

Talk by George Beebe Before Chamber of Commerce of
Puerto Rico in San Juan Feb. 12, 1960.

I want to devote most of my talk to Puerto Rico, but I will touch upon hemispheric and Caribbean problems, the free press, Castro, communism, tourism and women.

Let's first summarize where we stand as we enter the 1960s.

The last 10 years might be called the Forward Fifties in the Western Hemisphere.

Greater strides have been taken in that time to solidify and stabilize the entire hemisphere, than in the 40 previous years of the century.

Trade barriers, transportation barriers and language barriers are no longer serious drawbacks to unifying the Americas.

Aviation now makes us working brothers instead of distant cousins.

Responsible governments, dedicated to a better way of life for their peoples, have replaced those by revolt and corruption.

The standard living of every country has been improved, due largely to expanded industrialization that provides payrolls never achieved by an economy based solely on agriculture.

The press of the Americas has never been freer and more responsible and objective.

There's improvement in public health everywhere.

Illiteracy, the plague of so many underdeveloped countries, is gradually being reduced.

Nations that once glared at each other across hostile borders now smile in profitable trade.

One of the most encouraging steps of the decade was the formation of an economic union of six Central American nations working now for a common market rather than a competitive market.

The Inter-American Development Bank is giving financial aid to countries working for a place in the sun.

There has been an exchange of interests of our peoples-our entertainment, our music, our dress and our sports.

We in the United States have accepted cha-cha, you have accepted Elvis Presley, which indicates the extremes we are going to to be good neighbors.

Barring the last mentioned development, these are the progressive steps we should strive to continue.

I wish there was not a dark side to the hemispheric picture.

President Eisenhower's trip to South America is being made principally to reappraise our policy toward the Latin nations.

He goes at a time when an upsurge of nationalism and communism threaten the Good Neighbor policy for which we have so long worked and cherished.

The United States has been so occupied with cold wars on far away continents, that it evidently failed to fully realize that minor problems in Latin America suddenly has assumed major proportions.

Now we must act and act rapidly.

We will be as diligent in promoting our Good Neighbor policy as the Communists are in promoting their Bad Neighbor policy.

The hemisphere has a strenuous and long-range fight ahead to outmaneuver the cunning Soviets, but history shows that freedom-loving peoples always have won out over powers that would suppress.

I found extremely disturbing a recent report of the Central Intelligence Agency in Washington, that the Communists now are making a more intense drive in the Caribbean and Latin America than in the Middle East and North Africa.

General C. P. Cabell, deputy director of CIA, estimates that there are nearly one million Communists and their sympathizers in Latin Amreica.

Latin Communist leaders are being trained in Russia and Red China. More than 3,300 Latin American and Caribbean young people have attended Moscow youth festivals.

Soviet and Red China beam by radio 85 hours of propaganda weekly in Spanish and Portuguese to Latin Amrica.

"The current program," Cabell says, "involves the exploitation of the Cuban revolution as an example of a successful 'liberation struggle' which should be followed by 'anti-imperialist elements in other Latin countries.'"

This is what our enemies would do to undermine and destroy our hard-earned freedoms.

Now let's take a good look at the minor league cold war Cuba has placed at our doorstep.

I liken Cuba to a well-executed who-dunit.

The story is loaded with action, intrigue, mystery and excitement. It has a convincing cast of characters.

You can guess the outcome, but you wouldn't bet much money on your theory. The ending could be a sad one.

For the moment, Castro's antics are proving a boom to tourism in Puerto Rico, the Bahamas and Jamaica, but they also are scaring away American investments in other Latin American countries where they are urgently needed.

Anti-American venom being poured out in Cuba is making many a U. S. resident wonder how widespread is this feeling.

Cuba certainly deserved a change from Batista's strong-arm rule. It most certainly didn't deserve the type of dictatorship that Castro is dishing out.

Our experience at The Miami Herald with Fidel & Co. has been extremely interesting.

Just preceding and after the Castro brothers took off for the mountains, they and their followers sought The Herald as an outlet for telling their story to the world.

We used much of it, after extracting the obvious propaganda.

Yet Fidel had not been Cuba's chief for a month before he branded a half dozen U.S. publications, including The Miami Herald, as unfriendly to his regime.

Although we have sent telegrams and letters many times asking for interviews so he could explain reasons for this ill feeling, he has declined to reply.

Herald Publisher John S. Knight twice suggested that Castro meet with members of the Inter-American Press Association to discuss his resentment of the press.

He never responded.

Recently Mr. Knight wrote Fidel that The Herald would be willing to publish in length Castro's review of where he has been and where he is going.

Still no answer. Fidel just doesn't like to communicate with the outside world, although I notice that Soviet Deputy Premier Mikoyan has been in Cuba at Castro's invitation, showing that he does write occasionally.

Unless Castro gets substantial assistance from Russia and Red China, I predict he will bring Cuba to the Brink of economic disaster within two years.

Cuba Can't survive without tourists, without trade and without friends.

Cuba's anti-American stand has been deliberate, that's for certain.

The \$64 question is: Why has one of the United States' best friends turned bitter enemy without provocation?

Two influences that can slow down communism and dictatorships are the Catholic^{Church} and the free press.

Devoted Latin American Catholics never will reconcile themselves to adopting a godless way of life.

Communist propaganda can never withstand the spotlight of a free press that keeps the people accurately informed.

A dozen years ago the InterAmerican Press Association came into being.

Leading editors of the Western Hemisphere decided to fight for a universal free press.

John S. Knight of The Miami Herald and Mike Ramos of San Juan's El Mundo have been hard-hitting members of this organization which in a few years has helped to unseat a number of Latin dictators who insisted in a controlled press.

As President Harry S. Truman once said: "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen."

The IAPA heat has driven a half dozed dictators right out of the "kitchen" into exile.

Your neighbor, Rafael Trujillo, would give a fortune to get the spotlight of world opinion off his dictatorial back.

I might add that editors of El Imparcial of San Juan also have been active IAPA participants.

To the credit of Puerto Rico is the fact that while on the mainland rising production costs are driving some newspapers out of business, Gardner Cowles' faith in your future has led to the establishment of the new San Juan Star.

You should be proud of your excellent newspapers.

The Miami Herald some years ago accepted the challenge of helping to cement closer and friendlier relations between our continents and between our peoples.

At home, we try to acquaint Florida's thousands of newcomers with their neighbors to the South.

Each night, we fly some 6,000 copies of our Air Edition to 32 Caribbean and Latin American countries, keeping these subscribers abreast of world and Florida affairs.

The fine acceptance of our Air Edition in Puerto Rico has been most heartening.

I mentioned earlier that I would discuss women.

There are phases of this delightful topic that time tonight will not permit discussion, but I do want to emphasize that one of the great needs of Latin America is a militant women's movement.

For too long the women have been subjugated to the role of inferiors. In a progressive nation, women should be given the privilege of higher education, voting rights and the opportunity to participate in the business world, if they so desire.

You in Puerto Rico are a shining example of a Latin people who are following the United States in recognizing the need of "liberating" your women.

Where else in the Caribbean and Latin America will you find two large cities--San Juan and Ponce--with distinguished and capable women mayors?

Some of you perhaps wonder how Miami reacts to its influx of 40,000 Puerto Ricans.

Our fast-growing metropolis now has a Spanish-speaking colony of some 100,000 persons, a tenth of our permanent population.

Each month 1,000 more Latin Americans come to Miami to settle.

Integrating these people into our community is one of the responsibilities we assumed in becoming a leading gateway to Latin America.

We seek to absorb this continuing influx of Latinos with a minimum of conflict and hardship. It's not easy.

But we have been encouraged that we have avoided the troubles that have beset this migration in many of our northern cities.

Some of Miami's outstanding and most respected civic leaders are Puerto Ricans, and they are constantly active in helping to orientate and educate newcomers from their homeland.

We are aware that the majority of those coming to Florida from this island are rural folk, for the most part uneducated and unskilled. They do provide a problem at the outset as they encounter difficulties of language and customs, but they learn rapidly and are becoming an important segment of our labor force.

I fear in some instances they are being exploited, but this will not be tolerated indefinitely.

As Puerto Rico progresses and job opportunities increase, I'm sure this flow to the mainland will slacken off.

Until that time, we will continue to be understanding and helpful to those who join our community.

I think it significant that less than 2 per cent of our police cases are Latin Americans.

* * *

Mrs. Beebe and I toured South America two years ago, and we were most impressed by the vibrancy of Sao Paulo, now that continent's second largest city.

The driving force of its people to make the city even bigger and better was apparent everywhere we went.

From our hotel window we could see some six skyscrapers under construction. They poured concrete until midnight on a building next door to our hotel.

We were captivated by the enthusiasm and pride of accomplishment of these industrious Brazilians.

Now we sense much the same spirit in Puerto Rico.

You are now aware of your potential and the team effort of your people to assure success of Operation Bootstrap is winning the applause of the world.

As you know, one of the big factors in your development is a sound and stable government that permits enterprise and investment without fear of political turmoil and upheaval.

I know you are as proud as we are on the mainland to live and work under the inspiring United States Constitution--that rugged document that assures us the freedoms we all cherish.

Great credit for your advancement goes to your aggressive, determined and far-sighted leader, Governor Muñoz Marín.

He has been one of the champions of the democratic way of life and a man who has won the highest respect in the United States and in all free countries of the world.

Underdeveloped countries are looking to Puerto Rico for a formula to cure their ailments of poverty and unemployment.

Puerto Rico thus becomes the showcase of what can be done under democratic processes and free enterprise. You are the envy of your neighbors.

We should all work more diligently to tell and sell the Puerto Rico story to the world.

* * *

Let me for a minute take a look at your thriving tourist business.

Puerto Rico now has an opportunity to cash in on Cuba's temporary withdrawal as a major tourist center.

Jets flying to San Juan from Miami and New York already are bringing cries of anguish from Haiti, Jamaica and other Caribbean resorts, which are felling the lack of such service.

You have everything to offer the vacationist--luxury hotels, beaches and mountains, gambling and rum to drink and take home.

The advantage is all on your side.

But a word of warning. Mainlanders travel to the Caribbean looking for foreign atmospheres--something they can't get at Miami Beach or St. Petersburg or Fort Lauderdale.

Don't ever try to Americanize Puerto Rico. Strive mightily to keep your Latin traditions and customs and entertainment if you would capitalize fully on your tourist potential.

* * *

You should be proud of the part being played by Puerto Ricans now serving in key State Department posts in Latin America, Africa and elsewhere.

We should use even more of your people in our foreign service.

They not only have the advantage of speaking Spanish fluently, but also know the Latin background and temperament.

Puerto Ricans can help us in business, too.

A report made recently for the Senate Foreign Relations committee recommends that United States corporations would do well to use Puerto Rican personnel in their education and training programs of Latin American operations.

This all puts emphasis on your growing importance.

How lucky you are to live in a land just opening its door to opportunities.

Yours is a future of excitement and challenge and I know you will meet it with the same vigor and determination you have shown in the last 10 years.

You haven't yet tapped your your potential in aviation, in tourism, in mining, in agriculture and in industrial capacity.

Your destiny is to be envied. I see few obstacles that you can't surmount in going forward to greater heights.