

# **DOCUMENTS**

# 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL **CHE GUEVARA CONFERENCE** VANCOUVER & KAMLOOPS, CANADA

FEATURING:

**DR. ALEIDA GUEVARA**

Cuban Revolutionary leader, a pediatrician, prominent writer and daughter of the legendary Ernesto Che Guevara



## **VANCOUVER, BC:**

» **FRIDAY NOVEMBER 2**

SPECIAL EVENING FOR THE 5 CUBAN HEROES

7PM

MT. PLEASANT NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE  
800 EAST BROADWAY AVE.

» **SAT NOVEMBER 3 & SUN NOVEMBER 4**  
TWO FULL DAYS OF WORKSHOPS

10AM-6PM

RUSSIAN HALL, 600 CAMPBELL AVE.

## **KAMLOOPS, BC:**

**MONDAY NOVEMBER 5, 2012**

5-9PM IN THE BARBER CENTRE

THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY

900 MCGILL ROAD

KAMLOOPS EVENT ORGANIZED BY:

THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY SOCIALIST CLUB

**VCSC**



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## Speech delivered during the closing ceremony of the Sixth Session of the Seventh Legislature of the National People's Power Assembly

By: Raúl Castro Ruz                      Dec 18th, 2010

Speech delivered by Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, President of the Councils of State and of Ministers, during the closing ceremony of the Sixth Session of the Seventh Legislature of the National People's Power Assembly at Havana's Conference Center. December 18th, 2010, "Year 52 of the Revolution."

(Stenographic versions – Council of State)

This time the closing speech will be a little longer than on former occasions, but this has been indeed an exceptional session, because of the issues that have been discussed, the opinions that you have expressed and the documents that have been approved.

On my way here to attend this Assembly session, when I looked at the newspaper's date, December 18, a simple historical event immediately came to my mind. It has been exactly 54 years ever since –back then we did not expect to live for so long, due to the circumstances surrounding us- when we were part of the newly-formed Rebel Army, which are today the Revolutionary Armed Forces and the Revolution in itself. On December 5 of that same year, three days after the landing of the Granma, we suffered a major setback in a place known as Alegría de Pio. After that debacle we had to walk for 13 days in small groups, trying to cross through the two sieges that had been laid around us. Finally, with the help of some peasants, I could join the small group headed by Fidel.

It was already dark when we met. After the initial hug the first question he asked me was: "How many rifles are you bringing?" "Five", I answered. And then he said: "Five plus the two I got make seven. Now I am sure we will win this war!" (Applause).

And it seems he was right.

This is a happy coincidence. That is why I wanted to begin my closing remarks by evoking such a nice memory.

Comrades all:

We have been meeting for several days now discussing extremely important matters for the future of the nation. This time, in addition to our customary work in commissions, the deputies have met in plenary with the purpose of

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discussing the details of the current economic situation as well as the proposed budget and economic plan for the year 2011.

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

Our media has broadly covered these discussions in order to make it easier for the general public to receive this information.

In spite of the impacts of the world crisis on the national economy, the irregular rain pattern during the last 19 months -from November 2008 until June this year-, and without excluding our own errors, I can affirm that the performance of the 2010 economic plan could be deemed as acceptable considering the times we are living. We will attain the goal of 2.1 per cent growth of the Gross Domestic Product, better known by its acronym (GDP); exports of goods and services have increased. The annual forecast figure of foreign tourists has already been reached even when the current year is not yet at a close. Although, once again, we will not be able to meet the planned revenues goals, we have strengthened the domestic financial balance and, for the first time in several years, we have begun to see a favorable dynamic, still somewhat limited, in work productivity in relation to the average salary levels.

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

Once again I would like to thank our commercial and financial partners for their confidence and understanding and I reassure them of our most steadfast determination to punctually honor our commitments. The Government has given precise instructions not to take on new debts without guaranteeing their payment within the terms agreed upon.

As was explained by the Vice President of the Government and Minister of Economy and Planning, Marino Murillo Jorge, next year's economic plan foresees a 3.1 per cent GDP growth, which should be reached in the midst of a scenario that is not any less complicated or tense.

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

During the coming year, we shall decisively move on to reduce unnecessary expenses, thus promoting the saving of all types of resources which, as we have said on several occasions, is the quickest and safest input of revenues at our disposal right now.

We shall do likewise in the areas of health, education, culture and sports, without neglecting in the least – but rather raising- the quality of our social programs, where we have identified enormous reserves of efficiency through a more rational use of the existing infrastructure. We shall also increase the exports of goods and services, while continuing to concentrate investments in those areas providing the quickest returns.

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

At times there have been some comrades who, without pursuing a fraudulent purpose, convey the inaccurate information reported by their subordinates without previously checking them and so they unconsciously fall into lying. But these false data could lead us to make wrong decisions with major or minor repercussions on the nation.



Whoever acts in that manner is also a liar, and regardless of whom these persons may be they must be definitively -not temporarily- removed from the position they hold and, after an analysis by the corresponding bodies, they must also be removed from the ranks of the Party, should they belong to it.

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

I am going to repeat these three principles that are still observed by Inca descendants today: do not lie, do not steal and do not be lazy. Those are correct principles, aren't they? Let us try to bear them in mind.

We must struggle to eradicate, once and for all, lies and deceit from the cadres' behavior at all levels. No wonder Comrade Fidel in his brilliant definition of the concept of Revolution, pointed out, among other things: "... not to ever say a lie or violate ethical principles". These are concepts that appear on the first page of the booklet containing the Guidelines that we have been discussing.

After the publication of the Draft Guidelines for the Economic and Social Policy on November 9th last, the train of the Sixth Party Congress has taken on steam. The true congress will be the open and honest discussions -as is being the case- of said Guidelines by Party members and the entire people. This genuine democratic exercise will allow us to further enrich that document and, without excluding divergent opinions, we intend to achieve a national consensus about the need and urgency of introducing strategic changes in the way the economy operates, so that Socialism in Cuba could be sustainable and irreversible.

We should not be afraid of opposing criteria. This instruction, which is not new, should not be construed as one applicable only to the discussions of the Guidelines. The differences of opinion, preferably expressed in the proper place, time and way, that is, at the right place, at the right moment and in the correct form, shall always be more desirable than the false unanimity based on pretence and opportunism. Moreover, this is a right nobody should be deprived of.

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

The Economic Policy Commission of the Party and the 11 groups which make it up, have worked long months to draw up the abovementioned Guidelines which, as we have explained, shall constitute the leitmotif of the Congress, based on the conviction that the analysis of the economic situation is the most important task of the Party and the Government and the basic subject of cadres at all levels.

During the last few years we have been insisting that we could not let ourselves be carried away by improvising and haste in this area, considering the magnitude, complexity and inter-relations of the decisions to be adopted. For that reason I think that we did the right thing when we decided to defer the celebration of the Party Congress, even when we have had to patiently bear with the honest and also the ill-intended protests both inside Cuba and abroad urging us to rush into the adoption of a score of measures. Our adversaries abroad, as we might expect, have challenged our every step, first by calling the measures cosmetic and insufficient and now trying to confuse public opinion by prophesizing a sure failure and concentrating their campaigns on extolling an alleged disappointment and skepticism with which they say our people have welcomed this draft.

Sometimes it seems that their most heartfelt wishes prevent them from seeing the reality. In making their true desires evident, they blatantly demand that we dismantle the economic and social system that we created, just as if this Revolution were willing to submit to the most humiliating surrender or, what tantamount to the same thing, steer its own destiny by submitting to denigrating conditions.

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

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

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

We need to put on the table all the information and arguments behind every decision and also suppress the excessive secrecy to which we became used to during these 50 years that we have lived under the enemy siege. Any State must reasonably keep some matters secret; that is something nobody can deny. But matters defining the political and economical course of the nation shall be no secret. It is vital to explain, provide arguments and convince the people of the fairness, need and urgency of any measure, no matter how tough it appears to be.

The Party and the Communist Youth, as well as Cuba's Workers' Central and its unions, along with the rest of the mass and social organizations have the capacity to mobilize the support and the confidence of the people through debate, free from unviable dogmas and schemes that emerge as a colossal psychological barrier that we need to dismantle little by little. Together we can make it (Applause).

That is exactly the fundamental agenda that we have reserved for the National Conference of the Party to be held in 2011, after the Congress, at a date to be fixed later. On that occasion we shall analyze, among other matters, the modifications of the working methods and styles of the Party since, as a result of the deficiencies found in the performance of the Government administrative bodies throughout the years, the Party has had to engage in the exercise of functions outside its duties, which restricted and compromised its role as the organized avant-garde of the Cuban nation and the top leading force of society and the State, as established by Article Five of the Constitution of the Republic.

The Party should lead and supervise; it should not interfere with the activities of the Government at no level. It is the Government that governs. Each body has its own norms and procedures, depending on what their missions are within the society.

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

Many of us Cubans confuse socialism with freebies and subsidies; and equality with egalitarianism. Quite a few of us consider the ration card to be a social achievement that should never be gotten rid of.

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

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

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

As is known, as from September this year, the cigarette rations were eliminated. This product was being delivered only to a part of the population. Obviously, due to its harmful effects to human health, it can not be considered a basic commodity.

Next year –and we have already discussed that here- we can not afford to spend around 50 million dollars -47, to be exact- to import coffee to sustain the rations that have so far been distributed to all consumers, including newborn children. Since this is an unavoidable necessity, we intend to mix it with peas, as we used to do until 2005, since peas are much cheaper than coffee, whose price is almost three thousand dollars per ton, while the cost of a ton of peas is 390 dollars.

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

After the US war against Vietnam, the heroic and undefeated Vietnamese people asked us to teach them how to plant coffee, and there we went. We taught them how to plan it and conveyed to them all our experience. Today Vietnam is the second biggest coffee exporter in the world. A Vietnamese official asked one of his Cuban colleagues: “How come you, who taught us how to plant coffee just recently, are now buying coffee from us?” I can not figure out what might have been the Cuban official’s answer, but most certainly he might have said: “the blockade.”

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

The leader of the Cuban Revolution, Comrade Fidel himself, in his historical speech on November 17, 2005, stated, and I quote: “Here is a conclusion I’ve come to after many years: among all the errors we may have committed, the greatest of them all was that we believed that someone really knew something about socialism, or that someone actually knew how to build socialism”, end of quote. Hardly one month ago, exactly five years later, in his message on the occasion of the International Students Day, Fidel reiterated these concepts which are still fully valid.

I for one remember an idea expressed by a Soviet award-winning scientist who about half a century ago –around the times when the first man ever traveled to the cosmos, who was Gagarin- was thinking that even though the possibility of a manned flight into space had been theoretically documented, it was still a journey into the unknown, the undiscovered.

While we have counted on the theoretical Marxist-Leninist legacy, according to which there is scientific evidence of the feasibility of socialism and the practical experience of the attempts to build it in other countries, the construction of a new society from an economic point of view is, in my modest opinion, also a journey into the unknown –the undiscovered. Therefore each step must be profoundly meditated upon and planned before the next step is taken; mistakes are to be timely and quickly amended so that the solution is not left up to time, which will make them grow bigger and, ultimately, our invoice will be even more costly.

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

No one should claim they have been deceived: the Guidelines will signal the road towards a socialist future, adapted to Cuba's conditions and not to the capitalist and neo-colonial past which was defeated by the Revolution. Planning, and not free market, shall be the distinctive feature of the economy. As was outlined in the third general Guideline, the concentration of ownership shall not be allowed. This is as clear as glass, but there is no one as blind as the one who doesn't want to see.

The building of socialism should be according to the specific features of every country. That is a History lesson that we have learned very well. We do not intend to copy from anyone again; that brought about enough problems to us because, in addition to that, many a time we also copied badly, as we said yesterday. However we shall not ignore others' experiences and we will learn from them, even from the positive experience of capitalists.

Speaking about the necessary change of mind, I shall mention one example: we have arrived at the conclusion that self-employment is one more alternative for working-age citizens, aimed at increasing the supply of goods and services to the population, which could rid the State of those tasks so that it could focus on what is truly decisive, what the Party and the Government should do is, first and foremost, facilitate their work rather than generate stigmas and prejudices against them, much less demonize them. Therefore it is fundamental that we modify the existing negative approach that quite a few of us have towards this form of private job. When defining the features that ought to characterize the building of a new society, the classics of Marxist-Leninism –particularly Lenin- stated, among other things, that the State, on behalf of all the people, should keep the ownership over all the basic production means.

We turned this precept into an absolute principle and almost all the country's economic activity started to be run by the State. The steps we have been taking and shall take towards broadening and relaxing self-employment are the result of profound meditations and analysis and we can assure you this time there will be no going back.

Cuba's Workers' Central and its respective national trade unions are currently studying the forms and methods to organize the provision of assistance to this labor force, promote full compliance with the Law and the payment of taxes and encourage these workers to eschew illegalities. We should defend their interests just as we do with any other citizen, as long as they observe the approved juridical norms.

The introduction of the basic concepts about the taxation system at different levels of education becomes very important, since younger generations will become permanently and concretely acquainted with the implementation of taxes as the most universal form of redistribution of the national income, in the interest of covering social costs, including the assistance to persons in greatest need.

From the point of view of the society as a whole, we have to encourage among all taxpayers the civic values of respect for and compliance with tax payments; we should educate people in that discipline and culture, reward those who comply and sanction tax evaders.

Another area where there is still much to do, in spite of the advances made, is the attention to the different production modalities in agriculture to remove the existing obstacles that hinder the promotion of productive forces in our rural areas so that, depending on the savings obtained by reducing the import of foodstuffs, farmers could receive just and reasonable revenues for their hard work. However this does not justify the fixing of extremely high prices to the commodities consumed by the population.

After two years since we started to distribute idle lands in usufruct, I think we are now in the position to evaluate the allocation of additional land plots, above the limits regulated by Decree-Law 259 of July 2008, to those agricultural workers who have achieved outstanding results in the intensive use of the lands they have been tilling.

I think it timely to clarify that the ownership of the lands distributed in usufruct continues to belong to all the people. Thus, if for any reason these lands are required for uses different from these in the future –namely, the construction of a social facility, a highway or whatever- the State shall compensate beneficial owners for their investments and would pay to them the value of the benefits created.

In due time, once we conclude the studies based on the experience we have been accumulating, we shall submit the corresponding proposals to modify the abovementioned Decree-Law to the Council of State, where farmers have their own representative, who is comrade Lugo Fonte, the chairman of the National Association of Small Farmers.

One of the most difficult barriers to overcome in the effort to create a different view –and we should publicly recognize that-, is the lack of knowledge about the economy among the people, including quite a few cadres who, giving clear proof of a supine ignorance on the subject, adopt or propose decisions while facing customary problems without stopping for a single minute to evaluate their effects and costs, or without knowing whether there is a budget or resources assigned to that end according to a plan.

I am not announcing any new discovery when I state that improvisation in general, particularly when it comes to the economy, leads to a sure failure regardless of the lofty ends one intends to attain.

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

To become an economist does not mean that we should now try to get a degree in Economics –we have enough of those. It means to have a domain of the main principles of Economics, not to pursue a PhD in Economics.

And Fidel continued to say: “...now I add that we should all be economists, and I repeat, economists, not economic reductionists. A mindset oriented to saving and efficiency is different from that oriented to consumption”, end of quote.

That is the essence of the Guidelines you have in your hands and of the precise instructions oriented to promote economic development right now, which is about producing whatever can be exported, reduce imports and invest in those areas that could yield the quickest returns. It is also about increasing economic efficiency, saving resources, reducing unnecessary costs –we have discussed all that in these days-, increasing exports and raising an economic awareness in every citizen. And I repeat: “economists, not economic reductionists. A mindset oriented to saving and efficiency is different from that oriented to consumption”, end of quote. This was said on December 2, thirty four years ago.

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

After 34 and 24 years respectively from the time when these two ideas that I have just quoted were expressed by the Leader of the Revolution, these and many other problems are still with us.



And, well, what did we do back then? Why weren't the instructions given by the Leader of the Revolution complied with? We applaud every speech; we shout Long Live the Revolution! And afterwards things remain just the same.

He did his part, and now, trying to find an explanation, I express that Fidel, with his genius, was blazing a trail, showing the way, and the rest of us didn't know how to ensure and consolidate our march forward to pursue those goals.

The truth is that we lacked cohesion, despite this people's unity around its Party, its leaders and its Government, which has been our main strategic weapon for surviving more than five decades, inside a fortress under siege, facing the most powerful empire that has ever existed. But lacked cohesion, organization and coordination between the Party and the Government. In the midst of the threats and the daily emergencies we neglected mid and long-term planning; we did not act strongly enough against the economic violations and the errors committed by some leaders and we also stalled in correcting decisions that didn't have the effect we expected but managed to survive.

On more than one occasion –right here, before this Parliament- I have referred to the fact that in this Revolution almost everything has been said and that we should check which of the instructions given by the Leader of the Revolution have been fulfilled and which have not, ever since he made his vibrant statement “History Will Absolve Me” during the trial against the Moncada attackers until the present. We will retake Fidel's ideas, which continue to be valid even today, and will not allow the same to happen to us again. That is the reason behind the instructions oriented and the main line traced by the Party and the Government regarding errors, violations, etc. If we want to save the Revolution we have to comply with whatever we may agree. We should not allow that, after the Congress is over –as has been happening so far in many very eloquent cases- documents go to desk drawers to sleep the eternal sleep, just as we have been explaining in these days of fruitful, democratic and truly profound discussions. That is how we want the people to continue discussing those Guidelines. We have almost 100 days for that. We either rectify –because we no longer have time to keep on skirting around the precipice- or we will sink, and, as I said before, we will also be sinking the efforts made by entire generations since the times of Hatuey, the American Indian who came from the territory that is today the Dominican Republic and Haiti –the first internationalist in our country- until Fidel, who has brilliantly led us through these so complex situations since the triumph of the Revolution (Applause).

Those of us who are not so young, or those who, being older, are still feeling young and ready to keep up in the struggle (Applause), as well as those who belong to the younger generations –some of whom spoke eloquently yesterday- should never forget the words pronounced by Fidel in his first speech after coming into the capital, at the Batista's military headquarters, the former 'Columbia', which is today the school named “Ciudad Libertad”. From that place he said: “The Revolution has triumphed and there is an immense happiness, but there is still much to do. We should not make the mistake of thinking that from now on everything would be easier. From now everything would be perhaps more difficult”. And that precise and visionary advice has become true all along these more than fifty years.

We did not expect this to be a bed of roses; we knew the power we were going to challenge, for which we only counted on the people and the weapons that we grabbed from Batista's army. Later on we continued to acquire as many weapons as we could until the present, while we continued to further develop –and Fidel also taught us that- the great unity of our people, which we should always protect, as much as if it were the apples of our eyes or our own lives. But that unity can not be achieved by decree. We will have more unity because it will be everybody's domain, if we apply absolutely democratic methods to political work in the entire nation, with patience, from the Party's grassroots cells to the supreme organ of the State, which is this Assembly gathered here.

We have a cultured people that have attained a high educational level, and we have many other positive things. Huge advances have been made, but this is not the right occasion to list up all of them; you already know about them. Our media talks a lot about them, about the achievements of the Revolution. In our speeches we also expand

on that. But we must go to the core of the problems, just as we have done in this Parliament session.

What I mean is that the issues that we have discussed and the errors that we have criticized can not happen again because it is the life of the Revolution what is at stake.

Errors, if they are just analyzed with honesty, can become experiences and lessons that could teach us how to eradicate them and avoid its replication. Haven't you heard the proverb saying that the human being is the only animal that stumbles more than once against the same obstacle? I have known some who have stumbled five, six, even ten times, and if we don't stop them they will continue to stumble. And we will not because they may injure an ankle or the tip of their toes; it is because the mistakes they make cost millions. You heard what was read by the Vice-President himself, the Minister of Economy and Planning, Murillo; or what was just read by the President of the Commission on Economic Affairs of the Parliament, comrade Osvaldo Martínez. We stopped receiving some millions because of the low prices of sugar; throughout all these years sugar prices have been at rock bottom. And now, when sugar prices are up, we stopped receiving some millions because, for some reason, we did not meet the sugar production plan. In such and such economic activity we stopped receiving so much because we did not meet the production plans.

I was telling Machado –I was making some comments while they were speaking; just some comments, right there by his side- that if you add up all the millions that we have failed to receive for not meeting our production plans, just imagine how many problems we could have solved.

And so it happens in every other area.

That is why I am a staunch advocator of the eradication of excessive secrecy, although some secrets must be kept. Yesterday we talked about some of them, which I do not intend to publish. You may have noticed that nothing, almost nothing, has been published by the press about my interventions at the Assembly. I asked for this to be done this way, so that I could speak straight. The session was held behind closed doors so that we could discuss things as we commonly say here, stripping ourselves to our underclothes, although it was not necessary to take off so much clothes. But we discussed what we had to discuss. That is the way it should be.

And I am very much in favor of the struggle against excessive secrecy, because our failures as well as those who are interested in leaving things as they are so that they continue to be just the same, are all hidden under that well-decorated carpet. And I remember some of the criticisms that were made: "yes, let such and such criticism be published by the press", I myself said in the past, many years ago. And, of course, no specific reference was made to any entity, but to a product, and so on so forth.

All of a sudden the big bureaucracy began to mobilize: "Those things are not helpful; they demoralize workers", they said. What workers were going to be demoralized?

So it happened once at the big State-run dairy enterprise named 'El Triángulo'. It was quite big then and continues to be so. I believe it is now a genetic centre... (Someone reminds him that the center's name is 'Triunvirato'). That's right, Triunvirato. 'Triángulo' is the one in Camagüey. It had been weeks since one of the trucks of that dairy farm, a small truck, had been out of order. Therefore, all the milk produced by the dairy farms of that region –not only by that enterprise- was being used to feed some pigs they were raising.

Then I said to one of the secretaries of the Central Committee responsible for supervising agriculture at that time: "Go to the 'Granma' newspaper and tell everything that is going on; make a criticism.

I stirred up the hornet's nest. People did not know I had been the one who had given those instructions. And some approached me and even said to me: "Those things are not helpful because they demoralize the workers", and so on so forth.

Nearby the city, close to the capital of the province, there were they, throwing away milk, using it to feed their own pigs.

That is why I say: excessive secrecy? No way. Let those wanting to keep their own deficiencies in secret to struggle and devote that huge effort to avoid them –I mean, deficiencies.

That is to say, errors, if they are just analyzed –as we said a while ago- with honesty, can become experiences and lessons that could teach us how to eradicate them and avoid its replication.

If we do not proceed this way, we will keep on making the same mistakes. That is why I am one of those who claim that in Cuba there are animals –I am referring to the proverb saying that man is the only animal who stumbles twice against the same obstacle. But, in Cuba, there are more.

Do not forget about another Dominican, a great internationalist, who was the chief commander of our Liberation Army, Generalissimo Máximo Gómez, who knew Cubans too well. He was married to a Cuban; his children were born in the battlefield. Many of them died of poverty. Manana was always behind him; she accompanied him wherever he went. Gómez used to say: “Cubans either fall short of or go over the limits”. Isn’t that so? (The audience says yes). Let’s see if we can go over the limits, but when it comes to the strict compliance with our duties.

I mean, that is precisely the great usefulness of a thorough analysis of errors. That should become a permanent rule of conduct for all leaders, at all levels. Those who do not proceed this way would be infringing their main duty as leaders.

Besides, the reality of figures prevails over all of our hopes and dreams. Since our early years in first grade, when we study elementary arithmetic, we learn that two plus two makes four, not five or six –as we said once, right here. You don’t have to be an economist to understand that two plus two makes four. On that occasion I added: “...but sometimes, as a result of our own deficiencies, two plus two happen to make three”. That is to say, you don’t have to be an economist to understand that. Therefore, if at any given time we have to do something whether in the economic or social fields, whose cost can not be covered by the resources available, we may do that being aware of the consequences and knowing, ahead of time, that, ultimately, bare facts shall irremissibly prevail, no matter how well-intended we might be.

Besides, Cuba has tens and tens of thousands of professionals graduated by the Revolution in the specialties of Economics, Accounting and Finances, just to mention some within this profile, and we haven’t known how to make a proper use of their knowledge in the interest of the nation’s orderly development.

We have the most precious thing –mentioned by Comrade Fidel on several occasions-, which is human capital. We must further consolidate it, with the help of the National Association of Economists and Accountants (ANEC) to take up the task of constantly and systematically educating our cultured people and their leaders at all levels in this subject. A large representation from the ANEC National Board took part –together with us and several other cadres present here- in the first seminars that we organized to analyze these Guidelines, and many of its members are immersed in the process of discussions under way. The entire National Board attended these seminars and afterwards they took part in the discussions with the members of the Party and the people that were held in different municipalities and provinces.

In this regard, we should emphasize the decisive contribution made by thousands and thousands of accountants to recover the place Accounting deserves in economic management –and you know what I am talking about and how Accounting operates in this country and in almost all enterprises- which, as we well know, is an indispensable condition to ensure success and order in everything that we intend to accomplish.

In these circumstances, nobody should lose sight of the relevance of keeping a differentiated approach to the youth

—and here I am dealing with a different issue, related to university graduates and medium-level technicians; that is, they deserve a different treatment and approach, as you saw it was described by the first resolution passed by the Ministry of Labor. I should emphasize the decision of exempting new graduates from any overstaffing reduction process while they are completing their Social Service term. Otherwise they will be the first to be sacrificed.

Now then, we are not trying to assign them to jobs that have nothing to do with their professional profiles, as it has occurred in the past, when they were even employed as doormen at some work places while they were completing their Social Service term, regardless of the title or knowledge they have acquired, because that period is precisely designed to train them in the production and provision of services, so that they could complement the theory they learned in school with practice and cultivate in them the love for work. If we do not do that we will be sacrificing the immediate future, those who will continue after us.

No less important is the work to be carried out by cadres and specialists involved in the drafting and review of legal documents, which are to be in tune with the modifications that are being implemented. For example, in order to create the legal framework —because not a single step should be taken without first taking into account this, the legal framework- for two Guidelines (158 and 159), referring to self-employment, its taxation regime and the reduction of overstaffing, we have had to issue almost 30 legal provisions, including decree-laws —today we adopted those that were proclaimed during this period-, Government agreements and resolutions from various ministries and national institutes.

Just a few days ago —listen to this example-, a resolution issued by the Ministry of Finances that modified the prices set by collecting centers for a series of agricultural products had to invalidate another 36 resolutions issued by that same body on different dates in previous years, but all of them were still in force. Who could control an activity like that, the pricing of agricultural products, when the prices fixed are not governed by supply and demand and there are 36 different documents governing it? No matter how many computers you may have, this is something impossible to do. And so there are many decisions of this sort contained in documents, one after the other; some of them modify the others, the ones that come next, and so on. In this case, one resolution replaced another 36, but all of them were still in force.

These facts give you some idea of the work facing us in the area of juridical organization for the purpose of reinforcing the institutional character of the country —this is not because we like papers; every activity must be regulated in documents and officially approved-, and eliminating so many irrational prohibitions that have been prevailed for years, without bearing in mind the existing circumstances, creating a veritable breeding ground for multiple actions outside the law that very often give rise to different levels of corruption. One can arrive at a life-tested conclusion: irrational prohibitions lead to violations and that in turn leads to corruption and impunity. That is why I believe that people are right —because they have said since they discussed the speech I delivered in 2007, which was not a speech that deserved being discussed by the entire people, but then they were told: “You may say what you want”, and right here I reported the results of that survey. Besides, that was intended to accumulate greater experience for what we are doing right now, and we managed to accumulate important experiences, and many of the statements made then are being repeated now during the discussion of the Guidelines That is, people were right in their concerns over the mind-boggling procedures associated with housing and the buying and selling of cars among individuals, just to mention two examples that are currently under study for an orderly solution. That is why yesterday we remembered, as Marino was saying, that the State regulates its relations with individuals, but the State does not have to interfere in any way with the intention of regulating the relations between two individuals. So if I have a little car, a jalopy or whatever, an “almendrón”, as it is commonly called here, and that car is mine, I have the right to sell it to whoever I want, provided I also observe the regulations established by the owner’s registry.

At the same time, we must simplify and group together the legislation in force, which is generally rather dispersed. The guiding documents are drawn up so that they known by those responsible for enforcing them, not just to be



filed away. Therefore, we have to educate all cadres and demand that they work with the legal provisions that govern their functions and see to it that this is complied with as a professional qualification requirement to occupy any given post. Yesterday or the day before yesterday we referred to an example which was a sort of common denominator to all provinces regarding one specific fact. It was a usual practice for all to receive documents and immediately put them inside a drawer. And this happened just the other day. And meanwhile life goes on.

It is worthwhile remembering, once again, that ignorance of the law does not exempt anyone from complying with it and that, according to the Constitution, every citizen has equal rights and responsibilities. Therefore whoever commits a crime in Cuba, regardless of the position they hold or whoever they may be, they shall have to face up to the consequences of their mistakes and bear the full weight of the law.

Moving on to another issue, also covered by the Guidelines, we have excluded 68 important investments for the country from next year's economic plan —as was already informed here-, because they have not complied with the established requirements, among them, identification of funding, technical preparation, streamlining of project, identification of the construction group capable of undertaking such works within the established terms and the evaluation of feasibility studies, among others. We shall not permit the wastage of resources destined to investments due to the spontaneity, improvisation and superficiality that, more often than not, have characterized the investment process. And when this issue was discussed during the last meeting of the Council of Ministers —and many of you heard it- we decided that this will happen no more, and those who infringe upon that decision will have to face the consequences, no matter which.

In dealing with these subjects I must refer to the key role to be played by the Party cadres, the Government, mass and youth organizations in the coordinated and harmonious conduction of the process to update the Cuban economic model.

Now we have a special and well prepared battlefield to show that all of this can be done, that it can be done well, that we will not fall short of or go over the limits, as the Generalissimo used to say.

In the course of the gradual decentralization that we are carrying out, we have adopted different measures to increase the authority of administrative and business executives on whom we shall continue to delegate powers. Simultaneously we are improving control procedures and will adopt a more demanding attitude against any manifestation of negligence, apathy and other behaviors incompatible with public positions.

Right here, sitting on the first row, there is the Vice President of the Council of State, Gladys Bejerano, who —as you know- is an efficient General Comptroller of the Republic.

When that ministry still existed under the name of Ministry for Auditing and Control —that activity is now under the direct supervision of the Council of State and, on behalf of that organ, I personally check its everyday performance, as I do with the Republic's General Attorney's work, and I assign them some tasks-, despite the fact that it could not do much because all justifications were accepted and these always had a sort of godfather, comrade Gladys Bejerano was frowned on by some. And very often when she exerted her controls someone, anyone, came to complain: "Well, that does not help." Some others said: "That is demoralizing" —what on earth was that! They said that "comrade Gladys was very tough, that she said things in a very tough way". But that is what we want; that is what I always demanded from them.

And then, once —I had not yet been appointed to this post- I said: "I believe we should dissolve this ministry". I saw some happy faces; they were all looking at each other. The exception was Gladys' sad face; because apparently we were disregarding her important task. Then I waited for almost a minute, just a few seconds, and afterwards I said: "We are going to dissolve that ministry, because its minister has the same hierarchy as all other ministers, and we are going to create the Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic, which will be under the Council of State, and we will propose Gladys as Vice President of the Council of State". There were faces that saddened and Gladys

laughed happily again (Laughter). What I am telling you is no joke (Applause); this is no joke.

I was saying that the authority of administrative executives, ministers, provincial and municipal governments will increase. They will be further supported and their faculties will be decentralized from above.

We have said that municipal governments must have faculties and resources. We also indicated the way to acquire them and added that we will continue to delegate some faculties. At the same time the control mechanisms will be further perfected; we will adopt a more severe attitude against every manifestation of negligence, indolence and other behaviors incompatible with the performance of any public position.

Likewise, we are fully aware of the harm caused by the “inverse pyramid” phenomenon to the cadres’ policy over the years, which means that salaries were not being paid according to the importance and hierarchy of leading posts, nor was there an adequate differentiation between them. This discourages the promotion of the most capable workers to higher responsibilities at the enterprises and even at ministries. This is a basic problem that must be resolved according to what is indicated in Guidelines 156 and 161, related to the wages policy.

The Sixth Party Congress should be, as a fact of life, the last to be attended by most of us who belong to the Revolution’s historical generation. The time we have left is short, the task that lies ahead of us is gigantic, and without an ounce of immodesty, personal vanity or sentimentalism, I think we have the obligation of taking advantage of the power of our moral authority among the people to trace out the route to be followed and resolve some other important problems. (Applause).

We don’t think we are more intelligent or able than anyone else or any of the like, but we strongly believe that we have the elemental duty to rectify the mistakes that we have made all along these five decades during which we have been building socialism in Cuba. To this endeavor we will devote all the energy we have left, which fortunately is not just a little (Applause).

We will increase our perseverance and our intransigence against wrongdoings. Government ministers and other administrative and political leaders know they will count on our full support when, while performing their duties, they educate –they must first and foremost educate- and at the same time adopt a demanding behavior towards their subordinates, and are not afraid of running into trouble. Usually no one is willing to run into that: Do not be afraid of running into trouble for confronting the wrong. Running into trouble for confronting the wrong is right now one of our main tasks aimed at eradicating all those deficiencies that we have mentioned.

Likewise it is very clear to all of us that we are no longer living through the early years after the triumph of the Revolution in 1959 –the early months after the triumph-, when some of those who were appointed to government posts, particularly in that first government that was appointed by Urrutia, except for the Defense and Agriculture portfolios, were told: “Do not touch that”, because we were thinking about the agrarian reform and the weapons that we had occupied or we intended to occupy. I am speaking about January 2. After Fidel made the speech at “Céspedes” park, he left for the enemy’s general headquarters to speak to those soldiers so that they would join him – because there had been a coup d’etat in Havana and we did not know how to operate the tanks, the artillery and other means they had there. Fidel allowed Urrutia and other leaders of the 26th of July Movement of the University of Santiago de Cuba to appoint a government.

I was the one who carried that message to Urrutia at dawn on January 2, because the mass rally at the square had concluded after midnight. So I said to him: “Do not touch that; it is recommended not to touch the Ministry of Agriculture or the Ministry of Defense.” This was the only thing that was said. So when I told him, on behalf of Fidel, to appoint Colonel Rego Rubido, who had just surrendered to Fidel in an area known as “Alto del Escandel” on January 1, Urrutia started to pace up and down the garage of the house in the neighborhood called ‘Vista Alegre’, where I went to meet him. A crowd had surrounded the patio of the house and waved hello at me. Discussions went on for a while: “I can not appoint a member of Batista’s army as chief commander of the Rebel Army!” he said.

“Look President”, I told him, “Fidel knows what he is doing. There has been a coup d’etat in Havana. He is heading for Bayamo to speak with Batista’s soldiers...” And those were the ones who joined him along the way. They took a whole week to complete the journey, and when they entered Columbia they had already grown a wispy beard. Guillermo came with Fidel and others who are present here, like Colomé. Ramiro came with Che; Polito came with Fidel. I don’t know what Álvaro did; he was 15 years old. Did you stay there or you also came? (Álvaro answered he stayed in Santiago). Oh, you stayed in Santiago. Well done, because you are from Santiago.

So then there was no choice. There were 5 000 enemy soldiers in the city and I hardly had two or three bodyguards with me, nothing else. We founded several columns, because we prepared a solid force for Fidel. Lussón, who commanded a more powerful column, to which Colomé belonged, had departed already. Belarmino was commanding another column. We placed Efigenio into some old planes that used to belong to Batista, so that he might arrive in Havana and take over the National Police. Efigenio Ameijeiras was the chief commander of Column 6, facing Guantánamo, and I had appointed him as chief of the three columns surrounding the city that we intended to attack on January 2, when we realize that General Cantillo had betrayed us. So I had to think what to do. I entered the very office of Chaviano, the same place where I was interrogated at the time of the Moncada attack. I went through the same door I had gone through back then.

Luckily, I was captured many days after the repression and the massacre against the comrades who attacked the Moncada had ceased. I was not beaten; I did not go through that experience. Under such circumstances I tried to behave as decently as possible, without insolence. They made me walk along the lines of soldiers who yelled insults at me and asked the captain and the officers who accompanied me: “Give him to me Captain, so that justice is served!”

And then five years, five months and five days after, on January 1st, we entered the city of Santiago de Cuba, and I went to the Moncada garrison to speak to all those people. I entered through the same door but now I was cheered and applauded. I carried a single bodyguard with me, and I talked to the soldiers. My mission was to gather all officers and take them to El Escandel, close to El Caney, so that they could speak to Fidel. I could not leave by myself from that place. I was carried, shoulder high, by a crowd of soldiers and sergeants who took me to the neighborhood where they lived, right beside the Moncada garrison. And there I was; I could not leave that place. I was offered coffee, etc. (Somebody tells something to Raúl). What? Gerolán? I was addressing the troop and then they started to shout: “Gerolán! Gerolán!” So I asked the Batista’s officers: “What is Gerolán?” But they didn’t pay any attention to me. They continued shouting “Gerolán!” and I kept on speaking at the top of my voice from a balcony. But no way; nobody wanted to tell me what was Gerolán and the soldiers did not let me speak. The man who accompanied me did not know either. Finally, one officer –I think he was an accountant, or worked in something that had to do with logistics-, a lieutenant or second lieutenant, approached me and said: “Listen, Commander, Gerolán is the extra pay soldiers receive when they are operating out in the field”. And then I asked: “So, what’s the problem? Haven’t they been paid that?” and I was told: “No, because here the dead were not even reported so that the chiefs could rob that money.” So I said: “Tomorrow, after we take control of the fortress, there will be Gerolán for all of you”. Ah! It seemed that the world had come to an end. And then I said: What a troop we have right here in front of us! (Laughter). We requested a loan from a bank and we paid the Gerolán to those poor soldiers who did not have... That is what Guillermo wanted me to recall.

But, what was the meaning of Gerolán? Gerolán was the name of a poor-quality syrup that I believed had some special properties, which was taken mainly by braggers (Laughter).

And then I also said that everybody would be paid that money, but obviously these times are not like those early years after the triumph...

Oh, well! I did not finish the story about Urrutia, did I? Melba Hernández could bear witness of that –she is not here today. I had not seen her since we were in Mexico. Afterwards she was able to come and join the Third Front, which was commanded by Almeida. Since those houses of the Vista Alegre neighborhood had a garage with a little

stairs that led to a kitchen, she was there in the kitchen, waiting for all that fuss to come to an end. I signaled to her to wait, and Urrutia kept on pacing up and down with his hands crossed behind his back. Time passed by, until it seemed that I remembered about my Galician descent and uttered to him a few phrases I can not repeat here. I said to him: "Listen, I have been struggling against Batista for seven years. I have been in combat, in prison, in exile. Do you think it does not bother me to see a Batista's officer as chief commander of the army? That man will command nobody; he will consult me everything, because I will assign him to the very office of the chief of the regiment". And so it happened. The first order I gave was: "Let us begin to send all those soldiers who are here". And since the bridges had all been blown up and I did not want them to come across Fidel, although they were unarmed, I used the three frigates that belonged to Batista's navy. I began to send them into groups of 500 to the centre and the western part of the country, where they lived.

I said to him a few words. I was being tough on him and I said: "Fidel knows what he is doing and I obey Fidel!" Then he kept on pacing up and down and said: "Well, Commander, we will see a solution; I believe it is reasonable, don't you think?" And I said: "Yes, that is what I think." "Well, that's fine", he said. After that I kissed Melba goodbye and I left to fulfill my duties.

I was in Santiago; Fidel left me in charge of the eastern provinces at that time. I did not attend the inauguration ceremony, which was held at the University of Santiago. I did not attend that.

You have already seen how we held our meetings, haven't you? When I was about to leave, old Urrutia called me up and said to me: "Commander, I need you to appoint an aide-camp to work with me". I said: "I will send you one, President". I began to wonder which person I could send -I had already figured out the troubles we would have with this man. February, March, four or five months had hardly elapsed...you know the story- and I ran into Machado Ventura (Laughter). He was carrying a Thompson; he was already Commander. And then I said to him: "Listen Machado -I did not want to tell him about this incident: I only told that to Fidel and to no one else when I came to Havana on February. "Listen, Machado, the President has asked me this and that, and I think you are the ideal person". "Nooo!" Machado said to me, "what I have to do is to find a job as a medical doctor". "Forget about that job", I said, "it is now when all this mess is going to start". And, finally, he accepted.

Urrutia came to Havana and I stayed in Oriente. When I came to Havana on February, we started to have problems with Urrutia, and these problems continued. Nothing was published about the steps Urrutia was taking or his absolute irrationality, even as a person. The first thing he did was to be paid the same salary Batista earned, plus the representation allowance. And, of course, he bought himself a small shack, as was done by Grau, who must be around, although Urrutia left.

Then I said: "Well, I am going to call my friend Machado to see how things are". And when I called to the Presidential Palace and asked for Machado I was told: "No, Machado has not been here for such and such a time". And then I wondered: "Where is Machado?" And I found him working as a doctor in the municipality La Habana, wasn't it? (Machado says yes). That is to say, I thought he had been the first defector from the modern Revolutionary Armed Forces (Laughter). Hopefully with his work he managed to clear his name.

After laughing a little bit at the expenses of Machado, who is my friend, we shall continue.

We are all clear that these are not like the early days after the triumph of the Revolution in 1959, when some who occupied government posts -and that was when I came across the anecdote about that government- resigned to show their opposition against the first radical measures adopted by the Revolution, mainly against the agrarian reform -the first was adopted on May 17 of 1959. That is why that behavior was then branded as counterrevolutionary. That is, they resigned to show their opposition to the radical measures, and we qualified them: "That is counterrevolution", but then we accepted their resignation. Today, the true revolutionary and honest behavior is for any cadre to resign with dignity and without any fear whenever they feel tired or incapable of fully performing their



duties or comply with the new instructions that we are giving. In that case, the right thing to do is to resign, with dignity and without any fear. That will always be preferable to a demotion.

In this regard, I should refer to three comrades who occupied important positions in the leadership of the Party and the Government. As a result of their mistakes, the Political Bureau asked them to resign to their condition as members of this leading body, of the Central Committee and as deputies to the National People's Power Assembly. I am referring to Jorge Luis Sierra Cruz, Yadira García Vera and Pedro Sáez Montejo. The first two were also released from their positions as minister of Transportation and of the Basic Industry respectively —that is I am referring to Sierra and Yadira. Sierra took upon himself attributions he was not entitled to, which led him to make serious mistakes in management. Yadira García did a dreadful job as a leader of a very important ministry, such as the Basic Industry Ministry, which takes care of oil production, mining, etc., which became particularly evident in the poor control of the resources allocated to investments, that led to a waste of those resources, as it became obvious during the expansion of the nickel factory Pedro Soto Alba of Moa, in the province of Holguín. Both comrades were severely criticized at the joint meetings of the Political Bureau and the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers.

On his part, Pedro Sáez Montejo, evidencing superficiality incompatible with his position as First Secretary of the Communist Party in the City of Havana, infringed upon the party work standards, something that was discussed with him by a Political Bureau commission which was presided over by myself and made up by comrades Machado Ventura and Esteban Lazo.

It is fair to say though that the three of them recognized the mistakes each of them had made and adopted a correct attitude. That is the reason why the Political Bureau Commission decided to respect their condition as members of the Communist Party. Likewise, we deemed it convenient to assign them to tasks related to their respective specialties —some of them at the grassroots level. Others, like Sierra, who is a mechanical engineer by profession, is right now working in a little workshop of a general war tanks repairing unit. The workshop has between 11 to 14 workers, and Sierra is the chief of them all.

Personally, the three of them will continue to be my friends but my only single commitment is with the people, particularly with those who have lost their lives in these 58 years of continued struggle since the coup d'état in 1952. This has been the procedure followed with three high level leaders, so let it be known that this would be the same procedure to be followed by the Party and the Government with every other cadre. We will demand more from them, but at the same time we will warn them and adopt any relevant disciplinary measure if any of the established rules are infringed upon.

As was established by the Law to Modify the Country's Political and Administrative Division, on January next year the new provinces of Artemisa and Mayabeque will be created. Their respective governments will start to work according to the new organizational and structural conceptions, which are far more rational than the ones that exist in the present Havana province.

All functions, structures and payrolls have been already defined. We are still working on the definitions of their attributions as well as their relations with the Central State Administrative Apparatus, national companies and political and mass organizations. We will follow very closely this experience so that it could be gradually implemented on all other local government bodies throughout the country in the course of the next five years. We very much favor the usefulness of continuing to gradually increase the authority of provincial and municipal governments by entrusting them with greater faculties for the execution of local budgets, which will absorb part of the taxes generated by the economic activity aiming at contributing to its further development.

The relations with the peoples and governments of almost every nation are improving amidst the convulsive international situation.

The world has known with amazement about the scandalous revelations made by hundreds of thousands of

classified documents of the US government. Some of the most recent are about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; others deal with the most varied topics about the US relations with tens of States.

Although everybody is wondering what is really going on and how could this be linked to the twists and turns of the US politics, what has been revealed so far show that the US, under the pretence of practicing a kind rhetoric, essentially, it continues to implement the usual politics and acts as a global gendarme.

There isn't the slightest willingness on the part of the United States to change its policy against Cuba, not even to eliminate its most irrational aspects. It is evident that a powerful and reactionary minority that props up the anti Cuban mafia continues to have a major influence on these issues.

The United States not only turns a blind eye to the overwhelming call issued by 187 countries asking for an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade against our country. In the year 2010, it reinforced its implementation and once again included Cuba in its spurious lists, whereby they take upon themselves the right to qualify and denigrate other sovereign States to justify punitive actions or even acts of aggression.

The US policy against Cuba does not have an ounce of credibility. The US has no other choice but to resort to lies to reiterate certain allegations. Some of them stand out for being scandalously false, as the one asserting that Cuba is a country that sponsors international terrorism, tolerates domestic traffic in children and the use of women for sexual exploitation, violates flagrantly human rights and is responsible for significantly restricting religious freedom.

The US government tries to hide its own sins and attempts to evade its responsibilities when it allows that notorious international terrorists who have been wanted by the legal systems of several countries continue to live with impunity in that country while it maintains our Five brothers unjustly imprisoned for fighting against terrorism.

In its slanderous campaigns about the human rights situation in Cuba, the United States has found the connivance of European countries, characterized by their double standards and their submissiveness to the US imperialism, which became well known for their complicity with the CIA secret renditions, the creation of torture and detention centers, for placing the burden of the economic crisis on the lowest income workers and the students, for violently repressing demonstrators and for the implementation of discriminatory policies against migrants and minorities.

We will continue to struggle, together with all Latin American nations, for an emancipating integration. In the context of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, we will continue to work to consolidate the solidarity and unity that will make us ever stronger.

Therefore, we will continue to support the sister nation of Haiti where our health staff together with Latin American and Haitian doctors who graduated in Cuba, in a selfless and humanitarian way, is coping with the cholera epidemic, the destruction caused by the earthquake and the sequels of hundreds of years of exploitation and plundering of that noble people that needs the international community to grant resources for reconstruction and especially for a sustainable development.

This is also the right occasion to convey, from this parliamentary meeting and on behalf of all Cubans, a message of support and solidarity to the brother people of Venezuela, who are suffering from the ravages of torrential rains that have caused great human and material losses. At a very early stage, the tens of thousands of Cuban cooperation workers who are offering their services in that country were instructed to place themselves at the disposal of the Venezuelan people and President Hugo Chavez for whatever might be necessary.

April next year will mark the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of the Socialist character of our Revolution. In the sands of Playa Girón our forces fought for the first time to defend socialism and within hardly 72 hours, led by Commander in Chief in person, they managed to defeat the mercenary invasion sponsored by the US government.

On the occasion of such a relevant commemoration, there will be a military parade on April 16 with the participation

of troops and combat equipment, to be attended by the delegates to the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party who will meet on that very afternoon to begin their works, which we hope will conclude on April 19, the day when we celebrate the Victory of Playa Girón. We will begin by celebrating the proclamation of the socialist character of the Revolution, the speech delivered by Fidel during the burial of the victims of the bombings, which were launched the day before the attack on Girón, and we will conclude on the day when victory was attained. The parade will be closed by tens of thousands of youths representing the new generations, which are the guarantee of the continuity of the Revolution.

This celebration will be dedicated to our youth, which has never failed to be faithful to the Revolution. Youth were those who died during the attack on the Moncada and Bayamo garrisons; youth were those who rose up in Santiago de Cuba under the leadership of Frank País; youth were the Granma expeditionaries who, after the fiasco at Alegría de Pío, founded the Rebel Army, and were joined by waves of other youths from the countryside and the city, particularly by the reinforcement that came from Santiago that was personally organized and sent by Frank himself; youth were those who were members of the powerful clandestine movement of all the organizations; youth were those who courageously attacked the Presidential Palace and the 'Radio Reloj' radio station on March 13, 1957, headed by Jose Antonio Echeverría; youth were those who fought heroically in Girón; youth and teenagers were those who joined the literacy campaign in that same year, also 50 years ago; youth were most of those who fought against the mercenary bands organized by the CIA, until well advanced the year 1965; youth were those who wrote beautiful pages of courage and stoicism in the internationalist missions in several countries, particularly those in support of the liberation movements in Africa; youth are our Five Heroes who risked their lives in the struggle against terrorism and have suffered more than 12 years of cruel imprisonment; youth are many of the thousands and thousands of cooperation workers who defend the human life by curing diseases that have already been eradicated in Cuba, supporting the literacy programs and disseminating culture and the practice of sports throughout many countries of the world.

This Revolution has been the result of the sacrifices made by the Cuban youth: the workers, farmers, students, intellectuals, military, all the youths from all the times during which they have lived and struggled. That is why we will dedicate this fiftieth anniversary celebration to our youth.

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

Huge have also been the challenges and dangers since the triumph of the Revolution and the proclamation of its socialist character, especially after victory of Girón. But no difficulty has ever bent our spirit. We are and will be here thanks to the dignity, the integrity, the courage, the ideological strength, the revolutionary spirit and the sacrifice of the revolutionary people of Cuba, which long ago embraced the idea that socialism is the only guarantee to continue to be free and independent.

Thank you, very much (Ovation).



## 2

# Central Report To The 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba

By: Raúl Castro Ruz

Apr 16th, 2011

Comrades all,

The opening of the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba this afternoon marks a date of extraordinary significance in our history, the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of the socialist nature of our Revolution by its Commander in Chief, Fidel Castro Ruz, on April 16, 1961, as we paid our last respects to those killed the day before during the bombings of the air bases. This action, which was the prelude to the Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs) mercenary invasion organized and funded by the United States government, was part of its plans to destroy the Revolution and restore its domination over Cuba in league with the Organization of American States (OAS).

On that occasion, Fidel said to the people already armed and inflamed with passion: "This is what they cannot forgive us...that we have made a Socialist Revolution right under the nose of the United States..." "Comrades, workers and farmers, this is the Socialist and democratic Revolution of the people, by the people and for the people. And for this Revolution of the people, by the people and for the people, we are willing to give our lives."

The response to this appeal would not take long; in the fight against the aggressor a few hours later, the combatants of the Ejército Rebelde, police agents and militiamen shed their blood, for the first time, in defense of socialism and attained victory in less than 72 hours under the personal leadership of comrade Fidel.

The Military Parade that we watched this morning, dedicated to the young generations, and particularly the vigorous popular march that followed, are eloquent proof of the fortitude of the Revolution to follow the example of the heroic fighters of Playa Girón.

Next May 1st, on the occasion of the International Workers Day, we will do likewise throughout the country to show the unity of Cubans in defense of their independence and national sovereignty, which as proven by history, can only be conquered through Socialism.

This Congress, the supreme body of the Party, as set forth in article 20 of its Statutes, brings together today one thousand delegates representing nearly 800 thousand party members affiliated to over 61 thousand party cells. But, this Congress really started on November 9 last year, with the release of the Draft Guidelines of the Economic and Social Policy of the Party and the Revolution, a subject that, as previously indicated, will be at the center of the debates of this meeting that is regarded with great expectations by our people.

As of that moment, numerous seminars were organized to clarify and to delve into the content of the Guidelines in



order to adequately train the cadres and officials who would lead the discussions of the material by the party members, mass organizations and the people in general.

The discussions extended for three months, from December 1, 2010 to February 28 of this year, with the participation of 8, 913,838 people in more than 163 thousand meetings held by the different organizations in which over three million people offered their contributions. I want to make clear that, although it has not been accurately determined yet, the total figure of participants includes tens of thousands of members of the Party and the Young Communist League who attended the meetings in their respective cells but also those convened in their work or study centers in addition to those of their communities. This is also the case of non-party members who took part in the meetings organized at their work centers and later at their communities.

Even the National Assembly of People's Power dedicated nearly two work sessions in its latest Ordinary Meeting held this past December to analyze with the deputies the Draft Guidelines.

This process has exposed the capacity of the Party to conduct a serious and transparent dialogue with the people on any issue, regardless of how sensitive it might be, especially as we try to create a national consensus on the features that should characterize the country's Social and Economic Model.

At the same time, the data collected from the results of the discussions become a formidable working tool for the government and Party leadership at all levels, like a popular referendum given the depth, scope and pace of the changes we must introduce.

In a truly extensive democratic exercise, the people freely stated their views, clarified their doubts, proposed amendments, expressed their dissatisfactions and discrepancies, and suggested that we work toward the solution of other problems not included in the document.

Once again the unity and confidence of most Cubans in the Party and the Revolution were put to the test; a unity that far from denying the difference of opinions is strengthened and consolidated by them. Every opinion, without exception, was incorporated to the analysis, which helped to enhance the Draft submitted to the consideration of the delegates to this Congress.

It would be fair to say that, in substance, the Congress was already held in that excellent debate with the people. Now, it is left to us as delegates to engage in the final discussion of the Draft and the election of the higher organs of party leadership.

The Economic Policy Commission of the 6th Party Congress first entrusted with the elaboration of the Draft Guidelines and then with the organization of the discussions has focused on the following five issues:

1. Reformulation of the guidelines bearing in mind the opinions gathered.
2. Organization, orientation and control of their implementation.
3. The thorough training of the cadres and other participants for the implementation of some of the measures already enforced.
4. Systematic oversight of the agencies and institutions in charge of enforcing the decisions stemming from the guidelines and evaluation of their results.
5. Leading the process of information to the people.

In compliance with the aforesaid, the Draft Guidelines were reformulated and then submitted to analysis by both the Political Bureau and the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers, on March 19 and 20, respectively, with the participation of the Secretariat of the Party's Central Committee and the top leaders of the Central Trade Union (CTC), the Young Communist League (UJC) and the other mass organizations, approved at that level –also as a

draft—and then delivered to you for its examination during three days in every provincial delegation to the Congress and for its discussion at the five commissions of this party meeting for its subsequent approval.

Next, I will offer some data to illustrate our people on the results of the discussions of the Draft Guidelines, even though detailed information will be published later.

The original document contained 291 guidelines; 16 of them were moved to others; 94 preserved their phrasing; 181 had their content modified; and, 36 new guidelines were incorporated for a grand total of 311 guidelines in the current draft.

A simple arithmetic operation with these numbers avows the quality of the consultation process as a result of which approximately two thirds of the guidelines —68% to be exact—was reformulated.

The principle that guided this process was that the validity of a proposal would not depend on the number of opinions expressed about it. This is shown by the fact that several guidelines were either modified or removed based on the opinion of only one person or a small number of them.

It is also worth explaining that some opinions were not included at this stage either because the issue deserved a more exhaustive analysis for which the necessary conditions did not exist or because they openly contradicted the essence of socialism, as for example 45 proposals advocating the concentration of property.

I mean that, although the prevailing tendency was a general understanding of and support for the content of the Guidelines, there was no unanimity; and that is precisely what was needed for we really wanted this to be a democratic and serious consultation with the people.

For this reason, I can assure you that the Guidelines are an expression of our people's will, contained in the policy of the Party, the Government and the State, to update the Economic and Social Model in order to secure the continuity and irreversibility of Socialism as well as the economic development of the country and the improvement of the living standard of our people combined with the indispensable formation of ethical and political values.

As expected, most of the proposals made during the discussion of the Draft Guidelines were focused on Chapter VI, "Social Policy" and Chapter II "Macroeconomic Policies"; both accounted for 50.9% of the total, followed, in descending order, by Chapter XI, "Construction, Housing and Water Resources Policy"; Chapter X, "Transportation Policy"; and, Chapter I, "Economic Management Model." In fact, 75% of the opinions expressed focused on these five chapters out of a total of twelve.

On the other hand, 67% of the proposals referred to 33 guidelines, that is, 11% of the total. In fact, the highest number of proposals pertained to guidelines number 162, dealing with the removal of the ration book; 61 and 62, on the pricing policy; 262, on passengers' transportation; 133, on education; 54, related to the establishment of a single currency; and, 143, on the quality of healthcare services.

Undoubtedly, the ration book and its removal spurred most of the contributions of the participants in the debates, and it is only natural. Two generations of Cubans have spent their lives under this rationing system that, despite its harmful egalitarian quality, has for four decades ensured every citizen access to basic food at highly subsidized derisory prices.

This distribution mechanism introduced in times of shortages during the 1960s, in the interest of providing equal protection to our people from those involved in speculation and hoarding with a lucrative spirit, has become in the course of the years an intolerable burden to the economy and discouraged work, in addition to eliciting various types of transgressions.

Since the ration book is designed to provide equal coverage to 11 million Cubans, there are more than a few examples of absurdities such as allocating a quota of coffee to the newborn. The same happened with cigarettes until

September 2010 as they were supplied to smokers and non-smokers alike thus fostering the expansion of that unsafe habit in the population.

Regarding this sensitive issue, the span of opinions is very broad, from those who suggest dismissing it right away to others who categorically oppose its removal and propose to ration everything, the industrial goods included. Others are of the view that in order to successfully prevent hoarding and ensure everybody's access to basic foods, it would be necessary, in a first stage, to keep the products rationed even if no longer subsidized. Quite a few have recommended depriving of the ration book those who neither study nor work or advised that the people with higher incomes relinquish that system voluntarily.

Certainly, the use of the ration book to distribute the basic foods, which was justified under concrete historic circumstances, has remained with us for too long even when it contradicts the substance of the distribution principle that should characterize Socialism, that is, "From each in accordance with his ability and to each in accordance with his labor," and this situation should be resolved.

In this connection, it seems appropriate to recall what comrade Fidel indicated in his Central Report to the First Party Congress on December 17, 1975: "There is no doubt that in the organization of our economy we have erred on the side of idealism and sometimes even ignored the reality of the objective economic laws we should comply with."

The problem we are facing has nothing to do with concepts, but rather with how to do it, when to do it, and at what pace. The removal of the ration book is not an end in itself, and it should not be perceived as an isolated decision but rather as one of the first indispensable measures aimed at the eradication of the deep distortions affecting the operation of the economy and society as a whole.

No member of the leadership of this country in their right mind would think of removing that system by decree, all at once, before creating the proper conditions to do so, which means undertaking other transformations of the Economic Model with a view to increasing labor efficiency and productivity in order to guarantee stable levels of production and supplies of basic goods and services accessible to all citizens but no longer subsidized.

Of course, this issue is closely related to pricing and to the establishment of a single currency, as well as to wages and to the "reversed pyramid" phenomenon which as spelled out at the Parliament last December 18, is expressed in the mismatch between salaries and the ranking or importance of the work performed. These problems came up often in the contributions made by the citizens.

In Cuba, under socialism, there will never be space for "shock therapies" that go against the neediest, who have traditionally been the staunchest supporters of the Revolution; as opposed to the packages of measures frequently applied on orders of the International Monetary Fund and other international economic organizations to the detriment of the Third World peoples and, lately enforced in the highly developed nations where students' and workers' demonstrations are violently suppressed.

The Revolution will not leave any Cuban helpless. The social welfare system is being reorganized to ensure a rational and deferential support to those who really need it. Instead of massively subsidizing products as we do now, we shall gradually provide for those people lacking other support.

This principle is absolutely valid for the restructuring of the work force, —an ongoing process— streamlining the bloated payrolls in the public sector on the basis of a strict assessment of the workers' demonstrated capacity. This process will continue slowly but uninterruptedly, its pace determined by our capacity to create the necessary conditions for its full implementation.

Other elements will have an impact on this process, including the expansion and easing of labor in the non-public sector. This modality of employment that over 200 thousand Cubans have adopted from October last year until today —twice as many as before— make up an alternative endorsed by the current legislation, therefore, it should enlist

the support, assistance and protection of the officials at all levels while demanding strict adherence to the ensuing obligations, including tax payment.

The growth of the non-public sector of the economy, far from an alleged privatization of the social property as some theoreticians would have us believe, is to become an active element facilitating the construction of socialism in Cuba since it will allow the State to focus on rising the efficiency of the basic means of production, which are the property of the entire people, while relieving itself from those management of activities that are not strategic for the country.

This, on the other hand, will make it easier for the State to continue ensuring healthcare and education services free of charge and on equal footing to all of the people and their adequate protection through the Social Welfare System; the promotion of physical education and sports; the defense of the national identity; and, the preservation of the cultural heritage, and the artistic, scientific and historic wealth of the nation.

Then, the Socialist State will have more possibilities to make a reality of the idea expressed by Martí that can be found heading our Constitution: "I want the first Law of our Republic to be the Cubans' cult of the full dignity of man."

It is the responsibility of the State to defend national independence and sovereignty, values in which the Cubans take pride, and to continue securing the public order and safety that make Cuba one of the safest and most peaceful nations of the world, without drug-trafficking or organized crime; without beggars or child labor; without the mounted police charging against workers, students and other segments of the population; without extrajudicial executions, clandestine jails or tortures, despite the groundless smear campaigns constantly orchestrated against us overlooking the fact that such realities are, foremost, basic human rights that most people on Earth can't even aspire to.

Now, in order to guarantee all of these conquests of Socialism, without renouncing their quality and scope, the social programs should be characterized by greater rationality so that better and sustainable results can be obtained in the future with lower spending and keeping the balance with the general economic situation of the country.

As you can see in the Guidelines, these ideas do not contradict the significance we attach to the separate roles to be played in the economy by the state institutions, on the one hand, and the enterprises, on the other, an issue that for decades has been fraught with confusion and improvisations and that we are forced to resolve on a mid-term basis in the context of the strengthening and improvement of institutionalization.

A full understanding of these concepts will permit a solid advance while avoiding backward steps in the gradual decentralization of powers from the Central to the local governments, and from the ministries and other national agencies in favor of the increasing autonomy of the socialist State-funded companies.

The excessively centralized model characterizing our economy at the moment shall move in an orderly fashion, with discipline and the participation of all workers, toward a decentralized system where planning will prevail, as a socialist feature of management, albeit without ignoring the current market trends. This will contribute to the flexibility and constant updating of the plan.

The lesson taught by practical experience is that an excessive centralization inhibits the development of initiatives in the society and in the entire production line, where the cadres got used to having everything decided "at the top" and thus ceased feeling responsible for the outcome of the entities they headed.

Our entrepreneurs, with some exceptions, settled themselves comfortably safe and quiet "to wait" and developed an allergy to the risks involved in making decisions, that is, in being right or wrong. This mentality characterized by inertia should definitely be removed to be able to cut the knots that grip the development of the productive forces. This is a pursuit of strategic significance, thus it is no accident that it has been reflected one way or another in the

24 guidelines contained in Chapter I, “Economic Management Model.”

As far as this issue is concerned, we cannot indulge in improvisations or act hastily. In order to decentralize and change that mentality, it is indispensable to elaborate a framework of regulations clearly defining the powers of and functions at every level, from the national to the local, invariably accompanied by the corresponding accounting, financial and management oversight.

Progress is already being made in that direction. The studies began almost two years ago for improving the operation as well as the structure and makeup of the government at the different levels. These resulted in the enforcement of the Council of Ministers Regulation, the reorganization of the work system with the State and Government cadres, the introduction of a planning procedure for the most important activities, the establishment of the organizational bases to provide the Government with an accurate and timely information system supported by its own info-communications infrastructure, and the creation of the provinces of Artemisa and Mayabeque, on experimental basis and under a new structural and functional concept.

To begin decentralizing powers, it will be necessary for the cadres of the State and the companies to redeem the obvious role of contracts in the economy, as expressed in guideline number 10. This will also help bring back order and discipline to making and obtaining payments, a subject in which a good part of our economy has been getting poor grades.

As a no less important byproduct, the appropriate use of contracts as regulatory instruments of relations among the various economic actors will become an effective antidote against the extended habit of “reunionism,” that is, calling an excessive number of meetings and other collective functions, often presided by senior officials and uselessly attended by many others, only to enforce what the parties involved recognized as rights and obligations in the contract signed, and whose fulfillment they have failed to demand from those required to do so.

In this respect, it is worth emphasizing that 19 opinions, registered in 9 provinces, claimed for a reduction in the number of meetings and their duration to the minimum indispensable. This issue I intend to take up again when dealing with the functioning of the Party.

We are convinced that the mission ahead of us in connection with this and other issues related to the updating of the Economic Model is full of complexities and interrelations that, one way or another, touch on every aspect of the society as a whole. Therefore, we are aware that it is not something that can be solved overnight, not even in one year, and that it will take at least five years to implement it comprehensively and harmoniously. And, when this is achieved, it will be necessary to never stop and to continue working for its improvement in order to successfully face the new challenges brought up by development.

Metaphorically speaking, it might be said that every now and then, as the scenario changes, the country should make its own well-tailored suit.

We are not under the illusion that the Guidelines and the measures conducive to the implementation of the Economic Model will by themselves provide a universal remedy to all our evils. It will be required to simultaneously build a greater political awareness and common sense, and to be more intransigent with the lack of discipline and the violations committed by all, but primarily by the leading cadres.

This became all too evident a few months back in the flaws observed during the implementation of some specific measures –neither complex nor of great magnitude– due to bureaucratic obstacles and the lack of preparation of the local governments for the expansion of self-employment.

It is worthwhile reiterating that our cadres must get used to working with the guiding documents issued by the institutions empowered to do so and abandon the irresponsible habit of putting them on ice. Life teaches that it is not enough to issue a good regulation, whether a law or simply a resolution. It is necessary to also train those in charge



of its implementation, to monitor them and to check their practical knowledge of the issue. Let's not forget that the worst law is that which is not enforced or respected.

The system of Party schools at the provincial and national level, along with the unavoidable reorientation of their syllabus, will play a protagonist role in the preparation and continuous recycling in these subjects of Party and government cadres as well as the company executives with the aid of the educational institutions specialized in this area of knowledge and the valuable input of the members of the National Association of Economists and Accountants, as it was the case with the discussion of the Guidelines.

At the same time, and with the purpose of effectively arranging in order of importance the introduction of the required changes, the Political Bureau agreed to bring to the Congress the proposal of establishing of a Standing Government Commission for Implementation and Development, subordinated to the President of the Council of State and Ministers which, without affecting in any way the powers invested in the corresponding Central Government Organs, will be responsible for monitoring, checking and coordinating the actions of everyone involved in this activity, and for proposing the insertion of new guidelines, something that will be indispensable in the future.

In this token, we feel it is advisable to remember the orientation included by comrade Fidel in his Central Report to the First Party Congress, nearly 36 years ago, about the Economy Management System that we intended to introduce back then and failed due to our lack of systematization, control and discipline. He said "...that the Party leaders but foremost the State leaders turn its implementation into a personal undertaking and a matter of honor as they grow more aware of its crucial importance and the need to make every effort to apply it consistently, always under the leadership of the National Commission created to that end..." and he concluded: "...to widely disseminate information on the system, its principles and mechanisms through a kind of literature within reach of the masses so that the workers can master the issue. The success of the system will largely depend on the workers knowledge of the issue."

I will not tire of repeating that in this Revolution everything has been said. The best example of this we have in Fidel's ideas that Granma, the Official Party organ, has been running in the past few years.

Whatever we approve in this Congress cannot suffer the same fate as the previous agreements, most of them forgotten and unfulfilled. Whatever it is that we agree upon in this or future meetings must guide the behavior and action of Party members and leaders alike and its materialization must be ensured through the corresponding legal instruments produced by the National Assembly of People's Power, the State Council or the Government, in accordance with their legislative powers and the Constitution.

It's only fair to say very clearly, in order to avoid misinterpretations, that the agreements reached by congresses and other leading Party organs do not become law in themselves. They are orientations of a political and moral nature, and it is incumbent on the Government, which is the body in charge of management, to regulate their implementation.

This is why the Standing Commission for Implementation and Development will include a Judicial Subgroup made up by highly qualified specialists who will coordinate with the corresponding organs —with full respect for institutionalization— the legal amendments required to accompany the updating of the Economic and Social Model, simplifying and harmonizing the content of hundreds of ministerial resolutions, legislative decrees and legislations, and subsequently proposing, in due course, the introduction of the relevant adjustments to the Constitution of the Republic.

Without waiting to have everything worked out, progress has been made in the legal regulations associated with the purchase and sale of housing and cars, the modification of Legislative Decree No. 259 expanding the limits of fallow land to be awarded in usufruct to those agricultural producers with outstanding results and the granting of credits to self-employed workers and to the population at large.

Likewise, we consider it advisable to propose to this Congress that the first point of the agenda of every plenary meeting of the next Central Committee, to be held no less than twice a year, is a report on the status of the implementation of the agreements adopted in this Congress on the updating of the Economic Model, and that the second point is an analysis on the fulfillment of the economic plan, be it from the first semester or from the running year.

We also recommend the National Assembly of People's Power to proceed in the same way during its ordinary sessions with the purpose of strengthening its protagonist role as the supreme organ of the State power.

Starting from the deep conviction that nothing that we do is perfect and that even if it seems so today it will not be tomorrow under new circumstances, the higher organs of the Party and the State and Government Powers should keep a systematic and close oversight on this process and be ready to timely introduce any adjustments called for to correct negative effects.

Comrades,

It's a question of being alert, with our feet and ears to the ground, and when a practical problem arise, whatever the area or the place, the cadres at the different levels must act swiftly and deliberately avoiding the old approach of leaving its solution to time, since we have learned from experience that the problems grow more complicated as time goes by.

In the same token, we should cultivate and preserve a fluid relationship with the masses, devoid of formality, that would allow for an efficient feed-back of their concerns and dissatisfactions so that the masses can indicate the pace of the changes to be introduced.

The attention paid to a recent misunderstanding on the reorganization of some basic services shows that when the Party and the Government, each in its own role, with different methods and styles, act promptly and harmoniously on the concerns of the people providing clear and simple explanations, the people support the measure and their confidence in their leaders grows.

The Cuban media in its various formats should play a decisive role in the pursuit of this goal with clarifications and objective, continuous and critical reports on the progress of the updating of the Economic Model so that with profound and shrewd articles and reports written in terms accessible to all they can help building in our country a culture about these topics.

In this area of work it is also necessary to definitely banish the habit of describing the national reality in pretentious high-flown language or with excessive formality. Instead, written materials and television and radio programs should be produced that catch the attention of the audience with their content and style while encouraging public debate. But this demands from our journalists to increase their knowledge and become better professionals even if most of the time, despite the agreements adopted by the Party on the information policy, they cannot access the information timely nor contact the cadres and experts involved with the issues in question. The combination of these elements explains the rather common dissemination of boring, improvised or superficial reports.

Our media has an important contribution to make to the promotion of the national culture and the revival of the civic values of our society.

Another crucial issue very closely related to the updating of the Economic and Social Model of the country and that should help in its materialization is the celebration of a National Party Conference. This will reach conclusions on the modification of the Party working methods and style with a view to ensure, for today and for the future, the consistent application of article 5 of the Constitution of the Republic setting forth that the Party is the organized vanguard of the Cuban nation and the top leading force of the society and the State.

Initially, we had planned to call that Conference for December 2011; however, given the complications inherent to the

last month of the year and the advisability of having a prudent reserve of time to adjust details, we are planning to hold that meeting at the end of January 2012.

Last December 18, I explained to the Parliament that due to the inefficiency of the Government Organs in the discharge of their functions, the Party had spent years involved in undertakings that were not its responsibility, and compromised and limited its role.

We are convinced that the only thing that can make the Revolution and Socialism fail in Cuba, risking the future of our nation, is our inability to overcome the mistakes we have been making for more than five decades and the new ones we could make.

The first thing we should do to correct a mistake is to consciously admit it in its full dimension but the fact is that, although from the early years of the Revolution Fidel made a clear distinction between the roles of the Party and the State, we were inconsistent in the follow-up of his instructions and simply improvised under the pressure of emergencies.

There can be no better example than what the leader of the Revolution said as early as March 26, 1962, by radio and television, explaining to the people the methods and functioning of the Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas (ORI), which preceded the Party. He said: "...the Party leads, it leads through the entire Party and it leads through the public administration. An official must have authority. A minister must have authority; a manager must have authority and discuss as much as necessary with the Advising Technical Council (today, the Board of Directors), discuss with the working masses, discuss with the Party cell, but it is the manager who makes the decision, because it is his responsibility..." This orientation dates back 49 years.

There are very well defined concepts that, in substance, remain completely valid regardless of the time that has passed since Lenin formulated them, almost 100 years ago, and they should be taken up again, bearing in mind the characteristics and experiences of our country.

In 1973, during the preparations of the First Party Congress, it was defined that the Party must lead and supervise with its own ways and means, which are different from the ways, means and resources available to the State for exercising its authority. The Party's guidelines, resolutions and provisions are not legally binding for all citizens; it is the Party members who should abide by them as their conscience dictates since there is no apparatus to force or coerce them into complying. This is a major difference about the role and methods of the Party and the State.

The fortitude of the Party basically lies in its moral authority, its influence on the masses and the trust of the people. The action of the Party is based, above all, on the honesty of its motives and the justice of its political line.

The fortitude of the State lies in its material authority, which consists of the strength of the institutions responsible for demanding from everyone to comply with the legal regulations it enacts.

The damage caused by the confusion of these two concepts is manifested, firstly, in the deterioration of the Party's political work and, secondly, in the decline of the authority of the State and the Government as the officials cease feeling responsible for their decisions.

Comrades,

The idea is to forever relieve the Party of activities completely alien to its nature as a political organization; in short, to get rid of managing activities and to have each one do what they are meant to do.

These misconceptions are closely linked to the flaws of the Party's policy with the cadres, which will also be analyzed by the abovementioned National Conference. More than a few bitter lessons are the legacy of the mistakes made in this area due to the lack of rigorous criteria and vision which opened the way to the hasty promotion of inexperienced and immature cadres, pretending otherwise through simulation and opportunism, attitudes fostered by the

wrong idea that an unspoken premise to occupy a leading position was to be a member of the Party or the Young Communist League.

We must decidedly abandon such practice and leave it only for responsibilities in the political organizations. Membership in a political organization should not be a precondition for holding a leading position with the State or the Government. What the cadres need are adequate training and the willingness to recognize as their own the Party policy and program.

The true leaders do simply not crop up in schools or from favoritism; they are forged at the grassroots level, working in the profession they studied in contact with the workers and rising gradually to leadership by setting an example in terms of sacrifices and results.

In this regard, I think that the Party leadership, at all levels, should be self-critical and adopt the necessary measures to prevent the reemergence of such tendencies. This is also applicable to the lack of systematic work and political will to secure the promotion of women, black people and people of mixed race, and youths to decision-making positions on the basis of their merits and personal qualifications.

It's really embarrassing that we have not solved this problem in more than half a century. This shall weight heavily on our consciences for many years because we have simply been inconsistent with the countless orientations given by Fidel from the early days of the revolutionary victory and throughout the years, and also because the solution to this disproportion was contained in the agreements adopted by the transcendental First Party Congress and the four congresses that followed. Still, we have failed to ensure its realization.

The solution of such issues that define the future will never again be left to spontaneity but rather to foresight and to the unwavering political intention of preserving and perfecting socialism in Cuba.

Although we kept on trying to promote young people to senior positions, life proved that we did not always make the best choice. Today, we are faced with the consequences of not having a reserve of well-trained replacements with sufficient experience and maturity to undertake the new and complex leadership responsibilities in the Party, the State and the Government, a problem we should solve gradually, in the course of five years, avoiding hasty actions and improvisations but starting as soon as the Congress is over.

This will advance further with the strengthening of the democratic spirit and collective work of the leading Party, State and Government organs as we guarantee the systematic rejuvenation of all of the Party and management positions, from the grassroots to the comrades with the highest responsibilities, including the current President of the Council of State and Ministers and the First Secretary of the Central Committee elected in this Congress.

In this regard, we have reached the conclusion that it is advisable to recommend limiting the time of service in high political and State positions to a maximum of two five-year terms. This is possible and necessary under the present circumstances, quite different from those prevailing in the first decades of the Revolution that was not yet consolidated when it had already become the target of continuous threats and aggressions.

The systematic strengthening of our institutions will be both a premise and an indispensable guarantee to prevent this cadre renovation policy from ever jeopardizing the continuation of Socialism in Cuba.

The first step we are taking in this direction is the substantial reduction of the list of leading positions that required approval from the municipal, provincial and national levels of the Party while empowering senior leaders in the ministries and companies to appoint, replace and apply disciplinary measures to a large part of their subordinated cadres with the assistance of the corresponding Cadres Commissions, where the Party is represented and has a voice but which are presided by the manager who makes the final decision. The view of the Party organization is appreciated but the single determining element is the manager, and we should preserve and enhance their authority in harmony with the Party.

As to the internal functioning of the Party, which will also be examined at the National Conference, we think it is worthwhile reflecting on the self-defeating effects of old habits completely alien to the Party's vanguard role in our society. These include the superficiality and excessive formality characterizing the political-ideological work; the use of obsolete methods and terminology that ignore the instruction level of the Party members; holding excessively long meetings and often during working hours –which should be sacred, especially for the communists– sometimes with inflexible agendas dictated by the higher level in disregard of the context where the Party members develop their activities; the frequent calls to formal commemorations where still more formal speeches are made; and, the organization of voluntary works on holidays without a real content or adequate coordination that cause spending and have an upsetting and discouraging effect on our comrades.

These criteria also apply to emulation, a movement that lost through the years its capacity to mobilize the workers' collectives and became an alternative mechanism for distribution of moral and material incentives not always justified with concrete results, and in more than a few occasions gave rise to fraudulent information.

Additionally, the Conference will analyze the Party's relations with the Young Communist League and the mass organizations to break with routine and schematic approaches and to allow each of them to recover their *raison d'être* under the present conditions.

To sum up, comrades, the National Conference will focus on enhancing the role of the Party as the main advocate of the interests of the Cuban people.

The realization of this objective definitely requires a change of mentality, avoiding formality and fanfare both in ideas and in action; that is, to do away with the resistance to change based on empty dogma and slogans and reach for the core of things as the children of La Colmenita Theater Company brilliantly show in the playwright "Abracadabra."

It's the only way in which the Communist Party of Cuba can become, for all times, the worthy heir to the authority and unlimited confidence of the people in their Revolution and their only Commander in Chief, comrade Fidel Castro Ruz, whose moral contribution and undisputable leadership do not depend on any position and that as a soldier of ideas has not ceased to fight and help with his enlightening Reflections and other actions the revolutionary cause and the defense of Humanity from menacing dangers.

With respect to the international situation, we shall use a few minutes to assess the predicament of the world at this point in time.

There is no end in sight to the global economic crisis affecting every nation because it is a systemic crisis. The powerful have directed their remedies to protecting the institutions and procedures that originated it and to depositing the terrible burden of its consequences on the workers of their own countries, and particularly of the underdeveloped countries. Meanwhile, the climbing prices of foods and oil are pushing hundreds of millions of people into destitute poverty.

The effects of climate change are already devastating and the lack of political will of the industrial nations prevents the adoption of urgent and indispensable action to avoid the catastrophe.

We live in a convulsive world where natural disasters follow one another like the earthquakes in Haiti, Chile and Japan while the United States wages wars of conquest in Iraq and Afghanistan that have taken the lives of more than one million civilians.

Popular movements in Arab nations are uprising against corrupted and oppressive governments allied with the United States and the European Union. The unfortunate conflict in Libya, a nation subjected to a brutal military intervention by NATO, has given that organization a new pretext to go beyond its originally defensive limits and expand worldwide the threats and war actions undertaken to safeguard its geostrategic interests and access to petroleum.



Likewise, imperialism and the domestic reactionary forces connive to destabilize other countries while Israel oppresses and massacres the Palestinian people with complete impunity.

The United States and NATO include in their doctrines the aggressive interventionism against the Third World countries aimed at plundering their resources. They also impose to the United Nations a double standard and use the media consortia in an increasingly coordinated way to conceal or distort the events, as it befits the world power centers, in a hypocritical mockery intended to deceive the public opinion.

Despite its complex economic situation, our country maintains its cooperation with 101 Third World nations. In Haiti, after 12 years of intensive work saving lives, the Cuban healthcare personnel have been working with admirable generosity, since January 2010, alongside collaborators from other countries facing the situation created by the earthquake and the cholera epidemic that ensued.

To the Bolivarian Revolution, and to comrade Hugo Chávez Frías, we express our resolute solidarity and commitment, conscious of the significance of the process undertaken by the fraternal Venezuelan people for Our America, in the Bicentennial of its Independence.

We also share the hopes of the transformation movements in various Latin American countries, headed by prestigious leaders who represent the interests of the oppressed majorities.

We shall continue helping the integrationist processes of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the South Union (UNASUR) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CLACS) currently involved in arrangements for the celebration of its foundational summit on July this year, in Caracas. The establishment of this entity was the most extraordinary institutional event in our hemisphere during the past century, since for the first time all of the countries south of the Rio Bravo were meeting on our own.

We are encouraged by this increasingly united and independent Latin America and the Caribbean, whose solidarity we appreciate.

We shall continue advocating International Law and supporting the principle of sovereign equality among the States as well as the right of the peoples to self-determination. We reject the use of force and aggression, the wars of conquest, the plundering of the natural resources and the exploitation of man.

We condemn every form of terrorism, particularly State terrorism. We shall defend peace and development for all peoples and fight for the future of humanity.

The US Administration has not changed its traditional policy aimed at discrediting and ousting the Revolution. On the contrary, it has continued to fund projects designed to directly promote subversion, foster destabilization and interfere in our domestic affairs. The current administration has taken some positive but extremely limited actions.

The US economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba remains in force and intensifies under the current administration, particularly with respect to financial transactions. It ignores the almost unanimous condemnation of the blockade by the international community that for 19 consecutive years has advocated its removal.

Although apparently, as evidenced in the recent visit to the Palacio de La Moneda in Santiago de Chile, the United States leaders do not like to remember history when dealing with the present and the future, it is worthwhile indicating that the Cuba blockade is not something of the past. Therefore, it is our obligation to recall the content of a secret memorandum, declassified in 1991, where Deputy Undersecretary of State for Inter American Affairs Lester D. Mallory wrote on April 6, 1960: "Most Cubans support Castro...There is no effective political opposition (...) The only possible way to make the government lose domestic support is by provoking disappointment and discouragement through economic dissatisfaction and hardships (...) Every possible means should be immediately used to weaken the economic life (...) denying Cuba funds and supplies to reduce nominal and real salaries with the objective of

provoking hunger, desperation and the overthrow of the government.”

Mark the date of the memorandum: April 6, 1960, almost an exact year to the day of the Playa Girón invasion.

This memorandum was not an initiative of that official. It was part of the policy aimed at overthrowing the Revolution, like the “Covert Action Program against the Castro Regime,” approved by President Eisenhower on March 17, 1960, using all the available means, from the creation of a unified opposition, psychological warfare and covert intelligence operations to the training in third countries of paramilitary forces with the capacity to invade the Island.

The United States fostered terrorism in the cities, and that same year, before the Playa Girón attack, promoted the establishment of counterrevolutionary armed-gangs, supplied by air and sea, that robbed and murdered peasants, workers and young teachers, until they were finally annihilated in 1965.

In Cuba, we will never forget the 3,478 dead and 2,099 incapacitated by the policy of State terrorism.

Half a century of hardships and suffering have gone by in which our people have put up a resistance and defended their Revolution, unwilling to surrender or to besmirch the memory of the fallen in the past 150 years, from the onset of our struggles for independence.

The US government has not ceased to give sanctuary and to protect notorious terrorists while extending the suffering and unfair incarceration of the heroic Cuban Five antiterrorist fighters.

Its Cuba policy lacks credibility and moral basis. In order to justify it, baseless pretexts are used, which grow obsolete and then change depending on Washington’s interests.

The US government should not have doubts that the Cuban Revolution will be stronger after this Congress. If they want to cling on to their policy of hostility, blockade and subversion we are prepared to continue to face it.

We reiterate our willingness to engage in a dialogue and to take on the challenge of having normal relations with the United States as well as to coexist in a civilized manner, our differences notwithstanding, on the basis of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs.

At the same time, we will permanently give a priority to defense, following Fidel’s instructions as expressed in his Central Report to the First Congress, when he said: “While imperialism exists, the Party, the State and the people will pay utmost attention to defense. The revolutionary guard will never be careless. History teaches with too much eloquence that those who forget this principle do not survive the mistake.”

In the present scenario and predictable future, the strategic conception of “the Popular War” remains absolutely valid, thus it is constantly enriched and improved. Its commanding and leadership system has been reinforced and its capacity to react to various exceptional situations has increased.

The defensive capacity of the country has reached a higher dimension, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Using our own available resources, we have improved the technical condition and maintenance as well as the preservation of the armament and carried on the production effort and especially the modernization of the military technology taking into account its prohibitive world market prices. In this area, it is fair to recognize the contribution of scores of military and civilian institutions, proof of the enormous scientific, technological and productive potential created by the Revolution.

The degree of preparation of the national territory as the theater of military operations has been significantly boosted; the fundamental armament is protected, the same as a substantial part of the troops, the commanding organs and the people.

A communication infrastructure has been established to ensure the steady functioning of the commanding posts at

all levels. All of the material reserves have been raised with better distribution and protection.

The Revolutionary Armed Forces, or put another way, the people in uniform shall continue to constantly improve and preserve the authority and prestige earned with their discipline and order in the defense of the people and of Socialism.

We shall now deal with another no less significant issue of our times.

The Party must be convinced that beyond material needs and cultural interests our people hold a diversity of concepts and ideas about their own spiritual necessities.

Our National Hero José Martí, a man who synthesized that convergence of spirituality and revolutionary sentiments, wrote many pages about this subject.

Fidel addressed this topic quite early, in 1954, when still in jail he evoked Renato Guitart, one of the martyrs of the Moncada: "Physical life is ephemeral; it inexorably passes; the same as many and many generations of men have passed, as our own lives will shortly pass. This truth should teach every human being that the immortal values of the spirit stand above them. What is the meaning of life without the spirit? What is life then? How can death take those that understand this and still generously sacrifice their lives to good and justice!"

These values have always been present in his ideas, and so he insisted on them in 1971, at a meeting with catholic priests in Santiago de Chile: "I tell you that there are ten thousand times more coincidences of Christianity with Communism than there might be with Capitalism."

And, he returned to this idea as he addressed the members of the Christian churches in Jamaica in 1977. He said: "We must work together so that when the political idea succeeds the religious idea is not separate and does not appear as the enemy of changes. There are no contradictions between the purposes of religion and the purposes of socialism."

The unity of the revolutionary doctrine and ideas with regards to faith and its followers is rooted in the basis of the nation, which in asserting its secular nature promoted as an unwavering principle the unity of the spirituality with the Homeland bequeathed by Father Felix Varela and the teachings of Luz y Caballero, who categorically said: "I would chose to see the fall of not only the institutions created by man —kings and emperors—but even the stars from the firmament rather than see falling from the human breast the sentiment of justice; that sun of the moral world."

In 1991, the 4th Party Congress agreed to modify the interpretation of the statutes that limited the admission to our organization of revolutionaries with religious beliefs.

The justice of this decision has been confirmed by the role of leaders and representatives of various religious institutions in the different facets of the national life, including the struggle for the return to our Homeland of the child Elián, in which the Cuba Council of Churches played a particularly outstanding role.

However, it is necessary to continue eradicating any prejudice that prevents bringing all Cubans together, like brothers and sisters, in virtue and in the defense of our Revolution, be them believers or not, members of Christian churches; including the Catholic Church, the Russian and Greek Orthodox Churches, the evangelicals and protestant churches; the same as the Cuban religions originated in Africa, the Spiritualist, Jewish, Islamic and Buddhist communities, and fraternal associations, among others. The Revolution has had gestures of appreciation and concord with each of them.

The unforgettable Cintio Vitier, that great poet and writer, who was a deputy to our National Assembly, used the force of his pen and of his Christian and deeply revolutionary ethic, so profoundly rooted in Martí's, to leave us warnings for the present and the future that we should always remember.

Cintio wrote: "What is in danger, we know it, is the nation itself. The nation is by now inseparable from the Revolution that has been a part of it since October 10, 1868, and it has no other alternative: it is either independent or it is no more.

"If the Revolution were defeated, we would fall in the historic vacuum that the enemy wants for us and prepares for us, and that even the most basic people perceive as an abyss.

"It is possible to arrive at defeat, we know, through the intervention of the blockade, of internal decay, and the temptations imposed by the new hegemonic situation in the world."

After stating that "We are at the most challenging time of our history," he admonished: "Forced to fight the irrationality of the world to which it fatally belongs; always threatened by the sequels of dark age-old blights; implacably harassed by the most powerful nation on Earth; and also a victim of imported or indigenous blunders that history shows have never gone unpunished, our small island constricts and dilates, systole and diastole, as a glimmering of hope to itself and to others."

Now, we should address the recently concluded process of releasing counterrevolutionary prisoners, those that in challenging and distressing times for our Homeland have conspired against it at the service of a foreign power.

By sovereign decision of our Government, they were released before fully serving their sentences. We could have done it directly and take credit for a decision that we made conscious of the fortitude of the Revolution. However, we did it in the framework of a dialogue based on mutual respect, loyalty and transparency with the senior leadership of the Catholic Church, which contributed with its humanitarian labors to the completion of this action in harmony; in any case, the laurels correspond to that religious institution.

The representatives of the Catholic Church expressed their viewpoints, not always coincidental with ours, but certainly constructive. This is at least our perception after lengthy talks with Cardinal Jaime Ortega and the Chairman of the Episcopalian Conference Monsignor Dionisio García.

With this action, we have favored the consolidation of the most precious legacy of our history and the revolutionary process: the unity of our nation.

In the same token, we should mention the contribution of the former minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, Miguel Angel Moratinos, who facilitated the humanitarian efforts of the Church so that those who wished to travel abroad or accepted the idea could do so with their families. Others decided to remain in Cuba.

We have patiently endured the implacable smear campaigns on human rights, coordinated from the United States and some countries of the European Union that demand from us no less than unconditional surrender and the immediate dismantling of our socialist regime while encouraging, orienting and assisting the domestic mercenaries to break the law.

In this regard, it is necessary to make clear that we will never deny our people the right to defend their Revolution. The defense of the independence, of the conquests of Socialism and of our streets and plazas will still be the first duty of every Cuban patriot.

Days and years of intensive work and great responsibilities lie before us to preserve and develop, on solid and sustainable basis, the independent and socialist future of our Homeland.

So far, the Central Report to the 6th Party Congress

Thank you, very much.



### 3

## Closing Remarks by Raul Castro Ruz, at the 6th Party Congress

By: Raúl Castro Ruz

Apr 21st, 2011

Dear Fidel,

Comrades,

We have come to the end of this Congress after intensive working sessions where the Cuban communists have discussed and adopted the Guidelines of the Economic and Social Policy of the Party and the Revolution, the Central Report and various resolutions on the main issues examined.

I think that the best and most productive way to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Victory over the Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs) mercenary invasion, on a day like this April 19, 1961, is precisely this excellent Party Congress. This meeting comes to an end more than five months after the onset of the Guidelines discussions. This was a profoundly democratic and transparent process whose indisputable protagonist was our people under the Party's leadership.

On behalf of the nearly 800 thousand Party members, the one thousand delegates to the Congress, the new leadership of our organization and, particularly of comrade Fidel Castro Ruz, I wish to congratulate every Cuban for their decisive participation in the discussions and their unquestionable display of support for the Revolution. This is to us a source of great satisfaction, but most importantly it entails a greater responsibility and commitment to achieve, with everyone's cooperation, the updating of the Economic Model in order to make Socialism in Cuba irreversible.

We said in the Central Report that we are not under the illusion that the Guidelines and the related measures can by themselves solve all of our problems. Our success in this strategic issue and every other will certainly require that we focus on the execution of the agreements reached at this Congress. To that end, our conduct must be guided by one common denominator: ORDER, DISCIPLINE and EXIGENCE.

The updating of the economic model is not a miracle that can happen overnight like some people believe. Its full development will only be attained gradually in the course of five years for it requires a conscientious work of planning and coordination both in legal terms and in the thorough training of all those involved in its implementation.

It will also be necessary to work intensively providing the people with adequate information on every measure adopted while, at the same time, keeping our feet and ears firmly on and attentively to the ground, to be able to overcome the obstacles we encounter, and to quickly rectify the mistakes we make in implementation.



We are convinced that the main enemy we are confronting and shall confront will be our own inefficiencies and that an endeavor of such a great significance to the future of our country cannot be tackled recklessly or hastily. We will make every change required, as Fidel indicated in his Reflections published yesterday, but we will do it at the adequate pace mindful of our objective conditions and always with our people's support and understanding. We will never risk our most powerful weapon: the unity of our nation in support of the Revolution and its programs.

Chauvinism aside, I think that Cuba is one of the few countries in the world in which conditions exist to transform its economic model and leave the crisis behind while avoiding social trauma. First of all because our patriotic people know that their force stems from their monolithic unity, the justice of their cause and military training as well as from their high instruction and pride in their history and revolutionary roots.

We shall advance resolutely despite the US blockade and the adverse conditions prevailing in the international market, which among other things, limit Cuba's access to financial sources and expose it to the oil prices spiral that impinges on the prices of the rest of the raw materials and food. Simply put, everything that we purchase abroad is more expensive.

Barely a few months into the year 2011 and the data already show that the additional cost of imports for this year amounts to over 800 millions USD. This is just on account of price increases and only to buy the same quantities planned; therefore, we will be forced to make adjustments to the plan adopted last December, as soon as this Congress is over.

At the moment, saving all kinds of resources is one of the main things that our country can do to preserve our income since there is still irrational spending and huge reserves of efficiency remain untapped. We should work on this with much common sense and political sensitivity.

Despite the existing acceptable situation to this date concerning the delivery of fallow lands in usufruct, in compliance with Legislative Decree No. 259 of 2008, there are still thousands and thousands of hectares of arable land waiting for those willing to produce what our people and the national economy keep demanding and that can be grown in our farmland to replace the increasingly expensive imports of a number of products that are today benefiting foreign suppliers instead of our farmers.

The first thing that we should do is to implement what we have just approved in this Congress. It is no accident that we have decided that the Central Committee should examine at its plenary meetings—at least twice a year—the execution of the agreements reached at the Congress, particularly, the updating of the economic model and the enforcement of the Economy Plan.

In this sense, I should emphasize the transcendence of the mission assigned to the Government Standing Commission for Implementation and Development, which will harmoniously lead the efforts and actions of the national organs and entities in charge of updating the economic model with the special support of the Ministry of Economics and Planning as the government's General Staff for this activity.

On the other hand, our deputies have an arduous work to carry out since the Guidelines approved by this Congress will be submitted to analysis at the National Assembly of People's Power for legislative ratification in the successive sessions as the elaboration of the corresponding legal regulations is completed.

As you heard, the Congress agreed to convene the National Conference for next January 28, the day we shall commemorate the 159th Anniversary of José Martí's birth. That meeting, actually a continuation of the 6th Party Congress, will essentially assess the Party's work with realism and with a critical spirit. Also, it will make the necessary adjustments to the transformations required for playing the role of senior leading force of the society and the State as provided in Article 5 of the Constitution of the Republic. We have also agreed to empower that Conference to

bring up to date the Party's work methods and style, its structure and cadre policy, and even the renovation and expansion of its Central Committee.

As reflected in its announcement, the National Conference will be guided by the determination "to change everything that must be changed" contained in the brilliant definition of the concept of Revolution offered by comrade Fidel.

In order to succeed, the first thing we need to change in the life of the Party is its mentality, which as a psychological barrier will, in my opinion, be more difficult to overcome for it is tied to many years of repeated dogmas and obsolete criteria. It will also be indispensable to correct mistakes and to shape, with rationality and firm principles, a comprehensive vision of the future that will guarantee the preservation and development of Socialism under the present circumstances.

In terms of the cadre policy, the election of the new Central Committee, its Secretariat and Political Bureau, and their presentation this morning, constitute a first step towards compliance with the agreements reached at this Congress, particularly with respect to the beginning of a gradual process of renovation and rejuvenation of the cadre in different governmental and political positions. At the same time, the gender and racial composition of these organs has been considerably improved.

The Central Committee is now made up by 115 members; 48 of them are women, for a 41.7%. This is more than three times the 13.3% proportion obtained in the previous Congress. The number of black and mixed blood people is 36, which accounts for 31.3% of the total, and 10% higher than before.

This outcome, which I insist is only a first step, is not the result of improvisation. The Party has been working for months toward this end with the objective of submitting a list of candidates that takes into account the necessity to have a fair representation of gender and race in the Central Committee membership.

These were chosen from the huge number of university graduates and certified specialists that the Revolution did not waste time to train. These are the children of the working class; they belong to the most humble segments of the population and have had a politically active life in students' organizations, the Young Communist League and the Party. Most of these youths accumulate 10, 15 or 20 years of experience working at the grassroots level without abandoning their jobs in the professions they studied, and the majority were proposed by their respective Party cells during the process leading up to the Congress.

It is our duty now to monitor and assist their training to enable the progressive improvement of their work and future access to higher responsibilities.

In the makeup of the senior Party organs, —despite the exit of 59 comrades from the Central Committee, half its full members, most of them with a positive record of services to the Revolution— some veterans of the historic generation remain, and it is only natural, for it is one of the consequences of the mistakes made in this area and criticized in the Central Report, the same that prevent us today from having a reserve of mature and sufficiently experienced replacements to take over the main positions in the country.

Therefore, we shall continue working along these lines during the forthcoming National Conference and in our daily Party, Government and State responsibilities.

Comrade Fidel Castro Ruz, founder and Commander in Chief of the Cuban Revolution, set the first example of a consistent behavior in this matter, when he expressly asked not to be included in the Central Committee list of candidates.

Fidel is Fidel, and he does not need to hold any position to forever occupy a topmost place in the present and future of the Cuban nation. While he is strong enough to do it, and fortunately he is at the peak of his political thoughts,

in his modest capacity as Party member and soldier of ideas, he will continue making contributions to the revolutionary struggle and the noblest purposes of Mankind.

As for me, I assume this last assignment with firm conviction and I pledge my honor that the chief mission of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba that gives meaning to his life is to defend, preserve and continue to improve Socialism, and to never allow the return of the capitalist regime.

As you can see, we have in the Political Bureau a proper representation of leading chiefs of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. This is only logical and to explain it I will quote some lines included by comrade Fidel in his Central Report to the First Party Congress: "The Ejército Rebelde was the soul of the Revolution. The new homeland emerged free, beautiful, strong and invincible from its victorious weapons...When the Party was founded...our Army, the heir to the bravery and patriotic purity of the Ejército Libertador whose struggles it had carried on victoriously, placed in its hands the banners of the Revolution and became from then on and forever its most loyal, disciplined, humble and staunch follower."

I have plenty of reasons to assert that the Revolutionary Armed Forces, which I am proud to have served as a minister for nearly 49 years, will never renounce that role and will carry on defending the people, the Party, the Revolution and Socialism.

Membership in the Central Committee, which until now had been partly a recognition to the life of struggle of those elected, —and fairly so—will from now on be based on the concept of the great responsibility of these comrades to the Party and the people, since the Central Committee acts, between Congresses, as the top leading Party organ and, according to the Statutes, it is empowered to check the implementation of the adopted policies, the economic and social development of the country, and the cadre policy and ideological work, among other tasks.

In keeping with this, it is necessary to constantly raise the preparation and knowledge of its members as we intend to actively employ the Central Committee in the implementation of the Congress' agreements, in the way of a forum where collectively, and devoid of formalities, we can analyze the main issues concerning life in the Party and the nation.

At the Political Bureau, we shall do likewise, as it befits this organ, which is the highest leading body between Central Committee plenary sessions.

The Political Bureau consists of fifteen members. This is a reduction with respect to the previous 24 members, which proved an excessive number. Three new comrades are now members: Mercedes López Acea, First Secretary of the Party Provincial Committee in La Habana; Marino Murillo Jorge, Vice-president of the Council of Ministers and head of the Government Standing Commission for Implementation and Development; and, Adel Yzquierdo Rodríguez, who was recently appointed Minister of Economics and Planning.

These promotions are no accident. In the first case, it is due to the priority attached by the Party to its work in the capital, with a population of over two million. Regarding the other comrades, the promotion responds to the strategic significance of updating the economic model and developing the national economy.

We shall keep the useful practice of holding joint weekly meetings of the Political Bureau Commission and the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers to evaluate the fundamental issues pertaining to national life. At the same time, we shall continue promoting the participation in the monthly meetings of the Council of Ministers —depending on the issues under discussion and as guests— of members of the Political Bureau and the Secretariat of the Central Committee; the Council of State and the Speaker of the National Assembly; the leading cadres of the Workers Central Trade Union (CTC), the Young Communist League and other mass organizations; alongside the First Party Secretaries at the provinces and the chairpersons of the Provincial Management Councils.

This method has proved its efficiency to directly convey to the main leaders throughout the country the indispensable information and orientations to carry out their work.

Finally, none of us ignores the historical significance that the crushing defeat of the Playa Girón mercenary invasion had for the destiny of the Revolution. This was achieved thanks to the firm, constant and determined action of our combatants under direct orders from Commander in Chief Fidel Castro, who stayed all the time in the theater of operations where the battles were fought. In less than 72 hours, they shattered the US Government's attempt to set up a beachhead in a distant corner of our homeland to which they planned to bring, from a military base in Florida, a puppet government that would appeal to the Organization of American States, the notorious OAS, for a military intervention by the US forces already deployed very close to Cuba, as they had accompanied the mercenary troops since their departure from Central America, the same way they had done in Guatemala seven years before, in 1954, when the progressive government of Jacobo Arbenz was overthrown.

Let's use the occasion to repeat Fidel's remarks in the 5th Anniversary of the Victory, on April 19, 1976, when he said: "After Girón, all of the peoples of our America were a bit freer."

It was in Girón that we used for the first time in defense of Socialism in Cuba the weapons supplied by the Soviet Union a few months before, and that we had barely learned how to use. It is only fair that on a day like this we recognize that without the assistance of the peoples that made up that immense country, particularly the Russian people, the Revolution would not have been able to survive those initial years in light of the constant and increasing imperialist aggressions; and for this we shall be forever grateful.

On a day like this, our gratitude goes to the current socialist countries for their continuous cooperation and support during these years of hard battles and sacrifices.

Our brothers and sister in the Third World, especially those from Latin America and the Caribbean, who are making great efforts to transform the legacy of centuries of colonial domination, should know that they can always count on our solidarity and support.

Our fraternal greetings also go to the communist parties and other progressive forces all over the planet fighting restlessly with the deep conviction that a better world is possible.

I also wish to express the recognition of the Cuban people to all those governments that every year claim, with their voices and votes at the United Nations, for the removal of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba by the United States.

Finally, let us express our appreciation to all the comrades who took part in the successful organization of and support to this Congress.

I think there can be no better way to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Victory of Playa Girón than closing this historic Party Congress, with the presence of Fidel here and the symbolism contained in the "Elegía de los Zapaticos Blancos" by Indio Naborí, vividly recited by actor Jorge Ryan, and the touching words of Nemesia, the daughter of a charcoal burner who looked on helplessly as her mother was killed and her grandmother and two brothers injured by the murdering action of planes disguised with the Cuban insignia; the same girl whose white shoes in holes from the enemy's shrapnel are exhibited at the Playa Girón Museum as material evidence that 50 years later the Revolution remains victorious and paying respects to the fallen.

Thank you, very much.



## 4

# The context of Cuba's crisis

January 23, 2011

Written Wednesday, 19 January 2011

By Saul Landau and Nelson P. Valdés

On December 18, 2010, Cuban President Raúl Castro warned Cubans: the nation faced a crisis. The disastrous condition of Cuba's economy no longer allowed the state any maneuvering room to walk the dangerous "precipice" of inefficiency, low productivity and corruption. Without reforms, Cuba would sink — and with it the effort of every generation seeking a free Cuba since the first native revolt against Spanish colonial rule.

Cubans understood that since 1959 the Revolution, with all its faults, had safeguarded the nation's independence — national sovereignty. From 1492 (Columbus' landing) through December 1958, foreign powers had decided the fate of Cubans.

By the early 19th century a "Cuban" had emerged — not a Spaniard on a faraway island or an enslaved African, but a hybrid product of three centuries of colonialism who sought self-determination — like the American colonial population in 1776.

When Batista and his generals fled, a U.S.-backed coup effort among Colonels failed to materialize despite all the plots behind the scenes led by the U.S. government. The rebels then established the modern Cuban nation, which quickly became a real and until then almost unimaginable challenge to U.S. domination.

This unstated truth, understood in Havana and Washington, put the countries on a collision course. Washington refused to cede control; the Revolution rejected U.S. authority. Since 1898, the U.S. had treated Cuba as an appendage of its economy. U.S. companies owned Cuba's largest sugar mills, its best land, the phone and utility companies, the mines and much else. The Cuban government, like those of its neighbors in the "U.S. backyard," had automatically obeyed Washington's policy dictates.

Revolutionary defiance, reducing rent by 50 percent and passing an agrarian reform law, without asking permission, got attention in Washington. The words "dictatorship" and "communist" began appearing routinely in government-spun news reports.

The island of 6 million people with sugar as its cash crop lacked both material and human resources needed to secure real independence. Washington understood this. Some U.S. officials, wrote E. W. Kenworthy, "believe the Castro Government must go 'through the wringer' before it will see the need for United States aid and agree to the



stabilization measures which will make it possible to get aid.” (“Cuba’s Problems Pose Tests for U.S. Policy,” NY Times , April 26, 1959)

When Cuban leaders either ignored or ridiculed Washington ‘ s warnings, President Eisenhower, in March 1960, authorized a CIA covert operation to overthrow the Cuban government — ending in the April 1961 Bay of Pigs “fiasco.” In October 1960, however, in response to Cuba’s nationalization of U.S. property — an escalating confrontation of Cuba acting and Washington punishing — Ike imposed an embargo on Cuba.

But even in April 1960, the State Department had issued its punishment guideline: “[E]very possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba. ... a line of action which, while as adroit and inconspicuous as possible, makes the greatest inroads in denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of the government.” (Office of the Historian, Bureau Of Public Affairs, U.S. Department Of State; John P. Glennon, et al., eds., Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume VI, Cuba -Washington D.C.: GPO, 1991, 885.)

Havana responded by doing the unthinkable: In 1961, Cuba allied itself with the Soviet bloc. To secure independence, Cuban leaders became reliant on Soviet assistance.

In 1991, the Soviet demise left Cubans — finally — with total political “independence” and no outside material support with which to maintain their nation. The embargo took on heightened dimensions.

In 1959, revolutionaries in their 20s and 30s did not predict the ferocity of U.S. punishment, nor grasp that their sin of disobedience reached beyond the dictates of U.S. power, and to the core of a global system. Washington was the informal world capital.

In that role, Washington relentlessly attacked Cuba — even after it ceased to exercise Hemispheric hegemony. The control mantra still seeps through the walls of national security offices and by osmosis enters the bureaucrats’ brains: “We permit no insubordination.” Cubans had to pay for the resistance of their leaders. Washington’s lesson: Resistance is futile.

Last month Raúl Castro informed Cubans of the need for drastic reforms. The revolution had trained, educated and made healthy the Cuban population. But, Raúl admitted, the state no longer can meet some basic needs Cubans had assumed as human rights (entitlements). One million people, he announced, would lose jobs; social programs reduced or eliminated.

Cubans’ non-productivity — lax work ethics, bureaucratic inefficiency, and absence of initiative — had become compounded by corruption. The U.S. embargo leads to shortages and encourages bureaucratic misdeeds. A bureaucrat enhances his income by “solving ” the very “obstacles” the same bureaucrat helped create.

After 51-plus years, Washington’s punishment appeared to force Cuba into accepting a shock doctrine, but without all the regressive social costs most Third World countries have paid. In 1980, a Jamaican remarked after Prime Minister Manley submitted to the

International Monetary Fund’s punishing austerity measures: “We’ve been IMF’d. ”

The Cuban revolution again enters unscripted territory. Reformers, however, count on deep resources — a public with social consciousness absorbed through decades of education and experience.

World geo-political changes, however, offer Cuban leaders some advantages: China, Brazil and some European Union states have become potential counters to U.S. hardliners. With breathing space Cubans might still avoid the worst consequences of Washington’s obsolete 50 year old shock doctrine.

Saul Landau is an Institute for Policy Studies fellow whose film WILL THE REAL TERRORIST PLEASE STAND UP premiered at the Havana Film Festival. Nelson Valdés is Professor Emeritus, University of New Mexico.



## 5

### Cuba: Looking back and ahead

Wednesday, 25 January 2012 08:56 Saul Landau and Nelson P. Valdés

By Saul Landau and Nelson P. Valdés

In 2012, the White House will focus on the most important of international and national issues: the re-election of the President. U.S.-Cuba policy will fall into “Next Year’s” box – or the year after that. The National Security staff reverts to its familiar positions on relations with that troublesome island: ignorance and arrogance.

Few Americans even in the Foreign Service know the Cuban revolution began in the 1860s as a war of independence against Spain.

Spain prevailed in the 1860s war, as did Cuban slavery until 1886. Unlike the 1776 war for independence, the struggle in Cuba confronted a major social issue, which U.S. Founding Fathers had finessed – until the Civil War in 1861.

In January 1959, after almost 100 years of on-and-off combat, the 26th of July guerrillas marched into Havana as winners of the decisive round. The revolutionaries carried another ancestral platform: social justice and equality.

Cubans knew well how Washington had acted as their destiny blocker. By 1898, Cuban “independentistas” had almost defeated Spain. The United States intervened to thwart that goal. Washington imposed the Platt Amendment on Cuba’s constitution, giving itself the right to intervene in Cuban affairs, and a naval base in Guantanamo – now a prison and torture chamber. The United States intruded several times in the 20th Century to alter the island’s fate, including in events following the 1933 overthrow of the Machado dictatorship: to prevent revolutionaries from acquiring sovereignty.

That political-military exercise led to the Fulgencio Batista era (1934-1958) – in which the new U.S.-trained and bonded military held sway.

In 1958, however, Washington lost confidence in Batista’s ability to stop social revolution, and began plotting unsuccessfully with a clique of high military officials to replace Batista with a junta – ala 1934.

The revolutionaries’ victory in 1959 changed Cuba’s destiny. In 1960, after consolidating power, they made “Patria o Muerte” (homeland or death) the national slogan, referring to the long-sought goal. 1930s revolutionaries joined the 1950s rebels in a unity program: build a proud, healthy and literate nation, bound by ideals of social justice, equality and sovereignty.

Cubans were offered the chance to become actors on the stage of their own history. Millions left their homes to teach literacy, or joined militias, and voluntary associations to transform the island from dependency and underdevelopment into healthy development.

Cuba's revolutionary tradition assumed that a sovereign nation would use its resources to benefit its people. Rich soil and industrious workers would provide everyone with a decent living standard. Poverty, most assumed, derived from foreign or domestic exploitation.

Early laws restricting landlords and large foreign and Cuban property owners allowed the government to distribute resources and services to the population, which won more legitimacy for the revolutionaries. But Cuba's accumulated wealth would prove superficial compared to its needs.

Over the first decades, children of illiterate Cubans earned PhDs, and became doctors and soldiers who volunteered to go abroad to help change destiny in Africa and Latin America. Others volunteered for arduous tasks of construction and agriculture. By the mid 1970s Cuba had become literate and healthy.

To accomplish the overwhelming tasks of development revolutionary leaders had accepted Soviet help. This uneasy, but convenient marriage from 1972-1985 included adopting the Soviet economic and administrative models.

For Cuba the deal meant soft loans, technical assistance, secure supply lines and a high-paying market for its products. While most third world countries transferred capital to developed countries, the Cuba-Soviet agreement reversed the pattern, permitting the island to have sovereignty, social justice and relative equality. Cubans also became world-renowned artists, writers and athletes.

For the Soviets, Cuba became a legitimizing instrument to maintain credibility among third world peoples, playing a broker-like role for Soviet positions at third world meetings.

On July 26, 1989, however, Fidel Castro warned of the impending demise of the Soviet bloc. Cubans had to prepare. The enemy 90 miles away loomed as a constant threat to the revolution's goals.

In 1991, the Soviet Union died. Without Soviet aid and trade, could Cuba's economy survive? The unthinkable alternative, surrender to Washington, led Cuban leaders to design the "special period" – a daily juggling for survival. Euphoria prevailed in Washington. Scholars announced "the end of history," capitalism had won – well, if one ignored the cyclical disasters. Computers and the Internet would remake the world. China and Vietnam had already abandoned communism – in all but name. Cuba remained the "Jurassic state".

Without even major trade partners, Cuba's leaders at first relied on abstractions: national honor, patriotism and shared sacrifice, hardly adequate weapons to fight a 32% GNP drop in one year.

Circumstances dictated that Cuba earn money from foreign tourists, who required a service oriented labor force – including prostitution. Cuba permitted remittances, which created inequality. Working Cubans earned less than non-workers who got rewarded by family members abroad.

Cuba began earning dollars for doctors' and educators' services abroad. In turn, this reduced the breadth and quality of education and health care at home.

Living standards fell. Theft, black markets and corruption tied to bureaucracy grew. Those too young to experience the days of subsidized consumption became pessimistic – even cynical – and desperate about their future. Complaining reached theatrical height. As leaders repeated old slogans teenagers passing below signs of Che Guevara reading "Como el Che," would often say "Si, asmático." (Like Che ... yes, asthmatic.) Some opted for rafts to Florida.

Meanwhile, the revolutionaries maintained political power and withstood two decades of counter revolutionary efforts from abroad. By 2001, Cuba's economy and administrative structures had begun to fall into dysfunction. Corruption levels became intolerable; the once exciting revolutionary script sounded trite.

When Hugo Chavez became president of Venezuela, he provided Cuba with aid and political alliances. Additionally, Latin America accepted Havana as a full partner, ending Cuba's isolation

Recently, Cuba's Communist Party reviewed the economy. A new script began to emerge as a series of guidelines (lineamientos). Changes have begun to affect property rights, domestic trade, employment practices, and investments.

In 2012, Cuban leaders could forge a new mission, to remake Cubans as the inspiration – if not saviors – of human life on the planet. Part of Cuba's population still vibrates with desires to act on the world stage with a script the world's people need.

Imagine Cuba leading a green revolution for survival! They have the science, experience and organization. Will the leadership pass the torch to those who have the energy and will to carry it out?

Part two: how Fidel Castro laid the groundwork for an environmental mission.

Saul Landau's WILL THE REAL TERRORIST PLEASE STAND UP plays at Smith College, Feb 16. Nelson Valdés is Professor Emeritus at the University of New Mexico and director of Cuba-L.



## 6

# Environmental Internationalism

by SAUL LANDAU and NELSON P. VALDES

Since 1959 Cuba has played a significant world role, quite a feat for a nation of 5 million – 11 million now. Cubans have shown their values, commitment and solidarity in dealing with the aftermath of natural disasters around the world.

Between 1960 and 2011, Cuba sent 45 medical brigades to 30 countries. From 1963 to 2010, 135,000 Cuban health professionals worked in 108 countries. Presently, 80 countries receive the health services of 38,000 Cuban “internationalists.”

Suffering Pakistanis will long remember their Cuban doctors. The October 2005 Kashmir earthquake killed 75,000, injured 100,000 and left 3-plus million homeless. Even though Cuba’s medical aid team spoke no Urdu, doctors, nurses and technicians of the newly formed Henry Reeve International Team of Medical Specialists in Disasters & Epidemics (created after Hurricane Katrina) reached the stricken region within six days of the quake.

Responding to the critical needs in the devastated areas, the Cuban team performed services ranging from treatment of acute patients to “setting up or reestablishing public health facilities destroyed” by the massive tremors.

Similarly, in 1998, Cuban medical teams reacted by sending medical aid teams after a powerful hurricane swept coastal Honduras. Cuban doctors and medical professionals in the Caribbean, the Andes, in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, have saved thousands of lives, have treated 3 million people, performed 20,000 surgeries and delivered more than a thousand babies – with no fee or strings attached.

Its literacy brigades have successfully taught millions of adults around the world. In the 1970s and 1980s, Cubans also gave their lives fighting for Angolan and Namibian independence against South African apartheid forces.

These acts of good will represented more than revolutionary élan. From the onset this outreach became part of Cuba’s survival strategy. Over decades, it built good will, badly needed after the Soviets collapsed to fend off U.S. attempts to isolate it.

By 1991, when its Soviet partners disappeared, Cuba in economic disarray, necessity forced its leaders to adopt an environmentally friendly, self-reliance strategy. Without cheap oil and heavy Soviet machinery, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides how could Cuba grow food and forge a viable economy?

Food production became not only the national focus, but a place from which developed a “national laboratory in organic agriculture.” (“Cuba Going Against the Grain,” Oxfam America, June 1, 2001)



Urban gardens sprang up; oxen reappeared instead of tractors. Small-scale farming replaced large units, and farmers learned to use green fertilizers and pest controls, massive composting and worm humus.

The radical drop in oil supplies induced massive bicycle traffic. The society was mobilized to recycle; new light bulbs attained greater efficiency. Wind power development also began.

As the Soviet bloc disappeared, neo-liberal, casino capitalism increased production, but also world levels of pollution and social inequality. As a result, environmental socialism began to appear as capitalism's new enemy. Cuba claimed, again, its role as spokesman for small third world and especially island nations. Like Cuba, these poor islands and coastal nations confronted rising sea levels. Ironically, these countries contribute less than 1% of greenhouse gas emissions. In the first decade of the 21st Century as the world capitalist crisis gestated – the third world poor got hit hardest – dramatic environmental catastrophes also wreaked havoc. (James O'Connor's "Natural Causes: Essays in Ecological Marxism," Guilford, 1997 and Naomi Klein's "Capitalism vs. the Climate," *The Nation*, November 9, 2011, showed the intertwined nature of the ecological crisis and the capitalist economic crisis.)

In 1992, Fidel Castro had warned at a UN Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil: "Consumer societies are fundamentally to blame for the appalling destruction of the environment. Forests vanished, deserts grew larger; billions of fertile acres descends into the ocean, numerous species become extinct."

But, Fidel implored, "you can't solve this by blocking the development of those who most need it." Instead, he argued, saving humankind from destruction requires better planetary distribution of resources and available technology."

Calling for "a new and more just international order which uses science to sustain development without pollution," he may have hinted at Cuba's future role.

From 1959 on, Cuba's revolutionaries began to spread their revolution to other post-colonial peoples. Indeed, the new nation's survival depended on its ability take international initiatives. Since 1991, necessity has driven Cuba into environmental consciousness.

In 2012, can Cuba undertake the planetary salvation mission, to confront the climate (literally) of the times? Its educated and historically aware population – learning from their own environmental carelessness, like allowing for the contamination of Havana Harbor – experienced in internationalism, will not hesitate to experiment.

The U.S. government, media and its "dissident" opposition in Cuba trivialize attempts to achieve transcendent goals. They misdirect focus on those who supposedly died on hunger strikes or white clad women – which successfully distracts the attention of foreign publics.

The real issue, many Cubans understand, has little to with these distractions and requires a new formula for harmonious (sustainable) living – people and Nature—in the harrowing years ahead.

Because Cuba is such an important environmental reserve, and a treasure trove of diverse plant, and animal species, the Smithsonian labeled the island a "biological superpower" of the Caribbean. In addition, The "Tulane Environmental Law Journal" called Cuba a world model in coastal and marine management. (Summer 2003 issue dedicated to Cuba's environment).

Cuban leaders could use this environmental foundation to articulate a new and vital mission, to organize for the Earth's well being and humanity's survival. Cubans might even welcome green "internationalists" from everywhere to work with them toward that worthy goal.

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