

Socialism is the only guarantee of our liberty and independence

• Speech by Army General and President of the Councils of State and Ministers Raúl Castro Ruz, presented during the closing of the 7th Legislature of the National Assembly of People's Power 6th Ordinary Period of Sessions, within the Convention Palace on December 18, 2010, 52nd Year of the Revolution

(Typescript version from the Council of State)



The speech is, on this occasion, slightly longer than previous ones, but this has truly been an exceptional session of the assembly, given the topics discussed, your opinions and the documents approved.

As I made my way to this Assembly, seeing the date in the newspaper, December 18, a modest historical detail immediately came to mind, exactly 54 years ago, we didn't think we would live that long back then, in the circumstances we found ourselves,

the nascent Rebel Army, the current revolutionary Armed Forces, and the Revolution itself which after the disaster and the great defeat suffered in a place known as Alegría de Pío, three days after the landing, December 5 of that year, over 13 days, wandering in small groups trying to get around the two lines encircling us, finally aided by campesinos, I was reunited with Fidel's small group.

It was already night when we met. After the initial embrace, I stepped back and the first question was, "How many guns do you have?" "Five," I answered. "With the two that I have, that's seven. Now, yes, we have won the war!" (Applause) And it appears, given what we've seen, that he was right.

It is a felicitous coincidence, and I wanted to begin my last comments during this event with this gratifying memory.

Compañeras and compañeros:

We have been meeting for several days now discussing matters which are extremely important for the future of the nation. This time, in addition to our customary work in commissions, the deputies have met in plenary in order to analyze details of the current economic situation, as well as budgetary proposals and the economic plan for the year 2011.

The deputies have also devoted long hours to the thorough evaluation and clarification of some doubts and concerns about the Draft Guidelines for the Economic and Social Policy of the Party and the Revolution.

Our media has given a broad coverage to these discussions in order to make it easier for the general public to receive this information.

Acceptable economic performance for 2010

Despite the impact of the world crisis on the national economy, the irregular rainfall pattern during the last 19 months - from November 2008 through June this year - and without denying our own errors, I can affirm that the performance of the 2010 economic plan can be deemed acceptable, considering the times in which we are living. We will attain the goal of 2.1 per cent growth in the

Gross Domestic Product, better known by its acronym (GDP); exports of goods and services have increased. The number of foreign visitors projected for the year has already been reached, while the current year has yet to end. Although once again, we will not be able to meet the planned revenue goals, we have strengthened the domestic financial balance and, for the first time in several years, we are beginning to see a favorable dynamic, still somewhat limited, in work productivity as compared to average wage.

Withholdings of foreign transfers or, what amounts to the same thing, the restrictions we were forced to impose at the end of 2008 on payments from Cuban banks to foreign suppliers - which will be discontinued next year - have continued to decrease. At the same time, significant progress has been achieved in the rescheduling of our debt with our principal creditors.

Once again I would like to thank our commercial and financial partners for their confidence and understanding; I confirm to them our most steadfast intention to honor our commitments in a timely fashion. The Government has given precise instructions to not take on new debts without guaranteeing their payment within the terms agreed upon.

Economic Targets for Next Year



Raul with Marino

As was explained by Vice President of the Government and Minister of Economy and Planning Marino Murillo Jorge, next year's plan foresees a 3.1 per cent GDP growth, which should be reached under circumstances no less complicated or tense.

The year 2011 is the first of five included in the midterm projection for our economy. During this period we shall be gradually and progressively introducing some new structures and concepts in the Cuban economic model.

During the coming year, we will move decisively to reduce superfluous expenses, thus promoting

savings of all types of resources which, as we have said on several occasions, is the quickest and most reliable source of income at our disposal.

Likewise, we shall not overlook in the least social programs in the areas of health, education, culture and sports; we would rather raise their quality, since we have identified enormous reserves of efficiency through a more rational use of the existing infrastructure. We will also be increasing exports of goods and services, while continuing to concentrate investments in those areas showing the most rapid return.

Regarding the economic plan and the budget, we have insisted that the old story of non-compliance and overdrafts must come to an end. **The plan and the budget are sacred. And I repeat, from now on, the plan and the budget will be sacred; they were drafted to be complied with, not to allow us to be satisfied with justifications of any sort or even with inaccuracies and lies, whether deliberate or not, when the goals previously set are not met.**

The Consequences of Lying

At times, some *compañeros*, with no fraudulent intent, contribute inaccurate information received from their subordinates without previously checking it and so they fall into unconscious lying. But this false data could lead us to make erroneous decisions, with major or minor repercussions within the country. Whosoever acts in that manner is also lying, and whoever these persons may be they must be definitively and not temporarily removed from the position they hold and, after the analysis of the appropriate bodies, they must also be removed from the ranks of the Party, should they be members.

Lies and their harmful effects have accompanied humanity since we learned the art of speech in ancient times, motivating society's condemnation. We recall that the eighth of the Ten Commandments of the Bible reads: "Thou shalt not bear false witness or lie". Likewise, the three basic moral ethical principles of the Inca civilization are stated as follows: do not lie, steal, or be lazy.



We must struggle to eradicate, once and for all, lies and deceit from cadres' behavior at all levels. No wonder *compañero* Fidel in his brilliant definition of the concept of Revolution, pointed out, among other things: "never lie or violate ethical principles".

With the publication of the Draft Guidelines for the Economic and Social Policy on November 9th last, the train of the Sixth Party Congress has taken on steam,

since now the true congress will be the open and honest discussions of these guidelines by Party members and the entire people. This genuine democratic exercise will allow us to further enrich that document and, without excluding divergent opinions, achieve national consensus about the need and urgency of introducing strategic changes in the way the economy functions, with the purpose of making Socialism in Cuba sustainable and irreversible.

We should not be afraid of differences of opinion and this directive, which is not new, should not be interpreted as being limited only to the discussions of the guidelines; differences of opinion, preferably expressed in the right place, time and form, at the right moment and in the correct form, will always be more desirable than false unanimity based on pretense and opportunism. Moreover it is a right no one should be denied.

The more ideas we are capable of inspiring in the analysis of a problem, the closer we will come to its appropriate solution.

The Economic Policy Commission of the Party and its 11 working groups have worked for months to draw up the abovementioned guidelines which, as we have explained, will constitute the central topic of the Congress, based on the conviction that the economic situation is the most important task of the Party and the Government and the basic assignment for cadres at all levels.

We cannot let ourselves be carried away by improvisation and haste

During the last few years we have been insisting that we could not let ourselves be carried away by improvisation and haste in this area, bearing in mind the magnitude, the complexity and the inter-relationship of the decisions to be adopted. For that reason, I think that we did the right thing when we decided to defer the Party Congress even though we had to patiently resist the honest, as well as ill-intentioned protests, both inside Cuba and abroad urging us to rush into the adoption of a

score of measures. Our adversaries abroad, as we might expect, have challenged our every step, first by calling the measures cosmetic and insufficient and now trying to confuse public opinion by prophesizing a sure failure and concentrating their campaigns on the extolling of alleged disappointment and skepticism with which they say our people have received this draft.

Sometimes it seems that their deepest desires prevent them from seeing reality. Making their true hopes evident, they blatantly demand that we dismantle the economic and social system which we created, as if this Revolution were willing to submit to the most humiliating surrender or, tantamount to the same thing, allow its destiny to be governed by degrading conditions.

Over the course of 500 years, from Hatuey to Fidel, our people have shed too much blood to accept the dismantling of what we have built with so much sacrifice.

The measures we are implementing are aimed at the preservation of socialism ...I was not elected President to restore capitalism in Cuba



To those who may entertain such unfounded illusions, we must remind them once and again of what I said before this Parliament on August 1, 2009, and I quote: "I was not elected President to restore capitalism in Cuba nor to surrender the Revolution. I was elected to defend, maintain and continue improving socialism, not to destroy it", end of quote.

Today, I add that the measures we are implementing and all the modifications that need to be introduced in the updating of the economic model are aimed at the preservation of socialism by strengthening it and making it truly irrevocable, as was stated in the Constitution of the Republic at the behest of the vast majority of our population in the year 2002.

We have to put all the information, and the thinking behind every decision, on the table and discouraged the excessive secrecy to which we became accustomed during these 50 years that we have lived besieged by the enemy. Any State must reasonably keep some matters confidential; that is something no one can deny. But matters defining the political and economical course of the nation will not be secret. It is vital to explain, provide arguments and convince the people of the fairness, necessity and urgency of any measure, no matter how tough it appears to be.

The Party and the Communist Youth, as well as the Central Organization of Cuban Workers and the respective labor unions, along with the rest of the mass and social organizations, have the capacity to mobilize the support and confidence of the people through debate, free from unworkable dogmas and preconceptions which constitute a colossal psychological barrier, which we need to dismantle little by little, and together we will do it.

That is exactly the fundamental agenda which we have reserved for the National Conference of the Party to be held in 2011, after the Congress, at a date to be set later. On that occasion we will analyze, among other matters, modifications of the Party's methods and style of work since, as a result of the deficiencies found in the performance of Government administrative bodies, the Party has engaged in the exercise of functions beyond its duties, thus restricting and compromising its role as the organized vanguard of the Cuban nation and the supreme leadership of society and the State, as established by Article Five of the Constitution of the Republic.

The Party should lead and supervise and not interfere with the activities of the Government at any level: it is the Government that governs. Each body has its own norms and procedures, depending on their mission in society.

Transforming erroneous and unsustainable conceptions of socialism

It is necessary to change the mentality of cadres and of all compatriots in facing the new approach which is beginning to be sketched out. **It is simply about transforming erroneous and unsustainable conceptions of socialism, that have become deeply rooted in broad sectors of the population over the years, as a result of the excessively paternalistic, idealistic and egalitarian approach instituted by the Revolution in the interest of social justice.**

Many of us Cubans confuse socialism with giveaways and subsidies and equality with egalitarianism. Quite a few of us consider the ration book to be a social achievement that should never be eliminated.

In this regard, **I am convinced that several of the problems we are facing today have their origin in this distribution mechanism.** While it is true that its implementation was inspired by the wholesome idea of ensuring people a stable supply of foodstuffs and other goods to counter the unscrupulous hoarding by some for profit, it is an evident expression of egalitarianism that equally benefits those who work and those who do not, or those who do not need it, thus generating bartering and resale in an underground black market, etc, etc.

The solution to this complex and sensitive matter is not that simple since it is closely related to the strengthening of the role of salaries in society. That will only be possible if, at the same time, giveaways and subsidies are reduced and the productivity of work and the availability of products to the population are increased.

In this matter, as well as in the elimination of overstaffing, the Socialist State will not leave any citizen unprotected and via the social welfare system it will ensure that people who are unable to work receive the minimum required protection. In the future there will be subsidies, but not of products, but to Cuban men and women, who for one reason or another, really need them.

As is known, as of September the cigarette rations were eliminated. This product was received by only a part of the population. Obviously, due to its harmful effects to human health, it cannot be considered a basic commodity.

Next year - and as already said here during the discussions we've held - we cannot afford to spend around 50 million dollars - 47 million to be exact - to import coffee, which has so far been distributed in rations to all consumers, including newborn children. Since this is an unavoidable necessity, we intend to mix it with peas, as we did through 2005, since they are much cheaper than coffee, almost 3,000 dollars per ton, while the cost of peas is 390 dollars.

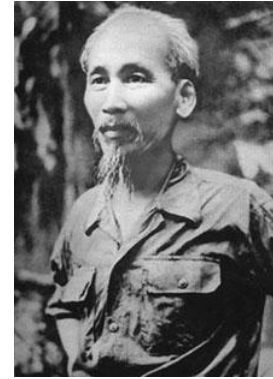
If we want to keep on drinking pure, un-rationed coffee, the only solution is to produce it in Cuba where it has been shown that all the required conditions for its cultivation exist, and where we can produce enough to satisfy the demand and even export, with the highest qua

CUBAN COFFEE



After the aggressive U.S. war on Vietnam, the heroic, undefeated Vietnamese people asked if we could teach them how to grow coffee and off we went; we taught them, we shared our experience. Today Vietnam is the second largest exporter of coffee in the world. And a Vietnamese official said to his Cuban colleague, "How is it that you taught us to grow coffee and now you are buying it from us?" I don't know what the Cuban might have answered. Surely, he said, "The blockade."

These decisions, and others that we will have to implement, even though we know they are not popular ones, are a must in order to be able to maintain and even improve the free public health, education and social security services for all of our citizens.



Ho Chi Ming,
Vietnamese leader

The construction of a new society from an economic point of view is, in my modest opinion, also a journey into the unknown.



The leader of the Cuban Revolution, compañero Fidel himself, in his historical speech on November 17, 2005, stated, and I quote: "Here is a conclusion I've come to after many years: among all the errors we may have committed, the greatest of them all was that we believed that someone really knew something about socialism, or that someone actually knew how to build socialism", end of quote. Hardly one month ago, exactly five years later, in his message on the occasion of the International Students Day, Fidel confirmed these ideas which maintain their validity.

I for one remember the idea of an award-winning Soviet scientist who, about half a century ago, was thinking that even though the possibility of a manned flight into space had been theoretically documented, it was still a journey into the unknown.

While we have counted on the Marxist-Leninist theoretical legacy, according to which there is scientific evidence as to the feasibility of socialism and the practical experience of the attempts to build it in other countries, the construction of a new society from an economic point of view is, in my modest opinion, also a journey into the unknown. Therefore every step must be carefully considered and planned before the next step is taken; mistakes are to be corrected quickly, in a timely fashion, not leaving the solution up to time, which allows them to worsen and, in the end, we are faced with a costlier bill.

We are fully aware of the errors that we have committed and the Guidelines precisely mark the beginning of the road to rectification and the necessary updating of our socialist economic model.

Nobody should claim that he or she has been deceived: the Guidelines indicate the road towards a socialist future, adapted to Cuba's conditions and not to the capitalist and neo-colonial past which was defeated by the Revolution. **Planning and not the free market shall be the distinctive feature of the economy.** As was outlined in the third general guideline, the concentration of ownership shall not be allowed. This is as clear as day, **but there is no one as blind as one who doesn't want to see.**

The building of socialism should proceed according to the special characteristics of every country. It is a history lesson that we have learned very well. We do not intend to copy from anyone; that

brought us enough problems because, additionally, we copied badly; but we will not ignore the experiences of others and we will learn from them, even from the capitalists' positive experience.

The need for a change of mentality

Speaking about the necessary change of mentality, I shall mention one example: if we have come to the conclusion that self-employment constitutes one more opportunity for working-age citizens, with the goal of increasing the supply of goods and services to the population and remove the State from these activities so that it can focus on what is truly decisive, what the Party and the Government should do is facilitate the work rather than generating stigmas and prejudices against it. Therefore it is fundamental that we modify the existing negative attitude that quite a few of us have towards this form of private employment. When defining the



Marx, Engels and Lenin

features that ought to characterize the building of a new society, the classics of Marxist-Leninism - especially Lenin - stated, that the State, on behalf of all the people, should maintain the ownership of the fundamental means of production.

We turned this precept into an absolute principle and converted into state property almost all the country's economic activity. The steps we have been taking and shall take in broadening and relaxing the regulation of self-employment are the result of profound reflection and analysis and we can assure you this time there will be no going back.

The Federation of Cuban Workers and its respective national unions are currently studying ways and means of organizing the provision of assistance to this labor force, promote full compliance with the Law and the payment of taxes and encourage these workers to eschew illegalities. We should defend their interests just as we do with any other citizen, as long as they observe the approved legal norms.

In this respect, the introduction of basic concepts about the taxation system at different educational levels becomes very important, so that younger generations are continuously and concretely taught about the application of taxes as the most universal form of redistribution of the national income, in the interest of covering social costs, including help to the most needy.

Across society as a whole, we need to develop the civic values of respect of and compliance by all taxpayers with their tax obligations; we should educate people in that culture and discipline, reward those who comply and sanction tax evasion.

Removing the existing obstacles to the promotion of productive forces in our rural areas

Another area where there is still much to do, in spite of the advances made, is the attention to the different production modalities in agriculture to remove the existing obstacles to the promotion of productive forces in our rural areas so that, depending on the savings generated by reducing imports, farmers can receive fair and reasonable revenues for their hard work. However this does

not justify the establishment of extremely high prices for the commodities consumed by the population.



Lugo Fonte

At this point, two years since we began distributing idle land in usufruct, I think we are in a position to evaluate the allocation of additional areas, beyond the limits established by Decree-Law 259 of July 2008, to those agricultural workers who have achieved outstanding results in the intensive use of the lands they are responsible for.

I believe it is opportune to clarify that the lands distributed in usufruct are the property of the people and therefore, if these are required for other uses in the future, for the construction of a public work or a highway or whatever, the State would compensate those working the land in usufruct for their investments and pay them the value of the improvements made.

In due time, once we conclude the studies based on the experience we have been accumulating, we shall submit to the Council of State the appropriate proposals to modify the abovementioned Decree-Law, with Lugo Fonte, President of the National Association of Small Farmers representing campesinos.

The Lack of Knowledge about the Economy

One of the most difficult barriers to overcome in the effort to create a different vision -and we need to publicly recognize it as such - is the lack of knowledge about the economy among the people, including quite a few leading cadres who, demonstrating a supine ignorance of the subject, adopt or propose solutions to daily problems without stopping for a minute to evaluate their effects and costs, or without even knowing if there are resources assigned or a budget toward that end within the plan.

I am not uncovering anything when I state that improvisation in general, particularly when it comes to the economy, leads to certain failure regardless of the lofty ends one intends to attain.

On December 2, on the occasion of the 54th anniversary of the landing of the *Granma*, the official newspaper of our Party published an excerpt of the speech delivered by Fidel in 1976 on that same date when we were celebrating the twentieth anniversary of that event. Given its validity and relevance I find it appropriate to quote it: "**The strength of a people and a revolution lies precisely in its capacity to understand and cope with difficulties. Despite everything, we will move forward on numerous fronts and we will struggle bravely to increase the economy's efficiency, save resources, reduce non-essential costs, increase exports and create economic consciousness in every citizen. I said earlier that we are all politicians; now I add that we all need to be economists, I repeat economists, not economic reductionists; a mindset of savings and efficiency is different from a mindset of consumption,**" end of quote.

Economists, that doesn't mean we all need to go earn a degree in economics, we have plenty; [it means] understanding economic principles, not getting a doctorate.

The core of these guidelines which you have, and the definition of directives for economic development, is, at this time, produce that which can be exported, reduce imports and invest in works which give more rapid returns and, additionally, improve efficiency in the economy. Conserve resources, reduce nonessential costs - we've talked these days about all of that - increase exports and develop the economic awareness of every citizen and I repeat, "economist, not economic reductionist; a mindset of savings and efficiency is different from a mindset of consumption," end of quote. Spoken on December 2, 34 years ago.



Ten years later, on December 1 of 1986, during the postponed session of the Third Party Congress, Fidel stated, and I quote: "Many do not understand that the Socialist State, just as any other State or system, cannot deliver what it does not have. Much less is it going to have that which it does not produce if it gives away money without having a productive backing. I am sure that overstaffing, excess money paid out to people, idle stocks, and wasting of resources are all linked to the great number of unprofitable companies that we have in our country." end of the quote.

After 34 and 24 years respectively, since these two quotes which I just cited, these instructions given by the leader of the Revolution, these and many other problems are still with us.

Well, what did we do? Why were these instructions, or directives from the leader of the Revolution, not followed? We applauded the speeches, we shouted 'Long live the Revolution' and then things continued just the same.

He did what was required of him and I am trying to find an explanation. I say that with his genius, Fidel was breaking through, showing the way, and the rest of us didn't know how to assure and consolidate the march forward in pursuit of those goals.

Neglecting mid and long term planning

We were in reality lacking in cohesion, despite the unity between the people and its Party, its leaders, its government, our fundamental strategic weapon which allowed us to survive, in a besieged fortress, facing the most powerful empire in history. But we lacked cohesion, organization and coordination between the Party and the government; in the midst of the threats and the daily emergencies we neglected mid and long-term planning; we did not act strongly enough against economic violations and errors committed by some leaders and we delayed correcting decisions that didn't show the expected results, but survived.

On more than one occasion I have referred to the fact that in this Revolution almost everything has been said and that we should check which of the instructions given by the leader of the Revolution have been fulfilled and which have not, ever since he made his vibrant statement "History Will Absolve Me" through the present. We will retake Fidel's ideas, which continue to be valid, and will not allow the same to happen to us again. That's why, the directives, the line, established by the Party and the government as to errors, violations, etc, etc. If we want to save the Revolution we have to implement what is decided and not allow that, after the Congress - which have been, up to now, in many cases, very eloquent - that the documents go to rest in the eternal slumber of the back drawer, as has been explained during these days of fruitful, democratic and truly profound

discussion. This is how we hope the people will continue discussing the guidelines; we have around 100 days for this. Either we rectify the situation or the time is up as we close in on the precipice, we fall, we fall as previously said, with the effort of entire generations, from Hatuey who came from the Dominican Republic and Haiti - the first internationalist in our country - to Fidel who has guided us brilliantly through such complicated situations since the triumph of the Revolution.

We will never forget, the not-so-young, or those of us who are older, but who are still young and in the fight and the new generations, too - some of whom took the floor yesterday and spoke eloquently - the words from Fidel's first speech once he arrived in the capital, from Batista's main barracks, the old Columbia, today the Liberty City school. He said, from that place, "The Revolution has triumphed, our joy is boundless, but there is still much to be done. We make no mistake thinking that everything will be easy now; perhaps now everything will be more difficult." And this precise and visionary perspective has been borne out over fifty some years.

It wasn't going to be a bed of roses, we knew the power we were going to challenge; we could only count on the people and the weapons we had confiscated from Batista, later we would arm ourselves as best we could, fomenting and educating, as well, the great unity of our people, which we must always care for like the apple of our eye, like life itself. But this unity cannot be decreed. We will have more unity because it will be everyone's domain if absolutely democratic methods are used in all of the nation's political activity, from the Party nucleus to the highest bodies of state power, which is this assembly gathered here, with patience.

We have an educated country, with a high level of education and we have many positive things, gigantic advances have been achieved. It's not up to this body to make a list; you know them. Our press talks about this enough, the accomplishments of the Revolution, we talk about them a lot in speeches; but **we have to get to the core of the problems**, as has been done during this session of the parliamentary assembly.

That is to say that the questions we have analyzed and the errors we have criticized, cannot continue to occur, the life of the Revolution is at stake.

Errors themselves, if they are just honestly analyzed, can become experiences and lessons for teaching us how to eradicate them and avoid their replication. You must have heard the saying that humans are the only animals that trip over the same obstacle more than once? I know some people here who have tripped over the same obstacle five, six or ten times and, if we don't stop them, they will continue to do so, and it's not that they damage their ankles or toes, it is that the errors that they commit cost millions.

The enumeration made by the vice president himself, Murillo, minister of economy and planning, or that made by compañero Osvaldo Martínez, president of the Parliamentary Economic Affairs Commission, who has just spoken: we lost so many millions given the market price of sugar; all these years its price has been on the floor and now that it rose, because of failing to meet sugar targets, for x reasons, we lost so many millions of dollars; and in another activity, we received a lot less through not having met the targets.

I was saying to Machado, commenting while we were listening, commenting there beside him: if you add up everything that we have



Osvaldo Martínez

lost by failing to meet targets, you'll see how many problems we could have solved. That is the case with everything.

I am an out-and-out defender of doing away with secretiveness

And for that, I am an out-and-out defender of doing away with secretiveness, although some secrets have to be kept, yesterday we were talking of some, that I am not thinking of making public; look at my speeches in the Assembly, and virtually nothing has been published in the press, I asked for it to be like that, precisely so as to be able to speak, the session was closed in order to discuss, as they say, to speak nakedly; there was no need to take off many clothes, but we discussed what had to be discussed. That's the way it has to be.



I am a defender of the battle against secretiveness, because underneath that embroidered carpet are the faults that we have swept there, plus the interest in that being how things are and should continue to be. And I recall certain criticisms; "Yes, put that criticism in the paper," I instructed that myself, many years ago and naturally, there was no talk of any entity, but about a product etc. Immediately the grand bureaucracy began to move: "those things don't help, they demoralize the workers." What workers are going to be demoralized? Like, on one occasion, in the large state dairy El Triángulo. It went on for weeks, because one of the trucks belonging to that dairy - it's huge, it still is, I

think it's a genetic center now... (He is told that it is the Triunvirato). The Triunvirato, that's correct, the Triángulo is in Camagüey. A little truck from there had broken down and so all the milk produced in the dairies in that area, from that place - not the complete enterprise - was thrown to some hogs that were being bred there.

It was then that I said to a secretary of the Central Committee responsible for agriculture at that stage, "Get to Granma, recount everything that is happening, make a criticism."

I stirred up the hornet's nest; what they didn't know is that it was I who had instructed it, and some of them came and even commented to me: "These things don't help, because they demoralize the workers," etc.

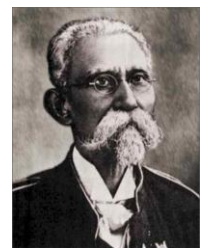
Close to the city, to the capital of the province, throwing milk away there, throwing it to their hogs.

Secretiveness for that reason? No. Anyone who wants to keep his or her own deficiencies secret, let them fight and devote that huge effort to avoiding them - I'm referring to deficiencies.

That is to say that errors, if they are simply analyzed - as I was saying a few minutes ago - with honesty, can be transformed into experiences and lessons for overcoming them and not repeating them.

If we do not act in this way, we will be continually repeating the same errors. That is why I am saying that in Cuba there are animals - I am saying of man being the only animal which trips over the same obstacle twice, but in Cuba there are more.

Let us not forget the other Dominican, a great internationalist, chief of our Liberation Army, Generalissimo Máximo Gómez, who knew us well, he was married



Maximo Gomez

to a Cuban woman, his sons were born in the field of battle, many died of need, and Manana by his side, there behind him, wherever, and he said: "The Cubans either don't arrive or they overreach." Isn't that it? (Replies of Yes)

Let's see if we overreach, but in the strict fulfillment of duty.

That is precisely the great usefulness of **a thorough analysis of errors**. That should become a permanent rule of conduct for all leaders.

The reality of figures prevails over all our hopes and dreams. Since our early years in first grade, when we studied elementary arithmetic, we learn that two plus two makes four, not five or six. You don't have to be an economist to understand that. Therefore, if at any given time we have to do something in the economic and social field the cost of which cannot be covered by the resources available, we should do that bearing in mind the consequences and knowing, ahead of time, that, ultimately, bare facts will irremissibly prevail.

Cuba has tens and tens of thousands of professionals graduated by the Revolution in the specialties of economy, accounting and finances, just to mention some, and we haven't known how to make proper use of their knowledge in the interest of the nation's orderly development.

We have something that is very precious –which is human capital, which we must further unite...

We have something that is very precious - to which compañero Fidel has referred to on various occasions - which is human capital, which we must further unite, with the help of the National Association of Economists and Accountants (ANEC) in order to undertake the task of constantly and systematically instructing our educated public and their leaders at all levels in this subject. A large representation from the ANEC National Board took part in the first seminars that we organized to analyze these guidelines and many of their members are immersed in the process of discussions under way.

In this context, we should emphasize the decisive contribution made by thousands and thousands of accountants to recover the place they deserve in economic management which, as we well know, is an indispensable condition for ensuring success and order in everything that we intend to accomplish.

Our Approach to Youth

In these circumstances, nobody should lose sight of the relevance of keeping a differentiated approach to youth - I have moved on to another issue, that of current university graduates and technical students; in other words, a differentiated treatment or focus, like the one you saw in the first resolution from the Ministry of Labor - and in line with that, I must highlight the decision to exempt new graduates fulfilling their Social Service from the overstaffing reduction processes. If we don't, they are going to be the first sacrificed.



Now then, we are not trying to assign them to jobs that have nothing to do with their professional profiles, as has occurred in the past, when they were even employed as doorpersons at some work

places, because that period is precisely designed to train them in production and the provision of services, so that they can complement the theory which they learned in school with practice and cultivate in them a love of work. If we don't do that we are sacrificing the immediate future, those who are going to continue.

No less important is the work to be carried out by the cadres and specialists involved in the drafting and review of legal documents, along with the modifications that are being implemented. For example, the issuance of almost 30 provisions - including decree-laws, Government agreements and resolutions from various ministries and national institutes - have been required to create the legal framework for two guidelines (158 and 159), referring to self-employment, its taxation regime and the reduction of overstaffing.

Just a few days ago - look at this example - a resolution issued by the Ministry of Finances that modified the prices set by redistribution centers for a series of agricultural products had to terminate another 36 resolutions from that same entity, issued on different dates in previous years, but all valid. Who can take charge of activities like the one of the prices of agricultural products, those who put a price on them and which are not within the demand and supply system; 36 documents? However many computers or whatever else we have, that's impossible. And there are many decisions of this kind laid down in documents, one after another, one modifying another, etc. one replaced 36, but all of them in force.

Irrational prohibitions lead to violations and that in turn leads to corruption and impunity

These facts give you some idea of the work facing us in the area of juridical reorganization for the purpose of reinforcing the institutionalism of the country and eliminating so many irrational prohibitions that have been on the books for years, without bearing in mind existing circumstances, thus creating a real breeding ground for multiple, barely legal, actions that frequently give rise to corruption in different degrees. One can reach a life-tested conclusion: irrational prohibitions lead to violations and that in turn leads to corruption and impunity; that is why I believe that the population is right - and what people have posed since the analysis of the 2007 speech, which was not a speech that merited being discussed within the population, except that I said to them, "Express opinions on anything you want," and I reported the results of that survey here on one occasion. It was moreover, to have more experience for what we are doing now, and great experiences were attained, and many of the proposals made at that stage, are being repeated in these debates of the Guidelines; in other words they have spent years in their concerns about the mind-boggling procedures associated with housing and automobile sales between individuals, just to mention two examples, which are currently under study for their solution, but an orderly one. For that reason, we recalled yesterday, as Marino said, the state regulates its relations with the individual, but the state doesn't have to interfere in anything that attempts to regulate the relations between two individuals, and that if I have a car, a little car or an *almendrón* as they are called now, and it is mine, I have every right to sell it to whomsoever I want, while complying with the regulations for the register of ownership.

At the same time, we must simplify and group together legislation in effect which is generally quite dispersed. The guideline documents are being drafted to be mastered by those responsible for their fulfillment, not for being filed away. As a result, we have to educate all the cadres and demand that they work with legal provisions that govern their functions and monitor that this complies as a requisite for suitability in occupying a determined position. We brought out an example yesterday or the day before, which was like a common denominator in all the provinces in a

concrete fact. It was normal practice for all of them to file away any paper that arrived, and that was the other day and along the way.

It is worth remembering, once again, that ignorance of the law is no excuse for not following it and that, according to the Constitution, all citizens have equal rights and responsibilities, therefore whoever commits a crime in Cuba, regardless of the position he or she holds, whoever they may be, will have to face up to the consequences of their errors and the weight of justice.

Moving on to another matter, also part of the Guidelines, in next year's plan, we have excluded 68 investments which are important for the country, because the established requirements were not met. These include funding definition, technical and project preparation, the definition of construction forces capable of undertaking them in the set term, and an evaluation of feasibility studies. We will not allow the wasting of resources directed toward investments resulting from spontaneity, improvisation and superficiality which, in more cases than not, have characterized the investment process. And when that was discussed in the last Council of Ministers and many of you heard it, that was the end of that, and anyone who violates it will have to bear the consequences of any kind.

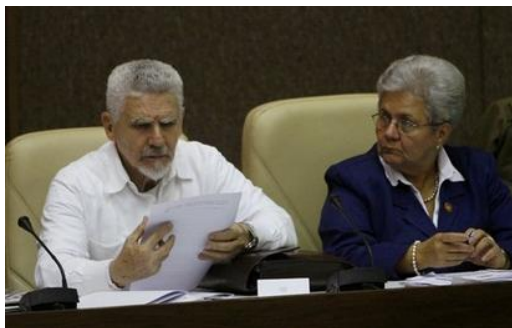
In dealing with these subjects I have to refer to the decisive role to be played by Party cadres, the government, and the mass and youth organizations in the coordinated and harmonious management of the process of updating the Cuban economic model.

We have now a special and well-prepared battlefield to demonstrate that all this can be done, and to do it well, and neither overreach or fall short, as the *Generalissimo* said.

The Course of Gradual Decentralization

In the course of the gradual decentralization that we are undertaking, we have adopted different measures aimed at increasing the authority of administrative and business leaders, to whom we shall continue delegating powers. Simultaneously, we are improving control procedures and raising exigency to higher levels to confront manifestations of negligence, apathy and other conduct incompatible with public positions.

We have here, sitting in the first row, Gladys Bejerano, vice president of the Council of State who, as you know, is an efficient Comptroller General of the Republic.



Ramiro Valdez, left, and Gladys Bejerano

One day when that Ministry existed - it is now dependent on the Council of State and, on behalf of this body, I am responsible for its daily functioning, as is the Attorney General's Office of the Republic, and I give them tasks - within the MAC, the Ministry of Audit and Control - despite the fact that she couldn't do much because all justifications were accepted and they always had some godfather, etc, the *compañera Gladys Bejerano* was not well regarded by some people. And always, when she controlled it, there was a little complaint from

somebody, anyone, "Well, this doesn't help." Some would say, "That demoralizes" - what is that! - "that *compañera Gladys* is very harsh, she says very harsh things." That is what we want, that is what I am demanding of you constantly.

So, on one occasion - I still didn't have this responsibility - I said, "I believe that we should dissolve this Ministry." I saw happy faces, they were looking at each other; except for Gladys' sad face, because it seemed as if we were disparaging her important work. I let almost one minute go by, a few seconds, and then I stated, "We are going to dissolve this Ministry, because it has equal hierarchy as other ministers, and we are going to make the Comptroller General of the Republic subordinate to the Council of State and we are going to propose her as Vice President." Their faces clouded again and she laughed happily again (Laughter). It isn't a joke that I'm telling you (Applause), it is not a joke that I'm telling you.

So, I was saying that administrative leaders, ministers etc, provincial and municipal governments, are going to have increased authority and backing, and decentralizing faculties from above.

We have said that municipal government has to have faculties and resources, and we also talked of how to obtain them and that we will continue delegating resources. In parallel control procedures are to be improved, and exigency raised to higher levels to confront manifestations of negligence, apathy and other conduct incompatible with public positions.

Likewise, we are fully aware of the damage caused by the phenomenon of the "inverted pyramid" to the cadres policy over the years; in other words, when salaries are not related to the importance and hierarchy of leadership positions, nor is there adequate differentiation between some and others, all of which discourages the promotion of the most capable workers to senior responsibilities in enterprises and in ministries themselves. This is a basic matter that must be resolved according to what is indicated in Guidelines 156 and 161, referring to wages policy.

The time we have left is short, the task as gigantic one

The 6th Party Congress has to be, as a fact of life - and I have that constantly present in my mind - the last of the majority of us who belong to the Revolution's Historical Generation. The time we have left is short, the task as gigantic one, and without the least shadow of immodesty, personal vanity or sentimentality, I think we have the obligation to take advantage of the weight of the moral authority that we possess before the people to leave the direction traced out and other important questions resolved. (Applause)

We do not believe ourselves more intelligent or able than anyone else, or anything of the kind, but we strongly believe that we have the elemental duty to correct the errors that we have committed in these five decades of the building of socialism in Cuba and, to that endeavor we will employ all the energy that we left to us which, fortunately is more than a little. (Applause)

We will redouble our perseverance and our intransigence against what is done wrong; ministers and other administrative and political leaders know they can count on our full support when, in the fulfillment of their duties, they educate, above all educate, and in turn are demanding of their subordinates and are not afraid of seeking out problems, because generally nobody wants to enter into that terrain; not afraid of seeking out problems in terms of confronting what is badly done, because at this moment, seeking out problems is one of the principal tasks in terms of overcoming all those deficiencies that we have mentioned.

Also, it is very clear to all of us that we are no longer in those initial years after the triumph of the Revolution in 1959 - in those first few months - when some of those holding government posts, particularly in that first government appointed by Urrutia, with the exception of Defense and Agriculture, because he was told, "leave them alone," thinking about agrarian reform and armaments

taken or that we were going to take. I am talking about January 2; after Fidel spoke in Céspedes Park, he left for the enemy's principal command post to talk with those soldiers so that they would join [the Rebel Army] - because there was a coup d'état in Havana - and we didn't even know to handle the tanks, the artillery and other means that they had there. He let Urrutia and other compañeros who were leaders of the 26th of July Movement in that era at the University of Santiago de Cuba, appoint the government.

I was the bearer of that message to Urrutia, at dawn on January 2, because the event in the Plaza went on until after midnight, and I communicated to him, "Don't touch, you are recommended not to touch the Ministry of Agriculture or the Ministry of Defense." That was the only thing that I said to him. And when I informed him on behalf of Fidel to appoint Colonel Rego Rubido, the man who had just surrendered to Fidel at Escandel Plateau on January 1, Urrutia went off and started pacing about the garage of the Vista Alegre house where I went to see him, a whole crowd surrounding the patio of the house saluting him, and the argument lasted for a while: "I can't appoint a little soldier chief of the Rebel Army!" I said to him, "Look, President, Fidel knows what he's doing. There's coup d'état in Havana, he's going to Bayamo to talk with Batista's soldiers..." And there were those who joined along the way and in the



course of the week that it took them to reach Havana, they arrived here in Columbia (Batista's command headquarters) with little beards that they had let grow. Guillermo García came there with Fidel and others of those present here: Colomé Ibarra, Ramiro Valdés came with Che, Polito came with Fidel. I don't know what Alvaro did, he was 15 years old. Did you stay there or come too? (He says that he remained in Santiago) You stayed in Santiago: you did well, because you're a native of Santiago.

So there was no way, 5,000 enemy soldiers in the city and I barely had two or three body guards and nothing else; we created some columns, because we trained a good force for Fidel; Lussón went, he was chief of a more powerful column, of which Colomé formed part; Belarmino Castilla Mas was going there in another column, we put Efigenio into some old airplanes that we took from Batista, so that he could arrive and take the police headquarters in Havana. Efigenio Ameijeiras was chief of Column 6, facing Guantánamo, and I had made him chief of three columns surrounding the city, which we thought to take on January 2, having confirmed the treason of General Cantillo, and he had to begin to see what he was going to do. I went into the office of [Colonel Alberto del Río] Chaviano himself, the same office in which he interrogated me at the time of the Moncada Assault, I entered through the same door.

When I was a prisoner, fortunately many days after the end of the repression and slaughter of the compañeros who assaulted the Moncada, they didn't strike me, they didn't beat me up, I did not go through that experience. Within the circumstances I tried to conduct myself in as dignified a way

as possible, without insolence, and they passed me through lines of soldiers who were insulting me and they asked the captain and the officers taking me, "Give him to me, Captain, to do justice."



Five years, five months and five days later, on January 1, we entered Santiago de Cuba and I went to the Moncada Garrison to talk to all those people, and now I entered the same place to cheers, and I had just one bodyguard, and I talked to them. The mission was to collect all the officers and take them to El Escandel, alongside Caney, so that they could talk with Fidel. I couldn't get out of there, a crowd of soldiers and sergeants took charge of me and took me to their barrio, there beside the Moncada Garrison, and there I was, I couldn't get out of there, they gave me coffee, etc, etc (They say something to him), eh? Gerolán? I'm talking to the troop and they begin: "Gerolán, Gerolán," and I asked Batista's officers, who is this Gerolán? They didn't take any notice: "Gerolán!" and me speaking at full pitch, from a balcony and, whatever, nobody told me who Gerolán was, and they wouldn't let me speak. The man who came with me didn't know either; until an officer, I think he was an accountant, something in logistics, a lieutenant or deputy-lieutenant, approached me and

said, "Listen, Comandante, Gerolán is the little extra wage that they give them when they are on campaign," and I said, "And so, haven't they paid them it?" They replied, "No, because here they didn't even report the dead so that the chiefs could steal their money." So, I said, "Tomorrow, when the fortress is in our hands, Gerolán for all of you." Aaahhh! The world stopped in its tracks. I said, "What kind of a troop have we got in front of us here! (Laughter) We asked a bank for a loan and we paid them the Gerolán, those poor soldiers didn't have... That's what Guillermo wanted to remember.

Well, and what was the Gerolán? It was a bad syrup from there, which I think had special properties, what charlatans take. (Laughter)

So, I was also saying that it's very clear to all of us that we are not in those initial days after the triumph.

Ah, well, I didn't finish the story about Urrutia, right? The witness is Melba Hernández - who is not here today - whom I hadn't seen since Mexico; later she was able to come and she was in the Third Front with Almeida (Bosque) and as those Vista Alegre houses have a garage from which a little stairway leads to the kitchen, she was waiting in the kitchen until that row was over, and I signaled to her to wait, and Urrutia was pacing up and down with his hands behind his back, and time is passing, until something of the *gallego* (native of Galicia) came out of me and I said a good few expressions to him that I cannot repeat here. I said, "Listen, I have been fighting against Batista for seven years, I've been in everything, in combats, imprisoned, in exile etc, you think that it doesn't bother me that a little soldier's going to lead the army? He is not going to command anybody; he's going to consult with me on everything, because I'm going to have him there in the

office, in the office of the regimental chief itself." And that's how it was, the first order I gave him was, "We are going to pull out all those soldiers that there are here." And as the bridges were blown up and I didn't want them to bump into Fidel there, although they were not armed, I used three frigates from Batista's navy that were there, and set about sending them in groups of 500 to the center and west of the country, which was where they lived.

I said a quite a number of things to him. When I talked hard to him, "Fidel knows what he's doing and I obey Fidel!" then he continued pacing about, and said, "All right, Comandante, we're going to find a solution, I think that's reasonable, don't you think?" I said, "Yes, that's what I think." "Well, all right." After that I gave Melba a kiss and went to fulfill my duty.

I was in Santiago, Fidel left me as chief of the eastern provinces, at that moment. I didn't go to the swearing in, I was in the University of Santiago, and I didn't go to that.

You have seen how we develop our meetings, right?

When I left, old Urrutia called me and said, "Comandante, I need you to appoint me an aide de camp, a commander aide de camp." I said, "I will send you one, President." I thought, who am I going to put there, gentlemen? - I had already divined the trouble we were going to have with this man; February, March, not four or five months had passed... you know the history - and I ran into Machado Ventura (Laughter), he was already going about with a Thompson, a Comandante, and I said to him, "Hey, Machado" - I didn't want to recount this incident to him, I only told Fidel and nobody else, when I came to Havana in the February - "Hey, Machado, the president has asked for this and this, I think that you are the most suitable." "Noooo! What I've got to do is get myself a job as a doctor," Machado replied. I said, "Forget about that job, the trouble's starting now." And he finally accepted.

Urrutia came to Havana and I stayed on in Oriente. By the time I came to Havana, in February, the problems were already beginning with Urrutia, which were not made public, the steps that Urrutia was taking, Urrutia's total irrationality, even as a person. The first thing that he did was to keep Batista's salary and the diplomatic expenses and, of course, he bought himself a little mansion just like Grau, it must be around here somewhere, although he went.



Raul and Machado

So, I said, "Well, let me call my friend Machado to see what's going on," and when I called the Palace and asked for Machado, they said, "No, Machado left here some time back." I said, "Where's Machado got to?" and I found him working as a doctor in La Habana municipality, that was it, right? (Machado affirms it). In other words, the man who I described as the first deserter from the modern Revolutionary Armed Forces. (Laughter) Just as well that he cleared that affront with his work afterward.

After laughing a bit at the cost of Machado, my friend, let's continue.

It is also clear to all of us that we are not in the those initial years after the triumph in 1959, when certain people occupying government posts - and that's where the anecdote about that government arose from - resigned in order to demonstrate their opposition to the first radical measures adopted by the Revolution, above all to the Agrarian Reform (Act), the first, on May 17, 1959, and

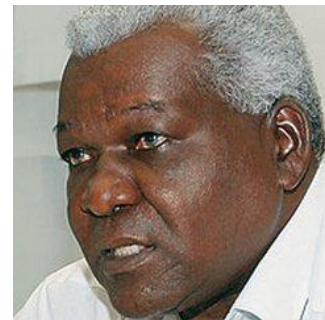
at that time, that conduct was branded as counterrevolutionary. In other words, they resigned to demonstrate their opposition to radical measures, and we qualified that, "That is counterrevolutionary," but accepted their resignation.

Today, the real and honest revolutionary is the opposite; when a cadre at any level feels tired, or incapable of fully exercising his or her responsibility, or of fulfilling the new orientations that we are giving, the correct thing in that case is to present their resignation, with dignity and without any fear, which is always preferable to being dismissed.

Relevant disciplinary measures will be adopted if any infringements of the established rules are detected

In relation to this matter, I must make reference to three compañeros who occupied important positions in the leadership of the Party and the government and whom, given the faults that they committed, were asked by the Political Bureau to resign from their positions as members of that leading body, the Central Committee and deputies to the National Assembly of People's Power. I am referring to Jorge Luis Sierra Cruz, Yadira García Vera and Pedro Sáez Montejo. The first two were also released from their responsibilities as minister of transport and of basic industry, respectively. Sierra assumed attributions to which he was not entitled, which led him to make serious errors of leadership, which we are now paying for. Yadira García's extremely poor performance at the head of a ministry as important as basic industry, which includes oil, mining etc, particularly reflected in weak control over resources allocated to investments, propitiating the waste of these, as confirmed during the expansion of the Pedro Soto Alba nickel enterprise in Moa, in the province of Holguín. Both compañeros were severely criticized at joint meetings of the Political Bureau and the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers.

For his part, Pedro Sáez Montejo, evidencing superficiality incompatible with his position as first secretary of the Communist Party in City of Havana, infringed Party working standards, which was discussed with him by a Political Bureau commission presided over by myself and made up by compañeros Machado Ventura and Esteban Lazo.



Esteban Lazo

It is fair to confirm that the three acknowledged the errors pointed out to each one of them and adopted a correct attitude, a reason why the Political Bureau Commission decided to respect their condition as members of the Communist Party. Likewise, we deemed it appropriate to assign them to tasks related to their

respective specialties, some, at the base level, and others, like Sierra, who is a mechanical engineer, in a little workshop of a general repair base for war tanks, a workshop of 11 or 14 compañeros who make parts, and he is heading them.

Personally, the three of them will continue to be my friends but **my sole commitment is to the people**, very particularly to those who have lost their lives in these 58 years of continuous struggle since the 1952 coup d'état. Having proceeded in this way with three high level leaders, let it be known that this will be the line to be followed by the Party and the Government with every cadre. We will demand more from them, but at the same time we will warn them and adopt any relevant disciplinary measure if any infringements of the established rules are detected.

As was established by the Law to Modify the Country's Political and Administrative Division, in January of next year the new provinces of Artemisa and Mayabeque will be constituted. Their respective governments will begin to operate under new organizational and structural concepts, far more rational than the ones currently existing in Habana province.

All the functions, structures and staffing have been defined. We are still working of the definitions of their attributions as well as their relations with the Central State Administration, national enterprises and the political and mass organizations. We will follow very closely this experience so that it can be gradually implemented within all other local government bodies throughout the country in the course of the next five years. We defend the usefulness of continuing to gradually increase the authority of provincial and municipal governments by entrusting them with greater faculties for executing local budgets, to which part of the taxes generated in economic activity will be directed with the aim of contributing to their development.

A global gendarme

Relations with the peoples and governments of almost all nations are advancing in the midst of the agitated international situation.

The world has received with amazement the scandalous revelations of hundreds of thousands of U.S. government classified documents, some of them very recent, on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and then, on the most varied issues of its relations with dozens of states.



Although everybody is wondering what is really going on and how this could be related to the twists and turns of the politics of the United States, what has been disclosed to date demonstrates that that country, while dissimulating an amiable rhetoric, is essentially following the politics of always and acting as a global gendarme.

In relations with the United States, one cannot appreciate the slightest will to rectify its policy toward Cuba, not even to eliminate its

most irrational aspects. **It is evident that a powerful and reactionary minority that serves to sustain the anti-Cuban mafia continues to have a major influence on these issues.**

The United States has not only disparaged the overwhelming demand of 187 countries to end the economic, commercial and financial blockade of our country, but in 2010, it reinforced its implementation and once again included Cuba on its spurious lists, through which it abrogates the right to qualify and denigrate other sovereign states in order to justify punitive actions or even acts of aggression.

The policy of the United States on Cuba does not have an ounce of credibility. It is left with no other remedy than to resort to lies in order to reiterate certain allegations, some of which stand out, given their scandalous falsity, such as the one asserting that Cuba is a country which sponsors international terrorism, tolerates the domestic traffic of children and women for sexual exploitation, flagrantly violates human rights and is responsible for significantly restricting religious freedoms.

The U.S. government is trying to hide its own sins and attempting to evade its responsibilities by allowing notorious international terrorists wanted by the legal systems of several countries to continue residing with impunity in that country while maintaining our five brothers unjustly imprisoned for fighting against terrorism.

In its slanderous campaigns concerning the situation of human rights in Cuba, the United States has found the connivance of European countries, characterized by their double standards and subjugated to U.S. imperialism, known for their complicity with the CIA secret flights, the creation of torture and detention centers, for placing the burden of the economic crisis on the lowest income workers and students, their violent repression demonstrators and implementation of discriminatory policies toward immigrants and minorities.

We will continue fighting, together with all Latin American nations, for an emancipating integration and, in the framework of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, we will continue working to consolidate the solidarity and unity that will make us steadily stronger.

Thus, we will continue to support the sister nation of Haiti, where our health personnel, together with Latin American and Haitian doctors who graduated in Cuba, are selflessly confronting, in a humanitarian way, the cholera epidemic, the destruction caused by the earthquake and the sequels of hundreds of years of the exploitation and plunder of that noble people, who need from the international community resources for reconstruction and, especially, for sustainable development.



Jennie Dorsainvil is examined by a doctor at a makeshift field clinic run by the Cuban Medical Battalion in Port-au-Prince, Haiti

This is also a propitious occasion to convey, from this parliamentary meeting and on behalf of all Cubans, a message of support and solidarity to the sister people of Venezuela, who are suffering from the ravages of torrential rainfall with a large number of human and material losses. At a very early stage, the tens of thousands of Cuban cooperation workers who are providing services in that country were instructed to place themselves at the disposal of the Venezuelans and of President Hugo Chavez, for whatever might be necessary.

Next April marks the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of the socialist nature of our Revolution. On the sands of Playa Girón our forces fought for the first time to defend socialism and within barely 72 hours, led by the Comandante en Jefe in person, defeated the mercenary invasion sponsored by the U.S. government.

On the occasion of such a significant event, on April 16 we are organizing a military parade with the participation of troops and combat equipment, to be attended by delegates to the 6th Congress of the Communist Party who, that same afternoon, will come together to begin their work, which we hope to conclude on April 19, the day of the Bay of Pigs victory. We will begin by celebrating the proclamation of the socialist nature, Fidel's speech at the funeral of the victims of the bombardment, which occurred the day before the Bay of Pigs attack, and we will conclude on the day of the victory. The close of the review will be led by tens of thousands of young people, representing the new generations, which are the guarantee of the continuity of the Revolution.

Dedicated to the Youth

This commemoration will be dedicated to our youth, which has never failed the Revolution. Those who died during the attack on the Moncada and Bayamo Garrisons were young people

It was the youth who rose up in Santiago de Cuba under the direction of Frank País.

It was the youth of the Granma expeditionaries who, after the debacle at Alegría de Pío, founded the Rebel Army, strengthened by waves of other young people from the rural areas and the cities, particularly by the Santiago reinforcement which was personally organized and sent by Frank.

The members of the powerful clandestine movement were young.

The valiant assailants of the Presidential Palace and the Radio Reloj radio station on March 13, 1957, headed by Jose Antonio Echeverría, were young.

Those who fought heroically in Girón were young.

Young people and adolescents joined the literacy campaign also 50 years ago.

The majority of those who fought against the mercenary bands organized by the CIA until well into 1965 were young.

It was young people who wrote beautiful pages of courage and stoicism in internationalist missions in several countries, particularly those in support of the liberation movements in Africa.



Our five heroes, who risked their lives in the struggle against terrorism and have suffered more than 12 years of cruel imprisonment are young people. (Applause)

Many of the thousands and thousands of Cuban voluntary workers who are defending human life by curing diseases eradicated in Cuba, supporting the literacy programs and disseminating culture and sport for children and adults throughout the world, are young people.

This Revolution is the work of the sacrifice of Cuban youth: workers, campesinos, students, intellectuals, military personnel, of all the youths in all the eras that have been theirs to live in and struggle.

This Revolution will be led forward by the youth, full of optimism and with an unshakable faith in victory.

Equally great have been the challenges and also the dangers since the triumph of the Revolution and the proclamation of its socialist nature, and particularly, starting from the Bay of Pigs victory, but **no difficulty has ever brought us to our knees**. We are here and will be here on account of the dignity, the integrity, the courage, the ideological steadfastness and the revolutionary and sacrificial spirit of the Cuban people, which a long time ago made its own the concept that socialism is the only guarantee to continue being free and independent.

Thank you very much. (Ovation)

Translated by ESTI and Granma International