

The All-New Good Old Fidel



Arthur Hoppe

MR. NIXON, having made peace with China, Russia and other far-away giants, now appears ready to make peace with Cuba, which used to be only 90 miles from our shores.

Two obstacles remain. First, we'll have to wait for Dr. Kissinger to get back from wherever he's now making peace with North Vietnam and even — it's within the realm of possibility — South Vietnam.

Secondly, we'll have to change Fidel Castro. We certainly wouldn't want to make peace with a bloodthirsty Communist dictator who's driven by this insane ambition to blow up America with Russian nuclear missiles.

Fortunately, this shouldn't prove difficult. For the State Department is blessed with one efficient agency — the universally-admired Bureau of Transmogrification. And already the dedicated T-men, as they are known, are hard at work on the problem.

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“**I** WANT you to work on this case, Frisbee,” Bureau Chief Homer T. Pettibone told a new, young T-man last week as he showed him around the agency. “You might as well start with an easy one.”

“Yes, sir,” said young Frisbee nervously. “But do you really think it'll be easy to change a bloodthirsty, insane Communist dictator?”

“A snap, lad. Look at the job we did on Uncle Joe.”

“Uncle Joe, sir?”

“You're too young to remember kindly, pipe-puffing Uncle Joe Stalin, our loyal ally in World War II. In six months we turned him into a bloodthirsty, insane Communist dictator.”

“Yes, sir. But this one's the other way around.”

“Well, then, take the case of Emperor Hirohito. Do you know he used to be a buck-toothed, power-mad Nip bent on conquering all of Asia with his cruel hordes? Look at him today, a gentle, democracy-loving grandpa — all thanks to us.”

“Wonderful sir. But what have we done lately?”

“Have you forgotten Chairman Mao, son? Only a year ago he was determined to blow up the world with thermonuclear weapons on behalf of his oppressed, starving ant-like society. In a single week we caused him to want only peace and progress for the lovable, thriving Chinese people.”

“Miraculous, sir.”

“Here are some of our current projects, Frisbee. all confidential. We'll be transforming Ho Chi Minh into a dead patriot, General Thieu into a corrupt dictator, Chiang Kai-shek into a senile, impotent old man, and Brezhnev... I wish we could get him to smile more. But we'll lick it.”

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“**I** KNOW you will, sir. You've convinced me the Bureau can do anything. What do you want me to convert this bloodthirsty Communist dictator, Fidel Castro, into?”

“Here's your model, Frisbee. Study it closely. You'll see a beloved liberator who delivered his downtrodden people from tyranny to bring them the blessings of democracy — a man of wit and charm who captures the hearts of America by appearing on talk shows and humbly plucking chickens in his posh New York hotel room.”

“Golly, sir. Anybody would love a Fidel Castro like that. But the model looks strangely familiar.”

“It should, Frisbee. That's Fidel Castro in 1960.”