

[Speech given by Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic of Cuba, the day of the tragic events that occurred in the United States. September 11, 2001 \[1\]](#)

Date:

11/09/2001

"None of the present world problems can be solved with the use of force"

Teachers, construction workers, workers, students, relatives and guests:

We will see how this goes because ceremonies in stadiums, and similar places like this coliseum, are always complicated since part of the audience are behind you, some are on one side, some are on the other, and when somebody calls out, "I can't hear you," then the problems begin. (Applause and shouts)

Yesterday (Shouts of: "We can't hear you over here!")... All right, then I will leave and talk to you on TV. (Shouts of "No!") Make a bit of an effort. You over there, who seem to be having the hardest time, have some patience and help us to maintain order here today. (Shouts of: "You can hear it, you can feel it, Fidel is here.")

As I was saying, yesterday was a quiet day, we were getting ready for two important events. First, the reopening of the school and the enormously important course that was beginning with this group of students. And also, many of our compatriots were waiting for news on the results of the famous Grammy awards, where a large and important delegation of Cuban artists was participating.

When we headed home in the wee hours of morning, quite late, our only worry was whether or not it would rain at the school, since there had been heavy showers on the previous days, and almost always at around the time the ceremony was scheduled. Just in case, we took the precaution of setting up an alternative venue for the inauguration of the course and the reopening of the school.

We planned ahead, and it is a good thing we did, because with all the rain that fell today, the place where we were going to hold the ceremony would have been flooded and muddy, even though a special place had been set up for the ceremony, where about 12,000 people were to take part, including students, relatives, guests, workers and community people.

Well, we had only been resting for a short time when the news started coming in about the dramatic events taking place in the United States. That news was and is of great importance. We immediately adopted the measure of asking the Cuban television network to broadcast information on what was happening there, with rigorously factual reports, even using footage from U.S. television broadcasts. Then we had to wait to see what would happen. Additionally, it was a very cloudy and rainy day here.

We did not even consider postponing the ceremony. It could not be postponed, despite the international tension created by such events. I would imagine that almost everyone knows about them, but to briefly summarize, at approximately 9:00 this morning, a Boeing airplane, a really big one, crashed straight into one of the two New York famous towers which make up one of the highest buildings in the world. Naturally, the tower caught on fire because of all the fuel from such a big airplane, and some horrific scenes began. And then, 18 minutes later, another plane, also from an U.S. airline, crashed straight into

the second tower.

At the same time, a few minutes later, another plane crashed into the Pentagon. News arrived, in the midst of a certain amount of confusion, of a bomb outside the State Department, and other alarming events, although I have mentioned the most important.

Obviously, the country had fallen victim to a violent surprise attack, unexpected, unimaginable, something truly unheard of. And the scenes that ensued were appalling, especially when the two towers were burning, and foremost when they both collapsed, all 100 floors, spilling over onto neighboring buildings, when it was known that there were tens of thousands of people working there, in offices representing many companies from various countries.

It was only logical that this would be a shock for the United States and the rest of the world. The stock markets started to collapse, and because of the political, economic and technological importance and the power of the United States, the whole world was shaken up today by those events. So, we had to follow the events throughout the day, but at the same time, we also had to continue thinking about the conditions and circumstances in which this ceremony would take place.

Therefore, there were two issues: the school and the extremely important course it will offer, and the political and human catastrophe that had taken place over there, especially in New York.

I will talk first about the school.

I should say, first of all, that the construction workers made an enormous effort and they have practically rebuilt the school in a matter of months. A project of this magnitude had never before been carried out in such a short period of time.

The school principal has explained that the facilities had been much deteriorated, particularly during the special period, and had eventually become a shelter for hundreds and hundreds of families. I visited it one day, and it was scarcely a shadow of that school we had opened on December 5, 1974 as a primary-school teacher training college for the capital. It operated as such for 14 years, and tens of thousands of new teachers graduated there. It then went on to serve other important teaching functions, and was used as a higher education center. But then came the special period, and all of the difficulties it brought with it.

At that time, the primary schools in the capital were not facing a shortage of teachers like they are today. This has become a genuine crisis. Suffice it to say that there were only 37 university graduates in primary education this year.

The situation in the capital was the worst in the country. Around 80% of students were in classrooms with 30, 35, 40, 45, and in some cases, up to 50 students. There were almost 400 classrooms with more than 40 students. This was reflected in the education they received, which is only logical. The capital was far behind other provinces, like Santiago de Cuba and others. The situation was extremely serious. No one in the capital wanted to be a primary school teacher.

The physical state of the schools was also critical after 10 years of the special period and a tremendous shortage of resources. Parents advised their children not to become primary school teachers. When students graduated from the various pre-university level teaching programs and were asked what they wanted to go on to study, less than five out of 100 chose primary school teaching. The rest chose history, mathematics, literature, geography, around 12 or 14 different subjects, but almost none of them wanted to be university graduates in primary education.

This situation did not correspond with the actual needs. Almost all of the students at the teachers college in the capital were helping out in the secondary schools. The secondary schools were maintained with the support of the higher education centers, and because of the idea that emerged,

barely two years ago, of seeking the cooperation of university students to teach one subject or another.

We had fallen victim to the myth of callings, and it was impossible to design curricula when there were schools short one, two or three teachers, or when one teacher had to teach four groups of 40 or 50 students. And I say four, but sometimes it was five or six. I know of one excellent school principal who at certain times gave history classes to 13 groups in her school.

This is an important issue, because it is the task that we will face when we win the battle we have undertaken in the area of primary school education, a battle we have now almost won. The battle we are waging now is that of training thousands of primary school teachers for the capital of the republic, ensuring that they have the necessary knowledge, and doing it urgently. The goal is to reduce the number of students in a classroom to no more than 20. This problem was first addressed last September 1, barely a year ago, and it was determined that it would be solved by September of 2002. It seemed an impossible task.

The problem was carefully studied, with visits to the 8080 heroic primary school teachers who had maintained primary education in the capital throughout the special period, together with the small number of new teachers graduating.

The buildings, as I said, were in very poor condition, and as the situation continued to worsen, the decision was made to undertake an emergency program to repair 659 primary and secondary schools in the capital. We assumed that this task would take at least three years to complete, but only a few months after the program had begun, the 100th school was reopened. Even then, they thought another two more years were needed, but soon the 200th will be reopened, while over 100 schools will be undergoing total restoration work.

I should not spend too much time on these details, since there will be time to talk about them when the 200th school is reopened. The most important thing is that next September, the 659 schools will be completely restored, and in better condition than ever, even before the special period or at any other time. All of them will be fully renovated and repaired, with all of the water problems solved, that is, running water. Many of them faced serious problems, and some of them had no running water, so the restroom situation was terrible. Almost none of the refrigeration equipment worked. I do not want to repeat myself, but basically, all of the weight of the special period and all the shortages fell on these schools, and an exceptional effort was needed.

Today, I dare to state here that by next September the 659 schools will be ready. It is a serious task, and all of this work which has been carried out with great discretion has taken place alongside the creation of enrollment space for 20,000 young students in this province and others. That includes enrollment space for training all of the primary school teachers needed, for 7000 social workers --one of the most important courses-- and for the teachers who are going to give computer classes to all primary school students. Those who were going to be teaching these subjects in secondary schools were being trained as such until the decision was made, after careful thought, to begin teaching computer skills from the age of five, or rather, from kindergarten.

There are other extremely important schools that I have not mentioned. An enormous effort has been made, very quietly, with little or no publicity, in keeping with our new policy of few promises and many achievements. Sometimes we have an opening ceremony for one school on behalf of 15, as was the case with the art instructor's school inaugurated in Santa Clara; it was inaugurated when there were already similar schools operating throughout the country, with 4000 students.

Huge efforts were made during this period of the battle of ideas, this period of struggle that began over 21 months ago after the kidnapping of little Elián González. These are the most important facts.

The workers have made a truly worthy effort. Many of them came from other provinces in eastern Cuba, from Camagüey, from all over. They have worked restlessly. They have done things with the highest

possible standards of quality, although we all know that when a project is completed and is put to use right away, because no time can be wasted, there are always a few minor things that need to be taken care of. There may be a pipe that does not hold out, or a leak in a roof. As such, the principle has been established that if any problem arises in a school, such as a leak or other minor repair needed, it is taken care of immediately. This is the way things have been planned and organized.

I know that they are doing a few things and will have to do a few repairs, as a result of the heavy rains that have fallen and because they just finished work, and the course had to begin immediately. Yes, we have lost a number of days, we have lost seven days, but many students are already at the school, and if any little problems come up, there is no need to despair, because a good number of workers will be left there to deal with the little things that may come up, at that school and at all the others. Because this school is being reopened today –I say "this school" because I am imagining that we are there– while another is being inaugurated for the emergency training of 1000 nurses, since there is also a shortage of nurses in the capital, and that is a problem that must be solved, and solved properly.

The nurse's work is extremely difficult, especially when they have to work midnight shifts.

What do these schools mean? What does this course mean? The two courses taught at the school in Melena have been exceptional examples of pedagogy. A total of 501 students enrolled in each course, and there was not a single dropout in either the first or the second. And while there were two students in the first course that did not manage to attain the knowledge and experience needed to pass, all of the students in the second course successfully passed it. The school has gained tremendous prestige, so much so that now everyone wants to go there, and this year they had to add a few more beds and admit a number of additional students, because it was not humanly possible to turn down a group of eight or nine more who also wanted to study there.

The methods they use with these young people are, in my opinion, most appropriate. They talk with them, discuss things with them, listen to them, deal with their problems, and try to meet their needs, and often their desires, when possible. Every one of these new courses, with their different content, trains graduates who are fully capable of beginning to work, whether under the guidance of an experienced university graduate in primary teaching, in the case of teachers, or under the guidance of a university-trained nurse, in the case of nurses.

Every one of these young people will have a professor, automatic enrollment in the university, the option of choosing from eight different degree courses, or nine, or ten, or fifteen. Real opportunities are opened to them; but at the same time they are educated, as young people should be, about the country's needs and how, from a long list of possibilities, these very needs can be appealing to young people, depending on their contact and relation with the subject. I have seen many young people who were thinking of doing other things, who were not considering the career of primary school teacher, and nevertheless, the number who have ultimately chosen this path has increased enormously.

In the long discussions held on September 6, the question of whether five years meant a sufficiently long commitment was debated at length. Modifications have been made but we will keep our word. If it is necessary to make changes this will be done with the new students. A great number of these will, in any case, choose between the options they have, making five years insufficient. We will never ask, neither will we accept that the students of the first two teachers' courses make an eight-year commitment; we have said five and five it will be.

Of course, their studies must be intensive. If they decide to choose another career, which they can do straight away in September –and many have already registered– this will demand a great effort. If they are studying sociology, for example, they must continue in the acquisition of pedagogical concepts for at least three years. And they have all the advantages of a private professor, plus the fact that they will be teaching, and thus gaining new experience and knowledge every day.

The Young Communist League is already working with you for an additional three-year commitment,

eight years in total, independent of the career you opt for. Therefore, you would be teaching for eight years; you would be graduates in their chosen field and could continue with your studies, if you wished, for a Master's degree or whatever you preferred, while teaching for the three extra years, that is to say, eight instead of five, which is what we consider indispensable for our aims.

I know there is a tremendous will, but each promise we make to a young person we keep, and each prospect we offer them we grant. For us, it is a matter of honor to honor our pledge. This is what we should always do. Sometimes we ask for a 20-day collaboration and then later we say: "We need five more days, just five more."

A few weeks ago more than 5000 students, members of the University Social Work Brigades, visited almost every household in the capital for a survey on social and community issues, ranging from hospitals, pharmacies, schools and even to the possibility of suggesting other issues. We have not even mentioned this, but they did an excellent and extraordinary job, and have done many such jobs, although we do not yet have enough social workers. We do not have the thousands, and we are really talking of tens of thousands, that we need. I am not going to go into that now, everything in its own time, and when we have that time.

We have witnessed strength, enthusiasm, discipline and spirit amongst the young people like we have never before encountered.

For you, the students, the 3500 –well, there were two figures, one that spoke of 3500 and another of 3599, a small difference that can be assimilated by the schools– this will be, in accordance with what we already had arranged, the last emergency teachers course, as these courses have come to be known. Their quality was clearly demonstrated on September 6, the first day of the new school year, when numerous trainee teachers, responding to the doubts about their capacity to fulfil the task, or about their intention to complete those tasks as students and teachers, spoke with an eloquence which I believe I had never seen before in people so young. We must attribute this to the courses they have received, to the higher cultural and political level of our people, and to the great deal that they have learned in the 21 months of this battle of ideas.

It is impressive and almost impossible to imagine what young people such as those will be like in the future, at that age and at that level, with all the things that have already commenced at a massive level throughout the country. Every classroom here in the capital will have a television and three entire municipalities in Havana, humble, workers' neighborhoods for the most part --Diez de Octubre, Arroyo Naranjo and San Miguel del Padrón-- already have computers. Other municipalities will need more time; in the three mentioned there will be 149 teachers from the Youth Clubs coming from many different provinces. Another 1250 young people are being trained, and will receive around 800 class hours, almost three times what is necessary. We are most interested, however, in the discipline and the consciousness they will acquire in school, and so these students will not be ready until March. On March 1, we will have these young teachers available, full of enthusiasm and able to go on later to study one of the three different university programs in information. For this reason, Havana will be the last city to have 100% of primary school students studying computing.

There are many ideas, programs and plans related to this subject and involving an incomparably high level of teaching and training and supported by the most up-to-date technology. In the long run, by different ways, this will make our country the most advanced in the world in terms of primary, intermediate and secondary education, and education is everything. Education is the future.

Later, when this course is complete, we have extremely ambitious plans related to the next great leap, the one we need to make in secondary education, and we will have, in the school we are reopening today 4500 students, when it is at full capacity.

During this process, we have had the privilege of coming into contact with an incredible number of extremely brave, talented, reliable and patriotic people who help to explain in anyone's mind how this

Speech given the day of the tragic events that occurred in the United States

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

country has resisted the blockade for more than 40 years, and especially how this country has resisted, with such heroism, honor and patriotism, the ten awful years of the special period, which we are gradually overcoming, but which has not yet been completely surpassed.

It is wonderful and encouraging to see what our people are already capable of and what they will be capable of in the future, not merely in the field of education, but also in culture, in the social sphere, with the development of methods and professionals to carry out the enormous work that still needs to be done in these fields.

I have finished with the Cuban portion. I have tried to be brief, for I feel obliged to use the time remaining to discuss the international situation that has arisen in the last few hours.

Today is a day of tragedy for the United States. You know very well that hatred against the American people has never been sown here. Perhaps, precisely because of its culture, its lack of prejudice, its sense of full freedom –with a homeland and without a master-- Cuba is the country where Americans are treated with the greatest respect. We have never preached any kind of national hatred, or anything similar to fanaticism, and that is the reason for our strength, because our conduct is based on principles and ideas. We treat all Americans who visit us with great respect, and they have noticed this and said so themselves.

Furthermore, we cannot forget the American people who put an end to the Vietnam War with their overwhelming opposition to that genocidal war. We cannot forget the American people who –in numbers that exceeded 80% of the population-- supported the return of Elián González to his homeland. (APPLAUSE) We cannot forget their idealism, although it is often undermined by deception, because –as we have said often times– in order to mislead Americans to support an unjust cause, or an unjust war, they must first be deceived. The classic method used by that huge country in international politics is that of deceiving the people first, to count on their support later. When it is the other way around, and the people realize that something is unjust, then based on their traditional idealism they oppose what they have been supporting. Often these are extremely unjust causes, which they had supported convinced that they were doing the right thing.

Therefore, although unaware of the exact number of victims but seeing those moving scenes of suffering, we have felt profound grief and sadness for the American people.

We do not go around flattering any government, or asking for forgiveness or favors. We neither harbor in our hearts a single atom of fear. The history of our Revolution has proven its capacity to stand up to challenges, its capacity to fight and its capacity to resist whatever it has to; that is what has turned us into an invincible people. These are our principles. Our Revolution is based on ideas and persuasion, and not on the use of force. I hope there is not anyone in the world crazy enough to say that 1.2 million people were forced to march along the sea front drive on July 26.

That has been our reaction, and we wanted our people to see the scenes and watch the tragedy. We have not hesitated to express our sentiments publicly, and right here I have a statement, which was drafted as soon as the facts were known and handed out to the international media around 3:00 p.m. In the meantime, our television networks were broadcasting news of the events. This statement was scheduled to be read to the Cuban public tonight during the evening TV newscast.

I am going to move the time up a few minutes by reading to you here and now the Official Statement from the Government of Cuba on the events that took place in the United States:

"The Government of the Republic of Cuba has learned with grief and sadness of the violent surprise attacks carried out this morning against civilian and official facilities in the cities of New York and Washington, which have caused numerous deaths.

"Cuba's position against any terrorist action is well known." Our history proves that, and those who

Speech given the day of the tragic events that occurred in the United States

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

know the history of our revolutionary struggles know it well. "It is not possible to forget that for over four decades our country has been the target of such actions fostered from within the United States territory.

"Both for historical reasons and ethical principles, the Government of our country strongly repudiates and condemns the attacks against the aforementioned facilities and hereby expresses its most heartfelt sympathies to the American people for the painful, unjustifiable loss of human lives resulting from these attacks.

"In this bitter hour for all Americans, our people express their solidarity with the American people and their full willingness to cooperate, to the extent of their modest possibilities, with the health care institutions and any other medical or humanitarian organization in that country in the treatment, care and rehabilitation of the victims of this morning's events." (APPLAUSE)

This message has not only been made public, but has also been officially delivered this afternoon, especially when we started to hear of the impressive numbers of possible casualties, and knew that hospitals were full of injured.

Although it is not known whether the casualties are 5000, 10,000, 15,000 or 20,000, it is known that the planes that crashed into the Twin Towers and into the Pentagon were carrying hundreds of passengers, and we have offered to provide whatever we can, if necessary.

That is a country with great scientific and medical development and resources, but at some point in time it could need blood of a specific type or plasma -any other product that we could donate, we would be most willing to give-- or medical support or paramedics. We know many hospitals are short of specific technicians and professionals. In other words, we want to express our disposition and readiness to be helpful in relation to these tragic events.

There is a history to all of this, because as I said, we have been affected by terrorism for more than forty years. We have even published that on specific occasions we have informed the U.S. government of serious risks to the lives of Americans. Here is an example; it is a page and a quarter long.

After the terrorist attacks against our hotels by the terrorist mob in Florida that organized and paid for the terrorist attacks against Cuba, as well as the assassination plots organized against me when I have needed to travel abroad, a group headed by that monster Posada Carriles -we had already caught some of his accomplices, who were foreign mercenaries, when they entered our national territory-- intended to repeat the sophisticated procedure used with the bombs planted in hotels or places frequently visited by foreign tourists, like La Bodeguita del Medio Restaurant, that could explode up to 99 hours after being set up. They could travel here, plant the bomb on the plane, party for three days, and go back to their country before the bomb exploded. There was the case of a Salvadoran mercenary who planted five bombs in hotels and other public places and attempted to make them blow up almost simultaneously, one after the other. You can see how far they had gone.

We made contact with the U.S. Government more than once through confidential channels, and here I have one of the direct messages that we sent to the President at that time. These were messages sent through confidential channels, not official ones, through fully trustworthy friends of ours who were also friends of his, and we precisely explained everything that we wanted them to convey. Part of this information has already been released to the public, but I will give you an example:

"An important issue.

"Number one: Plans for terrorist actions against Cuba continue to be hatched and paid by the Cuban American National Foundation using Central American mercenaries. Two new attempts at setting up bombs in tourist resorts have been undertaken before, and after, the Pope's visit.

"In the first case, those responsible failed, they were able to escape and return to Central America by

plane leaving behind the technical means and explosives which were then seized.

"In the second case, three mercenaries were arrested with explosives and other means. They are Guatemalans. They would have received 1500 USD for every bomb exploded." These were among the first caught, not the one who planted the most bombs.

"In both cases they were hired and supplied by agents of the ring organized by the Cuban American National Foundation. Now, they are plotting and taking steps to set up bombs in planes from Cuba or any other country airline carrying tourists to, or from, Cuba to Latin American countries.

"The method is similar: to hide a small device at a certain place inside the plane, a powerful explosive with a fuse controlled by a digital clock that can be programmed 99 hours in advance, then easily abandon the plane at foreseen destination; the explosion would take place either on the ground or while the plane is in flight to its next destination. Really devilish procedures: easy to handle mechanisms, components whose detection is practically impossible, a minimum training required for their use, almost absolute impunity. Extremely dangerous to airlines and to tourist facilities or of any other type. Tools suitable for a crime, very serious crimes.

"If they were revealed and their possibilities exposed," -we were opposed to revealing the technology used- "they might become an epidemic as the hijacking of planes once became. Other Cuban extremist groups living in the United States are beginning to move in that direction.

"The American investigation and intelligence agencies are in possession of enough reliable information on the main people responsible. If they really want to, they have the possibility of preventing in time this new modality of terrorism. It will be impossible to stop it if the United States doesn't discharge its fundamental duty of fighting it. The responsibility to fight it can't be left to Cuba alone since any other country of the world might also be a victim of such actions."

We passed this information on to them, and they paid so much attention that they even consulted with us on the advisability of sending airlines a text issued by the U.S. Government.

They sent us the text in which the airlines were informed of the following: "We have received unconfirmed information of a plot to place explosive devices aboard civilian aircraft operating between Cuba and Latin American countries. Those involved in the plot plan to leave behind a small explosive device aboard an aircraft..." Basically, they explained what we had informed them of.

"We cannot discount the possibility that the threat could include international air carrier operations from the United States.

"The U.S. Government continues to seek further information to clarify, and substantiate or refute, this threat."

We expressed our opposition to issuing that kind of warning because one of the objectives of those individuals was to create panic. We also explained that there were other procedures that we used. We set up the appropriate watch systems wherever there was any risk of bombs, we searched and knew who could plant them and who were involved. We kept watching, which is what has to be done, if you do not want to grow panic or make a scandal or grant the perpetrators the possibility to attain their objective, which was to impinge on the economy of the country and sow terror.

Anyway, they published the information. That was fine with us since we had already strengthened our mechanisms to capture those individuals. They have not even been able to plant a small bomb ever since, and the watch system remains in place where necessary. When they plotted the assassination attempt in Panama, we knew more than they were planning, and more than they knew. That is for sure.

There is the Miami Mafia making efforts to release the terrorists caught in fraganti and arrested in

Speech given the day of the tragic events that occurred in the United States

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

Panama. They have already planned how to do it and the country through which they would evacuate them and how. They would pretend to be sick and be moved. They freely receive visitors from Miami. We even know that they contributed to an infiltration through Santa Clara a few months ago.

Thanks to many friends that we have everywhere and to men like those (he points to the pictures of the Cuban patriots incarcerated in Miami for seeking information on terrorist plan against Cuba), the country has been able to defend itself from that terrorism. (APPLAUSE)

I say this here because the truth is that there are more papers and notes, and we have sometimes sent verbal messages, and sometimes we have left written evidence, and one of the arguments that we have used is irrefutable: The United States is the country with the largest number of extremist organized groups, 400 of which are armed.

The hijacking of planes –a method used against Cuba-- became a universal plague, and it was Cuba that solved this problem when, after repeated warnings, we sent two hijackers back to the United States. It is painful because they were Cubans but we had issued public warnings, so they came and we returned them. We complied with our public pledge, yet they never again provided us with any information about them to give to their relatives. They have their own ways of doing things. No one knows what they will do. I know they were sentenced to 40 years imprisonment, and that put an end to those hijackings.

But, listen, they have 800 groups of extremists. Sometimes they have locked themselves in a place for a certain reason and have burned themselves to death. They have groups, which due to political or sometimes religious reasons are prone to the use of force or to prepare poisons and products to act against the US authorities. I am not talking about the Mafia people. I am talking about the hundreds of extremist organized groups acting within the United States. They blew up that building in Oklahoma not so long ago.

The United States is the country that is most vulnerable to terrorism; it is the country with more planes, more dependable on technical resources, electric grids, pipelines, etceteras. Many members of these groups are fascists and they do not mind killing. Mentally speaking, they must be closer to madness than to a balanced intelligence. We have said to the US authorities that it is necessary to avoid the dissemination of these methods, we use that argument because they are easy to use and a danger for that country.

At this very moment, I mean, as I arrived here, there was no element of judgment to say who could have exploded those bombs, because it could have been an action planned and carried out by any of these groups, which have already done it before, like in the case of Oklahoma, or it could have been done by groups from abroad. However, it is evident –based on the details received-- that it was effectively organized, in other words, with sufficient organization and synchronization, by people who have the knowledge, the training and by pilots who were able to drive these huge Boeings, by people who coordinated the exact times at which they would act. They undoubtedly hijacked the planes, diverting them from their planned route; and had the pilots who could drive the planes directly against one tower or other targets and some minutes later against the other, and nearly at the same time, a third plane was crashed against the Pentagon.

In other words, they are very well trained and organized people and not necessarily operating in large groups. It is impossible to imagine the damage that can be caused by a small group of 20, 25 or 30 people, who are extremists devoted to certain ideas, and it is in the United States where they can cause most damage. You can perceive how they studied the time at which more people would be in the offices, around 9:00 am, the damage they could make, and the thousands of casualties they could provoke.

Actually, given the special characteristics of this event, it is now necessary to look for clues. That is the reason why I believe the most important duty of American leaders is to fight terrorism, and these tragedies are partly the result of the use of terrorist methods against other countries, like in the case of

Speech given the day of the tragic events that occurred in the United States

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

Cuba and other countries for a number of years. The idea of terrorism has been disseminated, and there is no power in the world today, regardless its size, that can avoid events of this nature because bigots, people who are totally indifferent to death, carry them out. Thus, the struggle against such methods is difficult.

A lesson can be drawn from that: none of the problems affecting today's world can be solved with the use of force, there is no global, technological or military power that can guarantee total immunity against such acts, because they can be organized by small groups, difficult to detect, and what is more complicated, carried out by suicidal people. Therefore, the general effort of the international community must be to put an end to a number of conflicts affecting the world, at least in this area. It is indispensable to put an end to world terrorism (APPLAUSE) and build a worldwide awareness against terrorism. I speak on behalf of a country, which has lived through more than 40 years of Revolution, and has gained much experience, a unified country with a high cultural level. It is not a country of bigots. Here, it is not fanaticism that has been cultivated but ideas, convictions and principles.

We could be in a better position to defend ourselves, and we have demonstrated it. How many lives we have saved while so much money and resources have been used to bring terrorism to our homeland! We have 40 years of experience, so we are ten times better prepared than the United States to prevent such actions.

It is very important to know what will be the reaction of the US Government. Possibly the days to come will be dangerous for the world, and I do not mean Cuba. Cuba is the most peaceful country in the world for several reasons: our policy, our kind of struggle, our doctrine, and also, comrades, for the absolute absence of fear.

Nothing troubles us. Nothing intimidates us. It would be very difficult to put together a package against Cuba, not even its inventor and the patent holder would believe it, this is very difficult and today Cuba means something to the world. (APPLAUSE) Cuba has a very high moral position, and a very sound political position in the world. It does not even cross my mind, although there is one of those Mafia fools trying to scheme something who I think even mentioned Venezuela and Cuba; one of the so many Mafiosi, a despicable big mouth. But, no one will pay the slightest attention, even though there will be tension and risks, depending on how the US Government proceeds.

The days to come will be tense both inside and outside the United States. A number of people will start to express their views.

Whenever there is a tragedy like this one, no matter how difficult to avoid it may be, I see no other way but to keep calm. And if at some point I am allowed to make a suggestion to an adversary who has been tough with us for many years, but knows we can be tough too, knows we resist, and knows we are not stupid and there is a little respect for our people, if under specific circumstances it were correct to suggest something to the adversary, for the well being of the American people and based on the arguments I have given you, we would advise the leaders of the powerful empire to keep their equanimity, to act calmly, not to be carried away by a fit of rage or hatred and not to start hunting people down dropping bombs just anywhere.

I reiterate that none of the world problems --not even terrorism-- can be solved with the use of force, and every act of force, every imprudent action that entails the use of force anywhere would seriously aggravate the world problems.

The way is neither the use of force nor the war. I say this here with the full authority of someone who has always been honest, with the sound conviction and the experience of someone who has been through the years of struggle that we have lived in Cuba. It is only guided by reason and applying an intelligent policy based on the strength of consensus and the support of the international public opinion that such a predicament could definitely be solved. I think this unexpected episode must be used to undertake an international struggle against terrorism. However, this international struggle against

terrorism cannot succeed by killing a terrorist here and another one there, that is, by using similar methods to theirs, sacrificing innocent lives. It is resolved, inter alia, by putting an end to State terrorism and other repulsive crimes (APPLAUSE), by putting an end to genocide and by honestly pursuing a policy of peace and respect for unavoidable moral and legal standards. The world cannot be saved unless a path of international peace and cooperation is pursued.

Nobody should think that we are trying to buy a ton of any thing in the US market. We have proven that we can survive, live and make progress, and everything seen here today is an expression of an unprecedented progress in history (APPLAUSE). Progress is not achieved only through the manufacturing of automobiles; developing people's minds, providing knowledge and culture, and looking after human beings accordingly makes progress. That is the secret of the tremendous strength of our Revolution.

The world cannot be saved any other way, and I mean from violent situations. May peace be accomplished everywhere to protect all the peoples from that plague of terrorism, which is one of the plagues (APPLAUSE), because there is another horrible plague today, which is called AIDS, for instance. There is another plague, which kills tens of millions of children, teenagers and people in the world, that is, starvation, diseases and lack of medical care and medications.

In the political area, there are absolutist ideas, a single way of thinking that they try to impose on the world thus promoting rebellious attitudes and irritation everywhere.

This world cannot be saved –and this has nothing to do with terrorism-- if this unfair economic and social order continues to be developed and applied leading the world to a catastrophe, to a blind alley for the 6.2 billion people who live today on this planet which is increasingly destroyed and led to poverty, unemployment, hunger and despair. The masses in different historical places like Seattle, Quebec, Washington and Genoa have proven that.

We expressed our opposition to publishing that kind of warning, because one of the goals of those individuals was to create panic. We also explained that there were other procedures that could be followed, like the ones that we use: we set up the appropriate watch systems wherever there was any risk of bombs, we searched and knew who could plant them and who was involved in these plans. We kept watching, which is what has to be done, if you do not want to spread panic or create a scandal or grant the perpetrators the possibility to achieve their goal, which was to damage the country's economy and sow terror.

In any case, they published the information. That is fine with us, we had already strengthened our mechanisms to capture those individuals, they have not even been able to plant a small bomb ever since, and the watch system is still in place where necessary. When they plotted the assassination attempt in Panama, we knew more than they themselves did about what they were planning. That is for sure.

Now the Miami mob is working on freeing the terrorists caught in flagrante delicto and arrested in Panama. They have already planned how to do it, which country they will evacuate them through and how. They will feign an illness and then make their move. They are freely receiving visitors from Miami, and even participated in the sending of armed infiltrators to Cuba, through Santa Clara, some months ago.

Thanks to the many friends that we have everywhere and to men like those (he points to the pictures of the Cuban patriots imprisoned in Miami for gathering information on terrorist plans against Cuba), the country has been able to defend itself against terrorism (APPLAUSE).

I am pointing this out here because there is a reality, there are more papers and notes, and we have sometimes sent verbal messages, and sometimes we have left written evidence, and one of the arguments that we have used is irrefutable: the United States is the country with the largest number of

organized extremist groups, and 400 of them are armed.

The hijacking of airplanes –a method invented for use against Cuba-- became a universal plague, and it was Cuba that ultimately solved this problem when, after repeated warnings, we sent two hijackers back to the United States. It was painful, because they were Cubans, but we had issued public warnings, they came here and we returned them. We complied with our public pledge and yet they never again provided us with any information about them to pass on to their relatives. They have their own way of acting. I know they were sentenced to 40 years imprisonment, and that put an end to the hijacking of airplanes.

But listen, they have 800 extremist groups over there. At times they have locked themselves up some place for some reason and they have burn themselves to death. There are groups formed for many reasons, often political, sometimes religious, that are prone to violence and the use of force, or the poisoning of products as a means to take action against the US authorities. I am not talking about the mob people. I am talking about hundreds of organized extremist groups acting within the United States. They blew up that building in Oklahoma not so long ago.

The United States is the country most vulnerable to terrorism. It is the country with the most planes, with the greatest dependence on technical resources, electrical power grids, gas pipelines, and so on. Many of the people in these groups are fascists who do not mind killing. Mentally speaking, they must be closer to insanity than to a balanced intelligence. We have told the U.S. authorities that these methods should not be publicized, because they are easy to use and a danger for them.

As I arrived here, there was no evidence as to who could have planted those bombs, because it may have been an action planned and carried out by any of these groups, which have already done such things, like in the case of Oklahoma, or it may have been done by groups from abroad. However, it is evident, based on the details received, that it was very effectively organized, in other words, with a high degree of organization and synchronization, by people who have the knowledge and the training, and by pilots who were able to handle these large Boeings, by people who coordinated the exact time at which they were going to act. They undoubtedly hijacked the planes, diverting them from their scheduled routes, and had pilots who could steer the planes directly into a tower or other target, and then the other tower a few minutes later, and at nearly the same time, another against the Pentagon.

In other words, they are people who are very well trained and organized, and they do not necessarily need to be from large groups. It is unimaginable the damage that can be caused by a small group of 20, 25 or 30 people, who are extremist fanatics fully devoted to certain ideas, and the place where they can do the most damage is the United States. You can see how they studied the time at which more people would be in the offices, around 9:00 a.m., the damage they could do, and the thousands of casualties they could cause.

In fact, they now have to look for clues, any clues, because this event has special characteristics. That is the reason why I believe the most important duty of U.S. leaders is to fight terrorism, and these tragedies are partly the result of the use of terrorist methods against other countries, as in the case of Cuba for so many years. The idea of terrorism has been broadly disseminated, and there is no power in the world today, regardless of its size, that can avoid events of this nature, because the bigots who carry them out are totally indifferent to death. Thus, the struggle against such methods is difficult.

A lesson can be drawn from this: none of the problems affecting today's world can be solved with the use of force; there is no global, technological or military power that can guarantee immunity against such acts, because they can be organized by small groups, difficult to detect, and what is more complicated, used by suicidal people. Therefore, the general effort of the international community must be to put an end to a number of conflicts affecting the world, at least in this area; there should be an end to world terrorism (APPLAUSE) while a worldwide awareness is built. I speak on behalf of a country that has lived through more than 40 years of Revolution and has gained much experience, a unified country with a high cultural level. This is not a country of bigots. It has not been bigotry but rather

ideas, convictions and principles that have been cultivated here.

We are in a better position to defend ourselves, and we have demonstrated it. Just look at the number of lives we have saved while so much money and resources have been used to sow terrorism in our homeland! We have 40 years of experience, so we are ten times better prepared than the United States to prevent such episodes.

It is very important to know what the reaction of the U.S. Government might be. Possibly the world will be living dangerous days, and I am not talking about Cuba. Cuba is the most peaceful country in the world, for several reasons: our policies, our forms of struggle, our doctrine, our ethics, and also, comrades, and due to an absolute absence of fear.

Nothing troubles us. Nothing intimidates us. It would be very difficult to concoct a slanderous accusation against Cuba; not even its inventor and the patent holder would believe it. It would be very difficult. And Cuba means something in the world today. (APPLAUSE) It has a very high moral position, and a very sound political position in the world. I cannot even conceive of such a thing, although one of those mob fools is already attempting to scheme, and I think he even mentioned Venezuela and Cuba; one of the many members of that mob, one of those contemptible charlatans. No one will pay the slightest attention to him, but there will be tension and danger, depending on the U.S. Government's reaction.

The days to come will be tense both inside and outside the United States. A number of people will start putting forward opinions.

Whenever there is a tragedy like this, no matter how difficult to avoid it may be, I see no other way but to remain calmed. And if at some point I were allowed to make a suggestion to the adversary who has been so tough on us for many years, but who knows we are tough, knows we resist, and knows we are not stupid, and there is just a little respect for our people, but if under certain circumstances it were correct to suggest something to the adversary, for the well-being of the American people and based on the arguments I have given you, we would advise the leaders of that powerful empire to remain calm, to act with a cool head, to avoid getting carried away by a fit of rage or hatred, and not to start trying to hunt people down by throwing bombs just anywhere.

I reiterate that none of the world's problems, not even terrorism, can be solved with the use of force, and every act of force, every imprudent action that entails the use of force anywhere, is going to seriously aggravate the world problems.

The way is neither the use of force nor the war. I say this with the full authority of someone who has always talked honestly, of someone with sound convictions and the experience of surviving the years of struggle that Cuba has lived through. Only reason, and the intelligent policy of seeking strength through consensus and international public opinion, can definitely eradicate this problem. I think this unexpected episode should be used to undertake an international effort against terrorism. However, this international struggle against terrorism cannot be won by eliminating a terrorist here and another one there, by killing people here and there, using similar methods to theirs and sacrificing innocent lives. It can only be won, among other ways, by putting an end to State terrorism and other repulsive forms of killing (APPLAUSE), by putting an end to genocide, and by seriously pursuing a policy of peace and respect for moral and legal standards. The world cannot be saved unless a path of international peace and cooperation is pursued.

Nobody should think that we are trying to buy a ton of anything on the U.S. market. We have proven that we can survive, live and make progress, and everything seen here today is an expression of unprecedented progress in all of human history (APPLAUSE). Progress is not achieved only through the manufacturing of automobiles; developing people's minds, providing knowledge, promoting culture, and looking after human beings the way they should be looked after makes progress. That is the secret of the tremendous strength of our Revolution.

Speech given the day of the tragic events that occurred in the United States

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

The world cannot be saved in any other way, and by that I mean the situations of violence. Let us seek peace everywhere and protect all the people from that plague of terrorism, which is only one of the plagues (APPLAUSE), because there is another horrible plague today, which is called AIDS, for instance. There is another plague, which kills tens of millions of children, teenagers and adults in the world, that is, hunger, disease and a lack of health care and medicines.

In the political arena, there are absolutist ideas, and attempts to impose a single way of thinking on the world; this fosters rebellious attitudes and irritation everywhere.

This world cannot be saved –and this does not have anything to do with terrorism-- if this unfair economic and social order continues to be developed and applied; an order that is leading the world to disaster, along a path from which there is no escape for the 6.2 billion people living today and the future inhabitants of this planet, suffering ever greater destruction and plunged further into poverty, unemployment, hunger and despair. This has been proven by the masses in places that have already gone down in history, like Seattle, Quebec, Washington and Genoa.

The world's most powerful economic and political leaders now find it almost impossible to meet; everywhere we can see that people are less and less afraid, and are rising up. I was recently in Durban and there I saw thousands and thousands of people members of non-governmental organizations; discontent is spreading like wildfire around the globe.

Now that I have already mentioned one of the plagues, it is only fair to talk of the others, and the most influential national leaders are obliged to seek for a solution to a situation that worsens by the minute. A serious economic crisis is affecting the whole planet; it gravely affects the United States, Europe, Japan, and the industrialized nations of Southeast Asia, with virtually the sole exception of China. Alongside its economic reforms, China has maintained distribution methods that prevent hunger in a country with the largest number of inhabitants on earth but only 5% of the world's agricultural land, proving that the world can still be saved.

The crisis is profound. Every day in the news we read of what is happening on the stock exchanges, of fluctuations in currency values, of increases in unemployment, of reductions in growth, and almost no one can escape, with the above-mentioned exceptions and perhaps another one under very special circumstances.

It is serious crisis and it could be worse than that of 1929, because speculation has been abused more than in 1929. Almost infinite but artificial wealth has been created, stock prices have been inflated, so much so that those who invested \$1000 in one or various shares have watched their value rise to \$800 000 in eight or nine years. But it is imaginary money, and the companies whose shares have undergone the most rapid growth have lost more than half of their value.

We watch the theorists and analysts inventing things, old and new remedies that have no impact on the crisis but bring more and more surprises. No one can predict the outcome, but I can assure you that the situation is very complex for the world economy, for neoliberalism, for neoliberal globalization.

The power of the large transnationals is ever greater; they are more independent and tend to act wantonly. Even governments are increasingly unable to fight and resist them.

You cannot imagine how the scenario has changed in just four months, between the last quarter of 2000 and this month. During this year there have been periods of favorable economic winds in Europe, but the wind has died, the wind no longer blows over Europe, all is calm and the tide is changing.

It is amazing to see the things that are happening in Japan, a country that was so capable of developing itself that for years everything that it did was called a miracle, and yet now its problems are worse every day.

Speech given the day of the tragic events that occurred in the United States

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

Nobody can say with any precision what will happen and how it will happen, because although events arise in almost mathematical fashion, economics is not an exact science. Trends, nevertheless, are clear and irrefutable. The prices for basic commodities are at rock bottom and ever more complicated situations continue to emerge. They know this, as do the Europeans and their economic strategists.

In recent weeks the United States has reduced its interest rate six times. This is one mechanism they use to check whether there is more money in the system and if people will buy more, in order for industries to produce more, even if resources are wasted.

It is an economy that needs people to throw more and more money away in order to survive. It is not an economy that serves humankind; it only serves itself and the owners of the giant companies, not the people.

We have to contend with all these problems on a daily basis. We need to know if the price of oil has gone up, or down, if the sugar price has fallen more. We need detailed daily information on what is happening in the world, and so we observe and review the situation every day.

There will soon be a meeting here, in November, of various non-governmental organizations and union representatives to discuss the FTAA. In December, there will be the so-called Sao Paulo Forum, where hundreds of Latin American political leaders will meet, representatives of ever more radical organizations. Tens of thousands of people will participate in an international forum against neoliberal globalization in Rio Grande del Sur in January. After the Rio Grande del Sur meeting, in February, we will host our annual meeting of economists from all over the world.

We have met very knowledgeable people who reflect the anger, the discontent and the hopelessness I have been talking about.

There is a lot of work to do, and we will be working within the privileged situation we find ourselves in today, in which our population will receive a million color television sets in 24 months. We have already begun to distribute these, favoring those who have no television. The University for All program is being further developed, and computer skills are becoming increasingly widespread. You will see that by next year a child in first grade will already know something about computers, and no one can handle that mouse better than a five-year-old: painting, making additions, playing educational games and developing their knowledge.

Every classroom throughout the country --I spoke to you of Havana-- will have a television set, and around 1000 communities that do not have access to electricity will have a meeting room with a 29-inch television and a solar panel collecting enough energy to power it for 10 hours a day, so that they will be able to benefit from the University for All programs, sports programming, news shows, round tables, televised public rallies, all for a negligible cost, particularly if you compare it with the enormous resources that our country currently must spend on energy consumption, and energy acquisition. This is why we are working with such speed on developing our own oil depots and searching for more oil and gas.

More than a thousand communities will be served! Not a single citizen will be left without access to a television, thanks to solar energy; and every one of the 1944 schools that do not have electricity will be equipped with an additional solar panel, in this case for the computer. Let them come and talk to us of justice! A country that, despite the blockade and the crimes that have been committed against it, is able to provide every school, whether it has 20 students, five, or even one --there are 21 schools with just one pupil-- with a teacher, two solar panels, televised classes and a personal computer, effective for many things, such as retaining knowledge with maximum efficiency.

There are areas in which there are great difficulties, such as spelling, for example. We are all aware of this; senior secondary school students know it when they take their exams, and our educational researchers have developed programs to correct this problem through a compact disc that has all the

information necessary to eradicate spelling mistakes and to learn to write without these mistakes.

What kind of justice can there be in the world, what kind of freedom, what kind of democracy, where citizens are never asked a question, where an entire country can be sold without even consulting Congress, or where a minister can mortgage the nation for 100 years without consulting a single citizen?

How can there be democracy without culture and without education? Do not think for a minute that the wealthy countries have a high level of education; the wealthy countries have a lot of money and a little more knowledge than some Third World countries, where real illiteracy rates may be 20%, 25% or 30%, as compared to many others where functional illiteracy rates are around the same. For example, 10 years from now, our own citizens would be considered functionally illiterate, even if they were university graduates, if they did not possess the general, comprehensive knowledge that we are talking about and towards which we are striving. And the results are already visible and impressive. We measure the results in centimeters, as if we were using a ruler, because every day we receive thousand of spontaneous opinions on every issue, and we compare what our citizens say 21 months after the beginning of the great battle of ideas, which began with the kidnapping of Elián, as I said. Who are they going to fool and where in the world if anyone can see the social programs we are developing with more vigor than ever that will represent an enormous leap forward for the Revolution?

As fate would have it, our Northern neighbors with their blockade and crimes against Cuba, have helped our people to become what they are, what they never asked to be, I am talking about their role as an example. Yes, as an example. Let them send philosophers, whomever they choose, to see if they can argue and maintain their claim, that all the caricatures they have created to exploit man, to humiliate him, to make him the enemy of his brother, that such societies are more just, freer, more democratic countries than the one our people have created with such sacrifice and after 132 years of struggle, from the beginning of its fight against colonialism and slavery. They can compete in nothing, they are incapable of doing even 20% of what we can and are already doing; let no one doubt it.

I urge you to observe, to reflect. Above all, I urge the young people to study as hard as they can; I urge those students entering the new schools created in this period, which are specialized schools that will become the main bulwark for what we intend to do, to be examples.

We will closely follow the progress in the studies of those 3,500 entering the school today.

Even the people living in the community around the school are happy, because the polyclinic --which belonged to the school, but now serves 26,000 residents, many of whom did not live there when the school was first built-- was in a terrible shape but has now been completely repaired and will be devoted principally to the local residents. That is because the school, its teachers and workers, will have what we have come to call a high quality infirmary, which will even have X-ray equipment and all other necessary facilities (Applause). We have given it that name, I do not know if you will ever have to go to the polyclinic. And there will be specially selected doctors, to help the young people who sometimes have many problems without anyone realizing.

The teaching staff is excellent, with a principal and deputy principal tested by life (Applause) and enjoying great prestige and experience.

I wish Maria Teresa, who was the principal of the already famous Melena school and is now responsible for the education of the 3500 new students, would sit down one day and describe the method she used to prevent even a single drop-out from the 501 pupils of those first two groups, particularly at that age.

If there is anything left to say, it is to urge the parents to cooperate ever more with the schools where their children study; children for whom a glowing future awaits, with respectable jobs and more knowledge than all other professionals in their fields.

Speech given the day of the tragic events that occurred in the United States

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

One of the secrets of this success has been the parents' cooperation. Nothing whatsoever has been done without their cooperation, and we are well aware of the decisive influence they have had.

To you, the most objective thing I can say is that we, who have known different times, can feel envious of you. I would give ten lives to be one of you sitting there now. (Applause)

Patria o Muerte!

Venceremos!

(Standing ovation)

Version taquigrafica del Cosejo de Estado

Source URL: <http://www.fidelcastroruz.biz/en/discursos/speech-given-day-tragic-events-occurred-united-states>

Links

[1] <http://www.fidelcastroruz.biz/en/discursos/speech-given-day-tragic-events-occurred-united-states>