

PORTIONS UNDERLINED REFER TO SEN. MCCARTHY
AND THE DOVISH ATTITUDE ON VIETNAM.

PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT OF LOS ANGELES MAYOR SAM YORTY'S NEWS
CONFERENCE AT CITY HALL HELD WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 1968,
WHERE HE DISCUSSES THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

REPORTER: How are things in Czechoslovakia?

MAYOR: Well, that's another story. I think the Russians have given their answer to the naive, the wishful thinkers, the dupes and the people that have been trying to tell us that the Russians have changed their spots and that we don't have to worry about them any more. Some of us who have been trying to warn the people that you can't trust them, that the only thing they respect is power, I think I can say now that perhaps we can get some of these people to listen to reason. I wonder if those who are screaming at the Americans to get out of South Viet Nam, where we're trying to protect the people from a Communist takeover... I wonder if those same people will now demand that the Russians and the Bulgarians and the Poles and the East Germans get out of Czechoslovakia right away...where they are actually trying to impose a hard line Communist rule with all the repression that goes with it on the people of Czechoslovakia who wanted nothing more than a few rights to speak, freedom of the press, a few of the simple things that we take for granted.

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MAYOR: While this goes on in those countries, complete repression of the members of the international communist party aligned with the Bolsheviks, the Communists of Russia, are parading around our streets here, abusing the right of free speech to try to destroy our nation and undermine our will to resist the Communists. We have the spectacle of the Democratic Party Platform Committee, up until at least the invasion of Czechoslovakia, threatened to get on the Communist side of the table in Paris advocating the same things the Communists advocate, the complete cessation of the bombing, without any commitment from the Communists that they will de-escalate their part of the conflict. So there has been a great deal of unrealism going on in this country, and I hope that the Russian action in Czechoslovakia will awaken our people, some demagogues and some dupes, to pay a little less heed to the Communist Party line in our country.

REPORTER: Do you think Senator McCarthy might change his mind, or his attitude being a dove as he is, because of the happenings in Czechslovakia?

MAYOR: Well, I don't think Senator McCarthy will change his mind.

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MAYOR: I hope that a lot of people in the U.S. who have been
listening to Sen. McCarthy will realize that he doesn't know
anything about the Communists, the International Communist Party,
doesn't understand it, doesn't see the menace of it. The Communists
are interested in power, and they respect only power and our entreaties
at the Security Council now are meaningless. They can veto anything
that the Security Council wants to do and if the United Nations
Security Council wanted to meet on this problem, it should have
met about a month ago and started watching it. We wait until the
Russians, who don't act like we do...they don't telegraph their
punches and fool around and act with indecision, they go ahead
and accomplish what they want and then say to you..."well now, let's
see what you're going to do about it."

REPORTER: After your briefing in Hawaii, how do you feel about the
Vietnam situation? Where are we going, is there going to be a
victory, what's going to happen?

MAYOR: Well, you can't have a victory when you have an administration
that's not seeking one. If you mean by victory that we actually
cause the Communists to surrender and we exert our will in the
situation. We are not even trying to do that at the moment. We
have set up a fairly defensive position within South Viet Nam. The
infiltration has increased tremendously since the limitation on the
bombing and I think it is pretty well conceded. I'm not revealing
anything that is secret information, that the Communists have refitted
and rested and re-supplied themselves and appear to be able now at
a time of their own choosing, to launch a major offensive in the
Da Nang area and in the Central Highlands and in the Saigon area.

MAJOR: They could do this because they have a sanctuary in North Viet Nam, where they are not even bombing anymore, and they have a sanctuary in Laos, where there is some bombing of the supply lines, but nothing that can stop them there. They have a sanctuary in Cambodia, where they can get supplies both from the north and through the port of Sihanoukville? in the south. So they can stay there and take their time about planning their attacks, and I think most people, who are knowledgeable in the subject matter, feel it will probably come after the weather changes, which would be, well, it could come pretty soon now or in about a month, when any attempt to resume bombing in the north would run into monsoon weather. It is felt that there will be at least one more large attack like the Tet offensive. On the other hand, our military people feel that, if it comes, they can cope with it and that might be the last dying gasp, provided that we are able to cope with it...that would throw them back with the kind of losses they suffered during Tet. . But there is no indication so far of a real de-escalation on their part or any attempt to reciprocate for our new restrictions on the bombing. And I think that it shows again that the Russians' quick lightning action in Czechoslovakia, very much like the lightning stroke of the Israelis, shows what we could have done it ourselves in Viet Nam and had the whole thing over at least in 1965 if we had the will and the courage to go about really defeating them. But, of course, our administration is afraid of the Russians and so we are afraid to do anything because the Russians might intervene in another way.

MAYOR: But the Russians are obviously not afraid of us. I might call to your attention that it was a Russian-German-Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939 which started World War II, but of course at that time Poland was protected by a treaty with Great Britain. Today Czechoslovakia stands alone with no protection and obviously the Russians will put in a puppet government and claim it's the legal government. It invited them in and Dubcek and his group are intruders, that they are not legitimate and, while the Security Council argues, the Russians will proceed to consolidate their hold on the government as they did in Hungary and to start the repression again. They simply can't stand free speech and free expression so close to their borders because they, themselves, are a small power dictator clique. They've never been elected by the people of Russia. Certainly Ulbricht would be thrown out of East Germany if the people who revolted once before there...if they had an opportunity to do so. And Gomulka in Poland is probably about as popular there as a rattlesnake among the people. If they had a chance to express themselves. We are seeing the usual Communist attitude to disregard for human decency ordinary rights. And I say again that those people who think they have changed better wake up and realize it is the same old Communist party with the same old tactics and the same old objective of Communising the World.

REPORTER: What is the Russian intervention going to do as the writing of the Democratic platform is concerned?

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MAYOR: Well, I think that it may cause the Platform Committee, I'm not sure, to stiffen their attitude a little bit and not listen so much to the McCarthys and the McGoverns and the others who have been completely fooled by the Communist Party.

REPORTER: What do you think this country's reaction should be to the Czech crisis?

MAYOR: Well, our reaction now is too late. It is a 'fait accompli.' They have taken over, and we don't have the military power to do anything about it and the Russians know it. So we will take the matter before the Security Council, now that the Russians have already gained their objective. We will try to get them condemned and they will argue that the government they install is a legitimate government. They'll veto anything meaningful. I doubt if the Assembly of the United Nations will get very far doing anything about it either.

REPORTER: What effect do you think this episode will have on the convention itself next week?

MAYOR: I would think that at least some of the delegates will now be able to argue that the stand taken by McCarthy and some others is based upon a false premise that the Russian Communist Party has changed and that it has liberalized and that you can deal with it and it will keep its word and we can follow out the McNamara policy of scaling down our former preponderance in nuclear weapons so as not to provoke the Russians by being too strong. I think they will realize that all of that is based upon a false premise. And I hope that it will stiffen the spines of a lot of Americans who have been misled.

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REPORTER: Do you think it is a negative event as far as McCarthy's chances?

MAYOR: I think it should be, and I'm sure that if the Democratic Party through its Platform Committee puts itself on the other side of the conference table with the Communists in making the same demands they are, the Democratic Party will commit suicide. They simply won't win the election in November.

REPORTER: Mr. Mayor, do you think the Czech crisis will in some way help Mr. Nixon?

MAYOR: I'm sure the Czech crisis will help Richard Nixon, who has always, I think, had a very good understanding of the ultimate objective of the Russian Communists. How much it will help him depends on what the Democrats do. If they show an increasing awareness of the real threat of Communism in the world, the fact that it is not subsiding. In fact, it is increasing, and I hope that this awareness will be shown by the Democratic Party and I hope also that the people in the country will start to look a little more about what the Communists are doing right here in our own country and understand the effects of their subversion on some groups that are not Communist but are badly influenced and badly infiltrated.