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Southeastern Association of School Business Officials

Lewis F. Powell Jr.

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I have spoken up to this point on my assigned subject, namely, Soviet Education and its challenge to our educational system. This is, as I have indicated, a very real challenge and one which we must meet if America is to survive. But this is essentially a long term problem - one measured in terms of decades.

There is, as we meet here tonight, a much more immediate problem. This is the crisis resulting from the Rebel invasion of Cuba which is now underway. Although there is little firm news, there are some disquieting indications that all is not well.

As I know that this is of concern to every American, and as the program this evening is on the subject of Communism, it seems appropriate to conclude my talk with a few observations on this critical situation.

The prestige of America is clearly associated with the Rebels' cause. In addition, the long term security of our country may also be at issue. If Castro defeats the present up-rising (which we have undoubtedly inspired or encouraged), the consequences will be far-reaching and extremely adverse to our position in the world. There will be little likelihood of another revolt against Castro; his regime will be entrenched, and his power and influence greatly enhanced.

There will be other and more far-reaching consequences: America will suffer a further damaging loss of "face." Every neutral and wavering country in the world will assume that we lack the will to assist effectively anti-Communist movements. Communist parties, already strong and active, will be encouraged to take over other governments in South and Central Americas. These will be even more difficult to overthrow than that in Cuba.

Thus, if we permit Castro to win this contest, a disastrous chain reaction may develop here in the Western Hemisphere. In a relatively short period of years, we could be faced with numbers of Communist satellite countries, each affording a base for military and subversive operations and each dedicated to the destruction of our form of government and way of life.

The Soviet Union, and its stooges around the world, are indicting America for "conducting an imperialistic invasion of Cuba." The extent of our actual involvement has not yet been revealed. President Kennedy has recently appeared to pledge that we would "never" invade Cuba unless we were attacked. But the Rebels are now conducting an invasion, and clearly they could not do this without our concurrence and assistance. The world - including our friends as well as enemies - considers us responsible for the Rebel move.

This no doubt places America in a difficult and delicate position. But this position is not unique. The Soviet Union, while denying intervention, is notoriously supplying and backing the rebellion in Laos. Both the Soviet Union and Red China did this on a massive scale in the Korean War and in Indo-China. This is standing operating procedure for the Communist countries.

In the present world situation, vital national interests require that we give whatever aid and assistance may be necessary to assure that the rebellion succeeds and that Castro is overthrown. This need not be done officially - but (having permitted the Rebels to move) it would be foolhardy not to back them with all necessary force. The Communists themselves have set abundant precedents for unofficial but effective support of those who fight on their side.

If America is to survive, we must learn to combat Soviet led International Communism far more effectively than we have in the past. There are still American leaders who argue that we must not resort, in this international warfare, to any of the tactics and techniques used by our Communist enemy. I do not recall any such effete arguments being advanced during the shooting war with the Nazis. And yet the present state of warfare is infinitely more dangerous to America's future than any shooting war in our history.

It is high time that our people, and our responsible officials, recognize that America is certain to lose this conflict if we continue to think that ordinary diplomacy, a nuclear deterrent force, and foreign aid will defeat or contain the new techniques of warfare employed by the Communists.

The first responsibility of any government is national defense and security. The Soviet Union, Red China and the world-wide Communist conspirators are waging a new and highly effective type of warfare which gravely threatens our country and the entire free world. It is essential that we abandon policies which have conspicuously failed for 16 years. We must have the courage and the toughness to employ (as we have in previous ways) whatever means may be necessary to protect and preserve our country's safety.

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