Propaganda: The New York Times and Herbert Matthews

Intro

Fidel Castro was given up for dead, and his would-be revolution written off, in the months after his disastrous invasion of the Cuban coast in late 1956. Then a New York Times editorial writer named Herbert L. Matthews published one of the great scoops of the 20th century, reporting that not only was Castro alive, but that he was backed by a large and powerful army that was waging a successful guerrilla war against dictator Fulgencio Batista. Matthews, clearly taken by the young rebel's charms and sympathetic to his cause, presented a skewed picture. He called Castro a defender of the Cuban constitution, a lover of democracy, and a friend of the American people.

The image created by Matthews stuck, helping Castro consolidate his power and gain international recognition. US attitudes toward the conflict in Cuba changed, dooming Batista. But after the triumph of the revolution, US views again abruptly shifted against Castro and Matthews was blamed for having helped bring him to power. The perception that Washington had been hoodwinked by Matthews and State Department officials sympathetic to Castro led to the development of the hard line which still guides US– Cuban relations.

Tasks

1. **Read "*FLASHBACK: When Castro Tricked The New York Times Into Saving His Revolution*"**

http://dailycaller.com/2016/11/27/flashback-when-castro-tricked-the-new-york-times-into-saving-his-revolution/

- What did Matthews report confirm to the American public that they didn't know?

- What are some ways that Castro fooled Matthew into thinking he had a larger army than he actual did?

- **Che (paraphrased):** "Matthews's work was more important to the rebels than a victory on the battlefield." Explain this.

2. **Read Matthews, "Cuban Rebel is Visited in Hideout" (New York Times: Feb 24, 1957).**

- Add two quotes from the article that describe Castro in a favourable light:

- Add three quotes from the article that portray Castro's rebel movement (M-26-7) as strong, powerful, or having good chances against Batista: