

INTERVIEW WITH SENATOR HICKENLOOPER
for
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1961

- Anncr: Senator Humphrey, could we clear one thing out of the way first. Is there any question over American invasion of Castro's Cuba?
- Humphrey: None whatsoever. Of course this has been a figment of Castro's imagination and a carefully designed propaganda effort on his part. The American people are not aggressors against anyone.
- Anncr: Senator Hickenlooper, what do you say to that?
- Hickenlooper: Well I think I agree thoroughly. There is no possibility of an invasion or an aggression against Cuba from a physical standpoint. It is a part of the propaganda smokescreen that Mr. Castro is attempting to use to whip up his people into fear.
- Anncr: Could I then ask you about reports which have appeared in very reliable American newspapers that the Americans are helping to train outside the United the States, possibly in Guatemala, invasion forces to overthrow Castro. What do you say to that?
- Hickenlooper: I think that those reports have been greatly misunderstood. American military missions in various countries in Latin America have for a long time, at the request of those countries themselves, been training their own internal security troops, assisting with the training and its under the treaty and agreement authority.
- Anncr: What do you think of that Senator Humphrey?
- Humphrey: Well I would say that our government has of course ^{responded} ~~the-responsibility~~ to the request as Senator Hickenlooper has said, of other countries for help in terms of their own internal military or security establishment and there may be private individuals in the United States who are aiding Cubans who feel -- Cuban exiles -- who feel that they would like to return to the mainland. But let us make it crystal clear. The government of the United States, the expressed responsible agencies of this government are not engaged in the preparation of aggressive maneuvers or aggressive tactics or any forces of aggression.
- Anncr: Well, now, let me put this to you. If that is so, does that mean that the United States is going to have to come to terms with Castro and his government, just as Britian had to come to terms with Nasser. Mr. Hickenlooper.

Hickenlooper: I don't think so. I think that the solution of this problem in Cuba probably rests in two broad areas. One is the complete disillusionment, eventually and it is coming very rapidly, of the Cuban people themselves,, that is, the working people in Cuba, the people who hoped for some reform but are bitterly disillusioned and disappointed now. That is their own revolt in one way or another against the Castro regime. And secondly through the coordinated and strong action of the Organization of American states.

Anncr: What do you mean by coordinated and strong action?

Hickenlooper: Well we have some 20 American states that are moving more toward united action of one kind or another. In other words, presenting a united front against this threat in the Caribbean, but that should come through the official action and the official cooperation of the Organization of the American States representing the various countries

Anncr: Senator Humphrey, what do you have to say about that, in particular this suggestion of strong action by the American States?

Humphrey: I do think its to the advantage of the whole world and surely to the cause of peace and justice to have the Organization of American States strengthened. I do not want to see the United States of America take unilateral action. I believe in light of our regional interest and regional solidarity here in the Western hemisphere that the Organization of American States is the proper instrument through which economic or any type of action ought to be taken.

Let me just add this: I think that one of the points that we need to make crystal clear to the people of Cuba is that American policy does not call for the restoration of conditions pre-~~Cuba~~ (Anncr - Bastisa) Yes, or any or any or all /Castro before Bastisa. I think we ought to make it very clear that we are perfectly willing to see the Cubans, and would like to aid them in strengthening their economy -- right now there is a good deal of central planning in Cuba for example -- there is nationalization of certain industries -- this is their business even though it was done, may I say it was done in a rather illegal manner as far as I can see.

We are not trying to seek to foist back on the Cuban people a reaction and dictatorship. We ought to make it clear to the whole world and in particularly the Latin American world, that we want to see the lot of the average human being improved. We are interested in education, in jobs, in a better agriculture, in land reform. In other words, I want to see us become the true revolutionaries of this period and not the counter revolutionary like Mr. Castro. Castro is just a sort of a bearded dictator. He doesn't really represent social progress.

Annex: Can I put this to you then. We have had economic sanctions against Cuba and we have had the breaking off of diplomatic relations. Now you think these have helped the situation or do you think they may have driven Castro even further into the Russian camp? Senator Hickenlooper.

Hickenlooper: No, I don't believe they have driven him further into the Russian camp because he was already in the Russian camp. (Annex: Was he at the very beginning?) I think he was in the Russian camp in the very beginning. Whether he actually realized it or admitted it or not, certainly those surrounding him were absolutely of the Russian camp and I think they were taking their orders and dictation from international communism. But as far as the breaking/~~and~~ off of diplomatic relations is concerned, there has been a great misunderstanding as to what happened in Cuba.

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Hickenlooper:but there was a breaking off of international relations ...or of diplomatic relations is concerned, there has been a great misunderstanding as to what happened in Cuba. The fact is that the Cuban government notified the United States that we could only have eleven personnel...persons in the entire diplomatic mission and that included janitors, chauffeurs, telephone operators as well as including any diplomatic personnel. Well, when you attempt to run an Embassy or a Mission with only 11 total personnel, not 11 diplomatic personnel, but 11 total personnel working for the entire Mission one can see how impossible it is to operate a mission on that kind of a basis. And so it was inevitable, there was nothing that could be done except to close there, to withdrew the representation.

Anncr: You said, Senator, that at the beginning Castro was under the influence of international Communism, yet when Castro came into power the American government, that is the Eisenhower government expressed the sincere goodwill of the government and the people of the United States toward Castro's government and the people of Cuba. What has gone wrong? Senator Humphrey, why do you think this hope that you ^{had} have of Castro's has been dashed?

Humphrey: Well I think the Americans had hoped that Mr. Castro would really bring reform to Cuba. There was great need of reform. I think that the tragedy of American policy in the past is that we were able to be so close physically and yet to see so little of what the misery and the troubles that were going on in Cuba and if we learned....I think Castro may have taught us a lesson. I hope that we have been alerted to all of Latin America now that this Castroism, which is based upon dissent, I mean upon disaffection, upon trouble and heart ache and poverty and all that goes with it--I hope that we have learned that we can't let this thing continue. That we must take action to the contrary that we must take affirmative action.

Yes, I would say that at the beginning we were sympathetic to Castro. I am sure that most of us felt that Castro himself was not a Communist. But as Senator Hickenlooper has pointed out, there were Communist influences -- there is not any doubt about that and they moved in from all over Latin America. This has become a base of operations for Communism pointed at Latin America. I think that the fact that it is crystallized into a Communist threat in Cuba may have saved the day, so to speak by

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the fact that we have now been alerted and shocked, as a matter of fact into a realization that unless something is done to help people help themselves, to make these economies in Latin America much more responsive to human needs and much more equitable, that there is going to be a continuous wave of Castroism & may I add that the Latin Americans themselves have to help themselves. The rich and the powerful and the landed-class of Latin Americans better start giving up some of their wealth voluntarily, better give us some of their so-called social position voluntarily because if they don't, somebody is going to take it away from them and America can't protect them.

What I am saying is, that the United States cannot do this alone and if it tried to, it would fail. The people of influence in Latin America have got to save themselves before it is too late.

Anncr:

Senator Hickenlooper, when you went on your tour of Latin America, did you find there was a likelihood of more Castroism -- did you find that Castro has support and hero-worship of the working people in these other countries?

Hickenlooper:

Well, my very definite impression as a result of this trip in November and December in which I covered 12 countries in Latin America, was that whereas a year ago many people in many Latin American countries were intrigued with the Castro movement in Cuba, they were hopeful that it pointed perhaps, pointed a way to a re-organization to their own cultures economically and socially, but they have become disillusioned indeed in the last 6 months or more with the antics of Mr. Castro, the fantastic performances of his group, his destruction of civil liberties, his destruction of the freedom of the press, his destruction of the court system in Cuba, his complete failure to establish any land reforms in Cuba that are worthy of the name and his attempt to interfere and meddle in the affairs of other sovereign countries.

Now they have become disillusioned and while there are still elements of Castroism in most of these countries and without doubt money from Cuba, regardless of its original source -- money from Cuba is being put into these countries in order to ferment dissent and revolution. The government officials and I might say the mass of the people, that is the, what we might call the middle-class of people wherever you find them, are aware now of what Castro really is -- it has been unmasked and they now fear it and they are attempting to take steps to counter it by reforms of their own, which, too late in coming perhaps, -- or, not too late, but very late in coming, but nevertheless welcome.

Annex: Senator, in your observations here in Washington, and in particular your questioning of the new Secretary of State, when he appeared before your Committee, Mr. Dean Rusk, what do you think ~~the~~ the possibilities are: a change in policy, or a new policy on these problems?

Hickenlooper: I don't anticipate a --- well, let's say, a 180-degree change in policy at all. I anticipate that the new administration after it takes a look at the situation may have some ideas of its own as to how to approach our cooperative activities and association with the various countries of Latin America, but I don't anticipate any revolutionary change. I anticipate that we will keep on and I hope with greater and greater success this cooperative association.

But I want to say just one thing: We make a mistake in this country and have for a long time and we make it in the world, in assuming that Latin America and all of its 20-some countries, that that constitutes one ethnic political & social block. It doesn't. Those are individual, -- sovereign countries, with different ethnic backgrounds, with different mores and they are just as sovereign as Holland and France is sovereign or Belgium and England and different in their backgrounds. They are independent and sovereign countries and we must not make the mistake in lumping them altogether.

Annex: Senator Humphrey, I thought I detected in Mr. Dean Rusk's answers some indication of a new approach, a more positive approach to the Latin American question. Would you agree in that?

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Humphrey: Well, I think ~~it~~ was in Mr. Rusk's testimony, an indication of the difference in emphasis and little more -- as he put it -- a little more attention to Latin America. A little more concern about Latin America and I hope that it is not only sporadic, I hope it will be continually and I expect it will.

Let me just make it clear first of all, that we Americans automatically respond with sympathy to what we think is a revolution for social justice and I am glad we are that kind of a people because this is the instinctive nature of the American people. We are for the underdog. Some of us feel that a great deal of American policy in Latin America has been directed primarily towards what we call the private ~~sector~~ sector of the economy and just to some of the governments. I happen to believe that we must be able to get our message as well as our aid and our assistance to a broader base -- to the people themselves and I think that the Voice of America ought to include the voice of laboring people in America, of labor, of our farm

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cooperatives in America, of our educators, of our doctors. We simply have not been able to get the story, or the expressed will of the American people down to enough of the people in Latin America. And I have talked to a number of people in that part of the world -- I haven't travelled there as my colleague Senator Hickenlooper, has -- but I have talked to them and these people who are good intentioned and well-informed have told me that despite all the aid that America has extended, the economic aid through export-import bank loans and etc. that the average man back in the mountains or the hills, the peon, the farmer or the worker, does not identify the United States with effective assistance.....(end of first platter)

(Humphrey continues)

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.....One of the best diplomats we have because his is the diplomacy not of ~~work~~ word but of deed and action and I think the United States ought to be utilizing Puerto Rico as a center, so to speak, of expression, of what can and will be done in areas where there is poverty, sickness, illiteracy and tremendous population problems and economic problems. We haven't ---- Puerto Ricans have not solved all of their problems, but they are doing so and are working at it and hope is high, ^{very} but we need to offer Latin America most is a hope of a better day.

Anncr:

Thank you very much indeed, Senator Humphrey and Senator Hickenlooper



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