

[Speech given by Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic of Cuba, at the decoration ceremony for the mothers and wives of the five Heroes of the Republic of Cuba Prisoners of the Empire. Karl Marx Theater, March 8, 2002 \[1\]](#)

**Date:**

08/03/2002

Compatriots:

Throughout history, we have paid tribute to legendary heroes and women who have filled themselves with glory as paragons of bravery, selflessness and the spirit of sacrifice, inspiring entire generations in their struggles for a better, more humane and more just world. Rarely, however, have we had the privilege of living alongside them.

The five Heroes of the Republic of Cuba Prisoners of the Empire and their mothers and wives, our contemporaries and the pride of our homeland, have found a place deep in the heart of their people and in the hearts of each and every one of its sons and daughters, without exception.

They are here today, International Women's Day, at this moving and solemn ceremony that will surely live forever in our memories: Carmen, Magali, Irma and Mirta; Adriana, Rosa Aurora, Olga and Elizabeth, mothers and wives of Gerardo, Fernando, René, Antonio and Ramón. We have just watched as these women were decorated with the Orders of Mariana Grajales and Ana Betancourt.

From one punishment unit to another, after 16 months of isolation and seven months of a rigged trial in which the lies, hypocrisy and shamelessness of their accusers were fully exposed, totally innocent of the charges against them, three have been sentenced to life in prison, and the other two with lengthy prison sentences.

As yet further proof of the fury and hatred unleashed against them, they continue to be subjected to inhuman and brutal treatment. In the belief that this might crush their integrity and steadfastness, they have been sent to five different high-security prisons, all at least 1400 kilometers away from any of the others, as a minimum. After the dangerous and cruel voyage, permanently shut up in solitary confinement cells, they will then join the general population of prisons where the control, impartiality and morality of the prison authorities are notoriously absent. This is a worthy demonstration of our heroes' unbreakable steadfastness and courage. And all of this is being done against men who were merely defending their people from death, by seeking out information on terrorism.

Allegedly with the same purpose, the United States has used its full powers to invade countries with the most sophisticated and destructive of weapons, and has declared a lengthy, open-ended and imprecise world war against terrorism.

With unparalleled arrogance and prepotency, it has threatened over 80 countries and taken the liberty of deciding which is a terrorist nation and which is not. It has even been so cynical as to include Cuba

among the so-called terrorist nations, when thousands of Cubans have died as victims of terrorism perpetrated from the United States, while not a single American has ever suffered so much as a scratch, nor has the least of damage ever been caused by any such actions on the part of Cuba.

It is only too well known that our country cannot be intimidated. With these ridiculous threats, they are simply lashing out in vain.

The government of the United States should apologize to Cuba for the thousands of acts of aggression, sabotage and terrorism perpetrated against our country throughout 43 years. The government of the United States should apologize to Cuba for more than three decades of economic warfare and a total blockade on food and medicine, acts of genocide even in times of war, and subject to punishment under the international conventions of 1948 and 1949 of which both countries are signatories. The government of the United States should compensate our people for such crimes that have caused enormous suffering and the loss of tens of thousands of lives. The government of the United States should break all ties with the Miami terrorist mob, through which countless brutal terrorist acts have been organized and financed; these include the blowing up in mid-flight of a Cubana Airliner with 73 passengers on board, all of whom were killed, as well as innumerable bombings of Cuban hotels and other facilities, hundreds of assassination plots against the leaders of the Cuban Revolution, and biological warfare against humans, animals and plants. The government of the United States should arrest and indict Orlando Bosch, the notorious terrorist who freely walks the streets of Miami, along with many others of his kind. The government of the United States should stop protecting Posada Carriles and demand that justice be served in his case and that of the other criminals who smuggled dozens of kilograms of high-powered explosives into Panama and planned to murder hundreds of young university students with the intent to assassinate the Cuban delegation to the Ibero-American Summit held in Panama City. The government of the United States should repeal the Torricelli and Helms-Burton Acts and the numerous amendments adopted to intensify the blockade against our country. The government of the United States should repeal the murderous Cuban Adjustment Act, which has cost the lives of so many women, children, old people and other citizens of Cuba, and continues to do so. The government of the United States should sit down with Cuba to discuss the illegal and unjust occupation of a piece of our territory, in order to reach an agreement as to when it will be returned to our country. The government of the United States should respect the Cuban people's right to self-determination and to give themselves the economic and political system of their choosing.

The government of the United States will always be lacking the morale to fight terrorism until it ceases using such practices against countries like Cuba, and ceases to support wide-scale, brutal and heinous massacres like those carried out by its ally, the State of Israel, against the Palestinian people. It should likewise renounce its policy of world domination, stop intervening in other countries, respect the authority of the United Nations, and comply with the international treaties it has signed. These are essential prerequisites for achieving a climate of peace in the world and eradicating the hateful scourge of terrorism.

Our heroes will be set free. The enormous injustice committed against them will be known throughout the world since millions of books will carry the truth and Cuba's message everywhere. Sooner rather than later, our comrades will return! No matter what it costs and where they are, their families will exercise their right to visit them every month, and bring them encouragement and love from all their people. (Applause)

Eternal glory to the heroic sons of Cuba (Shouts of "Glory!"), to the mothers who gave them life and raised them (Shouts of "Glory!"), to the wives and children whose love has helped forge their iron will and invincible spirit! (Shouts of "Glory!")

Hasta la victoria siempre!

Patria o muerte!

## Speech given at the decoration ceremony for the mothers and wives of the five Heroes of the Revolution

Published on FIDEL Soldier of Ideas (<http://www.comandante.biz>)

---

Venceremos! (STANDING OVATION)

VERSIONES TAQUIGRAFICAS

---

**Source URL:** <http://www.comandante.biz/en/discursos/speech-given-decoration-ceremony-mothers-and-wives-five-heroes-republic-cuba?height=600&width=600>

### Links

[1] <http://www.comandante.biz/en/discursos/speech-given-decoration-ceremony-mothers-and-wives-five-heroes-republic-cuba>