

[Speech given by Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic of Cuba, at the public rally held at the "Abel Santamaría Cuadrado" Revolution Square in Ciego de Avila on the occasion of the 49th anniversary of the attacks on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Barracks. July 26, 2002 \[1\]](#)

**Date:**

26/07/2002

Fellow Cubans:

History has proved that nothing could defeat our people in its noble endeavors and that weapons are no more powerful than ideas.

Gomez and Maceo, their tenacity and heroism, ride today like invincible horsemen through our fields; Céspedes and Agramonte bear with them the constitution and the justice for which they shed their blood in the free and sovereign republic they proclaimed in 1868. Martí's ideals live on in the nation of workers that we are today, as nothing could prevent that, from the proletarian spirit of a country built over centuries with the blood and sweat of slaves and workers, the deepest yearning for freedom and justice that our national hero demanded would flow with inextinguishable strength, that is, our socialism. What we are today we have defended with honor and a sense of humanism and justice that will live on like an eternal flame.

Glory be especially to this July 26 and to those who on the same date forty-nine years ago shed their blood and gave their lives to resume with ever growing conscience the march down the road opened by their predecessors!

Glory be to the people that, educated in just ideas and heroic traditions, has stayed true to them until today and will stay true tomorrow and ever onwards to victory!

What are we, what shall we be if not one single history, one single idea, one single will for all times?

Ciego de Avila and Morón, yesterday a line of barricades that the enemy tried to use to divide the country the East from the West, what are they this July 26? They are an indestructible path linking the thought, the heroism and the will to struggle of that imperishable bulwark with whose independence Martí wanted to prevent and did prevent the powerful and expansionist neighbor to the North from spreading through the Antilles and falling with that additional force on our American lands.

People of Ciego de Avila and fellow Cubans from the former province of Camagüey, without the memory of your sacrifices of yesterday, our dreams of today would be impossible.

Hardly twelve years ago, many in the world expected to see Cuba, the last socialist state in the West, crumble. Not much time has gone by and today, instead, quite a number of us on this earth are waiting to see how the developed capitalist world led by the United States disengages from the colossal and chaotic economic mess in which it is enmeshed. Those who yesterday talked so much about the end of history might be wondering if this profound crisis is not the beginning of the end of the political,

economic and social system it represents.

Nevertheless, being aware of the disaster affecting that system does not necessarily mean to be unrealistic, to indulge in excessive optimism or to see mirages in the midst of what is still an arid desert.

The men who to some degree foresaw a fragment of the future, as a rule perceived the demise of their era's tragedies as closer and imminent. However, one would have to be really blind to fail to understand that the barbaric and cruel world order that humanity endures today cannot last much longer.

History has shown that new eras have always arisen from the profound crises of any dominant system.

The 21st century will not be like the century that just ended when the human population grew four times more than it had grown in the hundreds of thousands of years that man wandered through the woods, groves, rivers and lakes of the earth, seeking sustenance in obscure corners of the planet which are today threatened with pre-emptive and surprise attacks. Today, one could almost envy those noble barbaric predecessors!

When Marx wrote the Communist Manifesto in 1848, it seemed that almost the only limit to the inexhaustible fount of riches that would make possible a truly just and worthy social system for human beings was the exploitative and merciless capitalist system born from the bourgeois revolution. Not even his wondrous genius could imagine how much damage capitalism was yet to bring on humanity.

Lenin discovered and analyzed its imperialist phase.

Today, almost one hundred years later, humanity is suffering under the horrors of its neoliberal globalization.

New and enormous challenges have surfaced in each of these stages that lead it closer to its end.

Hardly 30 years ago, few people in the world discussed the environment. Ideas or themes linked to the destruction of the forests, soil erosion and salinity, climate change, the disappearing ozone layer, melting

icecaps, whole cities and nations doomed to fatally disappear beneath the sea, polluted air and water; overexploited oceans seemed to be inventions of doomsday scientists and not pressing realities.

What does it mean for the overwhelming majority of humanity the spectacular breakthroughs of science, space flights, the possible colonization of Mars and suchlike things?

What is it they promise to the billions of starving and diseased people, total or functional illiterates, who live on this planet?

And what does the alleged existence of the United Nations Organization and the General Assembly mean to them, when the only thing that counts there is the Security Council, where five countries have veto power, and the real tyranny on any matter exerted by the dominant hegemonic superpower?

How can they be explained about the 200 million children who work for a living, others who are sold in the marketplaces of pleasure, or die by the millions every year when their lives could be saved with just a few cents?

What can we feel proud of?

What kind of humanity do we belong to?

It is necessary to build an awareness of these realities.

We should send this simple message of truth to the billions of people who in one way or another are experiencing this and are aware of it, so that no sophisticated weapons or mechanisms of deceit and lies that can destroy the conscience of our species.

Selfishness, ambition, hatred, envy, rivalries, the worst instincts are sown everywhere. Education is what the overwhelming majority of people on this planet mostly lack, and that is what turns newborn babies into human beings. A minimal amount of political education for young people and adults would allow them to understand the world's realities.

Perhaps, of the evils brought about by developed capitalism none is so nefarious as the way of life and the consumerist habits, as unrealistic as they are unattainable, which advertising drums into the world population 365 days a year, 24 hours a day at a cost of a trillion dollars. If this amount were spent on instilling values and on rationally educating nations, the face of the earth would change.

Human beings are not educated to realistic patterns of consumption and distribution that include our infinite cultural and spiritual wealth. These could realistically be within humankind's reach without destroying nature, as could food, housing, and other essential material goods. Actually, the exact opposite is done, which constitutes an enormous tragedy.

Cuba is a modest example of what could be done with a minimum of resources. Our current struggle becomes especially important as we find ourselves up against the hostility and aggression of a government, which is the sum of the most overwhelming powers that have ever existed. It is, nevertheless, completely lacking in the ethical, social and humanist values which an endangered species like ours need to survive.

Twenty U.S. universities have introduced crash courses to explain the complicated tangles created by neoliberal capitalism's latest feat: accounting fraud. What is accounting fraud? It is barefaced robbery, a criminal swindling of millions and millions of Americans who had bought shares in big companies or had invested hundreds of billions of dollars in them. It is a fraud that directly affects retirees who had invested their money in these seemingly juicy shares.

The fraud scandal has given rise to controversies and direct and indirect accusations between political leaders in the United States. President Bush, in a recent speech given in Alabama, insinuated that the blame lay with the previous U.S. administration. He said that the U.S. economy was suffering a hangover from the economic binge of the 90s. He did not mention President Clinton by name but he criticized that culture of endless corporate profits in the stock markets where no one ever thought about the future.

The Democratic leadership has coincided with major newspapers in responding with harsh direct criticisms linking the current president with the same practices that he now pretends "to get rid of". They have mentioned the use of a company on the brink of a crisis, and how Mr. Bush, fully informed of the situation as a board member, sold his shares for \$848,560, while the price was still high.

Additionally, the leader of the Democratic majority in the Senate has asked the body regulating the Stock Exchange to publish information about the privileged loans received by the president, at low interest rates, when he worked for the Harken Energy Company.

Accusations are flying while "millions of investors and pensioners have seen their savings and pensions reduced by more than one trillion dollars," to quote one prominent newspaper.

In the midst of the year 2000 crisis, the effects on the stock markets in the United States and Europe have been devastating and have had a serious impact on the world economy dealing a blow to hopes of a slight recovery in 2002.

More than 50% of U.S. consumers have shares in the stock market, which could negatively impact on the economic recovery.

Unemployment in the United States has now risen to 6%.

Company profits have fallen in five consecutive quarters.

From March 2000 to date the Dow Jones and NASDAQ indices, the most important for the New York Stock Exchange had fallen, the former by around 31.6% and the latter by 73.9%. The New York Stock Exchange had lost \$1.4 trillion in the last two weeks.

On Tuesday July 23, the New York Stock Exchange plummeted again because of the accounting fraud at WorldCom, the second largest world communications company. On Wednesday 24, it closed at a relatively high trend, and yesterday Thursday 25, it was announced that 12 investment banks were under investigation for possible links with the accounting frauds. Nobody knows what surprise tomorrow might bring.

After several years of high surpluses, the current administration is accused of bringing back budget deficits with its economic policy.

Public debt has risen to 6 trillion dollars, which is equivalent to a \$66,000 per capita debt for every American.

The trade deficit continues to grow while the country's spending in 2002 could exceed 500 billion dollars.

The external financing they receive has fallen to less than half the previous amount and so has foreign investment.

The dollar has been devalued against the Euro and the Yen.

The interest rate has fallen to its lowest level in 40 years, a symptom of uncertainty and insecurity.

There are some positive economic indicators, which do little to offset the set of overwhelmingly unfavorable factors just mentioned.

I have not said a word about what is happening in Latin America where, according to information known to our people, the economic and social situation is terrifying and getting worse.

Given the major significance of the U.S. economy for that of the rest of the world, including Cuba's, which in addition to the blockade suffers the indirect damage caused by the international economic crisis, the figures are far from encouraging for anyone. The set of problems that are piling up in the world point objectively to a disaster for neoliberal globalization and for that unsustainable economic order.

Since Cuba is a Third World country, it is also suffering from low sugar and nickel prices. The 10-year sustained growth of tourism of more than 15% annually was hit by the devastating terrorist attack on

the Twin Towers, the effects of the world economic crisis on this industry and the growing cost of life insurance and fuel. Additionally submitted to an economic blockade by the United States for more than 40 years, but saving and managing its resources efficiently and honorably, there is no place here for murky businesses, the plundering of public funds, money laundering, drug trafficking or any other similar situations. There are no children who don't have a school. They don't go barefoot or panhandling. Thirteen vaccines protect their health. The infant mortality rate is one of the lowest in the world. All get immediate free medical care. All complete their sixth grade and almost one hundred percent their ninth grade. Today, all options for studying are within their reach. Their diet has improved. Their general education and art knowledge are growing. Our young people are guaranteed the continuation of their studies and a job when they turn 16.

Unemployment is not growing; it is falling, from 6% about 2 years ago and it will be 3.5% by the end of 2002. The number of drugs in short supply for the population is clearly decreasing. Medical services are improving and other new ones are being introduced. The people are protected in case of natural disasters and receive immediate assistance when have been affected; also, recovery after such events takes place in record time. Hundreds of thousands of televisions are supplied every year. Old schools are repaired and new ones are built. Audiovisual aids and computers are being introduced into school and general education on a massive scale. Programs such as the training of social workers and University for All are coming into being. Teachers and professors-training-on-the-job to increase the numbers of teaching staff and reduce classroom size are being educated. Computer skills teachers are teaching this subject from pre-school on. University education is advancing significantly while we continue to help other countries with education, health and sport, free of charge.

The social and humane advantages of our system are infinite. We are well ahead of many industrialized nations in many of the most important areas of life and ahead of all of them in some areas such as education, culture, scientific knowledge for the masses and other fields. Not all have been mentioned.

We have unity, a political culture, cohesion and strength. Nothing can even affect our brilliant future. In the battle of ideas no one can go up against our intelligent and ever more cultured people. We have been able to withstand the blockade for more than 40 years, including 11 of special period. We have just waged a sound struggle against lies, infamy, political subversion and the attempt to impose the fickle will of the masters of the most powerful empire that has ever existed on our people. We did so with such impressive strength and popular support that nobody should have any doubts that there is no way to break our invincible will to win or to die defending our socialism, which we think is the most just, humane and decent society that can be conceived of. And with every minute that passes the lies, the ignorance, the lack of culture and the threats will crash up against the invincible spirit of our people.

Hardly three days ago, the Miami terrorist Mob created, hand-fed, trained and supported by the U.S. administration openly declared the millions that it invests in interfering, destabilizing and terrorist actions against our people. One more proof of the lack of seriousness behind the declarations, the lies and the alleged policies of an administration that promises to fight terrorism.

Even if only out of a sense of political decency, the U.S. government should stop tolerating and supporting the extremist group which made it put on such a ridiculous show on May 20, which only led to greater unity, a strengthening of the revolutionary spirit and the patriotic conscience that the Cuban people has shown to the world.

The smallest municipality in Cuba is stronger than all the scum that met with Bush in the James L. Knight Center in Miami.

I have always said —and I shall never regret it— that the American people, idealist by nature due to its ethical values and its traditions of love of liberty will be one of the Cuban people's best friends when it learns the whole truth about Cuba's honest and heroic struggle. It showed this in an impressive way with its support for Elián's return.

Scarcely 72 hours ago, the House of Representatives also made an important gesture when, based on various criteria and viewpoints, and even under assault by the hysterical screams and shouts of a little group of Miami mobsters, it paid no heed to the arguments of the supporters of the blockade and genocide against Cuba, voting with determination and courage for three amendments that bring glory to that institution. It does not matter if the executive as was already announced vetoes them, nor does it matter if new ruses and provocations are invented to annul them.

We shall always be grateful for that gesture. I would like to express our people's gratitude to both the Democratic and Republican legislators who on that day acted intelligently and strongly, following their own beliefs. We shall always be on the American people's side in its struggle to preserve the lives and interests of its citizens who might become innocent victims of criminal terrorist attacks.

On this historical date for Cubans, I can assure you that we wish for a sincere, respectful and fraternal friendship between the peoples of Cuba and the United States.

Long live socialism!

Patria o Muerte!

Venceremos!

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