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Cuba: ‘The beauty of this difficult hour lies in knowing that we are part of an undefeatable people’

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President Miguel Díaz-Canel. Photo: Bill Hackwell

Speech delivered by Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Republic, at the closing of the Fifth Ordinary Period of Sessions of the National Assembly of People's Power in its 10th Legislature, at the Convention Palace, on July 18, 2025, "Year 67 of the Revolution"

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(Shorthand Versions-Presidency of the Republic)

Dear Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, leader of the Cuban Revolution;
Dear comrade Esteban Lazo Hernández, President of the National Assembly of People's Power;
Dear deputies;
Compatriots:

This has been an authentic Assembly of the people, as the young deputy Danhiz expressed here. It has been so because its debates were the debates of today's Cuban society on the enormous challenges ahead of us, but also because they once again revealed the impressive willingness of this people to fight when everything becomes more difficult.

Neither pessimism, nor defeatism, nor discouragement. What we found here were sober presentations, criticisms based on commitment and, above all, concrete proposals and demands to change what must be changed without delay.

The wisdom and enthusiasm that has characterized practically all the interventions of these days do not surprise me, it is what I have seen in the tours through the provinces. Just where the situation is hardest, after long hours of blackout, you always find the extra of Cubans.

It is not the first time nor will it be the last time that the Cuban Revolution faces its "most difficult moment", although it will always seem to us that nothing can be worse than what we face at the instant we face it.

I will cite a few episodes in the history of Cuba: the Zanjón Pact after ten years of a bloody war that ended with the death or exile of its leaders; the fall in combat of José Martí and Antonio Maceo; the Yankee intervention that robbed us even of the right to enter the heroic city and to attend the signing of the Treaty of Paris because there two empires negotiated our freedom; the neocolonial republic with its appendix, and the Yankee military base where human dignity is tortured and violated.

Then comes the Machado times with its pomp and misery, and Julio Antonio Mella assassinated, and the Revolution that went to the dogs, and Antonio Guiteras massacred in El Morrillo for his profoundly anti-imperialist action. And the corruption of the authentic ones, and Batista's coup d'état, and the murders of "our children" denounced by the Cuban mothers, and the repressed students and the massacre of the assailants of the Moncada, the Presidential Palace, the Goicuría.

With all this inheritance of heroism and frustrations of the revolutionary struggles, the Centennial Generation entered history, with its setback marking the victory in the attack to Moncada. They already had a program, an ideal and a willingness to carry it to the ultimate consequences. And so they did.

When we review all the periods of the 66 years of the Revolution in power, what we find, in addition to victories, are third world challenges, enemy obstacles and also our own mistakes and lessons learned, all fruits of the never abandoned eagerness to conquer and sustain social justice as a supreme aspiration, in a completely adverse world context, since the Soviet Union and the socialist camp ceased to exist.

If, in spite of all that, the Cuban Revolution is standing and fighting for the possible prosperity, it is because of its authentic and genuine character. We are not an accident of history. We are the logical consequence of a history of resistance and rebellion against abuse and injustice that has very deep reasons to believe in its own strength.

That is why the national dignity is offended by those who play at comparing times to praise "how well Cuba was before 1959", posting photos of the palaces and the elegance of its ladies and gentlemen, but hiding those of the eviction, the machete plan, the misery, the children swollen with parasites who worked when they should have gone to school, the prostitutes, and the Italian-American mafias sharing the spoils of the hotels and cabarets for whites only in a mestizo country.

Because the Revolution that finally took power in 1959 was started by a small group of revolutionaries, but it was made by a whole people. And the people who made it have defended it and defend it today even with their teeth, let there be no doubt about it! (Applause).

Otherwise, it will never be possible to explain its existence in this uncertain decade of the 21st century, where dissidence from the single way of thinking, imposed by predatory capitalism, is paid for with smart bombs, the destruction of entire nations or with asphyxiating economic blockades, like the one that this small country of courageous people has been enduring for more than 60 years.

It is deeply insulting to human dignity that those who use the Internet in campaigns to denigrate the Cuban people do not react with equal indignation in the face of the scandalous crimes of those who blockade the country; They avoid calling by name the Israeli genocide in Gaza and Lebanon, and do not protest, do not rebel, do not have the courage to point the finger at those guilty of so much xenophobia, so much war, so many weapons and so much injustice, competing in news prominence with the rampage of billionaire pedophiles and the deportation or imprisonment, without proven crimes, of tens of thousands of migrant workers and their families.

What we learned from the Cuban Revolution is that ideals are not changed because circumstances change; that the trench is not abandoned when the enemy siege tightens. We learned that only by having clear convictions as principles is it possible to sustain and win battles. And we also learned that we can fight our way out of the siege! (Applause).

Fellow Members:

I am not going to expand on the topics already addressed. The gravity of the times demands more actions than words, although we will always have the duty to say them and above all to honor them before the people who elected us. The guide is in

the concept of Revolution that Fidel bequeathed us: "Never lie or violate ethical principles".

These working sessions leave us with an important lesson. This is the Assembly of the Cuban people and everything that is discussed and approved in it has to connect with the feelings, needs and demands of the Cuban people. But let us not forget, as we rethink these days, the revolutionary ethics, that which Fidel taught us; let respect and not hatred prevail in us after learning, we cannot for any reason resemble our enemies.

On the other hand, it would not be realistic or honest to commit ourselves to fulfill the solution of all those needs and demands, always growing, where the main obstacle to achieve it is external. What we can and have the duty to commit is our energy, our effort, our tireless search for new ways and actions towards the satisfaction of those demands.

As the main obstacle is not within reach, all solutions depend entirely on the ability to foresee, to anticipate events and to face them with intelligence, effort and innovation. But, first of all, with the indispensable participation of our heroic people.

The recently launched Soberanía information and services platform and the proposal of several deputies to reach a consensus and make transparent the measures of the Government Program to correct distortions are strengths of the digital transformation, which should speed up processes that are still running too slow for the seriousness of the urgencies.

The Cuban economy operates under many risks for any decision, largely derived from the fierce enemy persecution. We cannot add more with our own inadequacies. We maintain the conviction reiterated by Army General Raúl Castro Ruz that it is possible to move forward and overcome the current situation through our own

efforts and results; but to achieve this, more discipline, organization, awareness and perseverance are required.

I believe that the reports of the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Economy and Planning and of Finance and Prices have been sufficiently commented on and received observations and proposals that should be taken into account.

An encouraging example is the fiscal results analyzed in this Assembly. I will not dwell on the details, but I do think it is good to remember that we will close the year 2023 with a 35% increase in the fiscal deficit. Many will remember the alarm that this caused and the fatalistic prediction of those who calculated up to a decade to recover that indicator. A year and a half later, the encouraging news is that we were able to achieve a significant reduction. In fact, during the first four months of this year we had surplus results and up to this moment the current account closes without deficit, which had not been achieved for more than ten years.



This has been an authentic Assembly of the people. Photo: José Manuel Correa
How was this possible? The main formula: discipline and exigency in the fight against tax evasion, in the collection of taxes and fines. The work is not perfect yet, this is an area in which a lot of awareness and control work is needed, until we gain in tax culture.

This result, very important for the economy, has a transcendental social impact: it will allow us to redistribute that income to the most vulnerable sectors, such as our retirees. This is what has enabled us to bring their pensions to a level that, while not sufficient, does put them in a better condition.

The main currency in fiscal policy is and will continue to be to attend to those, in

society, who suffer most severely from the difficult situation of the country under the noose of the asphyxiation plan contained in Mr. Trump's Presidential Memorandum.

With the conviction that "Yes we can", we have to turn to other vital areas for development, such as achieving an increase in foreign currency income, in the midst of a very hostile scenario in which the United States Government is reinforcing its siege to prevent the entry of a single cent into the country every day.

We cannot remain impassive, much less feel defeated. We must focus on all our export capacities, which inevitably start from an increase in production in all possible areas, to do so in sufficient quantity and quality, which will then allow us to impose ourselves against the siege and global competition.

It is up to us, and only us, to be sufficiently efficient, even in the difficult circumstances of acting with our hands tied by the blockade that some try to avoid. It is a challenging challenge, but not an impossible one.

Here, I would like to return to what we find in every tour we make week after week through the country's municipalities: how some, in the same circumstances of shortages, can overcome difficulties and demonstrate results.

An undeniable answer to this question, which we constantly ask ourselves, lies in the potential of leadership and the value of successful collectives.

The import mentality that has corroded us for years, in addition to generating dependence, whose negative effects are felt more in times of crisis, curbs internal capacity and potential and facilitates the actions of persecution against Cuba.

We cannot say that we will renounce imports, they will always be necessary at some level; but it is urgent to change the matrix and work on the basis of consuming more of what we produce internally than what is imported.

These productive processes, which we urgently need to dynamize, we cannot expect them to be only from large structures or companies.

As a way of contributing to municipal development, we must bet on boosting local production systems. Let us defend once and for all that the municipalities finally occupy the leading role they should have in national development.

Dear deputies:

We are facing a world in which an attempt is being made by the main military and economic power to impose a hegemonic and neoliberal approach.

During this semester we have consolidated foreign relations, which are being strengthened in the midst of constant pressures from sectors of extreme anti-Cuban hatred to promote economic and political isolation, which they will never achieve.

Cuba continues to be that benchmark of dignity and national sovereignty that many governments and peoples of the world look up to with admiration.

We have reached a higher level in strategic relations with China, Vietnam, Russia and other friendly countries that participate in a growing and mutually beneficial way in economic and social development plans.

Our support for the Bolivarian Revolution, the Sandinista Revolution and the ever-sister nation and people of Mexico is ongoing.

We have continued the respectful dialogue and cooperative relations with the member countries of the European Union, on the broad basis and legal framework offered by the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement between Cuba and that bloc of countries.

Cuba will maintain its solidarity and cooperation with the sister nations of Africa and

Latin America and the Caribbean that continue to denounce the blockade and the arbitrary certifications, in spite of the different pressures to which they are subjected.

In the important events we have participated in this year, such as CELAC, the summits of the Eurasian Economic Union and the BRICS, the understanding, sensitivity and willingness to insert and support Cuba in these international mechanisms have been ratified.

We observe in the reactions of the people many favorable expectations about the strengthening of these exchanges and their results. Although it takes time to consolidate the incorporation into these mechanisms, they mean new and hopeful opportunities.

For this we also have to work together, at all levels, with a high sense of belonging, responsibility and without that persistent bureaucracy that we still encounter and not infrequently hinders and frustrates important projects.

Any strategy to move forward must take into account that the new U.S. doctrine, which seeks to impose peace by force, is a latent threat to true peace at the global level, which poses, in the particular case of Cuba, a very dangerous scenario.

No one is safe when the most powerful empire in history breaks all the rules of international relations to impose its hegemonic will against countries it intends to subjugate, even, as we have seen, its own traditional allies.

In our case, the attempt to subjugate us, much older than the Revolution, has intensified in recent years, and very recently the current Republican administration has taken it upon itself to declare it, formally and publicly, in a Presidential Memorandum on National Security.

The main measures contemplated in this Memorandum have actually been applied

since Donald Trump's first term in office and are aimed at closing all access to the financing that is essential for the normal performance of the economy.

This brutal siege, in combination with the unacceptable inclusion of Cuba on the list of alleged sponsors of terrorism, reinforces the blockade policy to unprecedented levels and causes a multiplied impact of the coercive measures on the economy and, by extension, on the standard of living of the Cuban population. We cannot hide or ignore this effect, much less its destructive purpose.

The combination of the limited availability of foreign currency income, as we have already mentioned, the high dependence on imports and the transversal effects caused by the instability of the national electro-energy system cause a significant paralysis or slowdown of economic activity which imposes a deficit in the supply of goods and services to the population, and a contraction of exports.

Consequently, the capacity to import foodstuffs for the basic food basket and the fuels necessary for the generation of electricity and the functioning of the economy is limited. The scarce availability of medicines, the decrease in transportation services, solid waste collection and water supply, among others, make up the harsh panorama that our people face every day.

To overcome this situation, we have been forced to accept the partial dollarization of the economy, which undoubtedly, in some way, favors those who possess certain capital resources or receive remittances, which translates into an undesired widening of the gaps that mark social inequality.

In this context, we must increase the effectiveness of the redistributive social function of the State with public and fiscal policies that, without restricting solutions, prevent the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, thus increasing inequality and poverty. And to pay the greatest attention to inflation which, although maintaining a slight deceleration, is still very high, limiting the purchasing power of

workers' salaries and the lower income of pensioners and retirees.

It is urgent to reorder the relations between the state sector and the private sector to correct distortions, bad practices and negative tendencies that deviate from the principles of socialist construction. Strengthen business ethics to avoid bribery, favoritism and corruption.

It is precisely in this scenario that we are working to enforce and support the Government Program to eliminate distortions and re-drive the economy, whose progress, results and projections were presented by comrade Marrero.

It is essential to make it known, from its foundations to its actions, so that it can be truly supported with popular participation and control.

The eminent scientist and member of our Council of State, Yury Valdés Balbín, very graphically exposed here the importance of the people's participation in the control and in all the processes that have an impact on their welfare, always from a perspective free of formalisms, which really connects with the interests of those who participate.

It is necessary to articulate and promote in municipal and community spaces participatory forms to meet the needs of citizens. And municipal management must be based on avoiding and preventing problems in the community, leaving behind tolerance and justifications, and designing a true and effective popular control, exercising it on the fulfillment of approved public policies and their effective implementation.

Another decisive front of national sovereignty is the battle in the digital ecosystem. This is demonstrated by the constant discrediting operations against the country; the networks of influencers, media and algorithms that amplify negative narratives; digital weapons such as bots and fake accounts that saturate that space with distorted narratives. It is also confirmed by the use of emotional techniques that

seek to erode the credibility of leaders, institutions and public media.

There we also have to be able to defend the truth with ethics, decency, ingenuity, optimism, confidence and energy; go on the ideological offensive; seek international alliances that allow us to break the media encirclement; promote sovereign technological solutions and, increasingly, build an articulated cyberspace of emancipation.

Ladies and gentlemen:

In the Session that concludes today, four laws were approved, all with a gender focus, which will strengthen the institutional order of the country, with a determining role in the economic and social sphere of the nation.

The Law of the Cuban Sports System establishes and regulates the areas, objectives, principles, components, organization and its operation, favoring its integral development in the midst of the current challenges.

The Law of the General Regime of Contraventions and Administrative Sanctions provides modifications that bring its content into greater harmony with the constitutional postulates and with the legislative provisions adopted lately, related to public administration to guarantee compliance and respect for legality.

The Civil Registry Law makes it possible to set up a single civil registry for the whole nation that contributes to achieve a more agile and efficient processing of the population's affairs, incorporating the use of new information and communication technologies.

They are all important norms, but one, in my opinion, stands out among them all and reveals in all its beauty the importance of what we do as legislators: I am referring to the Code of Children, Adolescents and Youth. By approving it, we legislate on the most sacred rights in our society, according to the future that is already walking

with us.



The Code of Children, Adolescents and Youth is a source of pride for Cuba, as was and still is the Code of Families. Photo: José Manuel Correa

The Code is a guide and a tool. Everyone who has to do with the formation of Cuban children, adolescents and youth must imbibe the spirit and the letter of the norm so that the future they symbolize finds its life project in the nation. And that this project is saved from the terrible plagues of this era, such as drugs and violence.

This Code is a source of pride for Cuba, as was and still is the Code of Families, in the midst of an increasingly hostile and aggressive world. It is also a tribute to Vilma, who dedicated her life to Cuban children, adolescents and young people, and opened the way for us with her always humanist, feminist and, above all,

revolutionary vision (Applause).

Nothing of what we dream and do would make sense without our greatest treasure: the new generations. Or to put it in more personal words: our children and grandchildren. Their happiness and the better possible world we want to bequeath to them is what the Code seeks to promote. Thanks to those who made it possible in such a short time (Applause).

On the other hand, the approved constitutional reform constitutes a legitimate and fair fact, responds to the current realities of the country and is faithful to our history. In such a way that the Constitution favors the possibility of a wider selection of comrades with conditions to be elected as President of the Republic. Finally, we defend the future of the nation with the approval of this constitutional reform (Applause).

Compatriots:

Today, when only hours away from a new commemoration of that key moment in history that was July 26, 1953, it is worth remembering what Fidel said at the Fourth Party Congress in 1991, the year that would end with the disappearance of the USSR and the socialist camp.

Faced with the challenging uncertainty that this scenario posed for Cuba, the Commander-in-Chief responded as follows: "To those who say that our struggle would have no perspective in the current situation and in the face of the catastrophe that has occurred, we must respond categorically: The only thing that would never have any perspective is if the homeland, the Revolution and socialism were lost. It is as if we had been told that we had no perspective after the Moncada attack...".

His legendary optimism is summed up in that phrase and in the ways out that he always saw, not outside but within the people, with his tremendous intelligence

potential, which is one of the great resources at hand. Aware of the absolute validity of those ideas, I reiterate today what Fidel told us then: "There are possibilities, that is the important thing, there are possibilities, but the possibilities are for the peoples who fight, the firm peoples, the tenacious peoples, the peoples who fight; the possibilities exist for a people like ours" (Applause).

That is the Cuban people who, represented by you, have illuminated the days to come and have done so with just criticisms and hopeful proposals, from the magnificent sessions of this Assembly that has left us with lessons, lessons learned, heartbreaks, but above all an extraordinary inspiration to undertake today's decisive combat: to prepare ourselves to leap over the obstacles of the economic war that the greatest empire in history is waging against us with its infamous Memorandum and its plan to suffocate our sacred independence and sovereignty.

On July 26th in Ciego de Avila, whose industrious people we congratulate, we shall celebrate the certainty that Yes we can! History says so and the present certifies it! (Applause).

On behalf of the Party and the Government, I extend my congratulations and deepest gratitude to all the people of Cuba (Applause). For their resistance to so many difficulties. For their inexhaustible creativity. For never giving up when everything is lacking, sometimes even the indispensable communication that we are obliged to give them.

In less than a month we will be celebrating the beginning of Fidel's centennial year, which will take place in August 2026. The best tribute to the political-military genius, the educator, the scientist, the leader of just causes in Cuba and the world, is the work of the Cuban people! (Applause).

Thank you, Cuba! The beauty of this difficult hour lies in knowing that we are part of an undefeatable people.

Surrender has never been an alternative. Independence or death, yes! Homeland or death, yes! Socialism or death, yes! Surrender, never! (Applause).

This was certified with his powerful voice by Commander Juan Almeida under a hail of bullets in Alegria de Pio:

Nobody surrenders here...!

Fatherland or Death!

We will win!

(Ovation)

