

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



Fire This Time!

HISTORIC VICTORY FOR CUBA! A GREAT VICTORY FOR OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF THE WORLD!



**THE CUBAN FLAG
FLIES HIGH OVER THE
NEW CUBAN EMBASSY
IN WASHINGTON D.C.**

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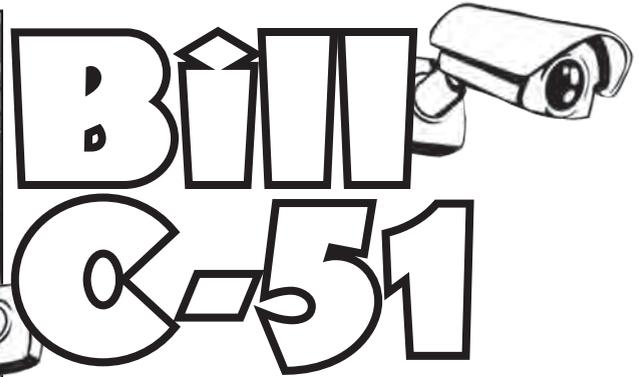
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**THE STRUGGLE MUST
CONTINUE UNTIL VICTORY**





The Struggle Must Continue Until Victory

By *Thomas Davies*

Bill C-51, popularly known as the “Secret Police Law”, achieved a new level of infamy in July. After managing to anger and alienate almost every sector of society in Canada, with its massive and purposefully vague expansion of state powers of surveillance, detention and secrecy, opposition became international in a very high profile way. A United Nations Human Rights Committee review panel called out the new law for opening the door to human rights abuses and said it should be re-written. This is just another chapter in the back and forth drama the Conservative government had hoped would be a short story, but which has been turned into a long one by significant and continuing opposition. While the Conservative government has attempted to rationalize and justify Bill C-51 using fear, scandal after scandal has shown clearly that it is much more about cracking down on dissent by poor and working people than protecting anyone from any so-called “jihadi terrorists.”

Opposition Grows – Another Bad Month for C-51

On July 23, 2015 the UN Human Rights Committee submitted its most recent report on Canada’s adherence to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, a legally binding part of the International Bill of Human Rights. While it found much fault with Canada, on issues such as missing and murdered indigenous women, human rights abuses by Canadian businesses in foreign countries and prison conditions, it took particular issue with Bill C-51. The report states Bill C-51, “confers a broad mandate and powers on the Canadian Security Intelligence

Service (CSIS) to act domestically and abroad, thus potentially resulting in mass surveillance and targeting activities that are protected under the Covenant without sufficient and clear legal safeguards.”

This wasn’t the only bad news for Bill C-51 that week. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) and Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE) launched a Charter Challenge against C-51 at the Ontario Superior Court, on the grounds that many sections are unjustified in a democratic society. In announcing the Charter Challenge, Tom Henheffer, executive director of CJFE said, “Bill C-51 is a grave threat to our rights in Canada. It will lead to censorship and a massive chill on free expression, and enables a potentially widespread abuse of power.” Importantly, the Charter Challenge surpassed its internet crowd-funding goal of \$25,000 in less than 3 days, and has now doubled its target to \$50,000.

Completely Unjustified

One of the primary issues with Bill C-51 is the massive new powers it gives Canada’s spy agency, CSIS. The newest scandal to come to light is that CSIS never really requested these powers! In fact, the Canadian Press obtained a heavily censored copy of a secret February 2014 presentation and a related memo where CSIS told federal deputy ministers that “significant improvements” to the sharing of national-security information were possible within the “existing legislative framework.” So CSIS asked for some renovations, and the Conservative government bulldozed the house instead.

The RCMP are also the supposed beneficiaries of Bill C-51, but even they

are grumbling. The Canadian Press used the Access to Information Act to obtain documents wherein the RCMP complain that the new CSIS powers, “could inadvertently jeopardize existing relationships” they have fostered. They are also concerned the changes will put increased pressure on them to coordinate with CSIS so that criminal investigations are not “negatively affected” now that CSIS has been given the undefined power of “disruption.” Both agencies will now be butting heads and intervening on the same cases.

It is clear that Bill C-51’s changes are based on a political agenda rather than practical considerations for protecting people.

Fear is Their Tool

The primary justification for Bill C-51 by the Conservative government has always been about its necessity in the “War on Terror.” In introducing Bill C-51, Stephen Harper justified its extreme measures by saying, “Our Government understands that extreme jihadists have declared war on us, on all free people, and on Canada specifically.” Unfortunately, he hasn’t been able to prove this so-called war “specifically” on Canada.

In an attempt to heighten our fear and establish a threat, Foreign Affairs bureaucrats were told this year to produce three terrorism-related statements for minister Rob Nicholson to make to the media each week. Unfortunately for the government, its bureaucrats proved unable and unwilling to fulfil this nonsense request.

So Stephen Harper has had to manufacture his own exaggerated statements such as this one:

“Canadians are targeted by these terrorists

for no other reason than that we are Canadians. They want to harm us because they hate our society and the values it represents. Because they hate pluralism, they hate tolerance, and they hate the freedom of others, the freedom we enjoy. Through their deeds, these jihadists have declared war on Canada and with their words, they urge others to join their campaign of terror against Canadians. Ladies and gentlemen, it would be a grave mistake to ignore their threats.”

Three people have died in Canada from domestic terrorist attacks in the last twenty years. Almost that many people die every day at work, mostly from unsafe working conditions. A woman is killed on average every six days in Canada by a current or former spouse or boyfriend. Ten people die from suicide in Canada every single day. Yet the Conservative government has cut funding from women’s and mental health programs, and made it easier for employers to get away with unsafe working conditions. If they were so concerned about protecting people, why are they blowing up the threat of terrorism and ignoring real problems which can actually be addressed?

The Real Reason for Bill C-51 – An Attack on Dissent

As the



right-wing National Post newspaper pointed out, “Ultimately, however, the legislation [Bill C-51] raises more questions than it answers — the most basic being, “Why?” The Conservative government failed to establish a threat, and therefore obviously failed to establish how Bill C-51 would actually combat the “jihadi terrorists” who, according to them, are poised at any moment to leap out of the shadows and take over Canada.

Many groups and organizations have been very right in pointing out that Bill C-51 is an unnecessary attack on democratic rights and freedom of speech, but we must answer the National Post’s question of “Why?” if we really wish to defeat Bill C-51.

For this it is important to look at what is going on around the world, where we can see that Canada is not the only country to enact similar laws.

- The United States has the Patriot Act which it rushed into existence following the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre. It allowed for greatly expanded powers for surveillance, detention, and secrecy and became the prototype for many other countries. It authorized indefinite detentions of immigrants, gave permission to enforcement officers to search a home or business without the owner’s or the occupant’s consent or knowledge and also allowed the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to search telephone, e-mail, and financial records without a court order.

- Britain recently passed a controversial new law called the ‘Anti-Terrorism Bill 2015’ (the same name as Bill C-51!) which demands educational institutions monitor and limit speech on campuses. University



vice-chancellors can now be charged with “contempt of court backed by criminal sanctions” if they do not enforce the new guidelines which many have said are intended to limit freedom of speech. This is just the newest change, as the British government had already created several laws similar to the Patriot Act and Bill C-51 in previous years.

- The French government passed a new law this year which allows French intelligence agents to plant cameras and recording devices in private homes and cars as well as to intercept phone conversations without judicial oversight.

- In 2014, the Australian government passed legislation which allowed the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) broad access to computer networks, and also imposes a possible ten-year prison sentence on journalists and whistleblowers who reveal “special” security operations. Previous legislation already allowed “preventative detention” to be imposed on individuals without evidence.

What do the United States, Canada, France, Britain and Australia have in common? They are all imperialist countries which have been actively involved in invading and occupying countries, especially in the Middle East, and especially since September 11, 2001. The list of countries



either invaded, occupied, bombed, threatened or sanctioned by these countries and their allies has grown longer every year: Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, Mali, Syria, Iran, Yemen... the list goes on.

These are all countries which have naturally had to divert resources from vital programs such as healthcare and education to pay for these increasing military exploits, and are therefore concerned about the fightback from the millions upon millions who suffer domestically because of their war priorities. They all also remember that the single largest coordinated mobilizations in human history were in opposition to the impending war on Iraq in 2003.

These are all countries who have used the “War on Terrorism” to justify their attacks abroad, just as they are now using them to increasingly shove through legislation limiting democratic and human rights at home.

As well, all of these countries are still attempting to recover from the 2008 financial and market crisis, and their solution has been to squeeze the lives and living standards of poor and working people instead of the massive corporations who created the problem in the first place. This has created, and will continue to create, a lot of anger and frustration against both the governments and the capitalist corporations.

So Canada is not alone, and Bill C-51 is not unique in its attacks on poor and working people, and especially its attack

on our ability to organize against the anti-human policies imperialist governments are imposing both at home and abroad. They are trying to roll back all of the gains we have made in the last 100 years, and limit our ability as a whole to fightback and defend our interests.

The Fight is Not Over!

The good news is that these governments would not be trying to take away our rights if they weren't afraid of the possibilities if we used them. The other good news is that poor and working people have fought, and won, similar battles many times throughout history. How else do you think we secured the rights we value today? They were all won by poor and working people, just like us, who decided to organize together and improve the living conditions of everyone. We simply need to follow in their footsteps, and make some of our own as well!

Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper has called for a Federal Election for October 19, 2015. This will be the longest election campaign period in over 100 years in Canada. Anger towards Bill

C-51 has not diminished since it was passed into law, and groups around the country continue to organize against it. The campaign period is one of the few times where politicians are forced to leave the safe confines of Parliament Hill in Ottawa and try to discuss political issues with people across Canada. This makes it an important opportunity to continue making the defeat of Bill C-51 a central issue across Canada – and continue to strengthen the grassroots campaign which has sustained the opposition since the beginning.

Regardless of who is elected, the most necessary aspect of political life in Canada is an active, engaged, determined and united working class and its allies. The opposition to Bill C-51 has shown time and time again that it can play an important role in expanding this. We need to continue building on this momentum, to defeat Bill C-51, and get back to creating a society where the rights of poor and working people are not only respected but reinforced as well!

Repeal Bill C-51 Now!



By Noah Fine

Although Bill C-51 has been passed into law in Canada, the opposition toward it from people in Canada has not yielded. In Vancouver, the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 has continued with consistent actions approaching people during their daily commute to work and back asking them to take a flier, sign a petition or get involved in the campaign to repeal Bill C-51.

On July 13, 2015 supporters of the working group organized an outreach rally at one of Greater Vancouver's busiest transit hubs, Metrotown Skytrain Station. Anti C-51 activists passed out thousands of fliers and collected hundreds of signatures from people during their commute. A short rally was held to close the activity with Working Group member and Fire This Time editorial board member Thomas Davies thanking supporters for participating and encouraging people to continue in the struggle until the undemocratic Bill is repealed.

On July 25, 2015 the campaign continued in one of Vancouver's important ethnic communities which houses poor and working people from many different ethnicities and backgrounds. At Fraser St and 49th Ave in South Vancouver, activists split up onto all corners of the neighbourhoods busiest intersection asking people to sign the petition to repeal Bill C-51.

An encouraging amount of petition signatures and support received on that day gave confidence to the group to continue organizing in opposition to Bill C-51.

The Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 would like to encourage all concerned people in Canada to get involved in the campaign to defend democratic and human rights by demanding: Repeal Bill C-51!

IMMIGRATION CRISIS; CAPITALIST CRISIS



By Alison Bodine

The sentence passed by quickly at the bottom of the screen, a headline from the New York Times

“60 Million People Fleeing Chaotic Lands, U.N. Says” and it was gone, followed by other news. This staggering number of refugees is the equivalent to the entire estimated population of Italy. Yet, it is still only a portion of the world’s displaced people, only those refugees fleeing their countries due to war and persecution, not due to poverty. The movement of 60 million people is nearly impossible to imagine. It is even more difficult if you imagine the ways that these refugees are forced to flee their homelands. They move by sea in overcrowded and dangerous boats and rafts, through deserts in the back of semi-trucks, their fate determined by smugglers and criminals, or by a sudden rainstorm.

Refugee Crisis - a Crisis for Humanity

In April of 2015 over 800 people died when a single ship carrying refugees from Libya to Italy sank in the Mediterranean. This horrific incident created a mass outcry that finally brought international media attention to the devastating pace that people were drowning in the sea en route to find a better life in Europe. In only the first four months of 2015, over 1,850 people had died in what became known as “the sea of death.”

What was the cause of this increase in the loss of human life? As was written in “The Human Crisis Made By Imperialist Powers” (Fire This Time, Volume 9, Issue 5), “There are a few reasons for this increasing death

rate, including the criminal policies of E.U. [European Union] governments towards people fleeing persecution, poverty and death. This includes cuts to rescue operations, following the backwards thinking of British Tory Minister Baroness Anelay, who claimed last year that rescue operations were actually encouraging more refugees to cross the Mediterranean. This is a ridiculous claim, given not only the rate of refugees so far this year, but also the estimation of the UN International Maritime Organization that nearly 500,000 refugees will make the perilous journey this year.”

Following international condemnation, E.U. governments scrambled for a solution to the crisis at hand. Quickly they decided on a short-term strategy, in what was described by Amnesty International as a “face-saving, not a life-saving operation.” The E.U. strategy largely only included an increase in funding for “Operation Triton,” a boat rescue operation run through the E.U.’s border security agency Frontex, which is only mandated to operate within 50 miles of the European shoreline. Their plan didn’t even offer a solution for the 40,000 refugees already accepted for asylum in Europe.

It is now three months after the tragic death of those 800 refugees and it is even more clear that the E.U. was not interested in saving human lives, only in calming the outcry. Not only have people continued to lose their lives in the dangerous Mediterranean crossing, but the crisis has further overflowed, in much the same way as cracks spread in a breaking vase continuously filled with water. According to the UNHCR (the United Nations Refugees Agency), from January to June 2015, 137,000 refugees crossed the Mediterranean to Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain. This is 83% more than in

2014, evidence that the Middle East and Africa are further plagued by imperialist intervention, wars and occupations.

Most of the people that make it safely to the shores of Europe, only do so after being rescued at sea by fishing boats or government and merchant ships. Unfortunately, once their feet touch dry land, their crisis continues. The struggle for refugees begins over again, this time on European soil, as they are forced into unsafe and unsanitary detention centres to be processed as asylum seekers and refugees. Camps in Southern Italy and Greece are especially overcrowded, and refugees are once again forced to live in inhuman conditions often similar to those they have fled, as they wait for European officials to decide their fate.

In the Amnesty International statement “Greece: Humanitarian crisis mounts as refugee support system pushed to breaking point” they state, “Tens of thousands of vulnerable people making the perilous sea journeys to escape war or poverty arrive on these islands only to be met by a support system on its knees. The majority of new arrivals have limited or no access to medical or humanitarian support and are often forced to stay in squalid conditions in overcrowded detention centres or open camps.”

The statement continues “An Afghan refugee held with his wife and two small children on Lesbos told Amnesty International: ‘My children slept with wet clothes...nobody came to check us. The situation is bad here, my children are ill, we are ill....We need a doctor and clothes.’”

The humanitarian crisis continues beyond the Mediterranean sea. Take, for example, a camp located outside of Vienna, Austria. The Wall Street Journal reported that this camp is housing twice as many people as it has space for, and more than 2,000 people are sleeping outside.



If the refugees are finally accepted as asylum seekers, they are left to fend for themselves on the streets of some of Europe's most impoverished countries. Once unable to find jobs or means of life in countries like Greece, many refugees are forced to travel illegally to other parts of Europe, as current laws govern that they are only granted asylum in the country where they first landed in Europe.

The Human Crisis Spreads Throughout Europe

It is at this step in the perilous journey for refugees that we encounter the latest flashpoint making international headlines. In the first seven months of 2015, 37, 000 people have been stopped attempting to cross through the Channel Tunnel that connects France to England. Eurotunnel, the private company that runs the tunnel, also revealed that in the month of July, nine people had died trying to make the crossing. In the week following the announcement, videos showing recently deployed and armed riot police fighting against refugees have appeared all over social media. It is these videos that have displayed clearly for the world the callousness of European governments towards desperate people that have been forced by imperialism to flee their homelands.

In response to this human crisis, David Cameron, the British Prime Minister, has likened refugees to swarming insects and called for the violent tightening of the border between France and England. On July 29, 2015 he arrogantly responded to questions about the Channel Tunnel crossings with, "This is very testing, I accept that, because you have got a swarm of people coming across the Mediterranean, seeking a better life, wanting to come to Britain because Britain has got jobs, it's got a growing economy, it's an incredible place to live....But we need to protect our borders by working hand in glove with our neighbours the French and that is exactly what we are

doing."

There are currently about 10,000 refugees living in Calais, France, an area located near the Channel Tunnel crossing. The camps in Calais,

located on the site of a former chemical dumping ground, are also known as "The Jungle." Graffiti on a wall in Calais reads in Arabic "Calais is the hell of immigrants." For people that have travelled the 2,500km from Southern Italy to Calais, escaping hell the entire way, it is no wonder that they would be willing to once again risk their lives to make the final journey on to the UK.

Capitalism and Imperialism are the roots of the Refugee Crisis?

Now that the stories of refugees are once again making international headlines, and in the case of those crossing from France to England, disturbing the ability for trade and travel between two prominent European countries, European leaders are once again scratching their heads about how to respond. What are the solutions that the European governments are offering? We only have to look at the last three months of their failed immigration policies to see what kind of "progress" has been made in providing a human solution to refugees. European governments have nothing to offer but more and higher fences and check points, nothing but increased humiliation and death for refugees.

So what is it that European governments and big media are leaving out when they discuss the refugees in Europe today? We only have to scroll through a few mainstream Western media articles about refugees in Europe to realize that

they pretty much all have the same content. They all talk about the grave crisis facing Europe, and they even go as far as to discuss the reasons why an unprecedented number of refugees are making the dangerous journey. But they stop before even asking the most fundamental question - why have the homelands of these refugees, largely from the Middle East and Africa, been plagued with endless wars, occupations and devastation? Until this question is answered there is no solution to the refugee crisis, a crisis for humanity that is only expected to grow in the coming years.

The importance of this question, and the gross hypocrisy of European governments, is clearly seen by taking a closer look at the countries from where these refugees are fleeing. According to a UNHCR report, the majority of the refugees arriving in Italy and Greece from the Mediterranean Sea are from Syria. The second-most common country of origin is Afghanistan. Over the last 14 years, both of these countries have been completely destroyed through foreign intervention, war and occupation.

Syria is a country devastated by over four years of a brutal civil war fomented by the U.S. and their imperialist allies, including France and the U.K. More than four million people have been forced to flee Syria. As these war refugees run desperately to neighbouring countries, they are finding life to be nearly as difficult as in Syria. This means they must continue, moving through Turkey beyond into Europe. The story of Sami, a Syrian refugee, is common. In an interview with the Irish Times, he explains "Every day, every hour, people were dying. Two of our daughters' friends were killed. Our youngest, who is 12, would not talk for a week. Their school work suffered. They were crying so much that they would not open their copy books for weeks... The economy has collapsed. I tried to find



work in Lebanon, where I registered as a refugee. But there is no work there either and accommodation is so expensive." Now, the U.S. and their allies are taking the crisis in Syria even further – dropping bombs on the country in the same of "fighting ISIS/ISIL terrorism."

Travel to the camp at Calais and you will hear a similar story of desperation caused by imperialist wars and occupations. In an interview with the Telegraph newspaper, Raihan Jan, a young refugee, described the situation in his home in Afghanistan. "Life in our villages is very difficult, we can't live there. I lost an uncle and we lost all our property and home in the war, everything was destroyed. I heard that it is also difficult there in the UK but we will try." As this young man prepares for the dangerous journey through the Channel Tunnel to England, he is travelling to find refuge in the same country, which alongside the U.S., invaded Afghanistan in 2001 and carried out a brutal and devastating occupation. This occupation left Afghanistan one of the poorest countries in the world, where the current unemployment rate stands at 40%. Even today 100,000 foreign private contractors remain in Afghanistan to serve the interests of imperialist governments.

Together refugees from Syria and Afghanistan make up 27% of all refugees landing on the shores of Greece and Italy (BBC). The majority of other refugees come from other parts of Africa, a continent robbed and devastated by hundreds of years European colonization, the North American slave trade and continued imperialist intervention. The British Empire, France, Belgium, Portugal, Germany at one point all held colonies in Africa, robbing their natural and human resources. Colonization also brought with it the re-tracing of borders in Africa in ways that have led to continuous violence and conflict, further propagated by the legacy of divide-and-conquer tactics used by imperialist powers to keep their colonies under control. In the last five years, the African continent has continued to face the battering of U.S. and European bombs – from Mali to Libya.

With this legacy it is clear that the policy of European governments towards refugees is not only anti-human and hypocritical, but also completely soaked in the blood

of millions of people in the Middle East and Africa. It is clear that the European countries, rather than erecting razor-wire fences, have the obligation to give conditions for life to the refugees fleeing towards their shores.

No to Imperialism! No to Capitalism! Open the Border to All Refugees!

The so-called solution to this human crisis offered by the European governments that has now been offered is no solution at all. Although 6,000 refugees were rescued at sea in the beginning of June, the fact that there were still 6,000 refugees that have taken the dangerous journey is evidence enough of its failure. This is not to mention the horrible conditions and prospects that refugees continue to face if they are lucky enough to be rescued at sea. Furthermore, increased border security has forced more and more people to make the deadly



Mediterranean crossing, as land-crossings become more difficult and refugees continue to be collectively expelled back across the land border, an illegal practice known as "push-back."

The only immediate solution to the refugee crisis is for all European countries to open their doors immediately. The needless deaths of the world's most vulnerable and devastated peoples must be stopped. All refugees must be accepted unconditionally and must be granted legal status immediately. These refugees must be trained and educated for a new life, for a new future. Imperialists and specifically European imperialist countries are the reason for this pain and misery therefore they are primarily responsible for providing decent shelter and life for all refugees.

The only long term solution to the refugee crisis is to put an end to the causes of so much misery and bloodshed in the Middle East and Africa. This means ending imperialist intervention, wars and occupations and ultimately putting an end to the system driving this devastation – capitalism. The unstoppable thirst of the capitalist system for more and more natural and human resources in the quest for more and more profit is what brings about imperialist wars and occupations.

On August 1, the Telegraph newspaper printed an opinion piece titled "Migrants think our streets are paved with gold." This piece was written by Theresa May, the U.K. Home Secretary and Bernard Cazeneuve, France's Minister of the Interior. In it they state, "The nations of Europe will always provide protection for those genuinely fleeing conflict or persecution. However, we must break the link between crossing the Mediterranean and achieving settlement in Europe for economic reasons."

No, it must be argued, no, Mrs. May and Mr. Cazeneuve, it is not possible to distinguish between refugees "genuinely fleeing conflict or persecution" and risking their lives to come to Europe for "economic reasons." It is imperialist, capitalist governments like that of the U.K. and France that have created so much human misery, that have forced people to leave everything behind and make a run for it just to achieve the basic necessities of life. And it is your governments that must take responsibility for the human crisis that you have

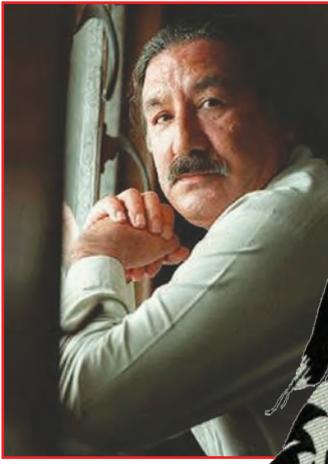
created.

Today we are living in a world characterized by the new era of war and occupation. A world, that as is stated at the beginning of this article, has created an unprecedented number of displaced persons, a world where 2.2 billion people live on less than \$2 dollars a day.

The crisis of refugees in Europe can be seen as an overflowing cup. Destroy the land, water and basic infrastructure for millions of people around the world, and they have no other choice but leave in search of a better life.

Imperialist Hands Off the Middle East and Africa!

Open the Doors to All Refugees!



Letter from Leonard Peltier on the 40th Anniversary of the Incident at Oglala

26 June 2015

Greetings to you, my relatives and friends.

This is the first time that my dear sister Roselyn will not be there for me, but I know she is there in spirit as she has gone on her journey. I have seen pictures of the gathering over the years and can still see her sitting there under the trees with our relatives... I will always miss her and be grateful to her for all she did for me and for our people.

This year I am most concerned with our children and the taking of their own lives. This is very sad to me, as it is to you, and I know there are many reasons for them to feel such despair and hopelessness. But I can only ask and encourage all of us to double our efforts to show them love and support, and let them know that we will always look after them and protect them. That includes asking big brothers and sisters to look after the younger ones. They are our future and have to be protected and to learn to be the protectors. This is not something we can live with, we need to all work to change this.

And this year it is even more urgent that we come together to protect our sovereignty. There are so many issues to face and fight. We continue to fight for our Black Hills and to stop the XL pipeline from poisoning our water and our land, and I stand with the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota Nations, and all people of like mind in this fight.

The destruction of our Mother Earth by the heavy and toxic Tar Sands oil, fracking, gas and oil drilling and uranium mining is unacceptable to me and to us. We are supposed to be protecting these things even as others try to push us aside. I honor all of our relatives who are on the front lines of this fight.

And after all that I have seen in these 40 years behind bars, I was still shocked to see what they are trying to do to the Apache people at Oak Flats. This cannot be tolerated. It is not only a blatant

money grab at the expense of a tribe's Sacred site, but it is an effort to push us back in the direction of termination by ignoring our rights as sovereign nations. This we will not tolerate. Nothing is sacred to these people and they will continue to try to bulldoze us out of the way without even a single thought to our coming generations if we do not continue to stand up and oppose them. We must be ready for anything or we will lose all that we have gained in the last 40 years.

The continued use of racist mascots is something that we can never accept as Indigenous peoples and we need to all continue to push to end that racist practice.

As for me, time is something I have learned a lot about in these years in prison. And now I can see that time is slipping away from me and I know that if I do not get out under this President I will almost certainly die here in prison.

I have been able to survive with the hope you have given to me and your prayers and I am grateful for that support from all of you.

I continue to pray for the family of my brother Joe Stuntz and for all those who paid such a dear price in those bitter times 40 years ago.

And I pray for the families of all our people who have suffered so much and continue to suffer now.

I thank all of you for coming today and I know how hot it can be there. And especially to all the runners and walkers I offer my gratitude.

I send my Love to the people of the Lakota Nations and to all Native Nations,

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse...

Doksha,

Leonard Peltier

June 26, 2015 marks 40 years to the day when two FBI agents sped on to Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota in an unmarked car and initiated a shoot-out with the American Indian Movement (AIM) activists.

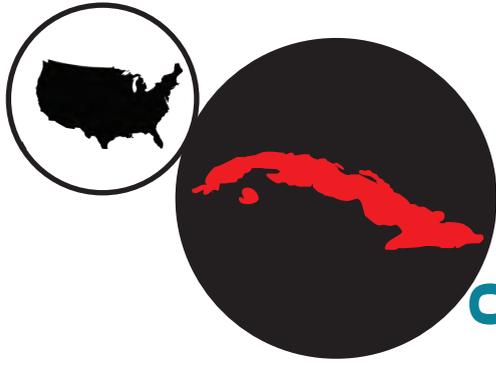
When it was over, the two FBI agents, and one Native activist, Joe Stuntz, were killed. While there was never any investigation into the death of Stuntz, the FBI began the biggest 'manhunt' in US history to capture the AIM members who were involved in the firefight. Two AIM activists stood trial and were found 'not guilty' for reasons of self-defense. The FBI then put its focus on Leonard Peltier, who had fled to Canada to avoid the racist US justice system. Using manufactured evidence, the FBI had Leonard extradited from Canada to stand trial for the deaths of the agents. Despite the fact that there was never any reasonable evidence presented in the trial that linked Leonard to the deaths of the agents, and that the prosecutor conceded that "We do not know who killed the agents," in 1977 he was convicted of the two murders and sentenced to two consecutive life terms.

Leonard's real crime was standing up against the US government for Indigenous people. Today, he is 70 years old and continues to be a symbol of US injustice, but also Native pride and unwavering courage. He has continued to write and speak out from behind prison bars, and is recognized throughout the world for his life-long struggle for human rights.

On the 40th anniversary of what has become known as the "Incident at Oglala", Leonard once again wrote an important message to his supporters encouraging them to continue the struggle for justice and self-determination.

For more information on Leonard's case, visit: <http://www.whoisleonardpeltier.info>

Historic Victory for Cuba!



Victory for the oppressed of the world!

As the Cuban flag is raised above the Cuban Embassy in Washington D.C., we reflect on the last 54 years of U.S. - Cuba relations and look ahead to future challenges...

By Tamara Hansen

On July 20, 2015 the Cuban flag, with its single star was risen proudly over the newly reestablished Cuban Embassy in Washington, DC. Hundreds gathered outside the building to watch and participate in the ceremonial event which represented an important victory for the Cuban people and their revolution after 54 years of broken relations between the U.S. and Cuba. According to the Guardian online, "Chants of 'Viva Cuba socialista' and 'Cuba libre' fill the streets outside the Cuban embassy as Cuban foreign minister calls for end to embargo and Guantanamo prison." The mood was clear, while celebrating, Cuba and its supporters know that the reestablishment of diplomatic relations is only a first step, the U.S. has a long way to go after over 50 years of hostility and sabotage against Cuba.

Over 50 years of US hostility towards Cuba

Indeed, for more than 50 years the US government has basically been at war against the revolutionary government of Cuba, which came to power in 1959 when the Cuban people kicked out the US-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. Some have called U.S. policy towards Cuba during this time a "cold

war" policy. However, with over 3400 Cubans killed due to U.S.-sponsored sabotage and the U.S. government's criminal policy of economic blockade against Cuba – referring to U.S.-Cuba relations since 1959 as a "cold war" seems like a fabrication of history.

The list of US attacks on Cuba is long: the bombing of La Coubre ship by the CIA in 1960 which killed 101 people; the Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961; the violence of Operation Mongoose in 1961 & 1962; the bombing of a Cubana airliner which killed all 73 people on-board in 1976; biological attacks carried out in Cuba by Cuban exile groups living with impunity in Miami; over 600 attempts to kill the leader of Cuba's revolution Fidel Castro; hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars invested in "freedom funds" and "democracy building" projects to overthrow Cuba's revolutionary socialist government.

These attacks are paired with the most vicious ongoing campaign by the U.S. against Cuba, the U.S. blockade. The July 2014 report by Cuba on resolution 68/8 of the United Nations General Assembly, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" published by the Ministry of Foreign Relations of Cuba (MINREX) explains the viciousness

of this aspect of the U.S. government's policy toward Cuba. "Cuba and the United States are not at war. Cuba has never launched any military aggression against the United States nor has it promoted acts of terrorism against the American people. It is unsustainable to justify the measures being taken under this ordinance. As stated before, the blockade qualifies as an act of genocide by virtue of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948 and as an act of economic warfare according to the declaration regarding the laws of naval war adopted by the Naval Conference of London of 1909. The blockade inflicts important adverse effects on the material, psychological and spiritual well-being of the Cuban people and it imposes serious obstacles on its economic, cultural and social development." This detailed report outlines the impact of the US blockade on the right to health, education and food in Cuba, as well as impeding many developments in sports and culture. The blockade also impacts foreign trade and investment not only from the US, but also from other countries due to the extraterritorial reach of these US laws. Cuba also reminds the US and UN General Assembly (UNGA) that this policy of blockade against Cuba has been internationally condemned at the UNGA for the last 22 years in a row. In fact in October 2014, for the 23rd time, the UNGA voted to condemn the US blockade on Cuba with 188 countries voting against the blockade and only two in favour (the US and Israel).

So what has been the goal of all of this hostility? Is it just a "cold war mentality" as many have suggested? A problem of capitalism versus communism? If that is so, why does the US have longstanding diplomatic relations with China and Vietnam? The





reality is that the US is afraid of the Cuban revolutionary example. The US government sees Latin America as its backyard and in many ways its own personal playground. For more than a century the US government and many US corporations have been supporting dictators and oligarchs across Latin America and lining their own pockets with the profits. Having governments in Latin America favourable to this economic exploitation has been an essential part of US foreign policy in the region.

The Cuban revolution in 1959 threw US corporations out of Cuba and returned the land to the people. Cuba nationalized all industries and invested the money in universal healthcare, education, development and jobs. Cubans became healthier, they became literate, they had access to clean water and electricity and the gap between rich and poor was decisively minimized – all thanks to Cuba’s socialist revolution. The US government was and is afraid that these socialist and communist ideas and methods would spread throughout Latin America. This is why since the triumph of the revolution 56 years ago, the US government has attempted to sabotage the growth of the revolution both within and outside of Cuba.

1961 to today: What has changed?

In January 1961, the US government pulled its diplomatic staff out of Havana and soon after imposed a travel ban on Americans wishing to travel to Cuba. At that time, it was two years that Cuba’s revolutionary government had been in power, and two years of US government covert attacks and sabotage against the revolution. However, the US never completely left Cuba, they maintained their military presence in Guantanamo Bay, which has been occupied by a US naval base since 1903. It is also important to mention that in 1977 the US established an “Interests Section” in Havana hosted by the Swiss Embassy (Cuba also had an Interests Section in

Washington, DC).

Nevertheless after 54 years without formal US-Cuba diplomatic relations, the US and Cuba have opened Embassies in each other’s countries. However, Cuba is still communist, and is maintaining its independence and defending

its revolutionary socialist example. The US is still capitalist and imperialist and is still afraid and shaken by the Cuban example. So the big question is, what has changed?

The White House website explains the reestablishment of US-Cuba relations from the US government’s perspective, explaining on their “Cuba policy” webpage: “Decades of US isolation of Cuba have failed to accomplish our objective of empowering Cubans to build an open and democratic country. At times, longstanding US policy towards Cuba has isolated the United States from regional and international partners, constrained our ability to influence outcomes throughout the Western Hemisphere, and impaired the use of the full range of tools available to the United States to promote positive change in Cuba. Though this policy has been rooted in the best of intentions, it has had little effect – today, as in 1961, Cuba is governed by the Castros and the Communist party.” So here we see that the US government admits its policy for over 50 years has been to isolate Cuba and that at times, this policy has actually resulted in isolating the United States! While I do not agree with most of the Obama administration’s policy towards Cuba, I can agree that this is the crux of why the US is today so willing to reestablish diplomatic ties with revolutionary Cuba.

Cuba’s recognition worldwide

While the US government pushed for so many years to isolate Cuba, the failure of their policy is clear. Cuba, a small country of 11.5 million people, has diplomatic or consular relations with 187 Countries and States.

Cuba is a leader and founding members of two very important Latin American organizations:

First, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) founded in December 2004 by Cuba and Venezuela. This organization for regional integration based on a vision of social justice, was built as an alternative to the unjust policies promoted by the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA). Today ALBA has 11 member countries.

Second, was the 2010 establishment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) which is a regional bloc made up of 33 Latin American and Caribbean member countries. In contrast to the OAS (Organization of American States), the US and Canada have not been invited to join, which has been an important step for the independence of the people of Latin America.

Cuba also has deep bonds and joint work with CARICOM (Caribbean Community Secretariat), the NAM (Non-Aligned Movement) and many UN (United Nations) agencies such as UNICEF and UNESCO.

It is important to explain that Cuba has not only fought against US imposed isolation with these international treaties and

FRIENDS OF CUBA DEMAND:



- FREE ALL THE CUBAN FIVE HELD IN U.S. JAILS**
- REMOVE CUBA FROM U.S. “TERRORIST LIST”**
- RESTORE U.S.-CUBA DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS**
- END THE U.S. BLOCKADE OF CUBA**
- RETURN GUANTANAMO BAY TO CUBA**
- END THE U.S. TRAVEL BAN TO CUBA**
- STOP U.S. “REGIME CHANGE” PROJECTS AGAINST CUBA**



at the Olympics (at the 2014 games Cuba came in 11th out of 74 countries) and Pan Am Games (at the 2015 Pan Am Games Cuba was 4th out of 36 countries). Furthermore, Cuba's international recognition for their cigars, rum, jazz, salsa, ballet and so many other delights.

So here one can better understand why the White House in Washington DC says things like, "At times, long-standing U.S. policy towards Cuba has isolated the United States from regional and international partners."

The people of Cuba have not surrendered any of their rights or their principles to reestablish diplomatic ties with the US government. Instead the newly reestablished diplomatic relations between the US and Cuba really mean the US government is admitting the failure of their 54 year attempt to isolate and strangle the Cuban revolution and its gains.

So today we celebrate the fact that the Cuban flag is proudly waving in Washington DC, only a few blocks from the White House. These new diplomatic ties vindicate Cuba's firm stance in the face of US slander and accusations. The US was forced to remove Cuba from their list of "state sponsors of terror"; to release the remaining three of the Cuban 5 held in US jails; and to reestablish formal diplomatic ties with Cuba. This is a big win for oppressed people around the world.

Today & the future of US-Cuba Relations

The road ahead is very uncertain for the United States and Cuba. While we hail the

reestablishment of diplomatic ties between the US and Cuba as an important victory, not only for the Cuban people but also for oppressed people around the world, we cannot forget the new challenge that the Cuban people are facing.

The US government has not agreed to normalize relations to help Cuba, in fact it has normalized relations only because its previous policies were failing and the US government wanted to adopt new policies in an attempt to continue its campaign for "regime change" in Cuba – meaning bringing an end to the Cuban socialist project and revolution. Really, to be honest, the reestablishment of a US Embassy in Havana will greatly aid the US government in its harmful meddling in Cuba's affairs.

On April 15, 2015 U.S. President Barack Obama declared, "On Cuba, we are not in the business of regime change. We are in the business of making sure the Cuban people have freedom and the ability to participate and shape their own destiny and their own lives, and supporting civil society." However, this statement goes against the money trail and leaked reports about the secret (and failed) covert operations of the US government in Cuba.

On November 9, 2014, the New York Times Editorial Board published an article titled, "In Cuba, Misadventures in Regime Change." This article explains some of the recent history of the US government in Cuba. "In 1996, spurred by an appetite for revenge, American lawmakers passed a bill spelling out a strategy to overthrow the government in Havana and 'assist the Cuban people in regaining their freedom.' The Helms-Burton Act, signed into law by US President Bill Clinton shortly after Cuba shot down two small subversive American planes, has served as the foundation for the \$264 million the United States has spent in the last 18 years trying to instigate democratic reforms on the island."

From the article, here are some of the "largely counterproductive" initiatives these millions of US tax-payer dollars were spent on in Cuba:

- a "legally questionable global lobbying effort to persuade foreign governments to support America's unpopular embargo"

- "loads of comic books [sent] to the American diplomatic mission in Havana, bewildering officials there"

organizations, but also through hands-on people-to-people work. In June 2012 the Toronto Star published an article titled "Cuba-trained doctors making difference around the world" by columnist Catherine Porter. She writes, "Since 2006, Cuban doctors have restored vision to 2.2 million Latin Americans through simple eye surgeries. Today, the tiny country of Cuba, population 11 million, sends more doctors to assist in developing countries than the entire G8 combined, according to Robert Huish, an international development professor at Dalhousie University who has studied ELAM [the Latin American School of Medicine] for eight years. There are 68,600 Cuban doctors now and more than 20 per cent of them — or 15,407 — are on missions in 66 countries. They have saved 4 million lives over the past five decades, they say. 'We are the army of doctors in the world,' says Dr. Jorge Juan Delgado Bustillo, the country's deputy director of medical co-operation, standing in front of a giant map on which almost every country in Africa and Latin America sports a little Cuban flag. 'We don't fight with guns. We fight with our knowledge and hands to assist people.'" This is just a small paragraph about some of the work Cuba and Cuba's health professionals have accomplished around the world. We could also talk about their leading role in fighting Ebola in West Africa, or the thousands of international students that study medicine for free each year just outside Havana at the Latin American School of Medicine.

These examples are also just about health. We could also find examples about Cuba's literacy program and its use throughout the world, including here in Canada as the Arrowmigh program. We could talk about Cuba's standing



- “a gas chain saw, computer gaming equipment and software (including Nintendo Game Boys and Sony PlayStations), a mountain bike, leather coats, cashmere sweaters, crab meat and Godiva chocolates”

- “to expand Internet access in Cuba [which] had disastrous repercussions for the Obama administration”

- “a rudimentary text messaging system similar to Twitter, known as ZunZuneo [...]. It was supposed to provide Cubans with a platform to share messages with a mass audience, and ultimately be used to assemble ‘smart mobs.’”

- “sending young Latin Americans to Cuba to identify ‘potential social change actors,’ under the pretext of organizing gatherings like an H.I.V. prevention workshop. The contractors [...] received quick pointers on how to evade Cuban intelligence and were paid as little as \$5.41 an hour for work that could have easily landed them in prison.”

This money is still working its way to Cuba through US organizations like USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy.

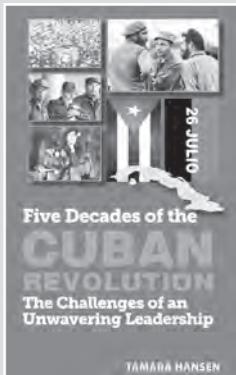
Battle of Ideas Press

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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However, these wasteful and sinister programs are not the only difficulty in the road ahead, now that the United States government will have an Embassy in Havana. The US government also has to answer for its continued policy of blockading Cuba and its occupation of Guantanamo Bay.

The US Blockade on Cuba continues

The December 17, 2014 announcement by US President Barack Obama that Cuba and the US would be reestablishing diplomatic relations does not mean an end to the US blockade on Cuba. In fact, Obama himself stated, “The embargo that’s been imposed for decades is now codified in legislation. As these changes unfold, I look forward to engaging Congress in an honest and serious debate about lifting the embargo.” This makes it sound like Congress is the only thing standing in Obama’s way. However, if we return to the White House website on their “Cuba policy” page, the Obama administration doesn’t even mention congress or Obama’s proposed “debate about lifting the embargo.” Instead the policy website explains that the Obama administration is authorizing, “expanded sales and exports of certain goods and services from the US to Cuba.” Why only certain goods and services? Because this expansion is not towards ending the blockade. Instead it is towards ‘empowering’, the “nascent Cuban private sector and make it easier for Cuban citizens to have access to certain lower-priced goods to improve their living standards and gain greater economic independence from the state.”

The US occupation of Guantanamo Bay

Of course when Barack Obama was campaigning for his first term as US president, he made many promises about closing the notorious US prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The Huffington Post explains, “The prison, which has been operating at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base since 2002, is being used to detain unlawful combatants from Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries who were captured in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The U.S. has come under international scrutiny for holding prisoners there who haven’t been charged, for torturing prisoners and for denying Geneva Convention protections. As of January 2015, 122 prisoners were still there -- down from a total of 779.” Even in March 2015 Obama called the existence of the Guantanamo bay prison, “a sad chapter in America history.” What he fails to remember is this is a sad chapter in America’s present political policy, which he is in charge of directing!

It should also be noted that closing the prison at Guantanamo Bay does not mean the US government would close their Naval military

base and leave Guantanamo for good. Getting the American naval base out of Cuba continues to be one of the main priorities of the Cuban people and their government.

So why are we celebrating?

If the US is continuing with its nefarious plans to put an end to the Cuban revolution, not planning to end the blockade against Cuba and keeping their military base in Guantanamo Bay, why are we celebrating the establishment of formal diplomatic relations as a historic victory?

First, Cuba is keenly aware of the new legitimacy the reestablishment of formal diplomatic ties could give the US for its campaign to force its version of ‘democracy’ down the throats of the Cuban people. Cuba has done the math and believes they have more to gain than lose from this historic process.

As Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Cuba’s minister of Foreign Affairs, said at the ceremony to re-open the Cuban Embassy in the US: “Only the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade which has caused so much harm and suffering to our people; the return of the occupied territory in Guantánamo and the respect for Cuba’s sovereignty will lend some meaning to the historic event that we are witnessing today. [...] We reaffirm Cuba’s willingness to move towards the normalization of relations with the United States in a constructive spirit, but without any prejudice whatsoever to our independence or any interference in the affairs that fall under the exclusive sovereignty of Cubans.” With these words Cuba is affirming that it is not bowing to the US government and that in these newly reestablished US-Cuba diplomatic relations Cuba also has its own goals and objectives.

Secondly, the Cuban flag and its single star flying over the Cuban Embassy in Washington, DC is a flag that belongs to all oppressed people. This is the flag of a revolutionary people and government, who are fighting in the heart of the empire to defend themselves against US aggression and continued sabotage. At the same time, that flag also represents hope – that a better world is possible and that when we oppressed people defend our dignity and rights, as Fidel Castro said, history will absolve us! This flag is the flag of revolutionary internationalist Cuba, whose internationalism is founded in the words of the great Cuban revolutionary writer Jose Marti, “Humanity is my Homeland.” We welcome and celebrate this undeniable advancement for working and oppressed people around the world against the empire.



Speech by Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba at the ceremony to re-open the Cuban Embassy in Washington D.C., U.S.

Washington, July 20, 2015

Her Excellency Mrs. Roberta Jacobson,
Assistant Secretary of State;

Officials of the US Government
accompanying her;

Honorable members of Congress;

Esteemed Representatives of the US
Organizations, Movements and Institutions
who have made huge efforts in favor of
the change of the US Cuba policy and the
improvement of bilateral relations;

Esteemed Representatives of the
Organizations and Movements of the
patriotic emigration;

Distinguished Ambassadors;

Comrades of the Cuban Delegation;

José Ramón Cabañas, Chargé D' Affairs;

Officials and workers of the Cuban Embassy;

Esteemed friends;

The flag that we revere at the entrance of
this room is the same that was hauled down
here 54 years ago, which was zealously
kept in Florida by a family of liberators
and later on by the Museum of our eastern
city of Las Tunas, as a sort of premonition
that this day would certainly come.
Flying once again in this place is the lone-star
flag which embodies the generous blood that
was shed, the sacrifices made and the struggle
waged for more than one hundred years by
our people for their national independence
and full self-determination, facing the most
serious challenges and risks.

Today we pay homage to all those who died
in its defense and renew the commitment of
the present generations, fully confident on the
newer ones, to serve it with honor.

We evoke the memory of José Martí, who was
fully devoted to the struggle for the freedom
of Cuba and managed to get a profound
knowledge about the United States: In his
"North American Scenes" he made a vivid
description of the great nation to the North

and extolled its virtues. He also bequeathed
to us a warning against its excessive craving
for domination which was confirmed by a
long history of disagreements.

We've been able to make it through this date
thanks to the firm and wise leadership of Fidel
Castro Ruz, the historic leader of the Cuban
Revolution, whose ideas we will always
revere with utmost loyalty. We now recall his
presence in this city, in April of 1959, with the
purpose of promoting fair bilateral relations,
as well as the sincere tribute he paid to Lincoln
and Washington. The purposes that brought
him to this country on such an early time are
the same that have pursued throughout these
decades and coincide exactly with the ones
that we pursue today. Many in this room,
whether politicians, journalists, outstanding
personalities in the fields of arts or sciences,
students or American social activists, have
been able to treasure unlimited hours of
enriching talks with the Commander, which
allowed them to have a better understanding
of our reasons, goals and decisions.

This ceremony has been possible thanks
to the free and unshakable will, unity,
sacrifice, selflessness, heroic resistance and
work of our people and also the strength
of the Cuban Nation and its culture.

Several generations of the revolutionary
diplomacy have converged in this effort
and offered their martyrs. The example and
vibrant speech of Raúl Roa, the Chancellor
of Dignity, have continued to inspire Cuba's
foreign policy and will remain forever in
the memory of the younger generations and
future diplomats.

I bring greetings from President Raúl Castro,
as an expression of the good will and sound
determination to move forward, through
a dialogue based on mutual respect and
sovereign equality, to a civilized coexistence,
even despite the differences that exist
between both governments, which makes
it possible to solve bilateral problems and
promote cooperation and the development
of mutually beneficial relations, just as both
peoples desire and deserve.

We know that this would contribute to
peace, development, equity and stability
in the continent; the implementation of
the purposes and principles enshrined in
the UN Charter and in the Proclamation
of Latin America and the Caribbean as
a Zone of Peace, which was signed at the
Second Summit of the Community of Latin
American and Caribbean States held in
Havana.

Today, the re-establishment of diplomatic
relations and the re-opening of embassies
complete the first stage of the bilateral
dialogue and pave the way to the complex
and certainly long process towards the
normalization of bilateral relations.

The challenge is huge because there have
never been normal relations between the
United States of America and Cuba, in spite
of the one and a half century of intensive
and enriching links that have existed between
both peoples.

The Platt Amendment, imposed in 1902
under a military occupation, thwarted the
liberation efforts that had counted on the
participation or the sympathy of quite a few
American citizens and led to the usurpation
of a piece of Cuban territory in Guantánamo.
Its nefarious consequences left an indelible
mark in our common history.

In 1959, the United States refused to accept
the existence of a fully independent small and
neighboring island and much less, a few years
later, a socialist Revolution that was forced
to defend itself and has embodied, ever since
then, our people's will.

I have referred to History to reaffirm that
today an opportunity has opened up to begin
working in order to establish new bilateral
relations, quite different from whatever
existed in the past. The Cuban government is
fully committed to that.

Only the lifting of the economic, commercial
and financial blockade which has caused so
much harm and suffering to our people; the

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Discurso por Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla

ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de la República de Cuba
en la ceremonia de
reapertura de la Embajada
de Cuba en los Estados Unidos



** EN ESPAÑOL **

Washington, 20 de julio de 2015

Excma. Sra. Roberta Jacobson, secretaria de Estado Adjunta y señores funcionarios del Gobierno de los Estados Unidos que la acompañan:

Honorables Miembros del Congreso:

Estimados Representantes de las Organizaciones, Movimientos e Instituciones estadounidenses que han realizado ingentes esfuerzos por el cambio de política hacia Cuba y el mejoramiento de las relaciones bilaterales:

Estimados Representantes de las Organizaciones y Movimientos de la emigración patriótica:

Excelentísimos Sres. Embajadores:

Compañeros de la Delegación Cubana:

Encargado de negocios José Ramón Cabañas, funcionarios y trabajadores de la Embajada de Cuba:

Estimadas amigas y amigos:

La bandera que honramos a la entrada de esta sala es la misma que aquí fue arriada hace 54 años, conservada celosamente en la Florida por una familia de libertadores y luego por el Museo de nuestra ciudad oriental de Las Tunas, como anticipación de que este día tendría que llegar.

Onda nuevamente en este lugar la bandera de la estrella solitaria que encarna la generosa sangre derramada, el sacrificio y la lucha más que centenaria de nuestro pueblo por la independencia nacional y la plena autodeterminación, frente a los más graves desafíos y peligros.

Rendimos homenaje a todos los que cayeron en su defensa y renovamos el compromiso de las generaciones presentes y, con absoluta confianza en las que vendrán, de servirla con honor.

Invocamos la memoria de José Martí, quien vivió consagrado a la lucha por la libertad de

Cuba y conoció profundamente los Estados Unidos. En sus "Escenas Norteamericanas", nos dejó una nítida descripción de la gran nación del norte y el elogio de lo mejor de ella. También, nos legó la advertencia de su desmedida apetencia de dominación que toda una historia de desencuentros ha confirmado.

Hemos llegado aquí gracias a la conducción firme y sabia del líder histórico de la Revolución Cubana Fidel Castro Ruz, a cuyas ideas siempre guardaremos lealtad suprema. Recordamos su presencia en esta ciudad, en abril de 1959, para promover relaciones bilaterales justas y su sincero homenaje a Lincoln y Washington. Los propósitos que tempranamente lo hicieron venir, son los que hemos intentado en estas décadas y coinciden exactamente con los que nos proponemos hoy.

Muchos en esta sala, políticos, periodistas, personalidades de las letras o las ciencias, estudiantes, activistas sociales estadounidenses, atesoran infinitas horas de enriquecedora conversación con el Comandante que les permitieron comprender mejor nuestras razones, objetivos y decisiones.

Este acto ha sido posible por la libre e inquebrantable voluntad, la unidad, el sacrificio, la abnegación, la heroica resistencia y el trabajo de nuestro pueblo, y por la fuerza de la Nación y la cultura cubanas.

Varias generaciones de la diplomacia revolucionaria confluyeron en este esfuerzo y entregaron sus mártires. El ejemplo y el verbo trepidante de Raúl Roa, el Canciller de la Dignidad, continúan animando la política exterior cubana y estarán en el recuerdo de los más jóvenes y de los futuros diplomáticos.

Soy portador de un saludo del Presidente Raúl Castro, expresión de buena voluntad y de la sólida decisión política de avanzar, mediante el diálogo basado en el respeto mutuo y la igualdad soberana, hacia una convivencia civilizada, aun dentro de las diferencias entre ambos gobiernos, que favorezca la solución

de los problemas bilaterales, promueva la cooperación y el desarrollo de vínculos mutuamente ventajosos como desean y merecen ambos pueblos.

Sabemos que ello sería una contribución a la paz, el desarrollo, la equidad y la estabilidad del continente, al ejercicio de los propósitos y principios consagrados en la Carta de las Naciones Unidas y en la Proclama de América Latina y el Caribe como Zona de Paz, firmada en la II Cumbre de la Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños, en La Habana.

Con el restablecimiento de las relaciones diplomáticas y la reapertura de Embajadas, culmina hoy una primera etapa del diálogo bilateral y se abre paso al complejo y seguramente largo proceso hacia la normalización de las relaciones bilaterales.

Es grande el desafío porque nunca ha habido relaciones normales entre los Estados Unidos de América y Cuba pese a un siglo y medio de intensos y enriquecedores vínculos entre los pueblos. La Enmienda Platt, impuesta en 1902 bajo ocupación militar, cercenó un esfuerzo libertador que había contado con la participación o la simpatía de no pocos ciudadanos norteamericanos y dio origen a la usurpación de territorio cubano en Guantánamo. Sus nefastas consecuencias marcaron indeleblemente nuestra historia común.

En 1959, Estados Unidos no aceptó la existencia de una pequeña y vecina isla totalmente independiente y unos años después, aun menos, la de una Revolución socialista que tuvo que defenderse, y desde entonces, encarna la voluntad de nuestro pueblo.

Cito la historia para afirmar que hoy se abre la oportunidad de empezar a trabajar para fundar unas relaciones bilaterales nuevas y distintas a todo lo anterior. Para ello, el gobierno cubano compromete toda su voluntad.

continúa en la página 15

return of the occupied territory in Guantánamo and the respect for Cuba's sovereignty will lend some meaning to the historic event that we are witnessing today.

Every step forward will receive the recognition and the favorable acceptance of our people and government, and most certainly the encouragement and approval of Latin America and the Caribbean and the entire world.

We reaffirm Cuba's willingness to move towards the normalization of relations with the United States in a constructive spirit, but without any prejudice whatsoever to our independence or any interference in the affairs that fall under the exclusive sovereignty of Cubans.

To insist in the attainment of obsolete and unjust goals, only hoping for a mere change in the methods to achieve them will not legitimize them or favor the national interest of the United States or its citizens.

However, should that be the case, we would be ready to face the challenge.

We will engage in this process, as was written by President Raúl Castro in his letter of July 1st to President Obama, "encouraged by the reciprocal intention of developing respectful and cooperative relations between our peoples and governments."

From this Embassy, we will continue to work tirelessly to promote cultural, economic, scientific, academic and sports relations as well as friendly ties between our peoples.

We would like to convey the Cuban government's respect and recognition to the President of the United States for urging the US Congress to lift the blockade as well as for the change of policy that he has announced, but in particular for the disposition he has showed to make use of his executive powers for that purpose.

We are particularly reminded of President Carter's decision to open the respective Interests Sections back in September of 1977.

I am pleased to express my gratitude to the Government of the Swiss Confederation for having represented the Cuban interests for the last 24 years.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Cuba, I would like to express our gratitude to the members of Congress, scholars, religious leaders, activists, solidarity groups, business people and so many US citizens who worked so hard for so many years so that this day would come.

To the majority of Cubans residing in the United States who have advocated and called for a different kind of relation of this country with our Nation, we would like to express our recognition. Deeply moved, they have told us that they would multiply their efforts and will remain faithful to the legacy of the patriotic emigration that supported the ideals of independence.

We would like to express our gratitude to our Latin American and Caribbean brothers and sisters who have resolutely supported our country and called for a new chapter in the relations between the United States and Cuba, as was done, with extraordinary perseverance, by a lot of friends from all over the world.

I reiterate our recognition to the governments represented here by the Diplomatic Corps, whose voice and vote at the UN General Assembly and other fora made a decisive contribution.

From this country José Martí organized the Cuban Revolutionary Party to conquer freedom, all the justice and the full dignity of human beings. His ideas, which were heroically vindicated in his centennial year, continue to be the main inspiration that moves us along the path that our people have sovereignly chosen.

Thank you, very much.

Solo la eliminación del bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero que tanto daño y privaciones ocasiona a nuestro pueblo, la devolución del territorio ocupado en Guantánamo y el respeto a la soberanía de Cuba darán sentido al hecho histórico que estamos viviendo hoy.

Cada paso que se avance contará con el reconocimiento y la favorable disposición de nuestro pueblo y gobierno, y recibirá seguramente el aliento y el beneplácito de la América Latina y el Caribe y del mundo.

Ratificamos la voluntad de Cuba de avanzar hacia la normalización de las relaciones con los Estados Unidos, con ánimo constructivo, pero sin menoscabo alguno a nuestra independencia, ni injerencia en asuntos que pertenecen a la exclusiva soberanía de los cubanos.

Persistir en objetivos obsoletos e injustos y solo proponerse un mero cambio en los métodos para conseguirlos, no hará legítimos aquellos ni ayudará al interés nacional de los Estados Unidos ni al de sus ciudadanos. Sin embargo, si así ocurriera, estaríamos dispuestos a aceptar ese desafío.

Acudiremos a este proceso, como escribiera el presidente Raúl Castro en su carta del 1ro. de julio al Presidente Barack Obama, "animados por la intención recíproca de desarrollar relaciones respetuosas y de cooperación entre nuestros pueblos y gobiernos".

Desde esta Embajada, continuaremos trabajando con empeño para fomentar las relaciones culturales, económicas, científicas, académicas y deportivas, y los vínculos amistosos entre nuestros pueblos.

Trasmitimos el respeto y reconocimiento del gobierno cubano al Presidente de los Estados Unidos por su llamado al Congreso a levantar el bloqueo y por el cambio de política que ha enunciado, en particular por la disposición que ha expresado de ejercer sus facultades ejecutivas con ese propósito.

Recordamos especialmente la decisión del Presidente Carter de abrir Secciones de Intereses respectivas en septiembre de 1977.

Me complace agradecer al gobierno de la Confederación Suiza por su representación de los intereses cubanos durante los últimos 24 años.

En nombre del Gobierno y del pueblo de Cuba, deseo expresar nuestra gratitud a los miembros del Congreso, académicos, líderes religiosos, activistas, grupos de solidaridad, empresarios y tantos ciudadanos estadounidenses que se esforzaron a lo largo de muchos años para hacer llegar este día.

A la mayoría de los cubanos residentes en los Estados Unidos, que han defendido y reclaman una relación diferente de este país con nuestra Nación, expresamos reconocimiento. Nos han dicho, conmovidos, que multiplicarán sus esfuerzos, leales a la tradición de la emigración patriótica que sirvió de sustento a los ideales de independencia.

Expresamos gratitud a nuestros hermanos latinoamericanos y caribeños, que han estado de manera decisiva junto a nuestro país y reclamaron un nuevo capítulo en las relaciones entre los Estados Unidos y Cuba, al igual que lo hicieron con extraordinaria constancia muchísimos amigos en todo el mundo.

Reitero nuestro reconocimiento a los gobiernos, aquí representados por el Cuerpo Diplomático, que con su voz y voto en la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas y en otros ámbitos dieron una contribución decisiva.

José Martí organizó desde aquí el Partido Revolucionario Cubano para conquistar la libertad, toda la justicia y la dignidad plena de los seres humanos. Sus ideas, reivindicadas heroicamente en el año de su Centenario, siguen siendo la esencial inspiración en este camino que nuestro pueblo, soberanamente, ha escogido.

Muchas gracias.

FIDEL





Cuban President Raul Castro Delivers a Speech on Normalizing U.S.- Cuba relations:

“We are talking about forging a new kind of relationship between both states, different from our entire common history,” ...

Speech presented by Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee and President of the Councils of State and Ministers, during the closure of the National Assembly of People's Power Eighth Legislature's Fifth Period of Ordinary Sessions, in the Havana Convention Center, July 15, 2015, Year 57 of the Revolution.

Compañeras and compañeros:

Over the last few months we have witnessed several events of great importance to the country, about which you and our people have been informed in a timely fashion.

As is customary, deputies have received abundant information about the performance of the economy during the first half of the year, and estimates through the end of the year.

The decelerating growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product – known as GDP – a trend which has appeared in recent years, has clearly been reversed. As of June 30, the GDP had grown 4.7%, and we estimate that at the conclusion of the year it will stand at about 4%. And this is very good, considering that last year we only grew 1%. Nevertheless, to reach the expected 4%, we must work hard and in a very disciplined manner, above all in the economic sphere, as Minister of the Economy Marino Murillo indicated.

Despite several unmet projections, production in the sugar industry and manufacturing increased, as well as in construction, commerce, tourism, and agricultural production,

despite the fact that the latter is suffering the effects of the prolonged drought occurring throughout the national territory.

I must emphasize, in this context, the need for more rational use of this vital resource, as several compañeras and compañeros have said. At the end of June, water stored in reservoirs stood at only 38% of capacity, today it stands at 36.1%, as the president of the Water Resources Institute, Inés María Chapman, reported, with the least favorable situations existing in the provinces of Guantánamo, Santiago de Cuba, Granma, Las Tunas, Ciego de Ávila, Sancti Spiritus and Pinar del Río.

One of the most disappointing aspects of the plan's implementation is to be found in the transportation sector, which led to difficulties in the economy's performance, a result of organizational shortcomings and the low level of technical availability in the railroad and automotive systems, associated with the lack of replacement parts and problems in maintenance and

repair. This situation was aggravated by delays in the arrival to the country of equipment projected for last year and this year, the majority of which should arrive in 2015.

In addition to the above is the decision adopted in the recent Council of Ministers meeting, to distribute means of transportation, as well as construction equipment, from state reserves, and expedite the ordering of equipment initially under consideration for the 2016 plan.

During the first half of the year we have faced severe external financial constraints. Nevertheless, the country has continued rigorously fulfilling its payment obligations to foreign creditors and providers, a practice which favors the gradual re-establishment of the national economy's credibility, despite the U.S. blockade which remains in full force.

Amidst these difficulties, we have been able to maintain social services for the population – a question we will never neglect – and, as evidence of this, we can point out that the country's epidemiological situation has improved substantially.

What's more, monetary and financial stability has been maintained. Inflation, in general, has been contained to predicted levels, between three and five percent, although we cannot ignore the justified concerns of the population regarding the high prices of agricultural products, which are increasing more than the average salary.



The Cuban flag is raised above the new Cuban Embassy in Washington D.C.

You have noticed that on this occasion, unlike previous sessions of the National Assembly, information has not been included on progress in the implementation of the Economic and Social Policy Guidelines approved by the 6th Party Congress, given that we considered more convenient a focus on the development of a draft report on this issue to be presented at the 7th Congress in April 2016, just as was called for by the Central Committee Plenum held yesterday.

I will, however, refer briefly to the principal tasks undertaken in the interest of updating our economic and social model. Among these is the elaboration of the theoretical conceptualization of socialism in Cuba, and the strategic guidelines and sectors to be included in the economic and social development plan through 2030. Both documents will be among those analyzed during the next Party Congress.

At the same time, progress continues in the strengthening of the role which the socialist state enterprise must play, as the fundamental element in the national economy, adjusting approved measures in a timely fashion and incorporating others related to more flexible functioning and to salary systems based on the results of work.

Likewise, several changes have been implemented in the economic planning process, in accordance with the perfecting of the enterprise system, which has facilitated the more comprehensive incorporation into the plan of policies approved as part of the implementation of the guidelines, and the programming of monetary balances in the plan and state budget.

Progress continues in the completion of the group of measures directed toward monetary unification, an extremely complex process which is indispensable to the efficient performance of the economy. It is worth reiterating what has been said on numerous occasions before our Parliament, about bank deposits being guaranteed, in international currencies, Cuban convertible pesos (CUC) and Cuban pesos (CUP), as well as cash held by the population, or national and foreign incorporated entities.

In the same way, the experimental process of creating non-agricultural cooperatives continues to advance, with the priorities of consolidating those which are in place and gradually advancing in the constitution of new cooperatives, without repeating the distortions already identified.

Along with this, slightly more than half a million Cubans are functioning as self-employed workers in multiple activities, a figure which will continue to increase in a gradual fashion, as restaurants and services for the population are transferred to this management mode, while preserving state ownership of buildings.

We will continue the process of transformations in Cuban society at our own pace, which we have sovereignly chosen, with the majority support of the people, in the interest of constructing a prosperous and sustainable socialism, the essential guarantee of our independence.



The first half of the year has been characterized by intense international action.

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Third Summit, held in January in Costa Rica, expressed the firm demand that the economic, commercial and financial blockade be ended, and called upon President Obama to utilize with resolve his broad executive authority to substantially modify the application of this policy. Just days later, the African Union Summit made a similar statement.

The 7th Summit of the Americas, attended for the first time by Cuba, held in Panama in April, provided a propitious opportunity for the region to reiterate its support to the just struggle of our people against the blockade, and insist on the necessity of modifying hemispheric relations in this era, when it can no longer

be treated as a back yard.

Precisely in Panama, we held a meeting with the President of the United States.

My words at the two events reflected the invariable, principled foreign policy position of the Cuban Revolution, and expressed loyalty to the ideas which our people have defended, despite dangers and challenges, with the guidance of Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz. This frees me from repeating them here today, since they are well known to you.

Nevertheless, I must reiterate our solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution and the government headed by President Nicolás Maduro, in the face of destabilization attempts and any act of external intervention. We were pleased to learn of the results of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela's primary elections, while we are carefully following the dialogue underway between this country and the United States.

We denounce the destabilization campaigns against the government of President Rafael Correa and the Citizen's Revolution in Ecuador, to which we confirm Cuba's solidarity.

We notice that an imperialist and oligarchic offensive has been put into practice against Latin

American revolutionary and progressive processes, which will be decisively confronted by our peoples.

This Parliament sends solidarity greetings to President Dilma Rousseff and the Brazilian people who defend the important social and political progress of regional integration and of the countries of the South against attempts to reverse these.

In early May, we attended the impressive commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the victory over fascism in Moscow, an episode that no one can distort or erase from the memory of humanity.

We warned early on, in this very hall, that the attempt to extend NATO to Russia's borders would bring serious threats to international peace and security.

Today we reaffirm that the intention of imposing sanctions on Russia will

harm the interests of Europe, and bring greater instability and new dangers. This position was put forward once again by Cuba at the Second CELAC-European Union Summit, where we also ratified our disposition to dialogue and cooperate with the European bloc, with which we are negotiating an agreement on this matter. On this occasion our delegation was led by First Vice President compañero Miguel Díaz -Canel.

We welcome the agreement reached between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Security Council group of permanent members plus Germany. We reiterate our support for the inalienable right of all states to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. This result demonstrates that dialogue and negotiation are the only effective tools to resolve differences between states.

At this time, we are preparing to receive Pope Francis in September, with the affection, respect and hospitality he deserves.

His advocacy of peace and equity, the eradication of poverty, protection of the environment and his analysis of the causes of humanity's problems arouse worldwide admiration, which we have all followed closely, especially during his memorable tour of Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay.

It was already reported that on July 20, as a result of the negotiations taking place in a respectful manner, and on an equal footing, diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States will be officially restored, and embassies will reopen in the respective capitals; firstly ours.

Thus the first phase of the process initiated on December 17 will have concluded, and a new, long complex stage will then begin, on the path toward the normalization of relations, which will require the will to find solutions to problems that have accumulated for more than five decades and affect the ties between our countries and peoples. As we have said, it's a question of establishing a new type of relation between the two states, different from those of all our common history.

As indicated in the Statement of the Revolutionary Government of July 1, it

is inconceivable, while the blockade is maintained, that there be normal relations between Cuba and the United States.

In recognizing the call by President Obama on the U.S. Congress to lift the blockade of Cuba, reiterated in his statement last July 1, we hope that he continues using his executive powers, that is, those decisions that he as President can adopt without Congressional involvement, to dismantle aspects of this policy, which causes damage and hardships to our people. Naturally, the parliament, namely Congress, is responsible for the rest of the blockade measures.

To normalize bilateral ties it will also be necessary that the territory illegally occupied by the Guantanamo Naval Base is returned; illegal radio and television transmissions to Cuba ended; programs aimed at promoting destabilization and internal subversion eliminated; and the Cuban people compensated for the

against Ebola in West Africa, where they provided an extraordinary example of solidarity, altruism and personal courage in confronting this deadly epidemic. Our eternal tribute to Jorge Juan Guerra Rodríguez and Reynaldo Villeda Antigua, the two collaborators who died of other diseases contracted during the fulfillment of that mission.

In addition, a Cuban medical brigade, which will return in the coming days, assisted with great spirit of solidarity the victims of the earthquakes in the mountains of Nepal.

Our country will continue to fulfill, in accordance with its means, and with our internationalist duty to support peoples in need, as today tens of thousands of compatriots in over 80 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia are doing, under the principle that those who can defray the collaboration do so, and we will continue helping those who do not have the resources.

In just 10 days we will celebrate the 62nd anniversary of the attacks on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Cespedes barracks and the 500th anniversary of the founding of the city of Santiago de Cuba. There we will share with this valiant people the joy at these events, valiant like the rest of the country, including the Isle of Youth and adjacent keys (applause), and hear the words of the Second Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, José Ramón Machado Ventura (applause).

Anyone who today compares this heroic city with that which was left after being ravaged by Hurricane Sandy, less than three years ago, will understand that nothing is impossible for a united people, like ours, willing to fight and defend the work of their Revolution.

See you in Santiago,

Thank you very much. (Prolonged applause)

(Council of State transcript)



human and economic damages caused by the policies of the United States.

Changing everything which must be changed is the sovereign and exclusive domain of Cubans. The Revolutionary Government is willing to advance in the normalization of relations, convinced that both countries can cooperate and coexist in a civilized manner, to our mutual benefit, beyond the differences we have and will have, thus contributing to peace, security, stability, development and equity in our continent and the world.

Compañeras and compañeros:

A few weeks ago, the homeland received the members of the "Henry Reeve" Contingent who participated in the battle

Discurso por Raúl Castro sobre la normalización de las relaciones entre los EE.UU. y Cuba



*** EN ESPAÑOL ***

Discurso pronunciado por el 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 V Período Ordinario de Sesiones de la VIII Legislatura de la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular, en el Palacio de Convenciones, el 15 de julio de 2015, "Año 57 de la Revolución".

(Versiones Taquigráficas - Consejo de Estado)

Compañeras y compañeros:

En los últimos meses hemos sido testigos de varios acontecimientos de gran relevancia para el país, de los cuales ustedes y nuestro pueblo han sido informados oportunamente.

Como es habitual, los diputados recibieron en estos días abundante información acerca del desempeño de la economía durante el primer semestre y los estimados hasta fin de año.

Ciertamente ha podido revertirse la tendencia a la desaceleración del crecimiento del Producto Interno Bruto —conocido por las siglas PIB— que se manifestó en años recientes. Hasta el 30 de junio el PIB creció un 4,7% y estimamos que al concluir el año quedará en el entorno del 4%. Y esto es muy bueno, teniendo en cuenta que en el pasado año solo crecimos un 1%; no obstante, para lograr este 4% esperado, hay que trabajar duro y con mucha disciplina, sobre todo en el orden económico como señalaba el ministro de Economía, Marino Murillo.

A pesar de diversos incumplimientos, creció la producción de las industrias azucarera y manufacturera, así como la construcción, el comercio, la actividad turística y la producción agropecuaria, aun cuando esta última sufre los efectos de la intensa sequía

que se manifiesta en todo el territorio nacional.

Debo enfatizar, en este sentido, la necesidad de un uso más racional de ese recurso vital, como se han referido varios compañeras y compañeros. Al cierre de junio el agua embalsada era solo del 38% de la capacidad existente —hoy está el 36,1% según informó la presidenta del Instituto de Recursos Hidráulicos, Inés María Chapman—, presentándose el escenario más desfavorable en las provincias de Guantánamo, Santiago de Cuba, Granma, Las Tunas, Ciego de Ávila, Sancti Spiritus y Pinar del Río.

Una de las mayores insatisfacciones en la ejecución del plan se encuentra en el sector del transporte, lo que ha ocasionado dificultades en el comportamiento de la economía a causa de deficiencias organizativas y baja disponibilidad técnica en el sistema ferroviario y el transporte automotor, asociada a la falta de piezas de repuesto y problemas en el mantenimiento y las reparaciones. Esta situación se vio también agravada por el retraso en la llegada al país de los equipos correspondientes al plan del pasado y del presente año, la mayoría de los cuales deben arribar en el 2015.

A lo anterior se une la decisión adoptada en la reciente reunión del Consejo de Ministros de entregar medios de transporte y también equipamiento constructivo de la Reserva Estatal, así como anticipar la contratación de los equipos inicialmente considerados en el plan del 2016.

Durante el primer semestre hemos enfrentado severas restricciones financieras externas; sin embargo, el país ha continuado cumpliendo rigurosamente sus obligaciones de pago con acreedores y proveedores extranjeros, práctica que favorece el paulatino restablecimiento de la credibilidad

de la economía nacional, a pesar de que el bloqueo norteamericano sigue en pleno vigor.

En medio de estas dificultades, se ha logrado preservar los servicios sociales a la población —cuestión que jamás descuidaremos— y como muestra de ello podemos señalar que ha mejorado de manera sustancial la situación epidemiológica del país.

Por otra parte, se mantiene el equilibrio monetario y financiero. La inflación, en general, se encuentra contenida en los niveles previstos, entre el 3% y el 5%, aunque no ignoramos la justa preocupación de la población por los altos precios de los productos agropecuarios, que crecen más que el salario medio.

Ustedes han podido apreciar, a diferencia de sesiones anteriores de la Asamblea Nacional, que en esta oportunidad no se incluyó la información sobre el estado de la implementación de los Lineamientos de la Política Económica y Social aprobados por el 6to Congreso del Partido, atendiendo a que hemos considerado conveniente concentrarnos en la elaboración del proyecto del informe que sobre esta temática será presentado al 7mo Congreso, en abril del 2016, tal y como fue convocado por el Pleno del Comité Central efectuado ayer.

No obstante, me referiré brevemente a las principales tareas llevadas a cabo en interés de la actualización de nuestro modelo económico y social. Entre ellas se encuentra la elaboración de la conceptualización teórica del socialismo en Cuba y las líneas y sectores estratégicos que conformarán el programa de desarrollo económico y social hasta el 2030. Ambos documentos formarán parte de los temas que se analizarán en el próximo Congreso del Partido.

Al propio tiempo, se continuó avanzando

en la elevación del papel que corresponde desempeñar a la empresa estatal socialista como figura fundamental de la economía nacional, ajustando medidas aprobadas con anterioridad e incorporando otras relativas a su funcionamiento más flexible y a sistemas salariales asociados a los resultados del trabajo.

Igualmente, se han ejecutado diversas transformaciones en el proceso de planificación económica en consonancia con el perfeccionamiento del sistema empresarial, lo que ha permitido incorporar al plan, con mayor integralidad, las políticas aprobadas como resultado de la implementación de los lineamientos y la programación de los equilibrios monetarios en el Plan y el Presupuesto del Estado.

Prosigue el avance en el cumplimiento del conjunto de medidas orientadas a la unificación monetaria, proceso de extrema complejidad y que resulta imprescindible para un eficiente desempeño de la economía. No es ocioso reiterar lo planteado en varias ocasiones, ante nuestro Parlamento, acerca de que se garantizarán los depósitos bancarios en divisas internacionales, pesos cubanos convertibles (CUC) y pesos cubanos (CUP), así como el efectivo en manos de la población y las personas jurídicas nacionales y extranjeras.

De la misma forma, se mantiene en marcha el proceso experimental de creación de cooperativas no agropecuarias, el que tiene como prioridades consolidar el funcionamiento de las existentes y seguir avanzando de manera gradual en la constitución de nuevas cooperativas, sin repetir las distorsiones ya identificadas.

A ello se une que poco más de medio millón de cubanos se desempeñan como trabajadores por cuenta propia en múltiples actividades, cifra que seguirá creciendo de manera paulatina, al trasladarse a esta forma de gestión un conjunto de establecimientos gastronómicos y de servicios a la población, preservando el Estado la propiedad de los inmuebles.

Continuaremos a nuestro ritmo el proceso de transformaciones en la



Raúl y Maduro, 1 de mayo 2015.

sociedad cubana, que hemos decidido soberanamente con el apoyo mayoritario del pueblo, en aras de la construcción de un socialismo próspero y sostenible, garantía esencial de nuestra independencia.

El primer semestre del año se ha caracterizado por una intensa ejecutoria internacional.

La III Cumbre de la Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (CELAC), efectuada en enero en Costa Rica, expresó el firme reclamo de que se ponga fin al bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero y exhortó al presidente Obama a utilizar resueltamente sus amplias facultades ejecutivas para modificar de manera sustancial la aplicación de esa política. Apenas días después, la Cumbre de la Unión Africana hizo un planteamiento similar.

La VII Cumbre de las Américas, a la que Cuba asistió por primera vez, celebrada en



La ceremonia de izada de la bandera cubana en Washington DC, 20 de julio 2015.

Panamá en abril, fue espacio propicio para que la región reiterara el apoyo a la justa lucha de nuestro pueblo frente al bloqueo y planteara la necesidad de modificar la naturaleza de las relaciones hemisféricas en esta época en que ya no puede tratarse como traspatio.

Precisamente en Panamá, sostuvimos una reunión con el Presidente de Estados Unidos.

Mis palabras en ambos eventos recogen la invariable posición de principios de la política exterior de la Revolución Cubana y expresan lealtad a las ideas que nuestro pueblo ha defendido,

frente a todos los riesgos y desafíos, bajo la guía del Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz. Eso me libera de repetirlas hoy aquí, ya que son bien conocidas por ustedes.

Sin embargo, debo reiterar nuestra solidaridad con la Revolución Bolivariana y el gobierno que encabeza el presidente Nicolás Maduro frente a los intentos de desestabilización y cualquier acto de injerencia externa. Conocimos con satisfacción los resultados de las elecciones primarias del Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela, al tiempo que seguimos con atención el proceso de diálogo entre ese país y Estados Unidos.

Denunciamos las campañas desestabilizadoras contra el gobierno del presidente Rafael Correa y la Revolución Ciudadana en Ecuador, a los que confirmamos la solidaridad de Cuba.

Apreciamos que se ha puesto en práctica una ofensiva imperialista y oligárquica contra los procesos revolucionarios y progresistas latinoamericanos, la cual será enfrentada con determinación por nuestros pueblos.

Llegue desde este Parlamento el saludo solidario a la presidenta Dilma Rousseff y al pueblo brasileño que defienden los importantes avances sociales y políticos de integración regional y de los países del Sur frente a los intentos de revertirlos.

A principios de mayo, asistimos a la



impresionante conmemoración en Moscú del 70 Aniversario de la Victoria contra el Fascismo, hecho que nadie podrá tergiversar ni borrar de la memoria de la Humanidad.

Nosotros advertimos tempranamente, en esta propia sala, que el intento de extender la OTAN hasta las fronteras de Rusia traería serias amenazas a la paz y la seguridad internacionales.

Hoy reafirmamos que el propósito de aplicar sanciones contra Rusia lesionará los intereses de Europa y traerá mayor inestabilidad y nuevos peligros. Esta posición fue planteada nuevamente por Cuba en la Segunda Cumbre CELAC-Unión Europea, donde se ratificó también nuestra disposición al diálogo y la cooperación en el bloque comunitario, con el cual estamos negociando un acuerdo al respecto. En esta ocasión presidió nuestra delegación el primer vicepresidente, compañero Miguel Díaz-Canel.

Saludamos el acuerdo alcanzado entre la República Islámica de Irán y el grupo de países miembros permanentes del Consejo de Seguridad más Alemania. Reiteramos nuestro respaldo al derecho inalienable de todo Estado al uso pacífico de la energía nuclear. Este resultado demuestra que el diálogo y la negociación son la única herramienta efectiva para solventar las diferencias entre los Estados.

Desde ahora, nos preparamos para recibir, el próximo mes de septiembre, al Papa Francisco, con afecto, respeto y hospitalidad, como merece. Despierta admiración mundial su prédica a favor de la paz y la equidad, la erradicación de la pobreza, la defensa del medio ambiente y su análisis de las causas de los problemas de la Humanidad, que todos hemos seguido con atención, especialmente durante su memorable recorrido por Ecuador, Bolivia y Paraguay.

Ya fue informado que el próximo 20 de julio, como resultado de las negociaciones que se desarrollaron de manera respetuosa y en pie de igualdad, quedarán oficialmente restablecidas las relaciones diplomáticas entre Cuba y Estados Unidos y se reabrirán Embajadas en las respectivas capitales; en primer lugar la nuestra.

Habrá concluido así la primera fase del proceso iniciado el 17 de diciembre y comenzará entonces una nueva etapa, larga y compleja, en el camino hacia la normalización de las relaciones, que requerirá voluntad para encontrar soluciones a los problemas que se han acumulado por más de cinco décadas y afectan los vínculos entre nuestros países y pueblos. Como hemos dicho, se trata de fundar un nuevo tipo de lazos entre ambos Estados, distintos a los de toda nuestra historia común.

Tal como señala la Declaración del Gobierno Revolucionario del 1º de julio, no es posible concebir, mientras se mantenga el bloqueo, relaciones normales entre Cuba y Estados Unidos.

Al reconocer el llamado del presidente Obama al Congreso norteamericano para que levante el bloqueo a Cuba, reiterado en su declaración del pasado 1ro de julio, esperamos que continúe usando sus facultades ejecutivas, es decir, aquellas que él como Presidente puede adoptar sin participación del Congreso, para dismantelar aspectos de esta política, que causa daños y privaciones a nuestro pueblo. El resto de las medidas del bloqueo corresponden como es natural, al Parlamento, o sea, su Congreso.

Para normalizar los vínculos bilaterales también será necesario que se devuelva el territorio ilegalmente ocupado por la Base Naval en Guantánamo, que cesen las transmisiones radiales y televisivas ilegales hacia Cuba, que se eliminen los programas dirigidos a promover la subversión y la desestabilización internas, y se compense al pueblo cubano por los daños humanos y económicos provocados a causa de las políticas de Estados Unidos.

Cambiar todo lo que deba ser cambiado es asunto soberano y exclusivo de los cubanos.

El Gobierno Revolucionario tiene la disposición de avanzar en la normalización de las relaciones, convencido de que ambos países podemos cooperar y coexistir civilizadamente, en beneficio mutuo, por encima de las diferencias que tenemos y tendremos, y contribuir con ello a la paz, la seguridad, la estabilidad, el desarrollo y la equidad en nuestro continente y el mundo.

Compañeras y compañeros:

Hace pocas semanas, recibimos en la Patria a los integrantes del Contingente “Henry Reeve” que participaron en la batalla contra el Ébola en África Occidental, donde dieron un extraordinario ejemplo de solidaridad, altruismo y valor personal al enfrentarse a esa mortífera epidemia. Nuestro eterno homenaje a Jorge Juan Guerra Rodríguez y Reynaldo Villafranca Antigua, los dos cooperantes que fallecieron por otras enfermedades contraídas durante el cumplimiento de esa misión.

También una brigada médica cubana, que regresa en los próximos días, asistió con gran espíritu solidario a las víctimas de los terremotos en las montañas de Nepal.

Nuestro país continuará cumpliendo, según sus posibilidades, con el deber internacionalista de apoyar a los pueblos necesitados, como hoy lo hacen decenas de miles de compatriotas en más de 80 países de América Latina, el Caribe, África y Asia, bajo el principio de que aquellos que puedan sufragar la colaboración lo hagan y a los que no cuenten con recursos los proseguiremos ayudando.

En apenas 10 días celebraremos el 62 aniversario de los asaltos a los cuarteles Moncada y Carlos Manuel de Céspedes y los 500 años de la fundación de la ciudad de Santiago de Cuba. Allí compartiremos con ese aguerrido pueblo la alegría por estos acontecimientos —aguerrido igual que el resto del país, incluyendo la Isla de la Juventud y sus cayos adyacentes (Aplausos)— y escucharemos las palabras del Segundo Secretario del Comité Central del Partido, compañero José Ramón Machado Ventura (Aplausos).

Quien hoy compare esa ciudad heroína con aquella que quedó después de ser azotada por el huracán Sandy, hace menos de tres años, podrá comprender que no hay nada imposible para un pueblo unido, como el nuestro, dispuesto a luchar y defender la obra de su Revolución.

Nos veremos en Santiago,

Muchas gracias (Aplausos prolongados).

¡Venceremos!

OUR STRUGGLE

Rafael Correa Again Condemns US Aggression Toward Venezuela

July 30, 2015 (TeleSUR English)

Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa said his government backs the normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba, but condemned Washington's aggression toward Venezuela Thursday.

Correa said that during the Summit of the Americas celebrated in Panama last April, President Obama "committed a historic mistake by issuing an executive order against Venezuela and by imposing sanctions on the South American country."

The announcement of normalization of relations with Cuba and the reopening of embassies in each others capitals represents a "historic event and a political turnaround, and it is a bilateral issue between Cuba and the United States, but we back this process," Correa told reporters.

Due to this, Obama should have been received at the Summit of the Americas as the U.S. president that made history by amending relations with Latin America, but instead he made the grave mistake of carrying out an aggression against the people of Venezuela through his "imperialistic decree."

The former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who is on a campaign trail to win over the presidential bid for the Democratic Party, is expected to urge Congress to lift the over five-decade blockade on Cuba.

Clinton is scheduled to be in Miami Friday to deliver a speech at the Florida International University and to participate in the National Urban League forum, according to her campaign office.

She is expected to criticize Republicans who insist on defending policies against Cuba that have proven to be a failure.



We Will Win!

AROUND THE WORLD

Quality, Sovereignty Among Topics under Debate by Venezuelan Teachers

July 17, 2015 (Prensa Latina)

More than a thousand teachers in Venezuela hold today for the third day in a row a debate about inclusion, quality and the defense of sovereignty in the educational process in this South American country.

Making such an analysis is the basic proposition of the National Pedagogical Congress, which will be held in the capital's secondary schools Fermín Toro and Andrés Bello until tomorrow.

Yesterday, Venezuelan teachers and guests from other countries discussed the need to bring to the classroom the defense of sovereignty and independence.

While addressing to the general audience, the Cuban Vice Minister of Education Rolando Forneiro (invited by the organizing committee) noted that the teaching of Latin American and Caribbean countries should conscientiously assume the task of defending the sovereignty against potential or actual attacks.

To fulfill this mission is fundamental to study history at all levels of education, Forneiro said to Prensa Latina; without it you cannot understand where we came from and what was necessary to reach the current situation and triumphs.

The Caribbean official also considered that one of the agreements to be reached in the event should be a continuation of teacher preparation. The curricular changes, infrastructure, textbooks and programs are very important, but it is vital the systematic improvement of educators, he said.

In the conference offered yesterday, several speakers noted the achievements of the Venezuelan education and contrasted them with those from other countries. On behalf of the Colombian Collective Teaching Group Paulo Freire, Mr. Henry Moya complained that his country's budget goes mostly to the internal war rather than to education.

He also noted the growing of the privatization in education and insufficiency in training Colombian teachers.

Evo Morales advocates elimination of U.S. blockade

August 3, 2015 (GRANMA)

Speaking with the press, Bolivian President Evo Morales expressed his hope that President Barack Obama would end the blockade of Cuba, and return territory illegally occupied by the Guantánamo Naval Base.

He said that the process Cuba and the United States have undertaken to normalize relations is a resounding victory for the Cuban people and the Revolution, emphasizing that Cuba's resistance to pressures of all kinds, and ability to move forward with its own project, are inspiring to peoples and the left, around the world.

He added that Cuba has international support in the United Nations, where only two or three nations support the blockade, and recalled that, at the beginning of his Presidency, he was criticized for building relations with Cuba, Venezuela and Iran, but that now countries like the U.S. are working to establish such ties.

Morales recalled that his response to this criticism was always that he hoped to have relations with all the world's countries, since Bolivia's traditional culture is one of dialogue.

He commented, "Now, instead of us running after the United States, they are after the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean."

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Letter from Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro to leader of the Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro



Nicolas Maduro and Fideo Castro

Miraflores, July 26, 2015

Commander Fidel Castro Ruz
Father and Maestro:

From the hearts of the people of Bolívar and Chávez, I want to convey our respect, admiration and warmth when today 62 years has passed since the attacks on the Moncada and the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks. On this glorious anniversary, we celebrate your beloved presence and the pleant reference you embody. We fete the Father and Maestro of all the revolutionary men and women of Our America and the world; the Father and maestro of his beloved child, Our Everlasting Commander.

We fete the champion who led a handful of brave, a group of women and men mobilized by what Martí called homeland decorum, what would end by turning into a true assault for the future.

That July 26, 1953 heroism and sacrifice shone in the heights since the vindication of the brilliant and undying legacy of José Martí was attempted. No wonder in that memorable speech which is History will Absolve me, you noted that the mastermind and maximum leader of this deed was the Apostle and nobody else.

Some 62 years have elapsed since the attacks on Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks, however, today we feel more than ever the fire of liberation alive which burned that day in all Our America and beyond, indicating a path followed by generations, still today and in the future.

From 1953 to this day, the spirit of many Moncadas has encouraged and is encouraging the struggle of the peoples of the Great Motherland for the definitive independence. We can affirm that July 26th will live on. And as the great Cuban singer

songwriter Noel Nicola stated: There's a calendar full of 26s.

Haydée Santamaría, Melba Hernández, Raúl Gómez García, Boris Santa Coloma, Abel Santamaría, Giraldo Córdova Cardín, Juan Almeida, so many are those who are not today among us but they continue to illuminate from somewhere so beautifully expressed by that immense Cuban voice of Fina García Marruz: ...where the light does not forget its warriors.

Every July 26, when the attack returns to life, Commander, memory is radiating again to warn us, who have thrown in our lots with the revolution that only through sacrifice we can conquer the future.

Believe me, Commander, the indelible memory of Moncada is reflected on us as the uppermost revolutionary commitment. We are the continuers of Bolívar, as well as José Martí, Fidel and Che Guevara. Certainly the true Revolutions are not a copy, as Mariátegui said, they are the heroic creation of every People, but we are aware that the Cuban Revolution is the cornerstone within the historic evolution of the Great Motherland.

Homeland is an altar rather than a pedestal as Martí said. That fighting confirmation of the Moncada Barracks Attack, seen from the distance, is the historic embodiment of the sacrificial stone envisioned by Martí, in front of which the very best of the human soul is delivered for subsequently expectant revelations. And that was a collective revelation erupting that July 26th : a victorious Revolution.

I guess when that 1953's decisive hour resounded in you, Commander, that great certainty of Martí: ...A true man does not seek the path where advantage lies, but rather the path where duty lies, and this is the only practical man, whose dream of today will be law of tomorrow.

In days like this of dignity and victory, the presence of our Giant can be felt with higher intensity.

Nearer, Fidel, today for you I recall your words since I identify with them and make them all mine: I want to pay tribute to Fidel and on his long path through our peoples, awaking us. Fidel is a soldier, a dreamer, a doubtless example for us all and for the entire Latin-American and Caribbean generations and fighters around the world.

With the greatest revolutionary fervor, receive the strongest and endless embrace from one who feels like a Moncada attacker of these days of Latin-American and Caribbean Revolution.

¡¡¡Chávez lives, the homeland goes on!!!,
 ¡¡¡Until victory forever!!!,
 ¡¡¡Independence and Socialist Homeland!!!,
 ¡¡¡We'll live and we'll overcome!!!,
 ¡Long live to the Cuba-Venezuela brotherhood!
 ¡Long live Chávez!
 ¡Long live Fidel!

Nicolás Maduro Moros

Translated by ESTI
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CARTA DEL PRESIDENTE VENEZOLANO NICOLÁS MADURO A FIDEL CASTRO

** EN ESPAÑOL **

Miraflores, 26 de julio de 2015

Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz

Padre y Maestro nuestro:

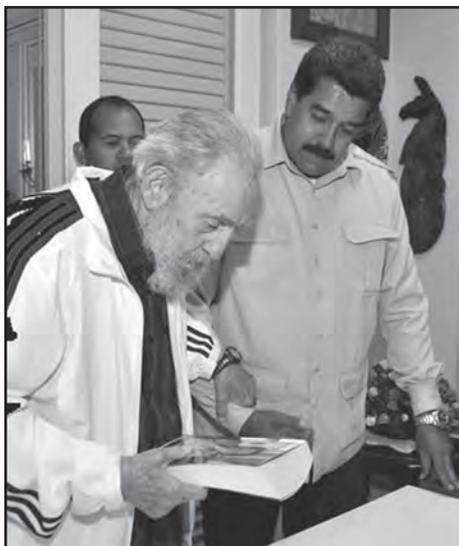
Desde el corazón del Pueblo de Bolívar y de Chávez, quiero hacerle llegar el testimonio de nuestro respeto, admiración y cariño al cumplirse hoy 62 años de los asaltos al Cuartel Moncada y al Cuartel Carlos Manuel de Céspedes. En este glorioso aniversario, celebramos su querida presencia y la entrañable referencia que usted encarna. Celebramos al Padre y al Maestro de los revolucionarios y las revolucionarias de Nuestra América y del mundo; al Padre y al Maestro de su hijo amado, nuestro Comandante Eterno.

Celebramos al adalid que al frente de un puñado de valientes, de un grupo de mujeres y hombres movilizados por lo que Martí llamaba vergüenza patria, encabezó lo que terminaría convirtiéndose en un real y verdadero asalto al porvenir.

Aquel 26 de julio de 1953 el heroísmo y el sacrificio brillaron en lo más alto porque se trataba de reivindicar el luminoso e imperecedero legado de José Martí. No en vano en aquel memorable alegato que es la **Historia me absorberá**, usted señaló que el autor intelectual y máximo líder de esta gesta no era otro que el Apóstol.

Han transcurrido ya 62 años de los asaltos al Cuartel Moncada y al Cuartel Carlos Manuel de Céspedes y, sin embargo, hoy más que nunca sentimos, Comandante Fidel, la llama viva de liberación que ardió ese día en toda Nuestra América y más allá, indicando un camino que han seguido ya varias generaciones: un camino que anda y seguirá andando.

De 1953 hasta nuestros días, el espíritu de muchos Moncadas ha avivado y aviva las luchas de los pueblos de la Patria



Fidel Castro and Nicolas Maduro



Grande por su Independencia definitiva. Bien puede decirse que el 26 de julio ha alcanzado vida perdurable. Y como cantaba el gran trovador cubano Noel Nicola: **Hay un almanaque lleno de días 26.**

Haydée Santamaría, Melba Hernández, Raúl Gómez García, Boris Santa Coloma, Abel Santamaría, Giraldo Córdova Cardín, Juan Almeida, son tantos los nombres entrañables de quienes partieron físicamente pero nos siguen iluminando desde ese lugar que nombrara tan bellamente esa inmensa voz de Cuba que es Fina García Marruz: **...allí donde la luz no olvida a sus guerreros.**

Cada 26 de julio, cuando el pasado de nuevo nos asalta, Comandante, la memoria resplandece otra vez para advertirnos, a quienes hemos hecho nuestra la bandera de la Revolución que sólo los sacrificios enaltecen y hacen posible un porvenir más nuestro.

Créame, Comandante, la memoria imborrable del Moncada se proyecta en nosotros y nosotras como el más

irrenunciable compromiso revolucionario. Somos hijos e hijas de Bolívar como también lo somos de José Martí, de Fidel y el Che. Ciertamente las Revoluciones verdaderas no son ni calco ni copia, como decía Mariátegui, sino creación heroica de cada Pueblo, pero estamos conscientes de que la Revolución Cubana es piedra fundacional dentro del devenir histórico de la Patria Grande.

La Patria es ara y no pedestal decía Martí. Aquella consumación combativa del Asalto al Cuartel Moncada, vista en la distancia, es encarnación en la historia de la piedra sacrificial vislumbrada por Martí, ante la cual se deja lo mejor del alma humana para luego aguardar las revelaciones. Y vaya qué revelación colectiva generó el 26 de julio: una Revolución victoriosa.

Yo imagino que cuando sonó aquella hora decisiva de 1953 en usted, Comandante, resonaba esta impresionante certeza martiana: **...el verdadero hombre no mira de qué lado se vive mejor, sino de qué lado está el deber, y ese es el mismo hombre práctico cuyo sueño de hoy será la ley de mañana.**

En fechas como esta de dignidad y de victoria, la presencia de nuestro Gigante se puede sentir con mayor intensidad. Más cercanamente, Fidel, hoy recuerdo sus palabras para usted porque con ellas me identifico y las suscribo plenamente: **Quiero rendirle tributo a Fidel y a su largo andar por nuestros pueblos, despertándonos. Fidel es un soldado, soñador, ejemplo sin duda para todos nosotros y para generaciones enteras de latinoamericanos, caribeños y de luchadores del mundo.**

Con el mayor fervor revolucionario, reciba el más fuerte e infinito de los abrazos de quien se siente un moncadista de estos tiempos de Revolución latinoamericana y caribeña.

¡¡¡Chávez vive, la Patria sigue!!!,

¡¡¡Hasta la Victoria Siempre!!!,

¡¡¡Independencia y Patria Socialista!!!,

¡¡¡Viviremos y Venceremos!!!,

¡Que viva la Hermandad entre Cuba y Venezuela!

¡Que viva Chávez!

¡Que viva Fidel!

Nicolás Maduro Moros

De: <http://www.juventudrebelde.cu>

CELEBRATE! JULY 26, 1953

WHEN REVOLUTION BEGAN IN CUBA

Vancouver, Canada

By Tamara Hansen

On Sunday July 26, 2015 our day in Vancouver, Canada began with rain. However, the forecast was in our favour: the rain would stop by 4pm, just in time for Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba's 11th annual Moncada Day celebration of the gains of the Cuban revolution. As luck would have it, by 6pm all the clouds had vanished and the sun was out over Trout Lake Park where the Cuba banners and flags were up, yummy food was cooking on the barbecue and Cuban music was welcoming everyone gathering for the event.

Over 120 people gathered lining up for food in anticipation for a great event, which was also a fundraiser for the campaign to bring a freezer truck and tractor to the Julio Antonio Mella Volunteer Work Camp in Caimito, Cuba.

"Let us begin tonight's program with the historic news this week. Once again, after 54 years of US government sabotage and hostility towards Cuba, the Cuban flag is waving in front of the newly established Cuban embassy in Washington, DC- in the heart of the empire." Expressed Tamara Hansen, coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) as she opened the event and welcomed participants. Tamara continued by explaining the importance of the fact that Cuba has stood firm in the face of US aggression since their revolution in 1959, and that the new US-Cuba relations represent a historic victory for Cuba. She also explained that the reason the US government has been so harsh towards the Cuban revolution is because it feels threatened by Cuba's example, a socialist example. Also, that the ideas that form the base of the Cuban revolution and it's success come from an other historic date: July 26, 1953. When Fidel Castro and over 120 other young revolutionaries attacked the Moncada Army Barracks in Santiago de Cuba with the goal of overthrowing the cruel US-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. Tamara finished her opening talk with "Viva Cuba!" which was echoed back by the audience.

Tamara then introduced the first musical group, performing for the first time together - Macarena Cataldo, Noah Fine and Maria Luisa Melendez. It was a treat for the audience who enjoyed singing along with their traditional Cuban and Latin American songs.

The second speaker for the evening was Nino Pagliccia, editor of the recently released book "Cuba Solidarity in Canada: 5 Decades of People to People Foreign Relations" (Friesen Press, 2014). He spoke about the importance of solidarity and the development of new US-Cuba relations.

Soon the microphone was filled with powerful Irish folk songs, sung by Gerry Alwell. His dynamic set reminded everyone of the struggles of the people of Ireland and their strong spirit.

continued on page 29

CELEBREMOS EL 26 DE JULIO 1953

CUANDO COMENZÓ LA REVOLUCIÓN EN CUBA

Vancouver, Canadá

* EN ESPAÑOL *

Por Tamara Hansen

Traducido por Macarena Cataldo



En Vancouver, Canadá, el día domingo 26 de julio del 2015, comenzó con lluvia. Sin embargo, el pronóstico del tiempo estuvo de nuestra parte, anunciando el cese de la lluvia alrededor de las 4 la tarde, justo a tiempo para que las Comunidades en solidaridad con Cuba en Vancouver (VCSC) realizarán su XI conmemoración del día de Moncada, y así celebrar los

logros de la revolución cubana. Los Astros permitieron que alrededor de las 6 de la tarde todas las nubes desaparecieran, el cielo se tornara más azul, y los rayos de sol iluminaran los arboles del parque "Trout Lake", mientras flameaban cada vez más pancartas y banderas Cubanas, completando este hermoso cuadro. Al son de música cubana, los participantes eran bienvenidos a disfrutar de una deliciosa carne asada.

Más de 120 personas hicieron la fila para saborear la deliciosa comida y esperar con entusiasmo el inicio del evento. Durante el evento se realizó también, una recaudación de dinero para la campaña para llevar un camión refrigerado y un tractor al campo de trabajo voluntario, Julio Antonio Mella, en Caimito, Cuba.

"Comenzaremos el programa de esta noche con la histórica noticia de esta semana. Después de 54 años de sabotaje y de hostilidad hacia Cuba por parte del gobierno de Estados Unidos, una vez más, la bandera cubana vuelve a flamear en la embajada de Cuba recientemente establecida en Washington, DC, en el corazón del imperio". Expresó Tamara Hansen, coordinadora de Comunidades en solidaridad con Cuba en Vancouver (VCSC) al iniciar el evento y dar la bienvenida a los participantes. Tamara continuó explicando la importancia de Cuba al mantenerse firme ante la agresión de Estados Unidos desde su revolución en 1959, y señaló que las nuevas relaciones entre Estados Unidos y Cuba representan una victoria histórica para la isla. Explicó que la razón por la cual el gobierno de Estados Unidos ha sido tan duro hacia la revolución cubana es por la amenaza que siente por el ejemplo socialista, que Cuba representa. También explico que las ideas sobre las cuales se basa la revolución Cubana provienen de esta histórica fecha, 26 de Julio de 1953, cuando Fidel Castro y otros 120 jóvenes revolucionarios atacaron el cuartel del ejercito Moncada, en Santiago de Cuba con el objetivo de derrocar al cruel dictador apoyado por Estados Unidos Fulgencio Batista. Tamara terminó su discurso de apertura con un energético "¡Viva Cuba!", el cual hizo eco en toda la audiencia.

Tamara, entonces presentó el primer grupo musical, el cual realizaba su debut oficial - Macarena Cataldo, Noah Fine y María Luisa Meléndez. Fue un regalo para el público, el cual disfrutó cantado junto a ellos canciones tradicionales cubanas y latinoamericanas.

El segundo orador de la noche fue Nino Pagliccia, editor del libro recientemente publicado "Cuba *continúa en la página 29*



Vancouver Rally Marks 10 Months Since Disappearance of 43 Students from Ayotzinapa, Mexico

On July 26th, 2015 activists and supporters gathered in downtown Vancouver for a monthly

rally demanding justice for the 43 missing students from Ayotzinapa, Mexico. 10 months earlier, on September 26th, 2014, the municipal police of Iguala, Guerrero, attacked a bus full of students from Ayotzinapa, killing three and kidnapping 43. Since the disappearance of the 43 students, people throughout Mexico and supporters worldwide have raised a campaign demanding that the government of Mexico be held accountable for the missing students. The Vancouver rally was organized by the Vancouver Solidarity with Ayotzinapa Collective.

.....

Vancouver Rally Marks 1 Year Since Israeli War on Gaza, Palestine

On Wednesday June 8th, 2015 Vancouver antiwar activists and Palestine supporters joined together for a rally marking the



one year anniversary of the 2014 Gaza Massacre. The 2014 seven week brutal Israeli siege and war against Palestinians in Gaza resulted in over 2,200 Palestinians killed by Israeli air strikes and a ground invasion. While the rally marked this anniversary, protesters also demanded an end to the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestine. The rally was organized by Boycott Israel Apartheid Campaign (Vancouver) and many other organizations, and supported by Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO).

Viene de la página 28

Solidarity in Canada: 5 Decades of People to People Foreign Relations” (Friesen Press, 2014). Nino, señalo la importancia de la solidaridad y el desarrollo de nuevas relaciones entre Estados Unidos y Cuba.

De pronto el micrófono se llenó de poderosas canciones populares irlandesas, cantadas por Gerry Alwell. Su espíritu dinámico recordó a todos las luchas de la gente en Irlanda y su fuerte espíritu.

La presentación de Gerry fue seguida por el discurso de Michael O’Neil, miembro ejecutivo de la Asociación de Amistad Canadiense-Cubana en Vancouver (CCFA en Vancouver). Michael trajo saludos en nombre de su organización y destacó la importancia de continuar la solidaridad con Cuba.

Fue entonces el tiempo para Beto Fuentes “El Trovador“, de subir al escenario. Beto interpreto muchas canciones originales relacionadas con sus raíces latinoamericanas y su vida hoy en Vancouver, Canadá.

Posteriormente, fue el turno del artista Oki quien cerraría las presentaciones en vivo. Como artista Cree / Nishnawbe, Oki nos golpeó con sus letras acerca la lucha de los pueblos indígenas de hoy en día en Canadá y la importancia de luchar contra la opresión. Tenía a toda la audiencia aplaudiendo al unísono y siguiendo sus ritmos con entusiasmo.

El sol iba cayendo lentamente, todo el mundo había ya disfrutado de la deliciosa comida, oído inspiradores oradores y escuchado talentosos artistas. Sólo una cosa podía faltar...clases de Salsa! Entonces, fue el turno de Janine Solanki, parte de la organización de las Comunidades en solidaridad con Cuba en Vancouver y su pareja de baile Alfredo, Janine animó a todos a participar, sin importar si eran novatos o expertos bailarines de salsa! Muchas sonrisas, e incluso algunas risas, se presenciaron durante la lección, en la cual muchos aprendieron algunos movimientos o repasaron sus habilidades.

A medida que la clase baile llegaba a su fin, se aproximaba la hora de la rifa. Todo el mundo tenía sus boleto en la mano, con la esperanza de ganar la hermosa obra de arte cubana del Che Guevara realizada por el reconocido artista cubano Olivio Martínez, y así como la altamente cotizada botella de ron Habana Club. El ganador tuvo una noche muy feliz.

El evento finalizo con la invitación a cada uno de los participantes al próximo evento realizado por las Comunidades de Vancouver en Solidaridad con Cuba en el cual se celebrara el cumpleaños 89º de Fidel Castro, el sábado 15 de agosto.

La gente aplaudía y gritaba "VIVA CUBA!" ";VIVA FIDEL!" "VIVA RAUL!" "" VIVA LATINOAMERICA UNIDA!

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Gerry’s performance was followed by a speech by Michael O’Neil, an executive member of the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association – Vancouver (CCFA-Vancouver). Michael brought greetings on behalf of his organization and emphasized the importance of continued solidarity with Cuba.

It was then time for El Trovador Beto Fuentes to take the stage. Beto played many original songs relating his Latin American roots and his life today in Vancouver, Canada. It was then time for the final live performer, Oki. As a Cree/Nishnawbe artist, Oki rapped about the struggles of Indigenous people in Canada today and the importance of fighting back against oppression. She had the whole audience clapping along creating a communal beat for her flows.

The sun was slowly setting, everyone had eaten a delicious meal, heard some inspiring speakers and many talented live performers. It could only mean one thing – it was time for the Salsa dance lesson! Janine

Solanki, an organizer with Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba and her dance partner Alfredo encouraged everyone to participate, whether they were a salsa beginner, novice or expert! Many smiles, and even some laughs, were seen and heard during the lesson, many learned some new moves or refreshed their skills.

As the salsa dancing came to an end, it was time for the special raffle. Everyone had their tickets out, hoping to win the beautiful framed Cuban artwork of Che Guevara by renowned Cuban artist Olivio Martinez, as well as the bottle of Havana Club rum. It was a very good night for the winner!

The event wrapped up with everyone being invited to Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba’s next event celebrating the 89th birthday of Fidel Castro, on Saturday August 15. Many cheered in agreement while shouting “VIVA CUBA!” “VIVA FIDEL!” “VIVA RAUL!” “VIVA LATINOAMERICA UNIDA!”



LOVE CUBA FOR THE RESPECT OF SEXUAL DIVERSITY!

By Azza Rojbi

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) celebrated the amazing advances made by the LGBTQ2+ community in Cuba by participating in Vancouver Pride weekend activities. On



July 31st, the Pride weekend was kicked off by the 6th annual Trans Liberation and Celebration March. Cuba supporters joined LGBTQ2+ activists and allies as they filled the streets of Commercial drive. A banner reading "Cuba Says: LGBTQ+ Rights are Human Rights!" was among the rainbow of placards and signs carried by participants.

On that same day Cuba was represented at the Davie Street Festival with a VCSC info booth.

The following day the Cuba contingent was back marching on Commercial Drive as part of the 12th annual Vancouver Dyke March. Afterwards people gathered in Grandview park for a festival and celebration. Supporters of Cuba handed out hundreds of materials about Cuba and directed people to the Cuba booth to learn



more.

The highlight of the weekend was the 37th Annual Vancouver Pride Parade and Festival. The parade is one of the most diverse and largest LGBTQ2+ events in the world. Over 650,000 people gathered to watch the parade.

VCSC participated in the parade for the 8th consecutive year. A colorful and energetic contingent marched flying the Pride, trans and the Cuban flags high together while chanting "Viva Pride! Viva Cuba!". Participants carried a banner reading "CUBA SAYS: Sexual diversity is not dangerous! Homophobia + Transphobia are!". Spectators greeted with cheers, clapping, broad happy smiles and hugs!

After an exciting parade marchers strolled down to the Pride Festival where they



gathered at the Cuba info booth. The booth was busy throughout the day with people stopping by to learn about the Cuban revolution and the amazing achievements of the LGBTQ2+ community in Cuba.

The participation of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba in Pride weekend activities was a great success .

You can still join the Cuba contingency at New Westminster Pride Festival, August 15, 2015 (3-8pm) on Columbia Street. Look out for the Cuban Flag and come join us at the Cuba info booth!

OUR HERITAGE



Alexandra Kollontai

1872-1952

Russian revolutionary leader. During the 1917 Russian Revolution, she was a member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party. She was the first woman to be appointed as a Soviet diplomat, as the Ambassador to Norway in 1923. She is renowned for her feminist writings.

There had to be an important revolution in the inner attitude of the women; her internal life had to be intensely complicated; in her soul there had to be stored a rich capital of self-reliant values to prevent her from becoming bankrupt the moment her man took from her the values he had contributed. But precisely because the life of the new woman is not exhausted in love, because she has in her soul a store of curiosity and interests that make her a "man," we will become accustomed to employ new criteria in measuring the moral personality of a woman. For many centuries the merits of women were measured, not by their human qualities, not by their mental capabilities, not by their inner characteristics, but exclusively by the stock of womanly virtues that bourgeois property morality demanded of them. "Sexual purity," sexual virtue measured her worth. For the woman who transgressed the code of sexual rectitude there was no mercy... But only in so far as woman stands on her own feet, ceases being dependent on father or husband, and participates side by side with men in the social struggle, will the old criteria become useless...

Excerpt from "The New Woman" 1919



**Hands off Syria!
Stop Saudi/US War on Yemen!
Stop Bombing Yemen!**

**MAWO Continues Organizing
Against War & Occupation**

By Noah Fine

On August 3rd, 2015 the *Associated Press* released an article in which it provided information from a new poll taken in Syria and Iraq. The *Airwars* poll showed that in the past year alone 459 innocent civilians have been killed by US air strikes. This includes the deaths of 64 civilians, 31 of which were children from a US-led coalition air strike on the village of Bir Mahli, Syria on May 4th.

Meanwhile in Yemen, US-backed Saudi airstrikes continue to destroy the ancient and beautiful cities and landscapes of that country as Saudi Arabia threatens to send more troops and bombs to continue its campaign of killing Yemeni people.

As threats to human life around the world continue at the hands of the imperialist war makers, Vancouver antiwar coalition Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO) continues to educate, organize and mobilize against war and for peace.

During the summer month of July, MAWO organized two important actions to bring people together against war. The first of the activities took place on Tuesday July 7th, where supporters of peace gathered together in East Vancouver for a public forum titled, "STOP BOMBING YEMEN! USA/ Saudi Arabia Hands Off Yemen!" After

watching a number of multimedia and videos about the war on Yemen, participants got to hear from speakers Janine Solanki, MAWO's chairperson as well as Azza Rojbi, executive committee member of MAWO and Tunisian social justice activist. The presentations were followed by a lively discussion on the importance of building an antiwar movement against the US/Saudi aggression on Yemen.

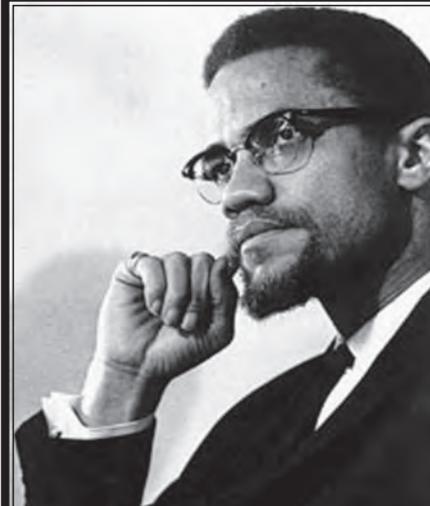


Later that month, on July 24th, MAWO activists and supporters from all different cultures and backgrounds joined in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery in busy downtown Vancouver for MAWO's monthly antiwar petition drive and rally. Among the speakers at the rally was Iraqi antiwar activist Mamdoh Ashir who spoke about the US attempts to divide Iraq and the criminal, ongoing US war on his country. Throughout the afternoon activists collected petition signatures against the war and opened up countless discussions and debates about war and occupation with passers-by.

As the summer season comes to a close and fall begins MAWO will be on the streets, campuses and all over the lower mainland. Mobilization Against War & Occupation will be campaigning against war and occupation and invites people to join in the fight against war & occupation and for a better world.



**"By Any Means
Necessary..."**



MALCOLM X SPEAKS

So I point this out to show that it was not change of heart on Uncle Sam's part that permitted some of us to go a few steps forward. It was world pressure. It was threat from outside. Danger from outside that made it — that occupied his mind and forced him to permit you and me to stand up a little taller. Not because he wanted us to stand up. Not because he wanted us to go forward. He was forced to.

And once you properly analyze the ingredients that opened the doors even to the degree that they were forced open, when you see what it was, you'll better understand your position today. And you'll better understand the strategy that you need today. Any kind of movement for freedom of Black people based solely within the confines of America is absolutely doomed to fail.

As long as your problem is fought within the American context, all you can get as allies is fellow Americans. As long as you call it civil rights, it's a domestic problem within the jurisdiction of the United States government. And the United States government consists of segregationists, racists. Why the most powerful men in the government are racists. This government is controlled by thirty-six committees. Twenty congressional committees and sixteen senatorial committees. Thirteen of the twenty congressmen that make up the congressional committees are from the South. Ten of the sixteen senators that control the senatorial committees are from the South. Which means, that of the thirty-committees that govern the foreign and domestic directions and temperament of the country in which we live, of the thirty-six, twenty-three of them are in the hands of racists. Outright, stone-cold, dead segregationists. This is what you and I are up against. We are in a society where the power is in the hands of those who are the worst breed of humanity.

Excerpt from speech delivered in Corn Hill Methodist Church Rochester, New York – Feb. 16, 1965

Celebrate the 89th Birthday of

FIDEL

SATURDAY
AUGUST 15²⁰¹⁵
6PM
MOUNT PLEASANT
NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE
800 EAST BROADWAY,
VANCOUVER

VANCOUVER COMMUNITIES IN SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA (VCSC)
@VanCuba_VCSC | VANCUBASOLIDARITY@GMAIL.COM | 778-882-5223
WWW.VANCUBASOLIDARITY.COM

A Cuban Cultural & Political Event

