

### The eternal flame

This is a political reflection. To be more precise: it is another proclamation. Exactly one year ago today, on July 31, 2006, I issued the first proclamation. But the year gone by is worth 10, for I have had the opportunity to live a unique experience which has afforded me information and knowledge on vital questions facing humanity, knowledge I have conveyed to the people of Cuba with the utmost honesty.

Today, I am bombarded with questions as to when I will take up again what some call power, as though that power were possible without independence. The world knows a real and destructive power, wielded by a decadent empire which threatens everyone.

Raúl has already responded that, as I recover, every important decision is consulted with me. What will I do? I will fight tirelessly as I have done my entire life.

One year after the first Proclamation, I can share with the people of Cuba the satisfaction of seeing that what was then promised is reflected by today's unquestionable reality: Raúl, the Party, the government, the National Assembly, the Young Communists League and grassroots and social organizations, headed by the workers, move forward, guided by the unshakable principle of unity.

With the same conviction, we continue to struggle relentlessly to have the Five Heroes, who provided Cuba with information on the United States' anti-Cuban terrorist plans, released from cruel and merciless prison.

The struggle against our own deficiencies and against the insolent enemy which seeks to take possession of Cuba must be unrelenting.

On this point, I am obliged to insist on something which the leaders of the Revolution can never forget: it is our duty to work untiringly to strengthen our defensive capability and preparedness, under the principle that, regardless of the circumstances, an unpayable price must be paid for any invasion.

No one should entertain the slightest illusion that the empire, which carries the genes of its own destruction, will negotiate with Cuba. Though we have said, again and again, that our struggle is not against the people of the United States —something which is absolutely true— the latter is not in a position to curtail the apocalyptic impulses of its government or the foul and insane call for what they label a "democratic Cuba", as though leaders here put themselves forth and elect themselves without having to pass through that inflexible filter embodied by the overwhelming majority of an educated and cultivated people who must support them.

In a previous reflection, I invoked the historical figures of Martí, Maceo, Agramonte and Cespedes. To keep alight the memory of the innumerable people who fell in combat, of those who fought and sacrificed themselves for the homeland, Raúl lit a flame that shall burn for eternity, 50 years after Frank País, the young 22-year-old hero whose example moved all of us, fell in combat.

Life is meaningless without ideas. There is no greater joy than to struggle in their name.

Fidel Castro Ruz  
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