

**KEY ADDRESS BY DR.FIDEL CASTRO RUZ, PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF CUBA, TO THE RALLY HELD AT "COMMANDER  
ERNESTO" SQUARE IN VILLA CLARA COMMEMORATING THE 47TH  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATTACK ON THE MONCADA BARRACKS ON  
JULY 26, 1953. VILLA CLARA, JULY 29, 2000 [1]**

**Date:**

29/07/2000

People of Villa Clara,

Fellow countrymen,

Guests:

Everything changes, even the time and the way our mass rallies are held. That was the case the past May Day and this July 26th. The tenacious and unrelenting struggle to correct a major injustice against a Cuban child, his father and family, as well as the great massive battle of ideas waged by our people throughout seven months, have deeply enriched our revolutionary experience. We now have a great mobilizing capacity, more organization and better discipline. Hundreds of new talented speakers, many of them children, teenagers and youths have emerged everywhere as an irrefutable proof of the unbeatable educational work of the Revolution.

New and efficient ways to expose our people and the world to our truth have been developed. Art and oratory, culture and the revolutionary message have merged almost inseparably in our historical process. The knowledge, general culture and political consciousness of the Cuban people are growing swiftly. Long speeches to people rallied in uncomfortable places under a hot sun will no longer be necessary to delve into complex issues and explain events which are being debated and analyzed almost on a daily basis on television, the radio and the newspapers.

We are holding this rally today at this Revolutionary Square in front of the mausoleum keeping the remains of the reinforcement detachment made up by Che [Guevara] and his brave comrades who perished in a noble and generous struggle in other nations of the world.

One by one they were sought for and found dispersed in remote places; one by one their bones were identified. It is our homeland's privilege to keep in this sanctuary of solidarity and internationalism the protagonists of one of the most beautiful pages in the history of the Americas. Before Bolívar's and Martí's dreams of unity can be realized, our Americas are already integrated here. Argentineans, Bolivians, Peruvians and Cubans --even a daughter of the country that was the birthplace of the first man who dreamed of a socialist world-- are forever resting together in this place.

These tombs, whose imposing presence convey an encouraging message, remind us that we are not alone in this July 26th celebration in Villa Clara, that here with us are also those who died in the battle where one after the other the streets and the buildings of this gallant city were recovered from the claws of the tyrant.

But, even after we had occupied the cities of Santiago de Cuba and Santa Clara, the struggle did not stop for a second. Our troops continued their impetuous march with the unanimous support of the workers and all of the people up to the total collapse of the regime less than 48 hour later. It was not a forcibly take over with the use of weapons; it was a Revolution.

Soon, we all realized that the true master was not the overthrown tyrant; the real master was another one a thousand times more powerful. Under common circumstances it would have seemed a simple theory or political hypothesis. Those were times when many still believed that the peoples' sovereignty and independence were sacred universal principles accepted and respected by all.

Our people learned their first lesson with the massive departure for the United States --where their fortunes were kept-- of hundreds of big plunderers of the public coffers and the worst war criminals who had tortured and murdered thousands of our sons and daughters. But, that was only the beginning.

The leaders of that nation immediately cut off all credits and began an intensive campaign of slanders, which they commonly use to justify their actions and that still goes on today. Then, the pretext was the exemplary punishment of the war criminals who failed to escape the country as well as the nationalization and confiscation of farms, real states and other unearned riches accumulated in almost seven years of tyranny.

A crucially needed land reform, which had been decreed four and a half months after the victory of the Revolution, aroused the wrath of the empire. Several of its big companies owned extensive areas of the best land in the country. Thus, the Revolution was unequivocally sentenced to death. It seemed quite easy.

That marked the beginning of the air raids by pirate planes coming from the United States against sugar cane plantations, sugar factories and even cities; terrorist actions, armed gangs and dirty war; attempts against the life of leaders, raids from the sea against coastal facilities and the merchant and fishing fleet; the Bay of Pigs mercenary invasion and the seemingly final and irresistible weapon against a small underdeveloped nation: total blockade and economic warfare.

One after another the corrupted oligarchies and bourgeois governments in countries of this hemisphere sharing our same language, culture and colonial history --except for one Latin American country-- joined the United States in that fratricidal action. Our sugar quota of over 3 million tons obtained in the course of a century was redistributed among accomplices and traitors. Everything was done in the name of "freedom" and "democracy", which seldom if ever existed in many of those same countries.

Once the mercenary invasion had been defeated, other plans were worked out for a direct invasion of Cuba by the U.S. military forces as irrefutably proven by declassified official documents. There was even a real possibility of a nuclear war.

Efforts were made to totally isolate Cuba; sabotages were carried out against our merchant fleet and our airliners. A civilian plane was blown up in flight carrying over 70 passengers including our youth fencing team, which had won all the gold medals in a Central American Tournament. Biologic warfare has been used to attack people, animals and plants; bombs have been set up in hotels and other tourist facilities and other terrorist actions have been directly executed either by entities run by the U.S. government or through puppet organizations. Our people have had to endure all of that for four decades.

The collapse of the socialist camp and the disintegration of the Soviet Union deprived our country of its basic markets, fuel, and food supplies, raw materials, equipment and spare parts and led it into an exceptionally difficult situation. It was disgusting that the moment was opportunistically chosen by the U.S. administration to try to deal the final blow to the Revolution using the Torricelli and Helms-Burton Acts and tens of amendments attached to major legislation in the U.S. Congress.

For several years many hopelessly awaited the news that the Revolution no longer existed. However, our people resisted with determination and that unprecedented feat is for us a legitimate source of pride.

Nothing could prevent the extraordinary social achievements that are today the subject of admiration of every honest person in the world. Nothing could prevent the golden pages written in the history book of internationalism and solidarity with others. Nothing can write off the example we have set for the world. Our patriotic sentiments are deeper and our internationalist beliefs have multiplied with the blossoming in the soul of the Cuban people of that most beautiful of Martí's ideas, that is, "Humanity is Homeland".

We take pride in those sentiments that led José Martí to Dos Ríos and Che Guevara and his comrades to Ñacahuazú, Río Grande, Quebrada del Yuro and La Higuera; that led hundreds of thousands of Cuban internationalist fighters to Angola, Cuito Cuanavale and the banks of the Cunene river along the Namibian border providing a decisive cooperation to the sister nations of Africa for the defeat of one of the most revolting and hateful bulwarks of racism and fascism.

Those sentiments have led dozens of thousands of medical doctors, teachers, technicians and construction workers to many distant places in the world to save lives and relieve the pain, to restore and preserve health, to educate and contribute to the well-being and development of millions of people, as they have led us to offer our educational facilities and universities to tens of thousands of youth from the Third World.

That is a legacy that Cuba --threatened, harassed and blockaded as it is by the mightiest power on Earth-- has contributed to the future world which can only be saved by and built on those pillars of solidarity and internationalism.

The theoreticians and advocates of the imperial policies still dream that the revolution, which could not be destroyed with such perfidious and criminal means, might be subverted with such appealing methods as the one they have called "the policy of people-to-people contact". It is all right with us; we are willing to take up the challenge but they should play fair. They should put an end to their conditioning and remove the murderous Cuban Adjustment Act, the Torricelli and Helms-Burton Acts and the scores of legal albeit immoral amendments opportunistically inserted in their legislation. They should completely end the deadly blockade and the economic warfare.

Likewise, they should respect the constitutional right of their students, workers, intellectuals, businessmen and Americans in general to visit our country, to do business, to trade and invest unrestrictedly --if they so wish-- without ridiculous fear, the same way we allow our people to freely travel to and live in the United States. We shall see then if that is the way they can destroy the Cuban Revolution, which is definitely their purpose.

It is not our intention to disturb the sweet dreams of those who believe that to be possible. It is simply out of courtesy that I am warning them that the Cuban Revolution can neither be destroyed by force nor seduced by fine words.

José Martí said that trenches of ideas are worth more than trenches of stone, and we share that thought, although he never said that the latter were unnecessary. A double trench of stones and ideas presently defends Cuba: the former against brutality. That one is made up by our people's determination to fight to the end, whatever the consequences, so that the intelligent weapons and the most sophisticated means coming out of our potential aggressors' advanced centers that turn out death instruments are rendered useless.

But, there is also a gigantic trench of beliefs and ideas strong enough to thwart the whole arsenal of lies, demagoguery and hypocrisy used by the imperialists to deceive the world. Also, with well-founded ideas of justice and a sound general and political culture, our people can defend their identity and be

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protected from the demi-cultures emanating from the dehumanized, selfish and irresponsible consumer societies. We can also be winners in that field and, in fact, we will.

History is on our side because the unfair and globalized political and economic order imposed on the world is unsustainable and it will collapse rather sooner than later. Nature cannot put up with the aggression against its resources and the environment. The billions of poor people increasingly populating this planet will become ungovernable. Neither the immigration laws nor the walled borders will contain them. Civilization itself is in jeopardy and the politicians, regardless of their haughtiness or inefficiency, will have to understand that in this age and on this planet there is no alternative to peace and close cooperation among the peoples.

The people in our country are very quickly acquiring a deep knowledge and a growing awareness of these realities. The enormous and combative march seen in our country's capital barely 72 hours ago is evidence of this. Also this massive, well-organized, enthusiastic, exciting and beautiful rally in Santa Clara confirm it.

That monument, by which we stand now, is like a beacon showing us the path to the future. The immortal, rather than mortal, remains of our comrades resting in their tombs are proof of what human beings can do for a world of justice, peace and fraternity.

Glory be to those who died at the Moncada barracks, at the Bay of Pigs, in the Escambray area, on the mountains and the cities of Cuba to make possible the dreams of that July 26th!

Glory be to Che Guevara and those who fought and perished with him!

Glory be to those who died in Guinea Bissau, in the east of Congo, in Ethiopia, in Angola, in Cuito Cuanavale, in the proximity of the Namibian border and elsewhere!

Glory be to the teachers and civilian workers who perished in the line of internationalist duty!

Honor, gratitude and appreciation be to the thousands of medical doctors and health workers who are saving lives in remote corners of the world!

Honor and glory be to the people capable of such deeds!

People of Villa Clara, victors over difficulties and obstacles, who have won the honor of holding the commemoration of the 47th anniversary of the day when an example and an idea lit a flame that today expands throughout the world, congratulations!

Fellow countrymen of Cuba, carry on!

Ever onward to victory!

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