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The Danger of a Hemispheric Vietnam

(Remarks of Senator Thomas J. Dodd before the national convention
of the American Legion, Portland, Oreg., Aug. 25, 1965)

Speech of

Hon. Thomas J. Dodd

of Connecticut

in the

Senate of the United States

Tuesday, August 31, 1965

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SPEECH
OF
HON. THOMAS J. DODD

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Tuesday, August 31, 1965

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to insert into the RECORD the text of a speech on "The Danger of a Hemispheric Vietnam," which I delivered last Thursday before the national convention of the American Legion in Portland, Oreg.

There being no objection, the statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

VIETNAM AND LATIN AMERICA: THE DANGER OF A HEMISPHERIC VIETNAM

(Remarks of Senator THOMAS J. DODD before the national convention of the American Legion, Portland, Oreg., Aug. 25, 1965)

The invitation to address your national convention means very much to me, not only because of the respect I have for your great organization but also because it has over the years encouraged citizen concern with our major problems of foreign policy and has given its uncompromising support to those policies which advance our national security and protect the peace.

That this is so is not surprising. There are no more passionate advocates of peace than those who, like the members of the American Legion, know the meaning of war. On the other hand, the members of the American Legion know well that peace cannot be purchased or protected by appeasement and that aggression cannot be wished away by burying one's head in the sand.

You know, because you have experienced these things in your own lives, that the surest way to destroy peace is to close one's eyes to reality and to retreat before aggressors. You know that peace can only be protected through strength, and that freedom can only be protected if we are willing to pledge to its defense "our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

This to me is what the American Legion stands for. And this is why I consider it a very special privilege to be able to address your convention today.

I want to take advantage of this opportunity to discuss with you the increasingly critical situation in Latin America.

We have, I fear, been so engrossed with the war in Vietnam that most of us have failed to note the storm clouds forming on our Latin American horizon.

Even the Dominican uprising we were disposed to put down as a passing storm.

And as soon as its fury had spent itself we again turned our eyes away from Latin America back to Vietnam, where almost 100,000 American boys are now committed to a life-and-death struggle with the aggressive forces of Asian communism.

Vietnam is not a diversion to distract our attention from Latin America.

Nor was the Dominican uprising a diversion intended to distract our attention from Vietnam.

Latin America and southeast Asia are two major fronts in the battle between the forces of freedom and the forces of international communism.

And each of these fronts is of such great importance that the war can probably be won or lost in either area.

More than any other war in which we have been engaged in the past, the war in Vietnam has driven home to the American people the terrible difficulty of coping with this type of Communist warfare, in which each well-trained guerrilla soldier can pin down 10 or 15 defenders.

Even on the scale on which it is now being fought, the war in Vietnam is taxing our resources and our capabilities.

It is frightening, therefore, to think of what would happen if we were ever confronted with a hemispheric Vietnam, with guerrilla uprisings occurring simultaneously in Brazil and Venezuela and Colombia, and Panama and Nicaragua and Guatemala, and then spreading out to other countries.

This prospect is neither a pipedream nor a nightmare.

On the contrary, there are official pronouncements by Castro Cuba and by other

the Communists are even today organizing for the objective of a hemispheric Vietnam.

In this plan, Castro Cuba plays the role of North Vietnam. And, as Castro's official newspaper *Revolucion* has spelled out the next stage of Communist policy in Latin America, "Colombia and Venezuela form the nucleus of a vast South Vietnam of Latin America."

CASTRO'S RECORD OF AGGRESSION

In January 1964, a tremendous cache of arms was discovered on the coast of Venezuela.

A special commission of the Organization of American States which was set up to investigate this cache unanimously reported that the arms originated in Cuba and that they were surreptitiously landed on the Venezuelan coast "for the purpose of being used in subversive operations to overthrow the constitutional government of Venezuela."

On the heels of this report, the OAS, with the single exception of Mexico, decided to sever diplomatic relations with Cuba.

This was held up at the time as a major victory in isolating Castro from his Latin American neighbors, and as a death blow to subversion.

But 1 year later we find that Castro subversion has been intensified and that it is being carried out more and more openly and with even greater success.

We have witnessed the overthrow of governments in Bolivia, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic.

Riots and terrorism threaten the foundations of the governments of Panama, Guatemala, Colombia, Venezuela, and Peru.

And, in every case, Castro-trained plotters are identified with these disturbances and insurrections.

In July of 1963, the OAS issued a report dealing with Soviet activities in Cuba.

In this report it named 10 major guerrilla warfare training centers.

But, despite this exposure, Castro has stepped up his training program for Latin American guerrillas so that Castro today operates no fewer than 30 guerrilla camps in which Latin American cadres are trained in the art of subversion.

After they are trained, they are reinfilitrated into their homelands, where they are skillfully working to overthrow the legiti-

The Dominican crisis is eloquent testimony to the effectiveness of these trained infiltrators.

Guerrilla training camps have been recently located in the Panamanian province of Chiriqui and in the capital of Guatemala.

In the latter case, troops captured a large cache of Cuban weapons.

The grave implications of these discoveries are that we may soon face self-propagating armies of Communist guerrillas in this hemisphere—armies which will no longer be completely dependent on their Cuban base.

When that happens, Cuban-sown time bombs will explode one by one throughout Latin America, or conceivably they will be timed so that a number of them go off simultaneously.

And the Communists make no secret of their intent.

The record is full of comments by leading figures in Castro's government to the effect that Cuba is indeed the North Vietnam of this hemisphere.

Castro's guerrilla chieftain, Maj. Ernesto "Che" Guevara, has publicly embraced Latin American guerrilla leaders in training in Cuba—Jose Cardona, and Tiro-Fijo from Colombia; German Layret of Venezuela, and others.

Cuban broadcasts blanket Latin America with propaganda, inciting riots and encouraging terrorism.

Havana radio openly broadcasts instructions to guerrilla bands in other Latin American countries.

For example, in a broadcast to Haiti on August 9 of this year, the Havana radio carried a lecture by "a guerrilla of the Venezuelan Armed Forces of National Liberation."

"The lecture," said the announcer, "deals with his experiences in northern Venezuela and it will serve as valuable orientation for revolutionaries. To the people of Haiti, Latin America, and the whole world the lecture will show that they must conduct their own revolutionary processes."

The lecturer then proceeded to describe how the urban and suburban detachments of the Venezuelan rebels had been organized; how they had sought to win the support of workers and peasants with reform slogans; how they had extended the guerrilla area of

of arms and explosives, and given them political indoctrination; established operation centers for guerrillas in the towns; and finally how they had proceeded to establish a combined command for the various sectors of the guerrilla movement.

The lecture on guerrilla warfare even included a passage inciting its listeners to the kind of terrorist murders that have characterized the Vietcong insurgency in Vietnam. "There is another kind of influence," said the broadcast. "For example, in a village where there is an enemy of both the peasants and the guerrillas, he is tried and executed. There have been many cases in which the results of this kind of influence had been extraordinary."

The incitations to violence are not confined to Latin America. I do not think that it is in any exaggeration to suggest that the broadcasts over Castro's radio Free Dixie by the renegade American Negro, Robert F. Williams, have played a role of some importance in inciting extremists elements in the American Negro community to the kind of violence that we have witnessed in recent weeks in Los Angeles and Chicago and other centers.

I do not mean to minimize the injustices which the American Negroes have suffered—the poverty, the discrimination, the lack of opportunity, the overcrowding in ghettos. But no one can tell me that it does not have some impact on the extremist minority in the Negro community when day after day they listen to broadcasts like the following over radio Free Dixie. I quote Robert F. Williams' words verbatim:

"We are injured by racial injustice. Let the thug cop and the racist savages view our indignation through the razor, the lye can, the gas bomb, and the bullet * * * let those who despise us and brutally oppress our people be prepared to kill or be killed * * * let our people take to the streets in fierce numbers and let their battle cry be heard around the world: Freedom, freedom, freedom, now or death."

THE ROLE OF THE OTHER COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

But it is not just a matter of Cuba.

Those who talk about a détente with the Soviet Union or about the so-called "desatellization" of the European satellites, would do well to examine the activities of Soviet and satellite embassies in Latin America.

In 1962, Ecuador broke relations with Czechoslovakia when it was found that the Czech Embassy was selling Skoda industrial products in Ecuador and turning over the proceeds to Castroites in that country.

Only last fall the Bolivian Government also broke relations with Czechoslovakia. Riots which overthrew the Government were traced to the Czech Embassy and to the military and financial support that it gave to Castroite terrorists in that country.

Moscow itself publicly issued a communique which targeted seven nations in this hemisphere to be overthrown by Cuban exported subversion. It went so far as to line up all Communist parties in this hemisphere in support of Castro.

The huge Soviet Embassy in Uruguay acts as one of the several direction centers of subversion in Latin America, while the role played by the Chinese Embassy in Brazil prior to the overthrow of the Goulart government is a matter of documentary record.

Despite the differences which divide them as nations, a Communist consortium appears to be biding its time in Latin America until its trained guerrilla forces are ready to strike. If they strike simultaneously in a number of Latin American countries, I am afraid that we may be confronted by a "continental war," as it is described by Moscow, which will make the Dominican uprising and even the Vietcong insurgency appear minor affairs by comparison.

THE ANDES—"THE SIERRA MAESTRA OF SOUTH AMERICA"

I have already spoken about the danger in Central America—in Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and Nicaragua—and of the danger in the southern Caribbean countries of Venezuela and Colombia.

There is, in addition, evidence that Castro is setting up a series of headquarters and way stations in the Andes Mountain.

Shortly before taking power in Cuba, Castro boasted that he would convert the Andes into "the Sierra Maestra" of South America.

There are increasing indications that Castro is on the way to achieving this goal.

From Bolivia comes reports that La Paz has become a center of Communist arms running and subversion throughout the Andes, with the Cuban Embassy in La Paz acting as a de facto headquarters.

From Chile comes the report that the capital city of Santiago is the seat of a Castro-Communist headquarters headed by two veteran Bulgarian Reds, Ivan Tenev and Konstantin Telalov.

From Peru there comes a report that, when several Communist youths were captured in the course of a guerrilla attack on May 20, they confessed that they were part of a larger Castroite operation intended to bring terror and guerrilla warfare to key areas of the country.

THE WAY OUT

At its meeting of July 26, 1964, the Organization of American States emphatically condemned the Government of Cuba for its acts of aggression and intervention against Venezuela.

In addition to voting to sever all diplomatic connections and suspend all trade and transportation between their countries and Cuba, they warned the Castro government that, if it persists in its acts of aggression and intervention, the member states of the OAS reserve the right to defend themselves, either individually or collectively, not excluding the resort to armed force.

I believe that the time has come to re-examine, on an emergency basis, our entire policy toward Cuba and Latin America.

We cannot afford the luxury of waiting and doing nothing until the flames of a Vietnamese or Dominican-type insurrection erupt at a dozen different points in the troubled countries of Latin America.

There is no single solution for the sickness of Latin America.

Those who believe that all of our Latin American troubles would disappear overnight if we simply sent in the marines to unseat Castro have woefully oversimplified the situation.

For the fact is that, with only a few countries excepted, the masses of the people in the Latin American countries are abysmally poor; the propertied classes—apart from an enlightened minority—are narrow-minded and grasping, and opposed to social progress; and their social structures remain virtually untouched by the vast reforms that have swept through most of the civilized world in recent decades.

If Castro were removed by the marines tomorrow and if nothing were done to improve

social and economic conditions in the Americas, then, as surely as night follows day, it could be predicted that we would be confronted with another half dozen Castros in various parts of the hemisphere over the coming decade.

But those do-gooders who urge that we push reforms in Latin America, and simply ignore the menace of Castroism, are just as blind and just as wrong as those who urge that we send in the marines tomorrow.

The mere existence of the Castro regime and its subversive network makes social reform and economic progress virtually impossible.

It makes chaos and violence an epidemic condition throughout the Americas; and it produces an outpouring of frightened capital that far exceeds the intake of new capital through the Alliance for Progress and private investment.

The problem of Latin America will never be solved and we will have no security in this hemisphere unless we embark on a simultaneous program, without delay and with all possible urgency, to put an end to the menace of Castroism and to bring the American Revolution to the suffering and impoverished and freedom-hungry peoples of the hemisphere.

For it is we, and not the Communists, who are the true revolutionaries.

It is we who stand for freedom and justice and human equality, we who have found the key to a better life for the masses of the people—while the Communists, in every country where they have seized power, have coupled the total slavery of the mind with an infallible genius for reducing agricultural production and stultifying progress in general.

I would like to see the OAS or the Alliance for Progress commit itself at their next meeting to the goal of a hemispheric revolution.

I would like to see a hemispheric attack on the problems of illiteracy and disease and housing and poverty.

I would also like to see the kind of sweeping land reform program that the Chinese Nationalist Government has carried out in Taiwan put into effect in the many Latin American countries where the majority of the peasants still do not own their own land.

I would like to see a massive program of assistance to the institutes of higher education in the Americas so that they can turn out more graduates in business and public administration, in agriculture and geology and marine biology and all the fields related to the expansion of social resources and the proper management of society.

Needless to say, no such hemispheric program can be carried out without massive support from our own country.

I, as one Senator, would be prepared to vote for such massive support because I believe that we could make no better investment from the standpoint of our own security.

As for Castro, the time has come to accept the simple unescapable fact that Castro must go—that we must embark on a crash program to help the Cuban people liberate themselves from the tyranny of this alien despot.

To those who say that Castro cannot be overthrown, my answer is the example of the Hungarian revolution.

True, the Soviet Red Army succeeded in crushing the Hungarian rebels. But Castro will not be able to count on the intervention of 5,000 Soviet tanks when the Cuban people rise against him, as the people of Hungary rose to a man against their own quisling Communist tyrants.

There is today in Cuba a state of disenchantment and open rebellion against the Castro regime that bears a striking similarity to the situation that existed in Hungary before the great popular revolution of October 1956.

There have been six major demonstrations and revolts against the Castro regime over the past 2 years.

The last revolt took place only several weeks ago when a village of some 300 families went on a hunger strike.

The army was sent in and the entire population was taken by truck to the nearby city of Sancti Spiritus.

And all of these uprisings and demonstrations, I want to emphasize, took place without the slightest encouragement or support from the United States.

Guerrilla bands, too, are operating against the Castro regime, with no support or public encouragement from outside.

Just over a month ago, the Castro regime made the revealing admission that the official antiguerrilla forces, which are called the fighters against bandits, had liquidated over 1,000 civilians and guerrillas in just three of Cuba's six Provinces.

Fidel Castro himself said on July 26 that his soldiers had wiped out "counterrevolutionary bands," with the exception of three unidentified groups. Castro upped the figure of civilians and guerrillas killed to 2,005.

It is significant that Castro has claimed the extinction of guerrillas on three previous occasions, but they always pop up again.

Obviously, he is beset with more problems than meet the eye.

If the Cuban people can accomplish this much without any assistance from the outside, then I say that we have every reason to be confident that, given the assistance to which they are entitled, the Cuban people will prove to the world that they are capable of making their own Hungarian revolution.

We must put an end to the folly of restraining and handicapping those patriotic Cubans who seek to bring aid to the freedom fighters in their homeland.

We must accord them at least the same freedom of action that we accorded the followers of Castro when they were working for the overthrow of the Batista regime—without any interference of any kind from the American authorities.

Basing ourselves upon the recognized facts that the Castro regime is guilty of aggression and intervention against its neighbors, we must, as a measure of legitimate self-defense, publicly commit ourselves to the liberation of the hemisphere from the menace of Castro subversion and aggression.

We must put teeth into our embargo on trade with Cuba. And here I would like to suggest a declaration that if a ship of any company discharges or takes on cargo in Cuba, all the ships of this company should be barred from entering American ports for a period of 1 year thereafter.

I would also like to urge that we bring more pressure to bear on our allies than we have heretofore brought, to put an end to this traffic which undermines the security of the hemisphere and our own security.

I do not pretend to have worked out a solution in all its details.

These are only some of the things that can and must be done.

But the essential thing is that Castro must go and Cuba must be liberated so that the countries of the Americas can together embark on that true democratic revolution which we in our country have pioneered, and which points the way to the future for all mankind.

EXHIBIT I

[From Havana, Radio Free Dixie in English, 0300 GMT, Aug. 21, 1968]

ROBERT F. WILLIAMS URGES MORE RIOTS IN UNITED STATES

(Excerpts): Greetings my brothers and sisters. We are witnessing the beginning of a ferocious and devastating fire storm. We are living in an age of great upheaval. We are living in an age of violence and revolution. We are living in an age where the angry cry of freedom rises from every quarter as the slave rises to challenge the enslaver. We see passions pent up for centuries burst from the miserable heart of the bondmen and set the streets aflame with insurrection. Yes, we see mighty racist America quiver from the impact of a terrifying shock wave of freedom.

Yes, Los Angeles, Los Angeles. The glorious spirit of our brutally dehumanized people of the ghetto has restored our self-respect, our human dignity. Los Angeles is a warning to oppressive racists who know they can no longer enjoy immunity from retribu-

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tion for their brutal crimes of violence and oppression of our people.

Our shining hour is fast approaching, and let us prepare to make the most of it. We are not alone. Our friends are many, and they are daily becoming even more powerful. My brothers and sisters, the Afro-American, has no enemy any place in the world other than in racist America. Look about you. Take a good look. There you will see the only enemy you have on this earth. He is the one who hates you. He is the one who abuses you. He is the one who blows the heads off little black girls praying in Sunday school. His hands are the ones stained with the blood of Emmet Till, Mack Charles Parker, Medgar Evers, and countless others.

My brothers and sisters, times are critical. They are going to become ever more critical. We are facing a future wherein the streets shall become like rivers of blood. Let us be prepared to fight to the death, organize, arm, learn to shoot and to handle explosives. When the impending showdown comes, use the match and the torch unsparingly. The flame of retribution must not be limited to urban buildings and centers, but the countryside must go up in smoke also. Remember the forests, the fields, and the crops. Remember the pipelines and oil storage tanks. Yes, let it be known to the world that we shall meet their sophisticated weapons of violence with the crude and simple flame of a match. We cannot escape our historical mission of destiny any more than our oppressors can escape the destiny of retribution.