

"We are realists... we dream the impossible" - Che



Fire This Time!



BILL C-51: TERRORIZING DISSENT

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT TRIES TO TURN BACK THE CLOCK ON HUMAN RIGHTS WITH NEW "ANTI-TERRORISM" BILL

"**I**njustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial 'outside agitator' idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds."

Martin Luther King Jr, April 16, 1963

Martin Luther King Jr, the great black fighter for civil rights, wrote these words from a jail cell in Birmingham, Alabama. His crime? Protesting against segregation after a judge had outlawed all, "parading, demonstrating, boycotting, trespassing and picketing" in response to a campaign against desegregation in the city. Being thrown in jail for speaking out against racism and for equal rights might be something most people in Canada consider impossible today, but by promoting a climate of fear and racism, and then using this as the pretext for new laws and legislation, the Canadian conservative

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VANCOUVER STANDS AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA

On Tuesday, February 10 three Muslim students were murdered in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Deah Barakat, Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha, and her sister Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha were victims of a racist hate crime fuelled by increasing Islamophobia in the United States and all Western countries. Since the day of the killings, people from around the world have joined together for vigils and rallies in solidarity with the victims and to take a stand against Islamophobia. There have been two vigils organized in the Lower Mainland, at Holland Park in Surrey on Friday, February 13, and at the Art Gallery in downtown Vancouver on Saturday, February 14. Following the vigil in Surrey, organized by Muslim Youth in Motion, Fire This Time interviewed Sherry Rashidan, a young Muslim community organizer and emcee of the Surrey vigil.

Thank you Sherry for agreeing to do this interview with Fire This Time and also for doing a fantastic job of MC'ing today's vigil for the three Muslim students, victims of the Chapel Hill shooting.

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Deah Barakat, Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha, and Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha

RAUL CASTRO'S SPEECH TO CUBAN PARLIAMENT "THE UNWAVERING CONFIDENCE IN VICTORY WHICH FIDEL INSTILLED IN US WILL CONTINUE TO GUIDE OUR PEOPLE"



Speech by President Raúl Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Councils of State and Ministers, at the close of the Fourth Ordinary Session of the Eighth Legislature of the National Assembly of People's Power, in the Havana Convention Center, December 20, 2014, "Year 56 of the Revolution".

Compañeras and compañeros:

We have experienced intense and moving moments in recent days. This December we successfully hosted the Fifth Caricom-Cuba Summit and the XIII Summit of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America last Sunday, an occasion on which we paid tribute to its creators: the dear Bolivarian President Hugo Chávez Frías and Commander in Chief of the Cuban Revolution, compañero Fidel Castro Ruz (Applause).



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Huge Support for Women's Rights!



Feb. 14, 2010 Women's Memorial March in Vancouver, Canada

By Aaron Mercredi

On February 14th, more than 1,200 people gathered at the intersection of Main and Hastings streets in Vancouver's downtown Eastside for the 25th Annual Women's Memorial March. Thousands more joined in dozens of cities across Canada, along with some cities in the United States, for similar marches to draw attention to a cross-country humanitarian crisis that is being ignored by the government of Canada: the issue of missing and murdered Native women.

According to the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), there are more than 600 unsolved cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women across the country since the 1980s. In 2014, the RCMP released the report, "Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview" acknowledging the problem. It summarized that between 1980 and 2012 police-recorded incidents of Aboriginal female homicides and unresolved missing Aboriginal females in its review totaled 1,181 – 164 missing and 1,017 homicide victims. This has obviously been a critical issue for Indigenous communities across the country, and families have continued to demand accountability from the different police forces and different levels of government.

In every possible way, the Harper Conservative government has shown its contempt for the fight for justice of Indigenous people across Canada. In 2010, the Conservative government cut all funding to Sisters in

Women's Rights!



Mural in Winnipeg, Canada

Women's Memorial March in Vancouver brings out more than 1,200 people!

Spirit, NWAC's ground-breaking program which conducted research and funded action to solve the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women. The Conservative government justified the cuts by saying "it is time to move to action, by taking the research and implementing it on the streets". But, in the years following, Indigenous women have continued to be murdered and gone missing and the government of Canada has continued to do nothing. In December 2014, Stephen Harper made the government of Canada's feelings about the matter crystal clear. When he was asked during a year-end interview with CBC about a public inquiry in to missing and murdered Aboriginal women, he said, "Um it, it isn't really high on our radar, to be honest ... Our ministers will continue to dialogue with those who are concerned about this."

As the murders and disappearances continue to mount, more and more pressure is being placed on the federal government to act. A recent report by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), which is affiliated with the Organization of American States (OAS) has called for a national-level action

plan and public inquiry in to the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. This echoes James Anaya's call, the UN's special rapporteur on Indigenous Rights who recently release his report on his findings of Canada's failure of Indigenous people in this country. On February 9th, the Stephen Harper Conservative government agreed to have two of its federal cabinet ministers meet with premiers and Indigenous leaders in Ottawa later this month to address the issue. However, the government rejected the requests for financial help to make the meeting possible.

Given the Conservative government's attacks on every aspect of Indigenous people's lives – from self-determination, to land and resources, to the legacy of residential schools, to education, healthcare and housing—we cannot expect that the government of Canada will pursue an honest and sincere inquiry in to the murders and disappearances of so many Native women. If they will not, we need to demand an independent public inquiry, one that is completely possible and can bring solutions to the tragedy that Canada has created and continues to ignore.



Feb. 14, 2015 Women's Memorial March in Vancouver, Canada

Vancouver Stands AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA

Interview with Sherry Rashidan
Muslim youth community
organizer & university student

By Azza Rojbi and Janine Solanki
Transcribed by Alison Bodine

On Tuesday, February 10 three Muslim students were murdered in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Deah Barakat, Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha, and her sister Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha were victims of a racist hate crime fuelled by increasing Islamophobia in the United States and all Western countries. Since the day of the killings, people from around the world have joined together for vigils and rallies in solidarity with the victims and to take a stand against Islamophobia. There have been two vigils organized in the Lower Mainland, at Holland Park in Surrey on Friday, February 13, and at the Art Gallery in downtown Vancouver on Saturday, February 14. Following the vigil in Surrey, organized by Muslim Youth in Motion, Fire This Time interviewed Sherry Rashidan, a young Muslim community organizer and emcee of the Surrey vigil.

Thank you Sherry for agreeing to do this interview with Fire This Time and also for doing a fantastic job of MC'ing today's vigil for the three Muslim students, victims of the Chapel Hill shooting.



February 13, 2015 Vigil in Surrey, BC, Canada

Fire This Time (FTT): What do you think, was just an isolated incident, or do you think we are witnessing a sharp rise in Islamophobic hate crimes in North America, especially in the United States?

Sherry Rashidan: I think especially recently, Islam and Muslims in general have been a very central thing in the media, in a very, very biased manner, and Islamophobia is on the rise day after day. This is not the first time that we are hearing about a hate crime happening towards Muslims for them being Muslim,

it happens world-wide and it often goes completely uncovered in the media. Examples of this would be after the Charlie Hebdo attack in France there were incidences of people being harassed and attacked, mosques being vandalized. There was a murder, a Muslim man coming out of the mosque was

stabbed 17 times and killed, yet this goes absolutely uncovered. The media too afraid to use the 't' word, the media is too afraid to call it terrorism, when we all see it for what it is.

FTT: What is the feeling of the Muslim community about these Islamophobic crimes targeting Muslims?

Sherry Rashidan: It's scary, and it's particularly scary when, like myself, you wear the flag of your religion, when you are wearing a hijab and you are a walking representation of a Muslim woman. It's scary to think that these victims were just like you and I, and that any of us could be next, especially in the West with the rise in Islamophobia, it's so scary, and we feel sad, and it's hurtful.

FTT: What is the response of the Muslim community overall, and specifically the Muslim community in Vancouver, to this racist Islamophobia?

Sherry Rashidan: We express our deepest condolences and solidarity with the victims and their families. I just hope that they are given strength, and patience, I can't imagine what it is like. They've lost two daughters, they've lost a son, they've lost friends, they've lost sisters, they've lost brothers, they've lost active members of their community. Not only that, their families have lost a part of themselves now, they can't go on like this, we are so sorry for this, and we will stand in solidarity with all victims of hate crime.





February 11, 2015 Vigil & Rally in Greensboro, North Carolina

FTT: What do you think is the best support from the progressive community and other communities, regarding supporting the Muslim community and fighting against Islamophobia?

Sherry Rashidan: I want people to educate themselves. I want them to first and foremost to know what is going on in this world, so when they turn on the news and they see headline attacks saying so-and-so was killed by a Muslim terrorist and they turn on the news and see one man, who probably had mental problems killed a family of Muslims, they are able to differentiate for themselves where this is problematic. So I want them to educate themselves. Secondly, I don't want to see silence, it's so disheartening to see that in cases where Muslims are the victims, it doesn't matter if it happens in the West, or if we are the victims out in the Middle East being slaughtered day-by-day, it's disheartening to see that it will always be an overwhelming majority of Muslims who speak out. It would be nice to see more

support, which we do, and the support that we see, we're so grateful for, and they know who they are.

FTT: Overall, what is the cause of the rise of Islamophobia in Western countries, why do you think it is happening more now?

Sherry Rashidan: Honestly, people are so affected by pop culture, by media, by movies, by Hollywood, by the music industry, by CNN, by BBC, they are so affected. Those same people that might come out and say 'I swear, I'm not racist, but...' they are the people who are brainwashed by these. Islamophobia, it's all in the way that stories are headlined in the news. I can give you example after example after example how the media full of double-standards when it comes to broadcasting any stories that have to do with Muslims. So it's media first of all. Second of all, it's the fear of using the word 'terrorism' for any other acts of violence for political means, that are not done by an Arab or a Muslim. That is problematic because when you restrict that word purely for a person who comes from Muslim or Arab descent, you are creating this bridge between two completely different groups of people. So I think that that needs to be addressed, but most, and foremost, we have to educate ourselves.

FTT: Thank you very much Sherry for doing this interview with Fire this Time.

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◇◇◇◇◇ U.S. WAR ON VENEZUELA ◇◇◇◇◇

'Almost All' Opposition Leaders Knew About Venezuelan Coup Plot

Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro added that a U.S. Embassy advisor drafted the script that the coup plotters read in video they planned to air.

In a televised address Saturday night, Venezuela's president Nicolas Maduro revealed new information on the foiled coup attempt against his government, including accusations that the country's opposition leaders were aware of the plans.

"Almost all of the MUD leaders knew about this plan, this ambush, almost all of them, including the four-time losing candidate," said the Venezuelan leader, referring to opposition presidential candidate, Henrique Capriles Radonski.

"I'm not saying all of them were actively involved. But it was a rumor circulating amongst them, that something was about to happen," Maduro explained.

Maduro also said that those detained have confessed to the plot and have provided new information which authorities are investigating.

In addition to attempting to bribe officials and



Feb. 11, 2014 Nicolás Maduro and Diosdado Cabello during a rally in Caracas

Evidence presented on Venezuelan TV showed a video of the coup plotters, as well as the 10-year U.S. visa granted to one of the accused.

The president of Venezuela's national assembly, Diosdado Cabello, presented further evidence of the right-wing plot to overthrow the Bolivarian government Friday evening.

Cabello presented evidence of the foiled plans, including a video showing members of the military prior to recording a message announcing that the military no longer recognized the government.

The video, which was set to be aired after planned attacks had been carried out, was to

politicians with cash and visas to enter the United States, the Venezuelan president expanded on the role played by the U.S. Embassy in the country, saying that the script read by coup plotters in a video they planned to air once the plan had been initiated was crafted by an advisor at the Embassy. Maduro called on U.S. president Barack Obama to stop his officials from meddling in Venezuelan affairs. "In your name, they are organizing coup plots against democratically-elected government, such as Venezuela," Maduro said.

According to Venezuelan intelligence and testimonies, the coup was set to have taken place on Feb. 12, one day after opposition leaders Leopoldo Lopez, Maria Corina Machado and Antonio Ledezma published a "Transition" program which outlined measures including the privatization of oil, deregulation of the economy and agreements with International Monetary Fund.

The plan included targeted assassinations

and bombing a series of targets – including teleSUR's headquarters in Caracas – while opposition activists staged violent protests in the streets to mark one year since the start of opposition-led protests that claimed 43 lives.

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coordinated by Venezuela's right-wing opposition with the support of the U.S. government.

During the televised presentation, Cabello pointed to a recent interview given by U.S. president Barack Obama, in which he stated that "American leadership at times entails twisting the arms of states which don't do what we need them to do."

The plans were to take place exactly one year after opposition-led acts of violence rocked the country, claiming 43 lives and billions in damage.

On Wednesday, opposition leaders Leopoldo Lopez, Maria Corina Machado and Antonio Ledezma released a "transition plan" which involved privatization of the country's oil, deregulation of the economy and accords with "international financial institutions" including the International Monetary Fund.

Published on: February 13, 2015
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As we approach the two year anniversary of the passing of Commandante Hugo Chavez Frias, Fire This Time is as positive as ever that Commandante Chavez continues to be a bright star lighting the path forward to a better world. We join social justice fighters around the world in declaring, "¡Chavez Vive, La Lucha Sigue!"

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Reprinted from: www.telesurtv.net

Evidence Reveals Canada, UK Involvement in Venezuela Coup Plot

have been televised by a station in Venezuela or Miami.

Cabello also showed a 10-year U.S. visa given to one of the detained, days before the plan was to be implemented.

Cabello also said that a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and a member of the U.K. diplomatic core in Venezuela, had been involved in plans, including seeking information on airport capacity in case of emergencies.

According to Venezuelan intelligence, the computers seized to military detractors revealed maps from the places where the opposition was plotting to carry out attacks, including the Miraflores presidential palace, and the headquarters of teleSUR in Caracas.

Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro announced Thursday that the government had thwarted a coup attempt which was being

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TRUTHS THAT BEGIN TO SURFACE ABOUT ALAN GROSS

*By Manuel Yepe**

It seems that some major media in the United States, so tightly controlled by the powers of the "Establishment", have timidly begun to tell the truth about some sensitive issues regarding relations with Cuba prior to December 17, 2014.

Thus, under the title "The real story behind the work of Alan Gross in Cuba", John Stoehr, editor of *The Washington Spectator* and contributor to *The Hill of Washington*, DC, offers a version different from the official –and the only one US readers had– about the activities of the US agent which prompted his arrest, conviction and imprisonment in Cuba.

"If you didn't know anything about Alan Gross other than what you saw on television, you probably thought it was appropriate for him to sit next to First Lady Michelle Obama as a guest of honor at this year's State of the Union address," said Stoehr.

Of Gross it was only said that he was a humanitarian activist unjustly jailed in 2009 by a repressive Communist regime for the alleged crime of promoting internet access to Cuba's small Jewish community.

According to *The Spectator*, even after his release from prison and return to the United States in December as part of President Obama's plan to normalize diplomatic relations with Cuba after half a century of regime-change policy in the United States, the official narrative with bipartisan support exonerated him from guilt.

Nothing had been said about the fact that in 2009, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) paid Alan Gross, through a third party specialized in installing computer electronics in remote areas, almost \$600,000 to go to the island nation to install military-grade internet equipment in Jewish synagogues which could not be detected by the government in Havana.

According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the United States government has spent more than \$200 million since 1996 on so-called



US Secretary of State, John Kerry embraces Alan Gross

"democracy-promotion programs" meant to destabilize the Cuban government from the inside.

"The GAO report noted that Cuban law forbids citizens from working with "U.S. democracy promotion activities." Therefore, of necessity, any pro-democracy program could not have been conducted openly. But American law forbids the State Department, which oversees USAID, to engage in covert operations. For this reason, USAID always says its Cuba programs are not "covert" but rather "discreet." Gross was, however, not discreet enough," Stoehr comments ironically.

On his fifth trip to Cuba, in 2009, Gross was detained and later sentenced to 15 years for "criminal acts against the independence of the Cuban nation."

"Gross wasn't only paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to subvert the Cuban government; he understood that by installing banned internet networks, he was breaking Cuban law. "This is very risky business in no uncertain terms," Gross wrote in trip reports to AP's Desmond Butler. Once Gross said, "we are all 'playing with fire.'"

Development Assistance Inc., the third-party company that subcontracted with Alan Gross, said he remitted regular reports

of his activities. DAI said that it briefed USAID on everything Gross was doing. A spokesman for DAI told the Associated Press in a statement that Gross "designed, proposed, and implemented this work"

Gross was endangering American and Cuban Jews when they were smuggling secret high tech components like "subscriber identity modules," or SIM cards available only to military and intelligence agencies.

Gross used the Jewish community for cover and thus endangered the privileges Jews enjoy in Cuba, according to the *Spectator*. "Cuban Jews had access to the internet for years before Gross started working with them."

Yet after being arrested, Gross claimed he had no idea that what he was doing was illegal in Cuba, that he had no intention of undermining the government, that the company that hired him, DAI, failed to properly inform him of the risks. At his trial, he said that he was "deeply sorry for being a trusting fool. I was duped. I was used."

But he was also enriched. While Alan Gross was serving his prison sentence, his wife, Judy Gross, sued DAI for \$60 million in federal court. The company settled nearly two years ago for an undisclosed sum. Whatever the amount, it's in addition to \$3.2 million that USAID agreed to pay Gross and DAI in November before he was released.

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**Manuel E. Yepe, is a lawyer, economist and journalist. He is a professor at the Higher Institute of International Relations in Havana. He was Cuba's ambassador to Romania, general director of the Prensa Latina agency; vice president of the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television; founder and national director of the Technological Information System (TIPS) of the United Nations Program for Development in Cuba, and secretary of the Cuban Movement for the Peace and Sovereignty of the Peoples.*

VERDADES QUE COMIENZAN A AFLORAR



La compañía que subcontrató a Gross, Asistencia al Desarrollo Inc. (DAI), con sede en Maryland, confirmó que él remitía informes periódicos de sus actividades, y que DAI informaba a USAID todo lo que hacía Gross. Un portavoz de esa compañía dijo a Associated Press que Gross “diseñó, propuso e imple-

** En Español **

*Por Manuel Yepe**

Parece que algunos de los principales medios de prensa de Estados Unidos, tan férreamente controlados por los poderes fácticos del “establishment”, han comenzado tímidamente a contar la verdad sobre algunas cuestiones delicadas de las relaciones con Cuba anteriores al 17 de diciembre de 2014. Así, bajo el título de “La verdadera historia detrás de la obra de Alan Gross en Cuba”, John Stoehr, director editorial del diario The Washington Spectator y colaborador de The Hill, de Washington, D.C., ofrece una versión diferente de la oficial y única que hasta ahora habían tenido los lectores de este país acerca de las actividades del agente estadounidense que motivaron su arresto, condena y encarcelamiento en Cuba.

“Quien solo sabe de Gross lo que ha informado la televisión, probablemente piense que había alguna justificación para que se le sentara este año junto a la primera dama Michelle Obama como invitado de honor en la ceremonia de presentación del Informe sobre el Estado de la Unión”, dice Stoehr. De Gross sólo se decía que era un activista humanitario injustamente encarcelado en 2009 por un régimen comunista represivo por el supuesto delito de promover acceso a Internet para la pequeña comunidad judía de Cuba.

Incluso cuando fue excarcelado y regresó a Estados Unidos en diciembre como parte del plan de Obama para normalizar las relaciones diplomáticas con Cuba en reemplazo de la política de cambio de régimen que se pretendió imponer a la isla por más de medio siglo, la versión oficial con apoyo bipartidista lo exoneraba de las culpas que

le imputaban, según The Spectator.

Nada se había dicho de que en 2009 la Agencia de Estados Unidos para el Desarrollo Internacional (USAID) pagó a Gross, a través de una compañía especializada en la instalación de equipos electrónicos de computación en áreas remotas, casi \$600.000 para ir a Cuba a instalar equipos de Internet de grado militar en sinagogas judías que no podrían ser detectadas por el gobierno de La Habana.

Según la Oficina de Responsabilidad del Gobierno (GAO), Washington ha invertido más de \$ 200 millones desde 1996 en supuestos “programas prodemocráticos” destinados a desestabilizar al gobierno cubano desde el interior de la isla.

“El informe de la GAO aclara que, como la ley cubana prohíbe a sus ciudadanos participar en “actividades estadounidenses de asistencia a la democracia”, ningún programa de este carácter podría realizarse abiertamente. Y como la ley estadounidense prohíbe al Departamento de Estado -que supervisa la USAID-, participar en operaciones encubiertas, ésta siempre califica de “discretos” sus programas para Cuba en vez de “encubiertos”. Gross no fue lo suficientemente discreto” ironiza Stroehr.

En su quinto viaje a Cuba, en 2009, Gross fue detenido y posteriormente condenado a 15 años por “actos criminales contra la independencia de la nación cubana”.

“Gross pagó cientos de miles de dólares para subvertir el orden en Cuba; conocía que mediante la instalación de redes prohibidas de Internet violaba las leyes cubanas. “Esto es muy arriesgado”, escribió Gross en un informe a Desmond Butler, de AP. En una ocasión dijo: “lo que estamos todos es jugando con fuego.”

mentó este trabajo”.

Gross ponía en peligro a los judíos norteamericanos y cubanos cuando contrabandaban tecnología secreta de alto nivel, como los módulos SIM (subscriber identity module), disponibles sólo para militares y agencias de inteligencia.

Gross usó la comunidad judía como fachada y con ello puso en peligro los privilegios que los judíos disfrutaban en Cuba, según el Spectator. “Los judíos cubanos tuvieron acceso a la Internet varios años antes que Gross empezara a trabajar con ellos”.

Aún después de ser arrestado, Gross afirmó que no tenía idea de que lo que estaba haciendo en Cuba era ilegal, que no tenía intención de socavar al gobierno; que la empresa que lo contrató, DAI, no le informó adecuadamente de los riesgos. Declaró que estaba “profundamente apenado por haber sido un tonto confiado. Yo fui engañado. Fui utilizado.”

Pero también se enriqueció. Mientras Alan Gross estaba cumpliendo su condena, su esposa, Judy Gross, demandó a DAI por \$ 60 millones en un tribunal federal. La compañía reparó el asunto hace casi dos años por una suma no revelada. Sea cual fuera la cifra, es adicional a los \$ 3,2 millones que USAID acordó pagarle en noviembre, poco antes de ser liberado.

Enero 28 de 2014.

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6th INTERNATIONAL

CHE

GUEVARA CONFERENCE

Vancouver & Kamloops, BC, Canada



A HUGE SUCCESS!

6th International Che Guevara Conference a Huge Success!... The 6th International Che Guevara Conference has come to a close, and its simple statistics show that it was a huge success:

- 5 Days
- 2 Cities
- 6 Cuban guests
- 9 Speakers
- 11 Workshops and Special Sessions
- 1 Book signing
- 2 Concerts
- 27 Hours of Program
- 700 Participants

However, the numbers do not tell the whole story of the conference and its theme, "Cuba: A Socialist Project in Progress." When the International Che Guevara Conference began in 2008, its objective was to bring Che Guevara's ideas to as widespread an audience as possible, and to use the Cuban Revolution as a living, breathing, winning example of how to build a better world. With every year the conference has grown, and shown, that Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution are as important as ever.

This year's conference was particularly relevant, given that it came hot on the heels of the December 17th victory, when all 5 Cuban Heroes unjustly imprisoned in US jails were finally returned to Cuba as part of the announcements made by Cuban President Raul Castro and US President Barack Obama that the two countries would work toward normalization of relations. This came after over 50 years of US attempts to blockade and isolate the island. Cuba was in the news, as it deserves to be, and the Che Guevara Conference was taking place in Vancouver and Kamloops to discuss the history, context and prospects of the Cuban Revolution.

DAY 1: Concert with Legendary Cuban

Musician Gerardo Alfonso for the Cuban 5

A gigantic 70 square foot photograph of the Cuban 5 Heroes back together in Havana hung next to the stage as the concert and celebration of their freedom opened the 6th International Che Guevara Conference. The evening itself was opened by Tamara Hansen, coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC). Kenia Serrano Puig, President of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) and part of the 6 person strong Cuban delegation to the conference, helped set the tone by speaking passionately about the significance of the Cuban 5 victory, not only for the Cuban people, but for the entire world.

Those present were also treated to special recorded video greeting to the conference made by Cuban 5 Hero Gerardo Hernandez. He thanked Vancouver for its 110 monthly picket actions demanding the freedom of the Cuban 5 and said, "Next time you go there you can tell them, that's it we won!" He also surprised everyone by bringing his newborn daughter Gema into the video and saying, "You helped make this possible!"

When Cuban 'Nueva Trova' legend Gerardo Alfonso took to the stage, there were absolutely no seats left in the hall as 250 people packed together for his highly anticipated performance. Gerardo did not disappoint, switching seamlessly between piano and guitar, through different moods and tempos, while his voice kept the audience mesmerized throughout. He took time between songs to explain their meanings related to life, love and



Gerardo Alfonso





Dr. Aleida Guevara, daughter of Che Guevara.



Dr. Jose Luis Rodriguez Garcia.



Kenia Serrano.



Dr. Rodriguez, Alberto Prieto and Tamara Hansen

revolution. It was a beautiful evening, and a fitting tribute to the Cuban 5 Victory as well as an opening for the 6th International Che Guevara Conference.

DAY 2: Workshops

When over 150 participants arrived to the hall for the first day of workshops of the Che Guevara Conference, they were greeted by a room covered in Cuba solidarity banners and historical photographs. Another massive photo of Fidel, Raul and Che speaking during the early years of the Revolution was at the front of the room with the Cuban 5 photo. Participants were also given thick conference packages with information about the program, speakers and upcoming Cuba solidarity events.

The conference was once again opened by VCSC Coordinator Tamara Hansen, who was joined by VCSC organizer and Fire This Movement for Social Justice Editorial Board member Aaron Mercredi.

The conference began with a keynote address by Dr. Jose Luis Rodriguez Garcia titled, "The World

Capitalist Economy and the Deterioration of Humanity." Dr Rodriguez Garcia is a former Cuban Minister of Economy and Planning, and was also Vice President of the Council of Ministers and a member of the Council of States. He gave a detailed analysis of the dynamics of the current capitalist crisis and how different capitalist countries are unsuccessfully attempting to overcome it. He concluded that the current crisis has given socialism a new relevance among people looking for an

alternative, and that we need to take advantage of this new opening and its opportunities.

Toronto based journalist and author Keith Bolender was next, giving a workshop titled after his new book, "Cuba Under Siege: American Policy, the Revolution and its People." Keith argued that it is impossible to understand Cuba with understanding the overall context of constant attacks by the United States and their effects on the island. The audience was very interested, and discussion carried on into his book signing which followed during the lunch period. Keith completely sold out of his first book on Cuba, "Voices from the Other Side" and had only 2 copies of his new book left at the end of the conference.

Returning for her 4th consecutive conference, Dr. Aleida Guevara spoke about, "Cuba's Healthcare System: Where Humanity Comes First and the Principle of Revolutionary Internationalism." Dr. Guevara spoke of her own experience volunteering for many years on Cuba's internationalist missions in Nicaragua and Angola, as well as Cuba's current world leading fight against Ebola in West Africa. She referenced her father, the legendary Che Guevara, his legacy as a revolutionary doctor, and his conception of healthcare as a human

right which Cuba could teach the world to respect and provide.

Also returning to the conference was Alberto Prieto, Coordinator for North and Central America for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba. His workshop was titled, "Latin-America and the Emerging Revolutionary Process." He outlined the emerging revolutionary processes in Latin-America, and the attempted counter-revolution being attempted by the United States. He discussed new Latin-American regional organizations such as CELAC (Community of Latin-American and Caribbean States) and said, "We are attending the funeral of the Organization of American States," to a loud applause by all those who for decades had watched the US and Canada use this increasingly irrelevant organization to impose their interests upon Latin America.

The first day of the conference closed with a Special Session, "The Importance of the Struggle for the Freedom of the 5 Cuban Heroes and the Future of the Cuba Solidarity Movement in North America." Before the keynote address, Nino Pagliccia presented an introduction to his newly released book, "Cuba Solidarity in Canada: 5 Decades of People to People foreign relations." Nino outlined the many contributors to the book, which includes a chapter on Cuban 5 organizing written by VCSC and Free the Cuban 5 Committee – Vancouver members Tamara Hansen and Ali Yerevani.

Kenia Serrano gave the key note address, and summarized the long, hard international campaign waged to Free the Cuban 5 Heroes, as well as the immense joy of the Cuban people now that they are returned to Cuba with their families. While she reminded people that Cuba still needs friends in important struggles to end the US blockade and return Guantanamo Bay to Cuba, she put Cuba's struggle within the context of a international movement of oppressed people fighting for their rights, and the need to unify to accomplish the goals of everyone. With the historic Cuban 5 victory in mind, and with eyes set firmly on future victories, Day 2 of the International Che Guevara Conference ended on a high note!

DAY 3: Workshops

The morning began with a special video presentation by Dr. Aleida Guevara titled, "Today I Released a Butterfly," a moving documentary of interviews with the now adult children of the combatants who fought and died with Che in Bolivia. The film was produced by the Che Guevara Institute in Havana, which Aleida works closely with and is overseen by her mother. This was followed by a highly anticipated workshop by Javier Domokos, the Cuban

continued on page 24



REFLECTIONS BY
FIDEL CASTRO

Feb 5th, 2015

Dear comrades:

Since the year 2006, for health reasons that were incompatible with the time and the efforts required to fulfill my duties –which I imposed upon myself when I entered this University on September 4, 1945, seventy years ago–, I renounced all my positions.

I was not the son of a worker, nor did I lack the material or social resources required for a relatively comfortable existence. I can say that I miraculously escaped wealth. Many years later, the wealthiest American, who was no doubt a very capable man, with almost 100 billion dollars, stated –as was published by a news agency last Thursday, January 22–, that the system of production and distribution of wealth that favored the privileged will make poor people rich from one generation to the next.

From the times of ancient Greece, during almost three thousand years, the Greeks, without going much farther, excelled in almost all areas of human knowledge: Physics, Mathematics, Philosophy, Architecture, Arts, Science, Politics, Astronomy and others. However, Greece was a country of slaves who did the hardest works both in the countryside and in the cities, while the oligarchy devoted itself to writing and philosophizing. The first utopia was written precisely by them.

Have a close look at the realities of this well-known, globalized and very unfairly distributed planet Earth, where, as is known, every single vital resource is deposited by virtue of historical factors: some have much less resources than they need; others have so many that they do not know what to do with them. Now, in the face of serious war threats and risks, chaos reigns in the distribution of financial resources and social production. The world's population has grown, between 1800 and 2015, from one billion to seven billion inhabitants. ¿Would this be the right way to cope with the population growth during the next 100 years as well as with the food, health, water and housing needs that the world's population will face, regardless of whatever scientific advances are made?

To my comrades of the University Students Federation

All right, but setting aside these enigmatic problems, it is astonishing to think that the University of Havana, at the time when I entered that beloved and prestigious institution, almost three quarters of a century ago, was the only one that existed in Cuba.

By the way, comrade students and professors, we should remember that today we not only have one, but more than fifty higher education centers scattered throughout the entire country.

When you invited me to participate in the launching of the campaign to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of my entering the University, a news that caught me by surprise, during very hectic days for me, for I was dealing with several issues in which I can perhaps still be relatively useful, I decided to have some rest and devote myself for some hours to remember those years.

I feel overwhelmed when I realize that seventy years have passed already. In fact, comrades, if I were to register again at the University at that age, as some have asked me, I would respond, without hesitating, that I would have pursued a scientific career. And after graduating, I would have said just like Guayasamín: Leave a little light on for me.

In those years, I was already influenced by Marx and I managed to have a broader and better understanding of the strange and complex world in we all have had to live in. I was able to dispense with the bourgeois illusions whose tentacles succeeded in confusing many students when they were least experienced and most passionate. This would be a subject for a long and endless discussion.

Lenin, the founder of the Communist Party, was another genius of revolutionary action. That is why I did not hesitate for a single second when, at the trial after the attack on the Moncada, which I was allowed to attend just one time, I stated before the judges and dozens of high-ranking officers of the Batista regime that we were readers of Lenin's works.

We did not talk about Mao Zedong because the Socialist Revolution in China, inspired by identical purposes, had not yet concluded.

But I should note, however, that revolutionary ideas are to be always on the alert as humanity is able to multiply its knowledge.

Nature has taught us that tens of billions of light-years may have passed by, but life, in

any of its forms, will always be subject to the most incredible combinations of matter and radiations.

The personal greeting between the Presidents of Cuba and the United States took place at the funeral of Nelson Mandela, a notable and exemplary fighter against Apartheid, who was a friend of Obama's.

Suffice it to say that, already by that moment, several years had elapsed since the Cuban troops had dealt a devastating defeat to the racist army of South Africa, led by a rich bourgeoisie that was the owner of huge economic resources. That is the history of a struggle that is still to be written. South Africa, the government with the most financial resources in that continent, had nuclear weapons that had been supplied by the racist State of Israel, by virtue of an agreement between the latter and President Ronald Reagan, who authorized it to deliver the devices required for the use of such weapons with which South Africa could attack the Cuban and Angolan forces that were defending the People's Republic of Angola against the occupation of that country by the racist, thus excluding every possibility of negotiating peace, while Angola was being attacked by the Apartheid forces, with the best trained and equipped army in the African continent.

Under such circumstances, there was no possibility whatsoever for a peaceful solution. The ceaseless efforts made to crush and systematically bleed out the People's Republic of Angola with the power of that well trained and equipped army, was the determining factor behind Cuba's decision to deal an overwhelming blow against the racists in Cuito Cuanavale, a former NATO base, which South Africa was attempting to occupy at all costs.

That arrogant country was forced to negotiate a peace agreement which put an end to the military occupation of Angola and to the Apartheid regime in Africa.

The African continent was then free from nuclear weapons. Cuba had to face, for the second time, the risk of a nuclear attack.

The Cuban internationalist troops withdrew from Africa with honor. And then came the Special Period in times of peace, which has already lasted for more than 20 years, without hoisting the white flag, something we never

did nor we will ever do.

Many friends of Cuba have known the exemplary behavior of our people, and it is to them that I will explain, in a few words, my essential position.


I do not trust the US policy, nor have I ever exchanged a single word with them, something that in no way means a rejection to a peaceful settlement of conflicts or war dangers. Defending peace is a duty of all. Any peaceful and negotiated solution to the problems between the United States and peoples, or any people of Latin America, which does not

involve force or the use of force, should be addressed according to international standards and principles. We will always advocate cooperation and friendship with all peoples of the world, among them, the peoples of our political adversaries. That is what we are demanding for all.

The President of Cuba has taken relevant steps in accordance with his prerogatives and the faculties vested upon him by the National Assembly and the Communist Party of Cuba. The grave dangers that threaten humanity today will have to give way to the norms that are compatible with human dignity. No

country can be denied those rights.

It is in that spirit that I have struggled and I will continue to struggle to my last breath.



Fidel Castro Ruz
January 26, 2015
12:35 pm

continued from page 14

each and every time a Canadian uses a mobile phone or accesses the internet.

There is no court or committee that monitors the CSEC's interception of these private communications and metadata information, and there is no judicial oversight of its sweeping powers. CSEC's operations are shrouded in secrecy."

- In 2012, the government also shut down the office of the CSIS inspector general, which provided active oversight over the agency. Since then, after-the-fact review is provided by a part-time Security Intelligence Review Committee.

Trying to Push the Campaign Further

So Bill C-51 is part of an ongoing effort. In this case the government is going so far, even its usual major media allies are concerned.

The Canadian Press noted, "The bill would give government agencies such as the CSIS vast new powers. But it would provide no new independent oversight."

A Globe and Mail Editorial asks, "Why does the bill do so much more than fight terrorism? One part of Bill C-51 creates a new definition of an 'activity that undermines the sovereignty, security or territorial integrity of Canada' that includes 'terrorism,' 'interference with critical infrastructure' and 'interference with the capability of the Government in relation to ... the economic or financial stability of Canada.'"

Even the conservative newspaper National Post published a highly critical editorial saying, "But Canadians have been given precious little information on which to decide whether the threat justifies the measures contained in Bill C-51. This is especially true in the case of C-51's prohibitions on 'advocating' and 'promoting' terrorism — terms that, worryingly, are not defined in the bill."

Unfortunately the Conservative Party promoted Bill has received little opposition in Parliament. The Liberal Party has criticized the lack of oversight, but said it will support the Bill. The New Democratic Party (NDP), despite all the bill being an obvious attack on poor and working people, has not even announced its official position yet! How is it that the National Post has a more progressive position on Bill C-51 than the Canada's "progressive" political party the NDP?

The Narrative Unravels

"As you are aware, Madame Chancellor, one of the jihadist monster's tentacles reached as far as our own Parliament." - Prime Minister Stephen Harper talking to German Chancellor Angela Merkel, February 9, 2015

Jihadist monster tentacles! It sounds laughable, but the consequences are not. The Canadian government is attacking Muslims, immigrants and refugees, and also creating more space to criminalize dissenting views. There is another important element as well: the effort to create divisions between white "Canadian" workers and non-white, immigrant and refugee workers in an overall effort to drive down wages.

Non-white people living in Canada have grown from less than 5% of the population in 1980, to 16.2% in 2006, and it is estimated the number will be 32% by 2030. According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), these workers make less than 82 cents for every dollar a white worker makes. Non-white women make only 55.6 cents for every dollar made by white male workers.

Also, as we have previously reported in Fire This Time, the Canadian government also changed the Temporary Foreign Worker Act to allow employers to pay higher skilled migrant workers 15% less than prevailing wage rates, and employers are also able to accelerate application for temporary foreign workers, reducing the time from 12-14 weeks to 10 days. There are now more than

300,000 Temporary Foreign Workers in Canada, triple the number from a decade ago.

This is used to try and create a climate of racism and division which is beneficial to the Canadian government and their business friends as they work to push down wages for everyone, especially higher paid workers, to maximize profits and survive the current global economic crisis.

Stop the War at Home and Abroad!

"Together, we will remain vigilant against those at home or abroad who wish to harm us."

- Stephen Harper, October 22, 2014

These were part of Stephen Harper's statement following the terrorist attack on Parliament Hill in Ottawa which left one man dead. The Canadian government instantly went on the offensive with one result being the introduction of Bill C-51. However, one can both condemn the Ottawa attack, and also the policies of the government of Canada, which have led to tens of thousands of deaths in Afghanistan and beyond, as well as painting a bleak picture for life at home as well. What "together" is the Prime Minister referring to when he has so blatantly attacked poor and working people in Canada and around the world? Bill C-51 has nothing to do with "fighting terrorism" or "jihadist monster tentacles" and everything to do with limiting our rights, silencing dissent and creating divisions. The real "together" is unity between all poor and working people regardless of race, sex, or religion, and it is crucial to defending our lives and livelihoods, at home and abroad, against the attacks of the Canadian government.

Scrap Bill C-51!

Stop Attacks on Poor and Working People at Home and Abroad!



REFLEXIONES DEL
FIDEL CASTRO

** En Español **

Queridos compañeros:

Desde el año 2006, por cuestiones de salud incompatibles con el tiempo y el esfuerzo necesario para cumplir un deber —que me impuse a mí mismo cuando ingresé en esta Universidad el 4 de septiembre de 1945, hace 70 años—, renuncié a mis cargos.

No era hijo de obrero, ni carente de recursos materiales y sociales para una existencia relativamente cómoda; puedo decir que escapé milagrosamente de la riqueza. Muchos años después, el norteamericano más rico y sin duda muy capaz, con casi 100 mil millones de dólares, declaró —según publicó una agencia de noticias el pasado jueves 22 de enero—, que el sistema de producción y distribución privilegiada de las riquezas convertiría de generación en generación a los pobres en ricos.

Desde los tiempos de la antigua Grecia, durante casi 3 mil años, los griegos, sin ir más lejos, fueron brillantes en casi todas las actividades: física, matemática, filosofía, arquitectura, arte, ciencia, política, astronomía y otras ramas del conocimiento humano. Grecia, sin embargo, era un territorio de esclavos que realizaban los más duros trabajos en campos y ciudades, mientras una oligarquía se dedicaba a escribir y filosofar. La primera utopía fue escrita precisamente por ellos.

Observen bien las realidades de este conocido, globalizado y muy mal repartido planeta Tierra, donde se conoce cada recurso

Para mis compañeros de la Federación Estudiantil Universitaria

vital depositado en virtud de factores históricos: algunos con mucho menos de los que necesitan; otros, con tantos que no hallan qué hacer con ellos. En medio ahora de grandes amenazas y peligros de guerras reina el caos en la distribución de los recursos financieros y en el reparto de la producción social. La población del mundo ha crecido, entre los años 1800 y 2015, de mil millones a siete mil millones de habitantes. ¿Podrán resolverse de esta forma el incremento de la población en los próximos 100 años y las necesidades de alimento, salud, agua y vivienda que tendrá la población mundial cualquiera que fuesen los avances de la ciencia?

Bien, pero dejando a un lado estos enigmáticos problemas, admira pensar que

lo que supe sorpresivamente, y en días muy atareados por diversos temas en los que tal vez pueda ser todavía relativamente útil, decidí descansar dedicándole algunas horas al recuerdo de aquellos años.

Me abruma descubrir que han pasado 70 años. En realidad, compañeros y compañeras, si matriculara de nuevo a esa edad como algunos me preguntan, le respondería sin vacilar que sería en una carrera científica. Al graduarme, diría como Guayasamín: déjenme una lucecita encendida.

En aquellos años, influido ya por Marx, logré comprender más y mejor el extraño y complejo mundo en que a todos nos ha correspondido vivir. Pude prescindir

de las ilusiones burguesas, cuyos tentáculos lograron enredar a muchos estudiantes cuando menos experiencia y más ardor poseían. El tema sería largo e interminable.

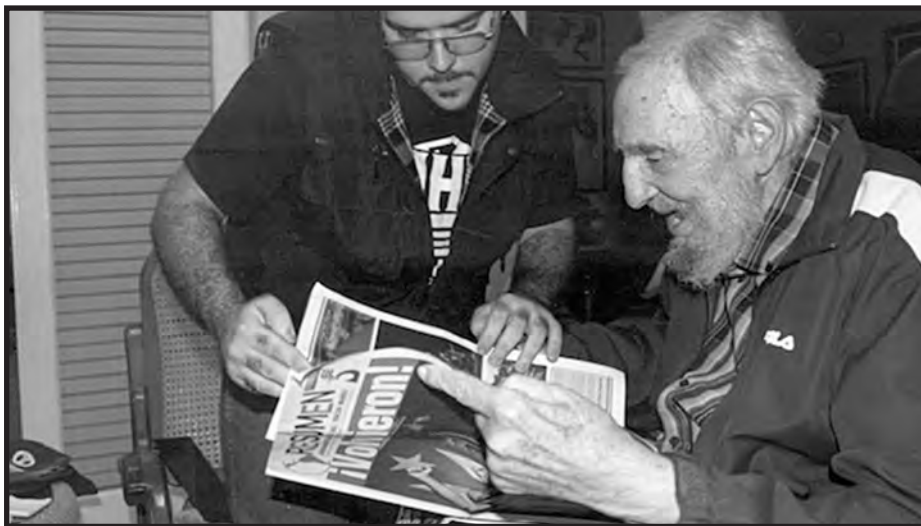
Otro genio de la acción revolucionaria, fundador del Partido Comunista, fue Lenin. Por eso no vacilé un segundo cuando en el juicio del Moncada, donde me permitieron asistir, aunque una sola

vez, declaré ante jueces y decenas de altos oficiales batistianos que éramos lectores de Lenin.

De Mao Zedong no hablamos porque todavía no había concluido la Revolución Socialista en China, inspirada en idénticos propósitos.

Advierto, sin embargo, que las ideas revolucionarias han de estar siempre en guardia a medida que la humanidad multiplique sus conocimientos.

La naturaleza nos enseña que pueden haber



23 de enero 2015 - Fidel Castro y Randy Perdomo García, presidente de la FEU de la Universidad de La Habana.

la Universidad de La Habana, en los días en que yo ingresé a esta querida y prestigiosa institución, hace casi tres cuartos de siglo, era la única que había en Cuba.

Por cierto, compañeros estudiantes y profesores, debemos recordar que no se trata de una, sino que contamos hoy con más de cincuenta centros de Educación Superior repartidos en todo el país.

Cuando me invitaron ustedes a participar en el lanzamiento de la jornada por el 70 aniversario de mi ingreso a la Universidad,

transcurrido decenas de miles de millones de años luz y la vida en cualquiera de sus manifestaciones está siempre sujeta a las más increíbles combinaciones de materia y radiaciones.

El saludo personal de los Presidentes de Cuba y Estados Unidos se produjo en el funeral de Nelson Mandela, insigne y ejemplar combatiente contra el Apartheid, quien tenía amistad con Obama.

Baste señalar que ya en esa fecha, habían transcurrido varios años desde que las tropas cubanas derrotaran de forma aplastante al ejército racista de Sudáfrica, dirigido por una burguesía rica y con enormes recursos económicos. Es la historia de una contienda que está por escribirse. Sudáfrica, el gobierno con más recursos financieros de ese continente, poseía armas nucleares suministradas por el Estado racista de Israel, en virtud de un acuerdo entre este y el presidente Ronald Reagan, quien lo autorizó a entregar los dispositivos para el uso de tales armas con las cuales golpear a las fuerzas cubanas y angolanas que defendían a la República Popular de Angola contra la ocupación de ese país por los racistas. De ese modo se excluía toda negociación de paz mientras Angola era atacada por las fuerzas del Apartheid con el ejército más entrenado y equipado del continente africano.

En tal situación no había posibilidad alguna de una solución pacífica. Los incesantes esfuerzos por liquidar a la República Popular de Angola para desangrarla sistemáticamente con el poder de aquel bien entrenado y equipado ejército, fue lo que determinó la decisión cubana de asestar un golpe contundente contra los racistas en Cuito Cuanavale, antigua base de la OTAN, que Sudáfrica trataba de ocupar a toda costa.

Aquel prepotente país fue obligado a negociar un acuerdo de paz que puso fin a la ocupación militar de Angola y el fin del Apartheid en África.

El continente africano quedó libre de armas nucleares. Cuba tuvo que enfrentar, por segunda vez, el riesgo de un ataque nuclear.

Las tropas internacionalistas cubanas se retiraron con honor de África. Sobrevino entonces el Periodo Especial en tiempo de paz, que ha durado ya más de 20 años sin levantar bandera blanca, algo que no hicimos ni haremos jamás.

Muchos amigos de Cuba conocen la ejemplar conducta de nuestro pueblo, y a ellos les explico mi posición esencial en breves palabras.

No confío en la política de Estados Unidos ni he intercambiado una palabra con ellos, sin que esto signifique, ni mucho menos,

un rechazo a una solución pacífica de los conflictos o peligros de guerra. Defender la paz es un deber de todos. Cualquier solución pacífica y negociada a los problemas entre Estados Unidos y los pueblos o cualquier pueblo de América Latina, que no implique la fuerza o el empleo de la fuerza, deberá ser tratada de acuerdo a los principios y normas internacionales. Defenderemos siempre la cooperación y la amistad con todos los pueblos del mundo y entre ellos los de nuestros adversarios políticos. Es lo que estamos reclamando para todos.

El Presidente de Cuba ha dado los pasos pertinentes de acuerdo a sus prerrogativas y las facultades que le conceden la Asamblea

Nacional y el Partido Comunista de Cuba.

Los graves peligros que amenazan hoy a la humanidad tendrían que ceder paso a normas que fuesen compatibles con la dignidad humana. De tales derechos no está excluido ningún país.

Con este espíritu he luchado y continuaré luchando hasta el último aliento.

Fidel Castro Ruz
Enero 26 de 2015
12 y 35 p.m.

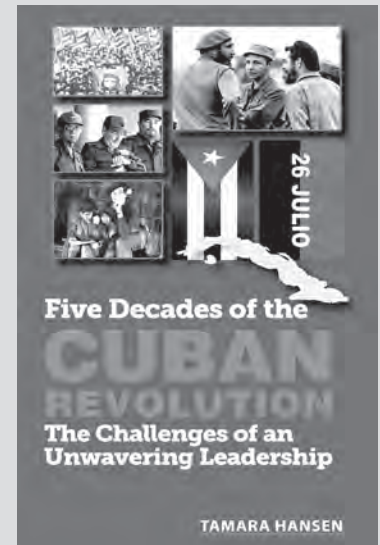
Battle of Ideas Press

5 Decades of the Cuban Revolution The Challenges of an Unwavering Leadership

By Tamara Hansen

"The battles Cuba has fought have not been easy. Some were physical battles, such as the battle against bandits in the Escambray Mountains or the Bay of Pigs invasion. However, most were not battles of physical might, but battles of ideas. But with every twist and turn, every up and down Fidel has been one of the first leaders to say, 'this way forward' or 'we made a wrong turn, we must change course.'"

Tamara Hansen is the coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC). She is also an editorial board member of The Fire This Time newspaper. She has travelled to Cuba ten times and has written extensively on Cuban politics since 2003.



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BILL C-51: TERRORIZING DISSENT

Canadian Government Tries to Turn Back the Clock on Human Rights with New “Anti-Terrorism” Bill



By Thomas Davies

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial ‘outside agitator’ idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.”

Martin Luther King Jr, April 16, 1963

Martin Luther King Jr, the great black fighter for civil rights, wrote these words from a jail cell in Birmingham, Alabama. His crime? Protesting against segregation after a judge had outlawed all, “parading, demonstrating, boycotting, trespassing and picketing” in response to a campaign against desegregation in the city. Being thrown in jail for speaking out against racism and for equal rights might be something most people in Canada consider impossible today, but by promoting a climate of fear and racism, and then using this as the pretext for new laws and legislation, the Canadian conservative government is moving towards just that.

The newest attempt is though Bill C-51, which has already been submitted to Parliament. Titled the, “Investigative Powers for the 21st Century Act”, the bill gives hugely expanded powers to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and other government agencies, including lowering the threshold of proof for arrest, new allowances for knowingly violating legal rights, increased secrecy of

court proceedings and expanding arbitrary “no fly lists.”

To accept the government narrative that this is only to combat the “violent jihadism” which is “at war” with Canada would be a huge mistake. This has been targeted against us too and will affect us all.

Nothing New

“I find it a little convenient that in the past few years that these radicalized people are the biggest threat to ever hit us. There are more people dying because of drunk drivers or because of gang violence.” - Former CSIS officer Francois Lavigne

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001 the Canadian government has waged an increasing war both at home and abroad. They have consciously tried to promote both racism and Islamophobia, which they use to justify their continued squandering of lives and money during their participation in wars such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Mali. It has also served as a convenient justification for rolling back hard won civil liberties here in Canada, starting with the targeting of Muslim communities.

To document all of the instances of abuse would take an entire article, actually an entire series of books, but it is useful to look at some examples:

- The use of “Security Certificates” to indefinitely detain non-citizen residents of Canada without charge, using secret evidence and a quasi-judicial process. Since 9-11, five Muslim men have been arrested and detained for years without charges and proper judicial process. Adil Charkaoui,

Hassan Almrei, Mahmoud Jaballah, Mohamed Harkat and Mohammad Zeki Mahjou have decades of imprisonment and harassment inflicted between them, but not one of them has been convicted of any crime.

- In August of 2014, 23 men were arrested in Toronto. The RCMP carried out these and several other raids in conjunction with the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). It was announced that they had uncovered an Al Qaeda “sleeper cell.” All 24 men were Muslim, 23 were from Pakistan, and they had all at one time attended the same business school. All allegations of terrorism against the detainees were dropped within two weeks of the arrests, yet the detainees spent two to five months in a maximum security prison outside Toronto. Some of the evidence used to justify and hype the arrests included an “airplane schematic” found on the wall of one of their apartments, which was actually a poster of an airplane given to one of the arrested by his father, a baggage handler!

- The BC Civil Liberties Association is currently suing the Canadian government for allowing the Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSEC) to “read Canadians’ emails and text messages, and listen to Canadians’ phone calls, whenever a Canadian is communicating with a person outside Canada. CSEC also operates under a secret ministerial directive that allows it to collect and analyze the metadata information that is automatically produced

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It is only being a Muslim which keeps me from seeing people by the color of their skin. This religion teaches brotherhood, but I have to be a realist—I live in America, a society which does not believe

Brute force is used by white racists to suppress nonwhites. It is a racist society ruled by segregationists....

[W]here the government fails to protect the Negro he is entitled to do it himself. He is within his rights. I have found the only white elements who do not want this advice given to undefensive Blacks are the racist liberals. They use the press to project us in the image of violence.

There is an element of whites who are nothing but cold, animalistic racists.¹ That element is the one that controls or has strong influence in the power structure. It uses the press skillfully to feed statistics to the public to make it appear that the rate of crime in the Black community, or community of nonwhite people, is at such a high level. It gives the impression or the image that everyone in that community is criminal.

And as soon as the public accepts the fact that the dark-skinned community consists largely of criminals or people who are dirty, then it makes it possible for the power structure to set up a police-state system. Which will make it permissible in the minds of even the well-meaning white public for them to come in and use all kinds of police methods to brutally suppress the struggle on the part of these people against segregation, discrimination, and other acts that are unleashed against them that are absolutely unjust.

They use the press to set up this police state, and they use the press to make the white public accept whatever they do to the dark-skinned public... They have all kinds of negative characteristics that they project to make the white public draw back, or to make the

white public be apathetic when police-state-like methods are used in these areas to suppress the people's honest and just struggle against discrimination and other forms of segregation.

A good example of how they do it in New York: Last summer, when the Blacks were rioting—the riots, actually they weren't riots in the first place; they were reactions against police brutality.² And when the Afro-Americans reacted against the brutal measures that were executed against them by the police, the press all over the world projected them as rioters. When the store windows were broken in the Black community, immediately it was made to appear that this was being done not by people who were reacting over civil rights violations, but they gave the impression that these were hoodlums, vagrants, criminals....

But this is wrong. In America the Black community in which we live is not owned by us. The landlord is white. The merchant is white. In fact, the entire economy of the Black community in the States is controlled by someone who doesn't even live there. The property that we live in is owned by someone else. The store that we trade with is operated by someone else. And these are the people who suck the economic blood of our community.

And being in a position to suck the economic blood of our community, they control the radio programs that cater to us, they control the newspapers, the advertising, that cater to us. They control our minds. They end up controlling our civic organizations. They end up controlling us economically, politically, socially, mentally, and every other kind of way. They suck our blood like vultures.

And when you see the Blacks react, since the people who do this aren't there, they react against their property. The property is the only thing that's there. And they destroy it. And you get the impression over here that because they are destroying the property where they live, that they are destroying their own property. No. They can't get to the man, so they get at what he owns. [Laughter] This doesn't say it's intelligent. But whoever heard of a sociological explosion that was done intelligently and politely? And this is what you're trying to make the Black man do. You're trying to drive him into a ghetto and make him the victim of every kind of unjust condition imaginable. Then when he explodes, you want him to explode politely! [Laughter] You want him to explode according to somebody's ground rules. Why, you're dealing with the wrong man, and you're dealing with him at the wrong time in the wrong way.



Speech by

MALCOLM X

at the London School of Economics - February 11, 1965

**Commemorating Black History Month 2015
Our Leaders that have inspired the world for liberation!**



“WE DECLARE OUR RIGHT ON THIS EARTH... TO BE A HUMAN BEING, TO BE RESPECTED AS A HUMAN BEING, TO BE GIVEN THE RIGHTS OF A HUMAN BEING IN THIS SOCIETY, ON THIS EARTH, IN THIS DAY, WHICH WE INTEND TO BRING INTO EXISTENCE BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY.”

**MALCOLM X
1925-1965**



**THOMAS SANKARA
1949-1987**

“THE REVOLUTION AND WOMEN’S LIBERATION GO TOGETHER. WE DO NOT TALK OF WOMEN’S EMANCIPATION AS AN ACT OF CHARITY OR BECAUSE OF A SURGE OF HUMAN COMPASSION. IT IS A BASIC NECESSITY FOR THE TRIUMPH OF THE REVOLUTION. WOMEN HOLD UP THE OTHER HALF OF THE SKY.”



**MAURICE BISHOP
1943-1983**

“WHEN WILL IMPERIALISM LEARN? YES, THEY CAN KILL OUR BODIES BUT THEY CAN NEVER KILL THE SPIRIT OF A PEOPLE FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIBERATION, THEY CAN NEVER KILL THE SPIRIT OF A PEOPLE FIGHTING FOR THEIR COUNTRY AND FIGHTING TO PUSH THEIR COUNTRY FORWARD.”



**PATRICE LUMUMBA
1925-1961**

“THE DAY WILL COME WHEN HISTORY WILL SPEAK. BUT IT WILL NOT BE THE HISTORY WHICH WILL BE TAUGHT IN BRUSSELS, PARIS, WASHINGTON OR THE UNITED NATIONS. IT WILL BE... TAUGHT IN THE COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE WON FREEDOM FROM COLONIALISM AND ITS PUPPETS. AFRICA WILL WRITE ITS OWN HISTORY AND... IT WILL BE A HISTORY OF GLORY AND DIGNITY.”



**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
1929-1968**

“ONE DAY WE MUST ASK THE QUESTION, “WHY ARE THERE FORTY MILLION POOR PEOPLE IN AMERICA?” “WHEN YOU ASK THAT QUESTION, YOU BEGIN TO QUESTION THE CAPITALISTIC ECONOMY.”

Vancouver Anti-War Rally Demands: NO to Islamophobia! NO to War! NO to Occupation!

By Janine Solanki

On Saturday January 31, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) called upon peace-loving people in Vancouver to join them in the streets of downtown Vancouver for their first antiwar rally and petition campaign drive of 2015. A quick look back on the last 12 months demonstrates clearly that the US-led war machine has continued the assault on oppressed people around the world through the ever-expanding new era of war and occupation with massive military aggression. Since October of 2001, with the start of the new era of war and occupation, the world has already seen the complete destruction of Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, and now Syria is left in a constant state of U.S. fomented division and civil war.

Following the attack on the offices of the Charlie Hebdo magazine in France, there has been a huge rise of Islamophobia in imperialist countries, coupled with the introduction of more and more so-called anti-terrorist legislation that threatens basic civil liberties. Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) in their rally condemned the terrorist attack in France, however also used the opportunity to condemn all forms of terrorism, including state terrorism, which is used by western colonial powers including France,

Canada, the U.K. and the U.S. "We stand strongly against Islamophobia and the assault on civil liberties that is being organized and promoted by imperialist governments and the Western mainstream media," stated Thomas Davies, an organizer and a founding member of MAWO who spoke during the rally.

Canada's role in Iraq was also protested during the rally where it was stated that over 600 military personnel and special forces, six CF-18 fighter jets, a refueling tanker aircraft and two surveillance planes are operating there as part of an air combat mission. MAWO organizers made it clear that the government of Canada is fully complicit in this newest brutal addition to the legacy of foreign wars and occupations that have devastated Iraq and killed millions of people.

During the rally, organizers and activists with



Mobilization Against War & Occupation distributed information against war to people walking by the busy downtown location while collecting signatures on their petition against the US led bombing campaign against Iraq. The petition also demands that the governments of Canada and the

U.S. stop all material and financial aid to the ISIS/ISIL groups in Syria and Iraq.

MAWO organizers while finishing their protest and petition drive encouraged supporters to join them again next month as they continue their monthly rallies and forums to protest against war and occupation and building an effective antiwar movement.

Climate Catastrophe Already Starting Capitalism vs. Our Future – We Can't Have Both

THE LOGIC IS SIMPLE: CAPITALISM CAN'T SURVIVE WITHOUT ENDLESS GROWTH. Many of earth's species—including humans—can't survive the onrushing catastrophe of climate change caused by unchecked growth. We have a choice to make.

A rapidly rising international movement against climate change and for climate justice is growing ever more aware of this logic.

Our struggles are multiplying against the dangers of oil and gas pipeline spills, tanker ruptures, exploding trains, fracking, and the mining/transport/export of coal.

In turn, these battles open our eyes to even worse threats and already-happening disasters that result directly from burning these fossil fuels, fulfilling the air with green-house gases, and raising out atmosphere's temperature. Our opened eyes can clearly see more and greater disasters looming.

Climate scientists are nearly unanimous that we need to keep 80% of known fossil fuels in the ground. If we don't, the next few decades will

suffer more super-storms, droughts, famines, rising sea levels, species extinctions, and probably the end of human civilization—with all the horrors that implies.

We cannot sentence our children and grandchildren to such a bleak future. A brighter future means our shifting quickly away from fossil fuel energy. We must end the incredible wastefulness of our production, consumption and war-making. We have to create a society and economy that is in harmony with the natural world—the complex and delicate ecology on which we depend for the air, food, water, and temperature range we need to survive.

THE ROOT CAUSE OF CLIMATE CHANGE IS OUR CURRENT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC system—capitalism—because it is based on unending growth. Profits, and thus production, must grow. Or else, there is crisis: investment falls, layoffs rise, spending drops, production dips, more jobs are lost, etc.

Insatiable profit-seeking and "market forces" make capitalism what it is. It is wishful thinking

A statement from EcoSocialist Group

that it can be reformed, can exist in some sort of steady-state, no-growth version.

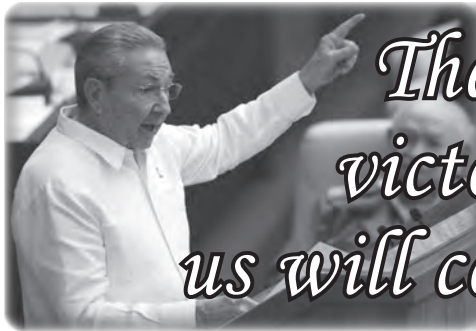
AN ECONOMY NOT COMPELLED BY THE ETERNAL QUEST FOR PROFIT—a sustainable economy—would have to be planned economy aiming for certain social, economic, ecological goals—goals chosen by someone.

That someone should be us—all of us—democratically deciding on production and consumption priorities, based on principles of equality and eco-harmony. To make this system work all must have a stake. So, we also need to eliminate racism, sexism, and all forms of inequality and oppression, while enshrining First Nations' rights to sovereignty and self-determination.

We call such a system socialism. It is not a reform of capitalism. It will be a new system, replacing capitalism.

The Vancouver EcoSocialist Group is working for democratic, egalitarian, ecologically sane socialism. Check our web page (below) for time and place of our bi-weekly meetings.

For more info: www.ecosocialist.org



The unwavering confidence in victory which Fidel instilled in us will continue to guide our people

Speech by President Raúl Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Councils of State and Ministers, at the close of the Fourth Ordinary Session of the Eighth Legislature of the National Assembly of People's Power, in the Havana Convention Center, December 20, 2014, "Year 56 of the Revolution".

continued from cover

We are joined in this session by Gerardo, Ramón and Antonio, a cause for genuine joy and happiness for all our people – I will expand on this important issue in the final part of my speech.

Also present are Fernando and René, and the relatives of the Five heroes, together with the young Elián González, his father Juan Miguel and Colonel Orlando Cardoso Villavicencio, Hero of the Republic of Cuba, who suffered severe imprisonment for over 10 years in Somalia.

As has been customary in sessions of our Parliament, it is my responsibility to review the performance of the economy during the year which is ending and the Plan and Budget for 2015, issues which have been thoroughly debated by deputies in the 10 commissions and also in the plenary session yesterday.

The Ninth Plenary of the Central Committee of the Party, held last Thursday, was also devoted to analysis of these issues. Therefore, I will make only brief reference to these matters. It was explained that the Gross Domestic Product, known as GDP, grew by 1.3%, lower than initially planned, influenced by poor performance in the first half of the year, during which major financial constraints were faced due to the lack of foreign income, adverse weather conditions and internal weaknesses in

economic management.

In fact during the second half of the year, a modest reverse in that trend and a superior outcome were achieved. The Plan for next year consolidates and reinforces the direction of stronger growth in the Cuban economy, based on the enhancement of internal reserves of efficiency, the revival of productive sectors, particularly manufacturing, more efficient use of energy sources and greater investment in infrastructure and material production, while social services such as health and education for our population were preserved.

For 2015, planned GDP growth is just over 4%, an achievable goal considering that we have, well in advance, a better financial situation in comparison with



December 20, 2014

Raúl Castro addressing the National Assembly of People's Power

the beginning of 2014. This does not mean that it will be easy, far from it. We will continue to face the effects of the global economic crisis and the U.S. blockade which is still in place, generating undeniable obstacles to the development of our economy.

At the same time, we will continue to strictly honor the commitments made

in the restructuring of debts with our main creditor,s and thus contribute to the gradual recovery of the Cuban economy's international credibility. Yesterday afternoon, the National Assembly adopted the State Budget Law for 2015, which projects a deficit of 6.2% of GDP, and is considered acceptable under the current circumstances. It incorporates new taxes and reduces the tax burden on enterprises in line with the gradual implementation of the Tax Law.

At the same time, various measures have been adopted to strengthen fiscal control in response to indiscipline and tax evasion by enterprises and individuals. In this area, not only should those who fail to comply be punished, as impunity would be tantamount to encouraging the violation of existing legal norms, but we also believe that it is necessary to foment a culture of tax compliance within institutions, enterprises, cooperatives and among the self-employed, so that it is understood that taxes are the main method of redistributing national income in the interest of all citizens.

Furthermore, the process of implementing the Economic and Social Policy Guidelines of the Party and the Revolution, approved by the 6th Party Congress has continued to advance. As reported, we are at a qualitatively higher stage in this area, in which extremely complex tasks are being addressed, whose solution will impact all facets of national life. I am referring, in the first place, to the process of monetary unification, which, from the conceptual point of view, has progressed strongly in the second half of this year and we have managed to outline a comprehensive program of measures in the interest of avoiding damages to the economy and the population.

The decision to extend sales in CUP across hard currency stores has been well received by the population and will continue to expand gradually. The time is right to reaffirm two concepts which we should not ignore. The first is that monetary unification is no universal or immediate solution to all the problems facing our economy.

“...without ever surrendering the ideals of social justice of this Revolution of the humble, by the humble and for the humble.”

This important decision should be complemented by a set of macroeconomic policies favoring the monetary order of the country through instruments which ensure the equilibrium of national finances, which will in turn contribute decisively to improving the functioning of the economy and the construction of a prosperous and sustainable socialism in Cuba.

The second and no less important concept is that bank deposits in foreign currencies, Cuban convertible pesos (CUC) and Cuban pesos (CUP) shall be guaranteed, as well as cash held by the public and national and foreign incorporated entities. We know that different opinions, both well and not so well intentioned, have continued to manifest themselves both within and outside of the country, regarding the pace of the process of updating our economic model.

There has also been no lack of open exhortations abroad to expedite privatization, including of the main production and service sectors, which would amount to laying down the flags of socialism in Cuba.

It seems that the latter have not bothered to read the Guidelines, which clearly express and I quote, “The economic system which will prevail in Cuba will continue to be based on the people’s socialist ownership of the fundamental means of production, governed by the socialist principle of distribution, from each according to his/her capacity to each according to his/her contribution”, end of quote.

We will continue to fulfill the agreements of the Communist Party of Cuba 6th Congress with responsibility and resolve, at the pace which we sovereignly choose here, without jeopardizing the unity of

Cubans, without abandoning anyone to his/her fate, without applying shock therapy and without ever surrendering the ideals of social justice of this Revolution of the humble, by the humble and for the humble.

Next year we will begin preparatory activities for the

celebration in April 2016 of the 7th Party Congress, prior to which a broad and democratic debate with members of the Communist Party and the entire people, on the progress of implementation of the Guidelines, will be carried out. Closely associated with the model update is the process of gradual, I repeat, gradual decentralization of authority from the ministries to enterprises.

This is not something which can be done overnight, if we hope to succeed. It requires a reasonable time to prepare and train cadres at all levels, change archaic mentalities and discard old habits and develop and implement the legal framework and precise procedures to allow each other to ensure that decisions are implemented properly, that errors are rectified promptly and thereby avoid

government contracts were defined and authority was granted for the marketing of surplus production. In addition, the elimination of administrative limitations on the payment of salaries linked to production was mandated.

These changes should be implemented gradually, without haste, with order, discipline and thoroughness. The just aspiration to earn higher wages is a very sensitive issue, about which we are not allowed to make mistakes, nor be led by desire or improvisation. We are delighted that wages will gradually increase for those workers employed in activities producing more efficient results and benefits of particular economic and social impact.

However, it should be clear that we can not distribute wealth which we have not been able to create, doing so would entail serious consequences for the national economy, and each and every citizen. Releasing money onto the streets without a corresponding increase in the supply of goods and services would generate inflation, a phenomenon among many other harmful effects which would reduce the purchasing power of wages and pensions, hitting those with fewer resources first.



Photos of Raul Castro, Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez in a Havana, Cuba march for May 1st, International Workers Day

unnecessary setbacks, as we have been doing. In favor of the greater autonomy of socialist state enterprises, among other measures, their social objective was expanded and made more flexible,

And that we can not allow. During the first year of the new salary policy’s implementation, more than a few enterprises have violated the standards set for salaries per peso of gross value added, in other words, greater salaries have been

paid without a corresponding increase in production. I have warned on several occasions that this must be considered a serious indiscipline, very serious, one which must be confronted with resolve by administrative leaders, and also by the trade unions.

It is no secret to anyone that, in our social system, unions defend the rights

the year drawing to a close. The challenge we Cubans have before us is great. The economy must achieve the high level of political prestige conquered by this small Caribbean island thanks to the Revolution, the heroism and resistance of our people.

The economy is the principal assignment pending, and we have the responsibility

innumerable governments, parliaments, organizations, institutions and figures who made a valuable contribution.

The Cuban people thank the President of the United States, Barack Obama, for this just decision, which has eliminated an obstacle to relations between our countries. The entire world has reacted positively to the announcements made



December 20, 2014 - The Cuban 5 Heroes at the National Assembly of People's Power, Havana, Cuba

of workers, and to do so effectively must be the first in safeguarding not only the interests of a given collective of workers, but also the interests of the entire working class, which are, in essence, those of the entire nation. We cannot leave any opening for the development or strengthening of self-interest or greed among our workers.

We all want and need better salaries, but first wealth must be created, to later be distributed, in accordance with one's contribution. Of course, I have not mentioned many other questions linked to the updating of our economic model, several of which involve missteps which we are obliged to rectify promptly, in an effort to avoid having to backtrack, but, in order to do so, tasks must be completed very seriously and responsibly.

No one in the world can deny Cuba's outstanding international record during

to definitively chart the course toward sustainable development and the irreversibility of socialism in Cuba. As I said earlier, deputies and our entire people are enormously moved and joyful to have Gerardo, Ramón, Antonio, Fernando and René present in the homeland, fulfilling the promise compañero Fidel made 13 years ago.

"The extraordinary example of determination, sacrifice and dignity of the Five fills with pride the nation which has struggled untiringly for their freedom, and now welcomes them as true heroes."

The extraordinary example of determination, sacrifice and dignity of the Five fills with pride the nation which has struggled untiringly for their freedom, and now welcomes them as true heroes. (Applause). I must reiterate our profound, sincere gratitude to all the solidarity movements and committees which struggled to obtain their freedom, and

this past Wednesday, recognizing their importance in international relations and, especially, in the United States' relationship with the region, which has generated favorable statements by governments, presidents and recognized figures – for which we are sincerely grateful.

This is the product of conversations at the highest level, held with utmost discretion, to which Pope Francis made a contribution, and the government of Canada offered facilitation. This outcome was possible, as well, thanks to the profound changes which have occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean, where governments and peoples share our demands for a new U.S. policy toward Cuba. We salute President Obama's proposal to open a new chapter in the relationship between the two countries,

and to initiate the most significant changes in U.S. policy in the last 50 years.

We appreciate, as well, the disposition he expressed to hold a debate on lifting the blockade in the U.S. Congress, as well as his desire to assure a better future for our two peoples, our hemisphere and the world. We share the idea that a new stage can begin between the United States and Cuba, that the reestablishment of diplomatic relations can be initiated, based on the Convention on Diplomatic and Consular Relations, which regulates the conduct of diplomatic and consular missions and functionaries. We will approach the high level contacts between the two governments in a constructive spirit, one of respect and reciprocity, with the purpose of advancing toward the normalization of bilateral relations.

As I said this past December 17, an important step has been taken, but the essential remains to be resolved: an end to the economic, commercial, financial blockade of Cuba, aggravated over the last few years, in particular regarding financial transactions, with the levying of enormous, illegitimate fines on banks in several countries.

Our people must understand that, given the conditions announced, this will be a long, difficult struggle which will require an international mobilization, and that U.S.

society continues to demand an end to the blockade. All the data indicates that a majority of U.S. citizens, an even greater majority of Cuban émigrés, favor the normalization of bilateral relations. Within the U.S. Congress, which encoded as law the blockade's regulations, opposition to this policy is also growing. We hope the President of the United States decisively employs his executive prerogatives to substantially modify implementation of the blockade, in those aspects which do not require Congressional approval.

At the same time, we will study the scope and methods used in implementation of the positive executive measures announced by President Obama. His decision to review the unjustifiable inclusion of Cuba on the list of state sponsors of international terrorism is encouraging. The facts demonstrate that Cuba has been the victim of multiple terrorist attacks. Those responsible for many of these today enjoy absolute impunity, as we all know, costing us thousands of dead and injured.

The pretexts put forward lack any basis in reality whatsoever, as the entire planet knows. They only serve political interests as false arguments to justify the tightening of the blockade, especially in the financial sector. No terrorist act on the people, property or territory of the United States has ever been organized, financed or executed from Cuba, nor

indicated, without renouncing a single one of our principles. I reiterate that it is only possible to advance on the basis of mutual respect, which implies observing the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter - among these, the sovereign equality of

“Latin America and the Caribbean, which is living in a new era and has united, within our diversity, in the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)”

all states; the equality of rights; and the free exercise of self-determination by peoples; the resolution of international disagreements via peaceful means, without resorting to threats or the use of force against the territorial integrity or independence of any state; and the obligation to refrain from intervention in internal affairs which are the domain of states, which implies that any form of interference or threat to political, economic or cultural elements constitutes a violation of international law. In accordance with the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, signed by heads of state and government during the CELAC Summit this past January 29 in Havana, every state has the unalienable right to choose its own political, economic, social and cultural system,

without interference of any kind on the part of another state, which constitutes a principle of international law. This document was signed here in Havana by all heads of state and government on the continent, with the exception of the United States and Canada, who were not invited.

Between the governments of the United States and Cuba there are profound differences which include, among others, different conceptions on the exercise of national sovereignty, democracy, political



January 29, 2015 - Raul Castro with other leaders at the CELAC summit in Costa Rica

would it be allowed. Every time we have become aware of any information about terrorist plans to attack the United States, we have reported it to the country's government, to which we proposed, years ago, the establishment of a cooperation agreement on this subject.

We have always been willing to dialogue respectfully, on the basis of equality, to address the most diverse topics in a reciprocal manner, without compromising our national independence or self-determination, and, as Fidel has

models and international relations We reiterate our openness to respectful, reciprocal dialogue about our differences.

We have firm convictions and many concerns about what occurs in the United States in terms of democracy and human rights, and we agree to converse, on the basis of the aforementioned principles, about any topic whatsoever, anything they would like to discuss, about Cuba, but also about the United States.

It must not be expected that, in order to improve relations with the United States, Cuba will renounce the ideas for which it has struggled for more than a century, for which its people have shed much blood and faced great dangers. It must be understood that Cuba is a sovereign state whose people, in a free referendum vote, approved the Constitution, chose the socialist path and our political, economic, social system. (Applause) Just as we have never proposed that the United States change its political system, we demand respect for ours. (Applause)

Both governments must adopt reciprocal measures to prevent and avoid acts which could affect progress in the bilateral relationship, based on respect for the laws and constitutional order of the parties.

We are not unaware of the virulent criticism which President Obama has been obliged to endure, as a result of the aforementioned announcements, on the part of forces which oppose normalization of relations with Cuba, and by legislators of Cuban origin and leaders of counterrevolutionary groups, who resist losing the sustenance which decades of confrontation between our countries have given them. They will do everything they can to sabotage this process, provocative actions of all kinds are not to be ruled out. For our part, prudent, measured and reflective - but firm - conduct will prevail. (Applause)

In Cuba, numerous, diverse mass organizations of workers, campesinos, women, students, writers and artists and members of society exist, and are represented on the Council of State and non-governmental organizations, many

of which are represented by deputies in this Assembly, to whom I would offend if I confused them with a few hundred individuals who receive money, instructions and oxygen from abroad. In multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, we will continue our defense of peace, international law and just causes, as well as our condemnation of threats to the survival of humanity, which include climate change and nuclear arsenals.

We will continue to promote the exercise of human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights for all persons, and peoples' rights to peace and development. The Cuban Revolution owes profound gratitude to the peoples,



parties, governments from whom we have received ongoing, unwavering solidarity, and I will continue to direct our foreign policy based on absolute fidelity to our principles. (Applause) Symbolic of this are the special relations we maintain with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, to which we will continue to offer support in the face of attempts to destabilize the legitimate government headed by compañero President Nicolás Maduro Moros, and oppose pretensions to impose sanctions on this sister country. (Applause)

As I indicated a few days ago, our willingness to cooperate with the United States on the bilateral and multilateral plane, to confront dangers which require effective collective humanitarian responses, must never be politicized. This is the case with the battle against Ebola in West Africa, and its prevention in the Americas, just as was proclaimed by the Alba Special Summit on Ebola, which

we held in Havana on the issue, this past October.

As I stated during the recent Caricom and Alba Summits, I thank the President of Panama, Juan Carlos Varela, for the invitation to participate in the 7th Summit of the Americas, and reconfirm that I will attend to express our positions, with sincerity and respect for all heads of state and government, without exception.

The participation of Cuba comes as a result of the solid, unanimous consensus of Latin America and the Caribbean, which is living in a new era and has united, within our diversity, in the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), which Cuba was honored to serve as president

pro tempore last year. We have not forgotten that Alba, with its constant demands and ongoing support to all countries of the region, achieved the elimination of those old, ignominious sanctions imposed on Cuba in 1962 by the Organization of American States, in the Republic of Honduras, where only a month later, the President of the country, compañero Zelaya, was overthrown by a coup d'état.

Compañeras y compañeros:

Within a few days, we will be celebrating the New Year and the 56th anniversary of the triumph of the Revolution, and just two days ago, December 18, the 58th anniversary of the reunion with Fidel in Cinco Palmas de Vicana in the Sierra Maestra mountains (Applause), in the heart of the Sierra Maestra, and his historic exclamation upon learning that we had seven rifles with which to reinitiate the struggle, "Now, yes, we have won the war!" (Applause),

The unwavering confidence in victory which Fidel instilled in us will continue to guide our entire people in the defense and perfection of the work of their Revolution.

All the best in the New Year! We salute the new Year 57 of the Cuban Revolution! Thank you very much. (Ovation.) (Council of State transcript)

continued from page 9

Consul General in Toronto, titled, "US/Cuba Diplomatic Relations: What is the History and What are the Prospects?" Consul Domokos gave a thorough summary of over 100 years of aggression against Cuba by the US government. He reminded people that Cuba was still vigilant because, "The US changed the policy, not the objectives." However, he framed the new dynamic as a victory for Cuba which forced the US government to change by remaining steadfast and committed to its principles and Revolution.

The conference package included two extensive articles by Dr. Jose Luis Rodriguez on the current economic situation in Cuba, and he elaborated on both during his presentation on, "Cuba's Economy Today: Progress and Challenges." Dr Luis Rodriguez was the Cuban Minister of Economy and Planning during the hardest years of the "Special Period" in Cuba, when the Soviet Union fell and Cuba lost almost the entirety of its foreign trade overnight. His experience in the field is obviously unmatched, and his analysis was thorough in describing the complexities of Cuba's economic policies as it continues to build a society based on the principles of humanity and social justice.

He was followed by Alberto Prieto, who returned to give the workshop, "Cuba's Policy Changes: What is the Progress of the Implementation of the 2011 Guidelines?" These were the guidelines adopted by the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba related to making the Cuban economy more efficient and productive in the midst of a worldwide economic crisis and continued blockade by the US. He emphasized the fact that all of the guidelines had been created with extensive public consultation, "We always seek the opinion of the masses when we make big decisions. That way we don't make big mistakes."

Dr. Aleida Guevara returned for one final presentation, titled, "Learning from Che." In a fascinating talk she discussed the current situation in Cuba and the world, and how Che's ideas of creating a new human being were not only relevant in Cuba today, but present in the everyday lives of Cubans as they continued to build their society and country. She spoke about Cuba's important place in the world, about how the World Health Organization did not go to the US or Canada to confront Ebola in West Africa, they went to Cuba.

The audience then rose to its feet as indigenous elder Kelly White brought her drum to the stage and presented the Cuban delegation with a handmade Star Blanket to thank them for participation in the 6th International Che Guevara Conference. She had everyone chanting, "Viva Cuba!" and clapping in unison in a powerful demonstration of unity and



solidarity.

Tamara Hansen and Aaron Mercredi returned to close the Vancouver leg of the conference. Aaron emphasized the importance of the Cuban delegation once again, "We learn about the socialist example of Cuba from the people who are involved in the leading it, analyzing it and developing it." Tamara continued, "We have a huge responsibility to learn and take what we have talked about this weekend, to build a community and a movement, and to build what Che called the new human being.

The room clapped loudly as once again the International Che Guevara Conference had been successful in bringing the example of



Javier Domokos.



Kieth Bolander.

Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution, their dynamism, and their important and necessary example for the world today. In keeping with the conference tradition, after the official program ended many people stayed to continue discussing excitedly and the previous three previous days themes and activities. With two more days of conference program in Kamloops on the horizon, a banner with a famous quotation of Che's continued to hang near the front of the room, with the words seeming larger and clearer than ever, "We are realists, we dream the impossible."

DAY 4:

Kamloops Leg of International Che Guevara Conference Grows in Numbers and Enthusiasm!

On January 26th, after 3 successful days in Vancouver, the 6th International Che Guevara Conference moved East to Kamloops, BC. Participation exceeded the previous year, with more than 210 people filling the Irving K. Barber Centre at Thompson Rivers University (TRU). The Kamloops event was once again co-organized by the TRUSU Socialists Club and Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC)

The large crowd was a diverse mix of international, university and high school students, faculty, and community members. There had been a significant presence in the community and on campus even before the event took place. A large conference banner hung in the main entrance to the TRU, and besides many posters in the hallways, the school's video screens showed an advertisement for the conference every 3 minutes. There was also announcements and advertisements on the campus radio station and newspaper. In the community, the local newspaper carried an advertisement and wrote an article on the event, and dozens of posters were put in libraries, community centers, and local businesses.

The event was MC'd by Aaron Mercredi who is an organizer with both VCSC and the TRUSU Socialists Club. He began by welcoming everyone to the Kamloops portion of the Che Conference, and



acknowledging the Sucwepemc territory that the event was taking place on. Kelly White, Coast Salish elder and media activist, gave a traditional acknowledgment of the territory and opened the evening up with Indigenous drumming and singing.

Building on the themes discussed in Vancouver, Aaron explained that this conference was an important opportunity to understand Cuba in the world today and international politics from the people who are directly involved in leading the Cuban Revolution.

Aaron introduced the representatives of the Cuban delegation, Dr. Aleida Guevara, Dr Jose Luis Rodriguez Garcia and Alberto Prieto.

Dr. Jose Luis Rodriguez Garcia spoke first regarding the Cuban economy. Using his vast experience as a former Cuban Minister of Economy and Planning and current researcher, professor and adviser, Dr. Rodriguez outlined the development of the Cuban economy from before the fall of the Soviet Union, through the “Special Period” where Cuba struggled to survive despite the almost complete loss of its foreign trade, and on to the recovery of the Cuban economy amidst the worldwide capitalist crisis.

Dr. Aleida Guevara using the example of her father, the legendary Ernesto Che Guevara, she explained how the Cuba has continued to provide free high quality healthcare to all of its citizens, while also intervening around the world to treat sickness, disease and respond to the human crisis created by natural disasters. She also presented several impressive statistics from these medical missions, “Cuba has had medical missions in 158 counties worldwide. These missions have performed more than 10 million surgical operations, assisted 2 million births, given 12 million vaccinations to children and saved over 5 million lives.” The audience applauded in stunned admiration.

Following this, Alberto Prieto spoke on the announcement of changing diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba. As the current the Coordinator for North and Central America for the Central Committee of the Communist

Party of Cuba and previous First Secretary of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, DC, he has a lot of experience on the subject. He emphasized that one cannot understand the current events

taking place today without understanding the history of the relationship between the United States and Cuba. Going back to pre-revolutionary Cuba, Alberto explained how the US has held a constant policy of interfering in Cuba’s sovereignty. He emphasized that Cuba will continue to assert its sovereignty and its Socialist system, which the Cuban people have benefited from since 1959, no matter how diplomatic relations change with the US.

This was the second time the International Che Guevara Conference has visited Kamloops, and was again a huge success with participation more than doubling from the previous year. This is a sign that both the Che Guevara Conference and the general interest in Cuba have grown. The TRUSU Socialists Club has been very active in Kamloops with different events on Cuba and Latin America, and working again with VCSC to organize the Kamloops leg



of the International Che Guevara Conference was another excellent opportunity to build bridges in Cuba solidarity work.

DAY 5: Special Bonus Concert by Gerardo Alfonso Celebrating the freedom of all 5 Cuban Heroes

Due to huge demand, the Smorgasbord Cafe in Kamloops became the venue for an intimate concert by Cuban musical legend Gerardo Alfonso on January 27th. More than 70 people either found seats or an empty place to stand to enjoy the last event of the 6th International Che Guevara Conference, a special bonus concert celebrating the release of all of the Cuban 5 Heroes. Once again co-organized by

the TRUSU Socialists Club and VCSC, this concert was an opportunity for Kamloops to take part in the international celebrations of the victory for the Cuban 5 Heroes.

Two short movies were shown. The first documenting the emotional arrival of the three Cuban men and their reunion with their families and neighbours. The second was a personal video greeting that Gerardo Hernandez had recorded for the Che Guevara Conference, thanking Vancouver organizers for their consistent monthly picket actions in front of the US Consulate. Next, Gerardo Alfonso took to the stage! With 6 nylon strings and piano keys, Gerardo brought the room in to his world of melodies and poetry. Gerardo explained the themes and inspiration of all his songs, allowing everyone in the room a glimpse both into his artistic creation and his social and political principles. Going through his repertoire of love songs, songs against racism and against homelessness, human relationships and the love of Havana, Gerardo’s voice conveyed the beauty and diversity that exists in Cuba today.



After more than an hour of music, Gerardo finished off with his famous song, “Son los Sueños Todavía” (“These are Still the Dreams”), a song dedicated to the revolutionary Che Guevara which is sung by millions around the world in his honour. After 5 days of activities of a conference created to discuss the ideas and legacy of this revolutionary fighter, this song and its lyrics were a beautiful way to bring it the conference to an end, for this year:

“After so much time and so much turmoil,
We continue forever,
On this long, long road,
That you take,
The end of the century tells us an old truth:
Good times and bad times,
Are a part of reality,
I knew very well you were going to return,
That you were going to return from some
place,
Because pain has not killed the Utopia,
Because love is eternal,
And the people who love you do not forget
you.”
- Excerpt from Gerardo Alfonso song “Son
Los Sueños Todavía”



La inquebrantable fe en la victoria que nos inculcó Fidel continuará

** En Español **

Discurso del General de Ejército Raúl Castro Ruz, Primer Secretario del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba y Presidente de los Consejos de Estado y de Ministros, en la clausura del IV Período Ordinario de Sesiones de la VIII Legislatura de la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular, en el Palacio de Convenciones, el 20 de diciembre de 2014, "Año 56 de la Revolución".

(Versiones Taquigráficas - Consejo de Estado)

Compañeras y compañeros:

Hemos tenido intensas y emotivas jornadas en los últimos días.

Este propio mes de diciembre celebramos exitosamente la V Cumbre Caricom-Cuba y el pasado domingo la XIII Cumbre de la Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América, ocasión en que rendimos merecido homenaje a sus artífices: el entrañable presidente bolivariano Hugo Chávez Frías y el Comandante en Jefe de la Revolución Cubana, compañero Fidel Castro Ruz (Aplausos).

Nos acompañan en esta sesión Gerardo, Ramón y Antonio, motivo de genuino regocijo y alegría para todo nuestro pueblo —sobre este importante asunto ampliaré en la parte final de mi intervención. Se encuentran también presentes los compañeros Fernando y René y los familiares de los Cinco Héroes, al igual que el joven Elián González, su padre Juan Miguel y el Coronel Orlando Cardoso Villavicencio, Héroe de la República de Cuba, quien sufrió severa prisión por más de 10 años en Somalia.

Como ha sido habitual en las sesiones de

nuestro Parlamento, me corresponde pasar revista al desempeño de la economía en el año que concluye y el Plan y Presupuesto para el 2015, cuestiones que han sido profundamente debatidas por los diputados en las 10 comisiones y también en la sesión plenaria de ayer.

Al análisis de esos asuntos se dedicó igualmente el Noveno Pleno del Comité Central del Partido, efectuado el pasado jueves. Por tanto, solo haré una breve referencia a estos temas.

Fue explicado que el Producto Interno Bruto, conocido como PIB, tuvo un crecimiento del 1,3%, inferior a lo planificado inicialmente, en lo que influyó el insuficiente desempeño

refuerza la dirección de un crecimiento más sólido de la economía cubana, basado en la potenciación de las reservas internas de eficiencia, reanimación de los sectores productivos, en particular de la industria manufacturera, utilización más eficiente de los portadores energéticos e inversiones superiores en infraestructuras y la producción material, a la vez que se preservan los servicios sociales como la salud pública y educación a nuestra población.

Para el año 2015 se proyecta un crecimiento del PIB de poco más del 4%, objetivo alcanzable teniendo en cuenta que se dispone con suficiente antelación de un mejor aseguramiento financiero en comparación con el inicio del 2014. Ello no quiere decir

que resultará fácil ni mucho menos. Debemos seguir enfrentando los efectos de la crisis económica global y del bloqueo norteamericano que se mantiene en pie, generando innegables obstáculos al desarrollo de nuestra economía.

Al mismo tiempo, continuaremos honrando estrictamente los compromisos asumidos en el reordenamiento de las deudas con nuestros principales acreedores y así contribuir a la paulatina recuperación de la credibilidad internacional de la economía cubana.



20 de Diciembre, 2014 - Raúl Castro en la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular

en el primer semestre, durante el cual se afrontaron limitaciones financieras de envergadura a causa del incumplimiento de ingresos externos, condiciones climatológicas adversas e insuficiencias internas en la gestión económica. Realmente en la segunda mitad del año se logró revertir modestamente esa tendencia y se alcanzó un resultado superior.

El Plan del próximo año consolida y

En la tarde de ayer la Asamblea Nacional aprobó la Ley del Presupuesto del Estado para el año 2015, el cual contempla un déficit del 6,2% del PIB, que se ha considerado aceptable en las actuales circunstancias. Se incorporan nuevos tributos y se reduce la carga impositiva al sistema empresarial en correspondencia con la aplicación gradual de la Ley Tributaria.

Al propio tiempo, se han adoptado diferentes medidas para reforzar el control fiscal ante indisciplinas y la evasión de impuestos por las personas jurídicas y naturales.

En esta materia no solo debe sancionarse a quienes incumplen, pues la impunidad equivaldría alentar a la transgresión de las normas legales vigentes, consideramos que también es necesario fomentar en las instituciones, empresas, cooperativas y trabajadores por cuenta propia una cultura de civismo fiscal y que se comprenda que los tributos constituyen la fórmula principal para redistribuir la renta nacional en interés de todos los ciudadanos.

Por otra parte, ha mantenido su avance el proceso de implementación de los Lineamientos de la Política Económica y Social del Partido y la Revolución, aprobados por el 6to Congreso. Como se ha informado, nos encontramos en una etapa cualitativamente superior en esta materia, en la que se abordan tareas de extrema complejidad, cuya solución impactará todas las facetas del quehacer nacional.

Me refiero, en primer lugar, al proceso de unificación monetaria, donde se ha progresado sólidamente en la segunda mitad del presente año desde el punto de vista conceptual y se ha logrado delinear un abarcador programa de medidas en interés de evitar afectaciones a la economía y la población.

Favorable acogida entre los ciudadanos ha tenido la decisión de generalizar la venta en CUP en las tiendas recaudadoras de divisas, la que continuará ampliándose gradualmente.

La ocasión es propicia para ratificar dos conceptos que no debemos soslayar.

El primero es que la Unificación Monetaria no es la solución universal o inmediata de todos los problemas que afronta nuestra economía.

Esta importante decisión deberá complementarse por un conjunto de medidas macroeconómicas que favorezcan el ordenamiento monetario del país mediante instrumentos que aseguren el equilibrio de las finanzas nacionales, lo cual contribuirá decisivamente a mejorar el funcionamiento de la economía y la construcción en Cuba de un socialismo próspero y sostenible.

El segundo concepto y no menos importante, es que se garantizarán los depósitos bancarios

en divisas extranjeras, pesos cubanos convertibles (CUC) y pesos cubanos (CUP), así como el efectivo en manos de la población y las personas jurídicas nacionales y foráneas.

Conocemos que no han dejado de manifestarse dentro y fuera del país criterios, con sanas y no muy sanas intenciones, acerca del ritmo del proceso de actualización de



nuestro modelo económico.

Tampoco han faltado desde el exterior exhortaciones abiertas a apresurar la privatización, incluso de los principales sectores productivos y de servicios, lo que equivaldría a deponer las banderas del socialismo en Cuba.

Tal parece que estos últimos no se han molestado en dar una lectura a los Lineamientos, donde con toda claridad se expresa, cito: “El sistema económico que prevalecerá en nuestro país continuará basándose en la propiedad socialista de todo el pueblo sobre los medios fundamentales de producción, donde deberá regir el principio

“...sin renunciar jamás a los ideales de justicia social de esta Revolución de los humildes, por los humildes y para los humildes.”

socialista ‘de cada cual según su capacidad y a cada cual según su trabajo’, fin de la cita.

Proseguiremos haciendo realidad los acuerdos del 6to Congreso del Partido Comunista de Cuba con responsabilidad y firmeza, a la velocidad que soberanamente decidamos aquí, sin poner en riesgo la unidad de los

cubanos, sin dejar a ninguno abandonado a su suerte, sin aplicar terapias de choque y sin renunciar jamás a los ideales de justicia social de esta Revolución de los humildes, por los humildes y para los humildes.

Ya el próximo año iniciaremos las actividades preparatorias para la celebración en abril del 2016 del 7mo. Congreso del Partido, previo al

cual se desarrollará un amplio y democrático debate con la militancia comunista y todo el pueblo acerca de la marcha de la implementación de los Lineamientos.

Estrechamente asociado a la actualización del modelo se encuentra el proceso de paulatina, repito, paulatina descentralización de facultades desde los ministerios hacia el sistema empresarial.

No es algo que pueda hacerse de la noche a la mañana si queremos tener éxito. Se requiere un tiempo prudencial para preparar y capacitar, como lo venimos haciendo, a los cuadros a todos los niveles, modificar la mentalidad arcaica y desechar viejos hábitos, así como elaborar e instrumentar el marco jurídico y procedimientos precisos que permitan a unos y otros controlar que las decisiones se apliquen de manera adecuada, rectificar oportunamente los errores y de ese modo evitar retrocesos innecesarios.

A favor de una mayor autonomía de la empresa estatal socialista, entre otras medidas, se amplió y flexibilizó su objeto social, se definió el encargo estatal y se otorgaron facultades para la comercialización de los excedentes productivos. Asimismo, se dispuso

la eliminación de límites administrativos para el pago de salarios vinculados a los resultados.

Estas transformaciones deberán ejecutarse de manera gradual, sin apresuramientos, con orden, disciplina y exigencia.

La justa aspiración a devengar mayores salarios es una cuestión muy sensible, en la cual no nos está permitido equivocarnos, ni dejarnos conducir por el deseo o la improvisación.

Nos alegra que aumenten de manera gradual los salarios de aquellos trabajadores que laboran en las actividades con resultados más eficientes y reportan beneficios de particular impacto económico y social.

Sin embargo, debe quedar bien claro que no se puede distribuir una riqueza que no hemos sido capaces de crear, hacerlo conllevaría serias consecuencias para la economía nacional y de cada ciudadano. Soltar dinero a las calles sin un incremento correspondiente de las ofertas de bienes y servicios generaría inflación, fenómeno que entre muchos otros efectos nocivos reduciría la capacidad adquisitiva de los salarios y de las pensiones, golpeando en primer lugar a los más humildes. Y eso no lo podemos permitir.

Durante el primer año de la aplicación de la nueva política salarial, en no pocas empresas se ha producido la violación del índice del gasto de salario por peso de valor agregado bruto, en otras palabras, se han pagado mayores salarios sin el correspondiente respaldo productivo. He alertado en varias ocasiones que esto hay que considerarlo como una indisciplina grave, muy grave y debe ser enfrentada resueltamente por los dirigentes administrativos y también por las organizaciones sindicales.

Para nadie es un secreto que en nuestro sistema social los sindicatos defienden los derechos de los trabajadores y para lograrlo efectivamente deben ser los primeros en velar no solo por el interés de un colectivo laboral determinado, sino por los intereses de toda la clase obrera, que son en esencia los mismos que sostiene la nación entera.

No podemos dejar espacio a que se desarrolle y fortalezca el egoísmo y la codicia entre nuestros trabajadores. Todos queremos y necesitamos mejores salarios, pero antes hay que crear la riqueza para luego distribuirla según el aporte de cada cual.

Por supuesto, existen otras muchas cuestiones vinculadas a la actualización del modelo económico que no he mencionado, en varias de las cuales se han presentado desviaciones que estamos en la obligación de rectificar a tiempo, en el ánimo de no tener que dar

“El extraordinario ejemplo de firmeza, sacrificio y dignidad de los Cinco enorgullece a la Nación, que batalló incansablemente por su liberación y ahora los acoge como verdaderos héroes.”

marcha atrás, pero para ello hay que trabajar con mucha seriedad y responsabilidad.

Nadie en el mundo puede negar la destacada ejecutoria internacional de Cuba en el año que culmina. El reto que tenemos por delante los cubanos es muy grande: Hay que situar la economía a la altura del prestigio político que esta pequeña isla del Caribe ha conquistado gracias a la Revolución, al heroísmo y a la capacidad de resistencia de nuestro pueblo. La economía es la principal asignatura pendiente y tenemos el deber de encarrilarla definitivamente hacia el desarrollo sostenible e irreversible del socialismo en Cuba.

Como dije al principio, los diputados y todo el pueblo sentimos la enorme emoción y

alegría de compartir la presencia en la Patria de Gerardo, Ramón, Antonio, Fernando y René, convirtiendo en realidad la promesa del compañero Fidel hace trece años. El extraordinario ejemplo de firmeza, sacrificio y dignidad de los Cinco enorgullece a la Nación, que batalló incansablemente por su liberación y ahora los acoge como verdaderos héroes (Aplausos).

Debo reiterar la profunda y sincera gratitud a todos los movimientos y comités de solidaridad que lucharon para conseguir su libertad y a innumerables gobiernos, parlamentos, organizaciones, instituciones y personalidades que aportaron su valiosa contribución.

El pueblo cubano agradece esta justa decisión del Presidente de los Estados Unidos, Barack Obama. Con ello se ha eliminado un obstáculo en las relaciones entre nuestros países.

El mundo entero ha reaccionado positivamente ante los anuncios que se hicieron el pasado miércoles, valorando su importancia en las relaciones internacionales y especialmente para los vínculos de Estados Unidos con la región, lo que ha suscitado declaraciones favorables de gobiernos, presidentes y reconocidas personalidades, las cuales agradecemos sinceramente.

Ha sido fruto de conversaciones al más alto nivel, sostenidas en estricta discreción y



17 de diciembre 2014 - Los 5 Héroes Cubanos con Raul Castro después de llegar a Cuba

que contaron con la contribución del Papa Francisco y facilidades ofrecidas por el Gobierno de Canadá.

Este resultado ha sido posible, además, gracias a los profundos cambios ocurridos en América Latina y el Caribe cuyos gobiernos y pueblos comparten el reclamo de una nueva política de Estados Unidos hacia Cuba.



Saludamos el planteamiento del Presidente Obama de abrir un nuevo capítulo en los vínculos entre ambas naciones y de introducir los más significativos cambios en la política estadounidense de los últimos 50 años.

Igualmente, reconocemos la disposición expresada por él de sostener con el Congreso norteamericano un debate sobre el levantamiento del bloqueo, así como su anhelo de lograr un futuro mejor para ambos pueblos, nuestro hemisferio y el mundo.

Compartimos la idea de que puede abrirse una nueva etapa entre los Estados Unidos y Cuba, que se inicia con el restablecimiento de relaciones diplomáticas, las cuales deberán estar basadas en las Convenciones sobre Relaciones Diplomáticas y Consulares que regulan la conducta de las Misiones Diplomáticas y Consulares y de sus funcionarios.

A los contactos de alto nivel entre ambos gobiernos, acudiremos con espíritu constructivo, de respeto y reciprocidad, con el propósito de avanzar hacia la normalización de las relaciones bilaterales.

Como expresé el pasado 17 de diciembre, se ha dado un paso importante, pero queda por resolver lo esencial, que es el cese del bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero contra Cuba, recrudescido en los últimos años, en

particular en el ámbito de las transacciones financieras, con la aplicación de enormes e ilegítimas multas contra bancos de diversos países.

Nuestro pueblo debe comprender que, en las condiciones anunciadas, esta será una lucha larga y difícil que requerirá que la movilización internacional y de la sociedad norteamericana continúe reclamando el levantamiento del bloqueo.

Todos los datos indican que una mayoría de los ciudadanos norteamericanos, y aun más amplia de la emigración cubana, favorece la normalización de las relaciones bilaterales. En el Congreso de los Estados Unidos, que convirtió en Ley las disposiciones del bloqueo, también crece la oposición a esta política.

Esperamos que el Presidente de los Estados Unidos utilice con determinación sus prerrogativas ejecutivas para modificar sustancialmente la aplicación del bloqueo, en aquellos aspectos que no requiera la aprobación del Congreso.

Al propio tiempo, estudiaremos el alcance y forma de aplicación de las positivas medidas ejecutivas anunciadas por el Presidente Obama.

“...del sólido y unánime consenso de la América Latina y el Caribe, que vive una nueva época y se ha unido, dentro de su diversidad, en la Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (CELAC)...”

Es alentadora su instrucción de revisar la injustificable inclusión de Cuba en la Lista de Estados Patrocinadores del Terrorismo Internacional. Los hechos demuestran que Cuba ha sido víctima de múltiples ataques terroristas, muchos de cuyos responsables gozan hoy de impunidad, como todos sabemos, nos han costado miles de muertos y mutilados.

Los pretextos esgrimidos con ese fin carecen absolutamente de base, como todo el planeta conoce. Solo sirven a intereses políticos como falso argumento para justificar el endurecimiento del bloqueo, especialmente

en el sector financiero.

Desde Cuba jamás se ha organizado, financiado ni ejecutado un acto terrorista contra personas, intereses o territorio alguno de los Estados Unidos, ni se permitirá. Cada vez que hemos conocido cualquier información sobre planes terroristas contra Estados Unidos, se lo informamos a su Gobierno, al cual desde hace años hemos propuesto establecer un acuerdo de cooperación en esa materia.

Siempre estuvimos dispuestos al diálogo respetuoso, sobre la base de la igualdad para tratar los más diversos temas de forma recíproca, sin sombra a nuestra independencia nacional y autodeterminación y, como Fidel señalara, sin renunciar a uno solo de nuestros principios.

Reitero que solo es posible avanzar a partir del respeto mutuo, que implica la observancia de los principios del Derecho Internacional y de la Carta de las Naciones Unidas, entre ellos, la igualdad soberana de los Estados, la igualdad de derechos y la libre determinación de los pueblos, el arreglo de las controversias internacionales por medios pacíficos, abstenerse de recurrir a la amenaza o al uso de la fuerza contra la integridad territorial o la independencia de cualquier Estado, y la obligación de no intervenir en los asuntos que son de la jurisdicción interna de los Estados, lo que implica que cualquier forma de injerencia o de amenaza a los elementos políticos, económicos y culturales de un Estado constituye una violación del Derecho Internacional.

En consonancia con la Proclama de América Latina y el Caribe como Región de Paz, firmada por los Jefes de Estado y Gobierno el pasado 29 de

enero, en La Habana, durante la Cumbre de la CELAC, todo Estado tiene el derecho inalienable a elegir su sistema político, económico, social y cultural, sin injerencia en ninguna forma por parte de otro Estado, lo que constituye un principio de Derecho Internacional. Este documento fue firmado aquí en La Habana por todos los Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno de este continente, con excepción de los Estados Unidos y de Canadá, que no fueron invitados a la misma.

Entre los gobiernos de los Estados Unidos y Cuba hay profundas diferencias que incluyen, entre otras, distintas concepciones sobre el ejercicio de la soberanía nacional,

la democracia, los modelos políticos y las relaciones internacionales.

Reiteramos la disposición al diálogo respetuoso y recíproco sobre las discrepancias. Tenemos firmes convicciones y muchas preocupaciones sobre lo que ocurre en los Estados Unidos en materia de democracia y derechos humanos y aceptamos conversar, sobre las bases enunciadas, acerca de cualquier tema, de todo lo que quieran discutir, de aquí, pero también de los Estados Unidos.

No debe pretenderse que para mejorar las relaciones con los Estados Unidos, Cuba renuncie a las ideas por las que ha luchado durante más de un siglo, por las que su pueblo ha derramado mucha sangre y ha corrido los mayores riesgos.

Es necesario comprender que Cuba es un Estado soberano cuyo pueblo, en libre referendo para aprobar la Constitución, decidió su rumbo socialista y sistema político, económico y social (Aplausos).

De la misma forma que nunca nos hemos propuesto que los Estados Unidos cambien su sistema político, exigiremos respeto al nuestro (Aplausos).

Ambos gobiernos debemos adoptar medidas mutuas para prevenir y evitar hechos que puedan afectar los progresos en la relación bilateral, basados en el respeto a las leyes y el ordenamiento constitucional de las partes.

No ignoramos las virulentas críticas que ha debido soportar el Presidente Obama, a causa de los citados anuncios, por parte de fuerzas que se oponen a la normalización de las relaciones con Cuba, incluyendo legisladores de origen cubano y cabecillas de grupúsculos contrarrevolucionarios que se resisten a perder el sustento que les han proporcionado décadas de confrontación entre nuestros países. Harán todo lo posible por sabotear este proceso, sin descartar acciones provocativas de toda índole. Por nuestra parte primará una conducta prudente, moderada y reflexiva, pero firme (Aplausos).

En Cuba existen numerosas y diversas organizaciones de masas, sindicales, campesinas, femeninas, estudiantiles, de escritores y artistas, sociales, incluso representados en el Consejo de Estado, y no gubernamentales, muchas de ellas representadas por diputados a esta Asamblea,

a las que ofendería que se les confundiera con unos pocos cientos de individuos que reciben dinero, instrucciones y oxígeno del exterior.

En los organismos multilaterales, como la Organización de Naciones Unidas continuaremos nuestra defensa de la paz, del Derecho Internacional y de las causas justas, así como la denuncia de las amenazas a la supervivencia de la especie humana que implican el cambio climático y los arsenales



16 de abril 2011 - Las mujeres soldados Cubanos en Plaza de la Revolución, La Habana, Cuba en el aniversario de la Playa Giron

nucleares.

Continuaremos promoviendo el ejercicio de los derechos humanos, incluidos los derechos económicos, sociales y culturales, por parte de todas las personas y del derecho a la paz y al desarrollo de los pueblos.

La Revolución Cubana debe profunda gratitud a los pueblos, partidos y gobiernos de quienes ha recibido invariable y permanente solidaridad y seguirá orientando su política exterior sobre bases inamovibles de fidelidad a los principios (Aplausos).

Símbolo de lo anterior son las especiales relaciones que mantenemos con la República Bolivariana de Venezuela a la que seguiremos brindando apoyo frente a los intentos de desestabilizar al gobierno legítimo que encabeza el compañero presidente Nicolás Maduro Moros y rechazamos las pretensiones de imponer sanciones a esa hermana nación (Aplausos).

Como señalé días atrás tenemos la disposición a cooperar con Estados Unidos en el ámbito multi y bilateral ante peligros que requieren respuestas humanitarias colectivas y eficaces, que no debieran nunca politizarse.

Este es el caso del enfrentamiento al Ébola

en África Occidental y la prevención en las Américas, tal como proclamó la reciente Cumbre Extraordinaria del ALBA que sostuvimos en La Habana sobre el tema el pasado mes de octubre.

Como he declarado en las recientes Cumbres de CARICOM y del ALBA, agradezco la invitación del presidente de Panamá, Juan Carlos Varela, a participar en la VII Cumbre de las Américas y confirmo que asistiré para expresar nuestras posiciones, con sinceridad y respeto por todos los Jefes de Estado y Gobierno, sin excepción.

La participación de Cuba es resultado del sólido y unánime consenso de la América Latina y el Caribe, que vive una nueva época y se ha unido, dentro de su diversidad, en la Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (CELAC) que Cuba se honró en presidir el pasado año.

No olvidamos que el ALBA, con su permanente reclamo y el apoyo de todos los países de la región, logró la eliminación de aquellas viejas

y oprobiosas sanciones a Cuba establecidas en 1962 por la Organización de Estados Americanos, en la República de Honduras, donde apenas un mes después derrocaron, por un golpe de Estado, al presidente de dicho país, el compañero Zelaya.

Compañeras y compañeros:

Dentro de pocas jornadas estaremos celebrando el nuevo año y el aniversario 56 del Triunfo de la Revolución, y hace solo dos días, el 18 de diciembre, se cumplieron 58 años del reencuentro con Fidel en Cinco Palmas de Vicana en la Sierra Maestra (Aplausos), en el corazón de la Sierra Maestra, y de su histórica exclamación al conocer que en total contábamos con siete fusiles para reiniciar la lucha ¡Ahora sí ganamos la guerra! (Aplausos).

La inquebrantable fe en la victoria que nos inculcó Fidel continuará conduciendo a todo nuestro pueblo en la defensa y perfeccionamiento de la obra de su Revolución.

¡Felicidades en el nuevo año!

¡Saludamos el nuevo Año 57 de la Revolución Cubana!

Muchas gracias (Ovación)

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**Who is
VCSC?**
VANCOUVER COMMUNITIES
IN SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA

vancubasolidarity@gmail.com

778-882-5223



Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) is an organization working to build solidarity and support for Cuba in Vancouver, Canada and internationally. To do this, we organize frequent educational events, cultural events, conferences, mobilizations and actions in support of Cuba's sovereignty against Imperialist attacks and in defence of the gains of the Cuban revolution.

We also support campaigns:

-1- Against the US Blockade on Cuba

***FREED! WE WON!** -2- To Free the Cuban 5 held in US Jails* ★ ★ ★

-3- To Extradite anti-Cuban Terrorist Luis Posada Carriles to Venezuela

Throughout the lower mainland, at events, actions, festivals, high schools and campuses, we engage with thousands of people about Cuba. Our work aims to bring Cuba, as a country making important social gains, to youth, students, women, Latin American people, people of the third world and other working and oppressed people in Canada, as an example of building a better world.

We welcome new members and encourage everyone to get involved with VCSC to build a larger, stronger Cuba solidarity movement in Canada!

www.vancubasolidarity.com

MONTHLY ANTI-WAR RALLY + PETITION DRIVE

JOIN US ON THE STREETS TO DEMAND:

U.S./FRANCE/CANADA & ALL IMPERIALISTS HANDS OFF IRAQ!
NO TO NEW U.S. WAR ON IRAQ!
U.S. & CANADA HANDS OFF SYRIA!
NO TO ISLAMOPHOBIA!
END THE BLOCKADE OF GAZA!
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PALESTINE!
END THE BLOCKADE OF CUBA!
U.S./EU/NATO/CANADA: HANDS OFF UKRAINE!
U.S. HANDS OFF VENEZUELA!
LIFT ALL SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAN!
FREE PRIVATE MANNING, SOLDIER OF HUMANITY!
NO TO U.S. DRONES!
U.S. AND ALL IMPERIALISTS OUT OF AFGHANISTAN NOW!
HANDS OFF NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST!
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR INDIGENOUS NATIONS AND ALL OPPRESSED NATIONS!
MONEY FOR JOBS, HOUSING, HEALTHCARE AND EDUCATION, NOT FOR WAR AND OCCUPATION!
NO TO WAR AND OCCUPATION!
YES TO SELF-DETERMINATION!

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 21
1PM @ VANCOUVER ART GALLERY
(ROBSON ST.)

MOBILIZATION AGAINST WAR & OCCUPATION - MAWO
@MAWO_VAN || INFO@MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG
WWW.MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG

YES
2 PEACE
NO
2 WAR

MARCH 8

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**WOMEN & THE
CUBAN
REVOLUTION WITHIN
A REVOLUTION WITHIN
THE REVOLUTION**

International Greetings:

Miraly González González
First Secretary of the Cuban Embassy in Ottawa

Carolina Escarrá

International Relations of the Youth of the
United Socialist Party of Venezuela (JPSUV)

Some remarks & poetry by:

Tamara Hansen

Azza Rojbi

SATURDAY
MARCH 7 2015 6pm

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350 West Georgia Street

Downtown Vancouver, Canada



VANCOUVER COMMUNITIES IN SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA - VCSC
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