

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM
2006 Walnut Street, Philadelphia 2, Pa.

October 9, 1962

Honorable Lyndon B. Johnson
Vice President of the United States
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Mr. Vice President:

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom is dismayed by your declaration that our nation's primary aim in relation to Cuba is "to get rid of the Castro Regime." However, in the same speech (September 30), you pledged that "we shall never... sacrifice our principles".

We agree with you in deploring the totalitarian characteristics of the Cuban regime and the role which the U.S.S.R. is now playing in Cuba. But we also agree that the U.S. must not let these circumstances lead it to sacrifice basic principles. And we feel compelled to point out what some of these principles are:

- 1) No nation is justified in promoting the overthrow of the government of another. The U.S. has proclaimed this principle whenever the U.S.S.R. has appeared to defy it.
- 2) No nation has the right to dictate the trade policies or aid requests of another - not even requests for military aid. The U.S. gives military aid and has military bases in a number of countries nearer the U.S.S.R. than Cuba is to the U.S.
- 3) The U.S. Neutrality Act forbids the use of U.S. means or money for preparing expeditions, such as those of Cuban refugees, to attack or invade any foreign state.
- 4) The U.S. as a signer of the Charter of the United Nations and the Charter of the Organization of American States, is pledged to avoid both military intervention and coercive economic measures against Cuba under the present circumstances.
- 5) The U.S. when it signed the Act of Caracas in 1954, in effect transferred to the O.A.S. the right to implement the Monroe Doctrine and renounced our right to take unilateral action in any Latin-American nation even though we may deem such action a protection of the others.

Let us, in all honesty, see the present Cuban situation against the background of recent history in which U.S. lack of vision has played a part -

- our support of Batista's repressive regime.
- our lack of support of the early efforts of the Castro regime to bring about needed domestic reforms.
- our breaking off of diplomatic relations and of trade on which Cuba's economy depended.
- our support of a military invasion of Cuba.
- our pressure on the O.A.S. to isolate Cuba.

Have not all of these tended to promote Cuba's economic and military dependence on the Communist bloc?

Now that the predictable has happened and the U.S.S.R., at Cuba's request, is sending in both civilian and military material and personnel, the U.S. will only more . . .

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make matters worse, if it abrogates its principles by blockading or invading Cuba or again aiding an unofficial attack by refugees. Any of these acts would not only invite war, but would serve the Soviet Union's natural desire to have us discredit ourselves in the eyes of Latin-America and the world to an extent almost impossible to retrieve.

There are still, however, courses of action open to the United States which offer hope of eventually changing the course of events in Cuba and, at the same time, putting America where, as you rightly say, she wants to be - "in first place as champion of freedom and keeper of the peace."

Firstly, we can best demonstrate that we champion peace and freedom by adhering to President Kennedy's declared policy of non-intervention either by blockade or invasion.

Instead of trying to get our unwilling allies to force Cuba to her knees by refusing shipping facilities for transporting civilian goods to Cuba and to get our Latin-American neighbors to take further measures against Cuba, would it not be more constructive for the United States to accept Brazilian or Mexican offers of mediation in re-establishing diplomatic and trade relations between the U.S. and Cuba? Let us remember that the U.S.S.R. maintains normal relations with a number of countries on her borders where U.S. military bases are located. The re-establishment of normal U.S.-Cuban relations would perhaps not immediately alter the Cuban situation. However, the U.S. is honor bound to refer this matter to the O.A.S. and the UN. And is not relieving Cuba's need for reliance on the Soviet Union the best way to make possible an eventual decision by the Cubans themselves whether Castro has, in fact, betrayed their revolution and whether they want to be independent of Soviet as well as U.S. interference in their affairs?

We can, moreover, demonstrate what we stand for by helping raise living standards in the Latin-American countries through the Alliance for Progress, even though this will mean generous expenditures of public money and considerable sacrifice of profits from private American investments in this area. Isn't this the surest way to protect Latin-America from being attracted to Communism?

Lastly, we can support Brazil's proposal to the UN that Latin-America be demilitarized and kept nuclear-free pending the general and complete disarmament of the world - a goal toward which the U.S. should be bending every effort. Isn't this the only reliable insurance of peace?

A nation gains stature and respect, not so much by attacking what it opposes, as by demonstrating what it is for. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom believes that insofar as the U.S. shows what it is for:

- 1) the right of the sovereign state of Cuba and all other sovereign states to run their own affairs so long as they do not actually attack others;
- 2) the rapid improvement of living standards and economic and social reforms in Latin-America and other developing areas;
- 3) disarmament, both regional and world-wide;

the United States will deserve to be and continue to be a world leader.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Dorothy Hutchinson
President
United States Section