

Castro and the Bay of Pigs Invasion

After the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, Cuban leader Fidel Castro gave a speech to the Cuban people on May 2, 1961. Read the following speech in order to analyze the impact of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion on Castro's mindset. As you read, complete the SOAPSTone worksheet to immerse yourself in Castro's point of view.

Today we have had a chance to see everything worthwhile in our country, everything produced in our country. We have understood better than ever that there are two classes of citizens, or rather there were two classes of citizens; the citizens who worked, produced, and created and the citizens who lived without working or producing. These latter were parasites.

Those who paraded today were the working people who will never resign themselves to work for the parasites... (Applause)

The motherland of today where we have won the right to direct our destiny, where we have learned to decide our destiny, a motherland which will be now and forever-as Marti wanted it-for the well-being of everyone and not a motherland for few!

What kind of morality and what reason and what right do they have to make a Negro die to defend the monopolies, the factories, and the mines of the dominating classes? What right have they to send the Puerto Rican of Latin blood, of Latin tradition, to the battlefields to defend the policy of large capitalists and monopolies? This concept of motherland and this danger to their security to which they refer is the danger of the monopolies. You can understand what concept they have of morality, law, and rights, to send the Negroes of the South and the Puerto Ricans to the battlefields to fight for them. This is their concept of motherland only when the interests of the privileged classes are liquidated, and when a nation with its wealth becomes a nation for everyone, the wealth for everyone, and opportunity and happiness for everybody.

What would have happened to our workers, wives, sisters, and factories? What would have happened if imperialism had established even a single beachhead on our territory? What would have happened if the imperialists succeeded in taking one part of our territory, and from there, with Yankee bombs, machineguns, and planes, would have launched an armed attack against us.

Let us not talk about what would have happened if the imperialist had won. There is no sadder picture than a defeated revolution... That is why we were thinking that every smile today was like a tribute to those who made possible this hopeful day. The blood that was shed was the blood of workers and peasants, the blood of humble sons of the people, not blood of land-owners, millionaires, thieves, criminals, or exploiters. The blood shed was the blood of

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the exploited of yesterday, the free men of today. The blood shed was humble, honest, working, creative blood-the blood of patriots not the blood of mercenaries. It was the blood of militiamen who voluntarily came to defend the revolution. It was spontaneously offered blood to defend an ideal... It was not an ideal of those who came to recover their lost wealth. It was not the ideal of those who always lived at the expense of others. It was not the ideal of those who sell their soul for the gold of a powerful empire.

U.S. leaders publicly confessed their participation-without any explanation which they owe the world for the statements made by Kennedy that they would never participate in aggression-and save us the effort of finding proof.

It would be absurd for us to try to tell the people of the United States what system of government they must have, for in that case we would be considering that the United States is not a sovereign nation and that we have rights over the domestic life of the United States.

Rights do not come from size. Right does not come from one country being bigger than another. That does not matter. We have only limited territory, a small nation, but our right is as respectable as that of any country, regardless of its size. It does not occur to us to tell the people of the United States what system of government they must have. Therefore it is absurd for Mr. Kennedy to take it into his head to tell us what kind of government he wants us to have here. That is absurd. It occurs to Mr. Kennedy to do that only because he does not have a clear concept of international law or sovereignty. Who had those notions before Kennedy? Hitler and Mussolini!

They spoke the same language of force; it is the fascist language. We heard it in the years before Germany's attack on Czechoslovakia. Hitler split it up because it was governed by a reactionary government. The bourgeoisie, reactionary and profascist, afraid of the advance of a socialist system, preferred even domination by Hitler. We heard that language on the eve of the invasion of Denmark, Belgium, Poland, and so forth. It is the right of might. This is the only right Kennedy advances in claiming the right to interfere in our country.

The U.S. government says that a socialist regime here threatens U.S. security. But what threatens the security of the North American people is the aggressive policy of the warmongers of the United States. What threatens the security of the North American family and people is the violence, that aggressive policy, that policy that ignores the sovereignty and the rights of other peoples. The one who is threatening the security of the United States is Kennedy, with that aggressive policy. That aggressive policy can give rise to a world war; and that world war can cost the lives of tens of millions of North Americans. Therefore, the one who threatens the security of the United States is not the Cuban Revolutionary Government but the aggressor and aggressive government of the United States.



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We do not endanger the security of a single North American. We do not endanger the life or security of a single North American family. We, making cooperatives, agrarian reform, people's ranches, houses, schools, literacy campaigns, and sending thousands and thousands of teachers to the interior, building hospitals, sending doctors, giving scholarships, building factories, increasing the productive capacity of our country, creating public beaches, converting fortresses into schools, and give the people the right to a better future-we do not endanger a single U.S. family or a single U.S. citizen.