedy accused Fidel of having almost caused a war fatal to all humanity.

When I stopped talking, I expected an explosion. Instead, I was treated to a lengthy silence and, at the end of that silence, to a calm, composed, often humorous, always thoughtful exposition. I don't know whether Fidel has changed, or whether these cartoons caricaturing him as a ranting madman which appear in the Western press perhaps correspond to a former reality. I only know that at no time during the two complete days I spent with him (and during which a great deal happened), did Castro abandon his composure and poise. Here too, I shall let Castro speak for himself, reserving only the possibility of correcting certain judgments on these two political leaders based on my own experiences in Cuba.

"I believe Kennedy is sincere," Fidel declared. "I also believe that today the expression of this sincerity could have political significance. I'll explain what I mean. I haven't forgotten that Kennedy centered his electoral campaign against Nixon on the theme of firmness toward Cuba. I have not forgotten the Machiavellian tactics and the equivocation, the attempts at

invasion, the pressures, the blackmail, the organization of a counter-revolution, the blockade and, above everything, all the retaliatory measures which were imposed before, long before there was the pretext and alibi of Communism. But I feel that he inherited a difficult situation; I don't think a President of the United States is ever really free, and I believe Kennedy is at present feeling the impact of this lack of freedom. I also believe he now understands the extent to which he has been misled, especially, for example, on Cuban reaction at the time of the attempted Bay of Pigs invasion. I also think he is a realist: he is now registering that it is impossible to simply wave a wand and cause us, and the explosive situation throughout Latin America, to disappear.

### *Why the Missiles Were Installed*

"There is one point on which I want to give you new information right now. I have refrained from doing this until now; but today an attempt is being made to frighten all mankind by propagating the idea that Cuba, and in particular I, might provoke a nuclear war, so I feel the world should know the true story of the missile emplacement.

"Six months before these missiles were installed in Cuba, we had received an accumulation of information warning us that a new invasion of the island was being prepared under sponsorship of the Central Intelligence Agency, whose administrators were humiliated by the Bay of Pigs disaster and by the spectacle of being ridiculed in the eyes of the world and berated in US government circles. We also knew that the Pentagon was vesting the CIA preparations with the mantle of its authority, but we had doubts as to the attitude of the President. There were those among our informants who even thought it would suffice to alert the President and give him cause for concern in order to arrest these preparations. Then one day Khrushchev's son-in-law, Adzhubei, came to pay us a visit before going on to Washington at the invitation of Kennedy's associates. Immediately upon arriving in Washington, Adzhubei had been received by the American Chief Executive, and their talk centered particularly on Cuba. A week after this interview, we received in Havana a copy of Adzhubei's report to Khrushchev. It was this report which triggered the whole situation.

"What did Kennedy say to Adzhubei? Now listen to this carefully, for it is very important: he had said that the new situation in Cuba was intolerable for the United States, that the American government *had decided it would not tolerate it any longer*; he had said that peaceful coexistence was seriously compromised by the fact that 'Soviet influences' in Cuba altered the balance of strength, was destroying the equilibrium agreed

upon and [at this point Castro emphasized his statement by pronouncing each syllable separately] *Kennedy reminded the Russians that the United States had not intervened in Hungary, which was obviously a way of demanding Russian non-intervention in the event of a possible invasion. To be sure, the actual word 'invasion' was not mentioned and Adzhubei, at the time, lacking any background information, could not draw the same conclusions as we did. But when we communicated to Khrushchev all our previous information, the Russians too began to interpret the Kennedy-Adzhubei conversation as we saw it and they went to the source of our information. By the end of a month, the Russian and Cuban governments had reached the definite conviction that an invasion might take place from one moment to the next. This is the truth.*

"What was to be done? How could we prevent the invasion? We found that Khrushchev was concerned about the same things that were worrying us. He asked us what we wanted. We replied *do whatever is needed to convince the United States that any attack on Cuba is the same as an attack on the Soviet Union. And how to realize this objective?* In our thinking and discussions revolved around that point. We thought of a proclamation, an alliance, conventional military aid. The Russians explained to us that their concern was twofold: first, they wanted to save the Cuban revolution (in other words, their socialist honor in the eyes of the world), and at the same time they wished to avoid a world conflict. They reasoned that if conventional military aid was the extent of their assistance, the United States might not hesitate to instigate an invasion, in which case Russia would retaliate and this would inevitably touch off a world war."

At this point I interrupted to ask how Cuba could have been absolutely certain of Soviet intervention. After all, I said, Stalin certainly "let down" Markos, the Chief of the Greek Communist Resistance, because such help would have conflicted with prevailing zones of influence.

"I know," Castro replied, "but the two situations cannot be compared." Then he continued:

"Russia was much too deeply committed to us. Moreover, since then we have had every proof of the immense solidarity of the Soviet people and its leaders. You can see for yourself how clearly this solidarity is manifest here. Then there is something else, specifically apropos of Stalin. When I was in the USSR and others, outside Russia, were reproaching Khrushchev for taking a more conciliatory stand than Stalin toward the capitalists, Khrushchev confided to me several examples, which I will not repeat to you, illustrating the prudence, even the abdication of Stalin. He told me – and I believe him – that Stalin would never have emplaced missiles in Cuba.

DECEMBER 14, 1963

"It is true that it was said then by other factions that the real reason for installing the missiles was because certain internal problems were driving the Russians to use us to provoke the United States. I am here to tell you that the Russians didn't want and do not today want war. One only need visit them on their home territory, watch them at work, share their economic concerns, admire their intense efforts to raise the workers' standard of living, to understand right away that they are far, very far, from any idea of provocation or domination. However, Soviet Russia was confronted by two alternatives: an absolutely inevitable war (because of their commitments and their position in the socialist world), if the Cuban revolution was attacked; or the risk of a war if the United States, refusing to retreat before the missiles, would not give up the attempt to destroy Cuba. They chose socialist solidarity and the risk of war.

"Under these circumstances, how could we Cubans have refused to share the risks taken to save us? It was, in the final analysis, a question of honor, don't you agree? Don't you believe that honor plays a role in politics? You think we are romantics, don't you? Perhaps we are. And why not? In any event, we are militants. In a word, then, we agreed to the emplacement of the missiles. And I might add here that for us Cubans it didn't really make so much difference whether we died by conventional bombing or a hydrogen bomb. Nevertheless, we were not gambling with the peace of the world. The United States was the one to jeopardize the peace of mankind by using the threat of war to stifle revolutions.

"And so in June, 1962, my brother Raoul and Che Guevara went to Moscow to discuss ways and means of installing the missiles. The convoy arrived by sea in three weeks. The United States was able to find out that weapons were being shipped in, of course; but it took them two months to discover that these weapons were guided missiles. Two months . . . in other words, longer than we had calculated. Because, of course, we were seeking intimidation, not aggression."

#### *Alliance for Progress*

The conversation now turned to the Alliance for Progress. "In a way," Castro said, "it was a good idea, it marked progress of a sort. Even if it can be said that it was overdue, timid, conceived on the spur of the moment, under constraint . . . despite all that I am willing to agree that the idea in itself constituted an effort to adapt to the extraordinarily rapid course of events in Latin America. Such as, for example, what we read in the papers this morning—did you see the news? That Argentina is nationalizing the oil industry? The Argentine government! Do you realize what that means? This

will cause more commotion on the New York stock exchange than Castroism! The Catholic and military conservatives of Argentina, the factions most closely linked with American interests! There is talk of nationalization of industries there, of agrarian reform there . . . well and good! If the Alliance for Progress provokes these developments, then it's not doing so badly; all these things are consonant with the aspirations of the people. I can look back to the days of Eisenhower, or rather of Nixon, and recall the furore which broke out when the United States and Cuba together decreed an agrarian reform which was to apply, mark this well, only to landowners of over 200,000 hectares! Yes, 200,000! Yet the reaction of the trusts was terrible at that time. Nowadays, in the other Latin American countries, because the Communist banner is used as a bogeyman, the reaction of the American trusts is shrewder. They are going to choose strawmen, so as to rule indirectly. But there will be difficulties.

"This is why Kennedy's good ideas aren't going to yield any results. It is very easy to understand and at this point he surely is aware of this because, as I told you, he is a realist. For years and years American policy—not the government, but the trusts and the Pentagon—has supported the Latin American oligarchies. All the prestige, the dollars, and the power was held by a class which Kennedy himself has described in speaking of Batista. Suddenly a President arrives on the scene who tries to support the interests of another class (which has no access to any of the levers of power) to give the various Latin American countries the impression that the United States no longer stands behind the dictators, and so there is no more need to start Castro-type revolutions. What happens then? The trusts see that their interests are being a little compromised (just barely, but still compromised); the Pentagon thinks the strategic bases are in danger; the powerful oligarchies in all the Latin American countries alert their American friends; they sabotage the new policy; and in short, Kennedy has everyone against him. The few liberal or allegedly liberal presidents who were chosen as instruments of the new policy are swept out of office, like Bosch in Santo Domingo, or else they are transformed. Betancourt, for example, was not a Batista; now he has become one.

"In view of all these things, how can the American government seriously believe that Cuban subversion is at the root of explosions taking place all over the South American continent? In Venezuela, for example, are you familiar with the situation there? Do you think the Venezuelans need us to understand what's going on in their country? Do you think we don't have enough problems of our own? Right now I ask only one thing: Leave us in peace to better our country's economic situation, to put our planning into effect, to

educate our young *compañeros*. This doesn't mean we do not feel solidarity toward nations that are struggling and suffering, like the Venezuelan people. But it is up to those nations to decide what they want, and if they choose other regimes than ours, this isn't our business."

*"We Have Always Lived with Danger"*

I asked Fidel where is this all going to end? How will the situation develop? Even if the United States uses against you what you call the alibi of Communism, it still remains true that you have chosen Communism, that your economy and your security depend on the Soviet Union, and that even if you have no ulterior motives in this association, still the United States considers that you are part of an international strategy, that you constitute a Soviet base in a world where peace depends on mutual respect for a tacit division of zones of influence.

"I don't want to discuss our ties with the Soviet Union," Fidel Castro cut me short. "I find this indecent. We have none but feelings of fraternity and profound, total gratitude toward the USSR. The Russians are making extraordinary efforts on our behalf, efforts which sometimes cost them dear. But we have our own policies which are perhaps not always the same (we have proved this!) as those of the USSR. I refuse to dwell on this point, because asking me to say that I am not a pawn on the Soviet chessboard is something like asking a woman to shout aloud in the public square that she is not a prostitute.

"If the United States sees the problem as you have posed it, then you are right, there is no way out. But who is the loser in the last analysis? They have tried everything against us, everything, absolutely everything, and we are still alive and getting better day by day; we are still standing upright, and we plan to celebrate with greater festivities than usual, on January 1, 1964, the fifth anniversary of the Cuban Revolution! The United States' policy of isolating us economically is less effective with each passing day; we are increasing our trade with the rest of the world. Even with Spain! We have just sold a shipment of 300,000 tons of sugar to the Spaniards. Far from discouraging us, the blockade is maintaining the revolutionary atmosphere we need to stiffen the country's backbone. Are we in danger? We have always lived with danger. To say nothing of the fact that you have no idea how many friends one discovers in the world when one is persecuted by the United States. No, truly, for all these reasons, we are not suppliants, we ask nothing. I'll tell you something else: since the rupture and the blockade, we have forgotten the United States. We feel neither hatred nor resentment any more, we simply don't think about the US. When I think of the problems

which diplomatic relations with the United States would pose! The Swiss Ambassador is representing the US at present. I prefer to do business with him than with 200 members of an Embassy among whom surely some spies would be spotted.

"I have just talked to you as a Cuban revolutionary. But I should also speak to you as a peace lover, and from this viewpoint I believe the United States is too important a country not to have an influence on world peace. I cannot help hoping, therefore, that a leader will come to the fore in North America (why not Kennedy, there are things in his favor!), who will be willing to brave unpopularity, fight the trusts, tell the truth and, most important, let the various nations act as they see fit. I ask nothing: neither dollars, nor assistance, nor diplomats, nor bankers, nor military men—nothing but peace, and to be accepted as we are! We are socialists, the United States is a capitalist nation, the Latin American countries will choose what they want. All the same, at a time when the United States is selling wheat to the Russians, Canada is trading with China, de Gaulle respects Ben Bella, why should it be impossible to make the Americans understand that socialism leads, not to hostility toward them, but to co-existence? Why am I not Tito or Sekou Touré? Because the Russians have never done us any injury such as the Yugoslavians and the Guineans have complained of in the past, and because the Americans have never given us any of the benefits for which these two nations congratulate themselves today.

"As to this matter of fearing Soviet intentions in Latin America through Cuba's subversive activities, this is just attributing to others one's own desire to dominate. You said yourself just a little while ago that the Russians have had enough of their Cuban involvement. Economically this is obvious. This is why, speaking from a military viewpoint, it is better not to force nations to turn to the Russians for help. Really, it seems to me that a man like Kennedy is capable of seeing that it is not in the United States' interest to pursue a policy which can lead only to a stalemate. So far as we are concerned, everything can be restored to normalcy on the basis of mutual respect of sovereignty."

In conclusion, Fidel Castro said to me: "Since you are going to see Kennedy again, be an emissary of peace, despite everything. I want to make myself clear: I don't want anything, I don't expect anything, and as a revolutionary the present situation does not displease me. But as a man and as a statesman, it is my duty to indicate what the bases for understanding could be."

All this was said two days before President Kennedy's death.

Mr. STANDARD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman STOKES. Because of the lateness of the hour, it will be the plan of the committee to make the presentation tomorrow morning of the interview with President Fidel Castro in Cuba. For that reason I would like to make some other remarks at this time.

This committee made two trips to Cuba, one on March 30, which extended from the 30th of March to the 4th of April. The second trip was from August 24 to August 29. Prior to going to Cuba on both occasions, it required a great deal of preparation and a great deal of contact between this committee and the Cuban Interest Section in the Cuban Government.

I want to acknowledge the presence here today at the witness table of one of the gentlemen who was extremely helpful and cooperative to this committee in terms of both of those trips, Senor Ricardo Escartin, who is the Consul and the First Secretary of the Cuban Interest Section. It was necessary for Mr. Escartin and other members of the Cuban Interest Section to meet with me on many occasions and also with Professor Blakey and members of this staff. We spent a great deal of time and received a great deal of cooperation from him on every occasion.

Also, in Cuba, Senor Senen Buergo, the American Department of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was extremely helpful and cooperative with this committee.

I also want to acknowledge the presence here at the witness table today of another gentleman who was extremely cooperative with us, and that was Senor Felipe Villa, Captain of the Ministry of the Interior, and during the course of both of our trips he extended a great deal of cooperation and help and assistance to this committee.

I would like also to mention two very talented and able Cuban translators who were extremely helpful to us, Ms. Juanita Vera Nellie and Ruiz de Sarade.

Others who gave cooperation and hospitality to this committee were Dr. Mondo Torres Santrail, the Minister of Justice; Oscar Fernandez Mel, the mayor of Havana; Jose Raimond Fernandez, Minister of Education, all of whom were extremely helpful and hospitable to us on our stay in Cuba.

In addition, we want to express our deep appreciation to President Fidel Castro. On the first trip we made to Cuba, President Castro spent in excess of 4 hours being interviewed by the chairman of this committee and other members of the committee and staff. The entire transcript will be put into the record at some point tomorrow.

During that period of time, the President made it very clear that it was the purpose of the Cuban Government to make it very clear that their government had nothing to do whatsoever with this very tragic occurrence in this country. It was the intent of their government to do everything possible to cooperate and see that the Cuban Government did everything in its power to clear up whatever it could around a tragedy of this type.

So we are indeed grateful for the kind of cooperation that this congressional committee has received, and we want to thank each of you gentlemen for the assistance you have given us in this very important matter.

If there is nothing further at this time, I might also say that we are once again indebted to the U.S. Marshall Service for the security arrangements here around the distinguished witnesses who have appeared here today.

We also would like to thank the interpreter from the State Department, Mr. Hervas, for a very efficient job he has done here today.

At this time the Chair will request that everyone remain seated until our witnesses have departed from the hearing room. Thereafter, we will adjourn these hearings until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Thank you, gentlemen. You are excused.

[Whereupon, at 4:22 p.m., the committee recessed, to reconvene at 9 a.m., Tuesday, September 19, 1978.]