

Discussion of Khrushchev's Letter to Castro

by E. Martin Schotz

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Dear Vince,

I have finally purchased Chang and Kornbluh, [The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: A National Security Archive Documents Reader](#), and early this morning re-read *in toto* Khrushchev's long letter to Castro of January 31, 1963. I think this it is very important. For one thing it is apparent that Khrushchev is trying to clarify for Castro the emerging rift between the Soviets and the Chinese, and the significance of this rift for the struggle for socialism and peace. . . . Here there is a clear split in the socialist camp between the cautious Soviets who believe that the triumph of socialism hinges on peaceful co-existence and China which is advocating a militaristic warmongering line "against" the U.S. as well as the U.S.S.R. From Khrushchev's point of view, the Chinese position amounts to nothing more than slogans, slogans which verbally oppose imperialism, but objectively cause it no problem. The clear implication of the letter is that as far as the Soviets are concerned there is already at this point an emerging alliance between U.S. imperialism and Chinese communism.

What Castro said in [his speech of 11/23/63](#) about the split in Washington parallels a split between the U.S.S.R. and China which Khrushchev is talking about . . . There are forces for war which wish to push the world along the lines of confrontation in order to selfishly achieve as much as possible with threats and weapons, and there are the forces of peaceful coexistence and moderation which are taking a different tack. On one side are the right wing in the U.S., including Dulles, Nixon, Kissinger, et al. . . . in alliance with the Chinese leadership including Mao. On the other side there are the Soviets and Kennedy and the more moderate side of imperialism which he represented. Khrushchev . . . cautions Castro not to be taken in by the Chinese, because the extreme "right" and the extreme "left" are destined to make common cause.

The other point to note is Khrushchev's view that the Cuban Missile Crisis was a watershed event which had changed the relations between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. and opened the way for the possibility of peaceful coexistence.

You can see from this the perilous balance of correlated forces which existed within the capitalist camp as well as within the socialist camp in 1963 and how the removal of Kennedy, the cancellation of his policy on Cuba, and the cancellation of movement on [McCloy/Zorin](#) had to bolster the emerging alliance of the Chinese leadership and the U.S. ultra-right, thus making the escalation of the Vietnam war inevitable.

And of course even today, the U.S. and China are still supporting Pol Pot. So you see what a devastating blow to the balance of forces and progress Kennedy's assassination was. Again, forget about the secret memos and secret presidential orders and Chomsky's nonsense about the internal

record. It is not simply Kennedy as a personality that is at work here; it is Kennedy as a representative of certain forces within capitalism who are coming to recognize an interest in an alliance against a dangerous foe, the ultra-right of capitalism and the ultra-left of socialism. Kennedy was a representative of moderation who held the power to do something about it. And as Castro points out, with the removal of Kennedy the vacuum in civilian authority in Washington had to tip the balance to the ultra-right.