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MEET THE PRESS

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MEET THE PRESS

America's Press Conference of the Air

Produced by **LAWRENCE E. SPIVAK**

Guest: **MISS JUANA CASTRO**

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Panel: MAY CRAIG, *Portland (Me.) Press Herald*
HERB KAPLOW, *NBC News*
DAVID KRASLOW, *Los Angeles Times*
LAWRENCE E. SPIVAK, *Permanent Panel Member*

Moderator: NED BROOKS

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MEET THE PRESS

MR. BROOKS: This is Ned Brooks, inviting you to MEET THE PRESS. Our guest today on MEET THE PRESS is the sister of Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba, Miss Juana Castro. She was closely allied with him in the revolution against Batista. Several months ago she fled from Cuba to Mexico, and she is now devoting herself to Castro's overthrow. She arrived in this country the other day. Now we will have the first question from Lawrence E. Spivak, Permanent Member of the MEET THE PRESS panel.

MR. SPIVAK: Miss Castro, many people have written about your brother, and there have been various estimates made of him. Some say he is brilliant, he is undisciplined, he is highly egotistical, he is ruthless. Will you give us your estimate of him?

MISS CASTRO: Well, undoubtedly a man who is—he is intelligent; but this intelligence which he might have used to do so much good in Cuba he has used against the people of Cuba and to make Cuba a satellite of the Soviet Union, in the first place, and took the country to absolute destruction in every aspect.

MR. SPIVAK: What about the qualities of him himself—do you think he is mad as some people think he is? Do you think he is a paranoid personality?

MISS CASTRO: I do not know if he is mad or not. The only thing I know and I can assure you of—is that he has destroyed our country. The six million inhabitants of Cuba on the first of January, in 1959, when the revolution triumphed, the people of

Cuba, supported him fully until that moment. Castro did not know how to use this opportunity, and he did not know how to use the faith and the confidence that the people of Cuba had deposited and had placed in him.

MR. SPIVAK: Miss Castro, you were recently quoted as saying that the time is ripe for the overthrow of your brother. This has been said by exiles in the past five years over and over again. Why do you think the time is now ripe to overthrow him?

MISS CASTRO: It is not something that I think but it is a fact. The time is now ripe for the overthrow of this tyranny under which Cuba is suffering. Ninety percent of the Cuban people are against this regime, and the militia and the Army of Cuba is also against the Communist regime. These militia and these Armed Forces are awaiting the moment when they can use their arms against the Communist government.

MR. SPIVAK: What do you think will start the revolution against him? What will trip the thing off? Who will start it?

MISS CASTRO: The overthrow of the regime, is that what you are talking about?

MR. SPIVAK: Yes, the overthrow.

MISS CASTRO: Well, then, we for a long time now have been struggling and fighting against the Communist regime in Cuba. We did not begin this fight a few months ago. The conditions of the country are right now, very favorable in all of their aspects. The people are discontent, and from the economic standpoint and from the political standpoint they are now undergoing great internal difficulties. They wish to avoid their coming to the light, and aside from the fight which is taking place inside the country itself, it is necessary of course for us who are in exile to fight and to make this great final effort which will be the definite one for achieving our freedom.

We also hope and have the support of all of the countries of the American hemisphere and the support of the United States and of all of the free countries, who will help us and who will give us

their support because they have to do something for Cuba, they have a commitment for it. It has served as a great experience for many of the countries of this continent, and if many of the other countries have not fallen into the hands of communism, it has been because of the sad experience that the Cuban people have undergone.

MR. SPIVAK: Miss Castro, all the information that we have is that your brother is in complete control in Cuba. He controls the Army, he controls the militia, and the 90 percent that you say are against him are afraid to lift their hands against him. Just how is he going to be overthrown, by whom, and when?

MISS CASTRO: I am sorry, I did not quite get the question.

MR. SPIVAK: I say that your brother, from all information we have, is in complete control of Cuba, in control of the Army, in control of the militia and the people themselves, the 90 percent who are against him, are afraid to lift their heads or hands against him. How then is he going to be overthrown?

MISS CASTRO: The information that comes here is the information which they allow to get to this country. It is not true. He may have control of the government, that is true, based on the terror and the terrorism imposed by that minority that controls the country, and it might be possible for him to control up to a certain point, but if the moment should come, I am sure that that Army is not afraid. His Army may be afraid of him, yes, because they have to watch out for themselves because their lives are at stake, the lives of the militia and the Army, but when the proper moment comes, since I do not believe that the conditions in Cuba can continue for a long time, since it is the uniformed people who are tired and sick of this regime because they are suffering so much and they are suffering like all of the people—when the moment comes, they shall do everything possible to overthrow the regime. The information that comes from Cuba, the information that many times is received from the newspapermen who visit Cuba is not as true as one wishes it to be. Therefore in the public opinion of America you might have a different opinion of what is really happening.

MR. KRASLOW: Miss Castro, what is the position of the Negro in Cuba today? Are the Negroes better off generally speaking than they were under the Batista regime?

MISS CASTRO: The Negro in Cuba is suffering from the same persecution and the same tragedy as the rest of the people who live in Cuba. Fidel has taken the argument of the social and racial problems as political propaganda. It is one more means of propaganda and demagoguery. In Cuba people who are political prisoners are colored as well as white, and I also know of the way in which Fidel, since he is going against his own propaganda, has torn up the passports of the colored people who have tried to leave the country. In Cuba, before the revolution, the Negro was beloved and respected, and he was never discriminated against because he was a human being. But now the Negro is only used for propaganda means by the Communist regime.

MR. KRASLOW: Is there any sector in Cuban life which is better off today than it was under the Batista regime? Is there any improvement in Cuba at all today?

MISS CASTRO: The only sector where there has been definite improvement has been in that new class, in the new leaders and the leaders of the communistic revolution, who do not suffer and have no needs or lack nothing—from what has been stolen legitimately from the whole island and from what they have stolen from the poor people who, rather than give him anything—they have taken everything from them. So, the only class that is now living well is the leading class of the Communist government.

MRS. CRAIG: Miss Castro, there is a report that the Viet Cong are in Cuba training Cubans to subvert Latin America. Do you know anything about that?

MISS CASTRO: The Cubans are training all the Latin American peoples for subversion, and they are well trained. They are infecting and taking to all of the continent, using all resources available and are importing and exporting their revolution for all of the continent. There is no one from the Viet Cong. They know well enough how to teach the rest of the people in the continent.

MRS. CRAIG: Are there offensive missiles in Cuba, now?

MISS CASTRO: I could not truthfully say whether there are offensive missiles in Cuba. I know that there are missiles from one end to the other of the island, but I cannot tell you what type of missiles there are, there, right now.

MRS. CRAIG: We also understand that the Soviet Union is putting \$1 million a day into Cuba hoping to subvert all of Latin America. Do you know whether such a sum is being spent for that purpose?

MISS CASTRO: The only aid and assistance that Cuba has been receiving for a long time is military assistance, and it is possible that that \$1 million which is being spent by the USSR in Cuba is to keep the troops and the arms. They have lent no other type of assistance, and it is quite possible that this figure of \$1 million is true. The Kremlin has a military base in the Caribbean, and it is in the American continent.

MRS. CRAIG: Is the Soviet Union having success in subverting Latin America, in your opinion?

MISS CASTRO: I do not believe that they are as successful as they were hoping to be, but I do believe that up to a certain point they have achieved many of the purposes and the objectives they had in Latin America.

MR. KAPLOW: Miss Castro, specifically what are you doing to try to overthrow your brother's regime?

MISS CASTRO: I am ready to take the truth of what is happening today in my country and what has been happening during the past six years to all the corners of the world so that everyone may come to understand and realize what is happening in Cuba, today. Also in my plans I have thought that I might start a foundation of all types of assistance, assistance to help the Cubans who are still there, those who are prisoners and who are suffering most and those people who arrive in other countries and

are in need, all these people who lack resources, today. To start this foundation I have about \$15,000 that Life Magazine paid me for the interview. I am ready and willing to do anything that I will have to do, even offering my life so that I might overthrow the Communist regime in my country, today—do everything that is necessary. I will fight, and I will continue fighting.

MR. KAPLOW: Miss Castro, last week Fidel suspended one of the old line Communists from his public jobs, Joaquin Ordoqui. What significance, if any, is there to that?

MISS CASTRO: In the first place, it is not strange that if Khrushchev after a whole life of service to his country was overthrown in a few minutes that one of the members of the Communist Party in Cuba may have been overthrown in a few minutes and taken from his position—which shows that there are weaknesses within the Communistic regime in Cuba.

MR. KAPLOW: What weaknesses are there?

MISS CASTRO: The Communist regime in its very makings and in the government is now going through a very difficult crisis. There are grave differences among the members of the government itself. There are very marked differences, and this is the weakness that the foundation of the Communist regime is going through. There are differences in criteria, the situation and the conditions of the government. That is what I am referring to. These are the weaknesses of the Communist regime.

MR. SPIVAK: Miss Castro, as far as you know, is your brother Fidel in control of Cuba or are the Communists in control of your brother Fidel?

MISS CASTRO: Fidel handed Cuba to the Kremlin, to the Soviet Union. Therefore the Soviet Union has a vote and a voice in the destiny of Cuba. He may control part of what happens in the island itself, but the Soviet Union has the final word concerning all of the problems, be they economic or political within the country.

MR. KRASLOW: Miss Castro, the statement is often made by Cubans and Europeans and even some Americans that your brother was pushed into the arms of the Soviet Union by United States policy. Do you believe this?

MISS CASTRO: I do not believe anything of this. This is some of the propaganda which they are handing out and which they are distributing. The plan to make Cuba Communist and hand it to the Kremlin was something already planned and premeditated.

Nobody is to blame for that. We can not blame—the lack of assistance or the fact that the United States was not ready to listen to Fidel at that time are not the reasons for which he handed the country over to the Communists.

MR. SPIVAK: Miss Castro, in recent months your brother Fidel has tried to make up differences between Cuba and the United States. What is your explanation for this change of mind of his?

MISS CASTRO: It is not possible for the United States now to believe in a proposition or an offer of this type. It is not possible that a man who has been lying for the past six years and who every time he says something tells another lie—one has to discover the proposition; one must try and find out what is behind that proposal. A man who betrayed six million Cubans can not possibly misguide [too] so many people and so many millions of Americans, nor the American government. It is not possible to come to any understanding nor to a coexistence with the Cuban government.

MR. KRASLOW: Miss Castro, was your brother a dedicated Marxist or Communist before the Batista dictatorship fell?

MISS CASTRO: Sincerely whether he is or whether he wasn't is not very important right now. The problem is that he is, and we are suffering from his Marxism and Leninism in all of the intensity and all of its furor. So whether he planned it before—yes, I believe it, that this was a premeditated plan, but it doesn't matter now. The fact is that we are suffering under it now.

MR. KRASLOW: Do any of the exile organizations have what you would regard as a significant underground apparatus in Cuba today?

MISS CASTRO: All of the Cubans are ready to fight, and the organizations that are struggling there now—since I did not participate directly with any of the groups—I have been working with them, but I was never aware of their plans or their projects, therefore I couldn't sincerely say anything in that respect.

MR. BROOKS: We have about two minutes remaining.

MRS. CRAIG: Miss Castro, are you going back to Mexico to stay?

MISS CASTRO: No. I shall return to Mexico now, but I am coming back to the United States, and I intend to live in Miami.

MRS. CRAIG: Mexico recognizes the Castro regime, of course, and is sympathetic. Do you think Mexico itself is pro-Communist now?

MISS CASTRO: I do not believe that Mexico is pro-Communist, and in the second place, I respect the opinions of Mexico, even though I wish and desire for Mexico to be on the side of all of the Cubans, but I respect their attitude concerning Cuba at this time.

MR. KAPLOW: Miss Castro, are you aware, and if so when were you aware, of a report that an exile airplane set off Friday night to bomb a Havana stadium where Fidel was speaking?

MISS CASTRO: I heard the rumor a few moments before arriving here, but I couldn't tell you anything concerning it.

MR. SPIVAK: Miss Castro, what can the United States today do to help towards the overthrow of Castro without invasion?

MISS CASTRO: I will tell you. The United States can help us very, very much, and that is what we hope, that you will help the Cuban people overthrow the Cuban government—

MR. BROOKS: I am afraid this will have to wait until the next time. I am very sorry to have to interrupt but I see that our time has run out.