

Fidel's message to the students

November 17, 2010

Dear university students and other guests,

I am very pleased by the presence at this meeting of the minister of Higher Education, of the rectors of the universities in Havana, a representative group from the Young Communist League (UJC), chaired by its First Secretary, the provincial leadership and the National Federation of Secondary Education Students.

I well remember that November 17th of 2005. We were celebrating International Students' Day. You, the university students, had decided that I should speak on that day. They told me it was the 60-year anniversary of my starting university studies at the end of 1945. At that time I was just a bit younger than I am today; I was your age. But together we have lived through a phase of life.

I thought that that meeting we had at the University of Havana, 5 years ago, would never be repeated. I was 79 years old then. But just two months ago, to be more exact, when I presented the second book about our revolutionary war, "The Strategic Counter-offensive", at the Great Auditorium on September 10, 2010, at the end, I spoke with many of the veterans of those battles and at the exit from that hall I greeted an enthusiastic group of university student leaders who were waiting there, I chatted with them, and they explained to me their anxious anticipation of the 17th so I could talk about the speech.

I liked that group. They were not promoting any "cultural revolution"; they wanted to hear a reflection once more about the ideas put forth that day.

That meeting was already theirs. It seemed to me that a lot of time would pass between September 10th and November 17th; other things were going through my mind and I answered: "We'll see each other on that day".

Nevertheless I knew that that speech raised some worries, given the moment we were living, facing a powerful enemy that was threatening us more and more, blockading our economy with an iron will and making efforts to sow discontent, promoting the violation of laws and the illegal departures from our country, taking away a youthful, cultural and technically well-educated work force reserve. Many of them were later led to illicit activities and crime.

There was also the fact of my tendency to be self-critical and ironic about our actions. Even though my words were stinging, I defended principles and made no concessions.

I was remembering all that, but not the exact words I had used, the bulk of the arguments wielded and the considerable length of the speech.

I asked the Council of State Archives for a textual copy and I was looking at 115 single-spaced pages which implied more than 200 as these barely go for more than 40.

Work has been intense in the last few weeks, and dedicated to many tasks; among these meetings with interviews with the principal editor of the Global Research website, Michel Chossudovsky, the overwhelming electoral victory of the far-right in the US and, within it, that of the fascist group the Tea Party, the unprecedented economic crisis, the currency wars closely followed by the G-20 Summit Meeting in Seoul, the APEC Summit in Yokohama, Japan and within two days, the NATO Summit in Portugal on November 19 and 20, something that must be followed closely.

In spite of that, I was not resigning myself to postponing or suspending the date of our meeting.

Bolstered by the original text, I was picking out the main ideas of the speech that I had given then, in order to present them with the very same words I used at that time. In the interest of brevity, I omitted numerous examples that were backing up the opinions I held.

I must confess that the timeliness of the ideas expressed surprised me; 5 years later they are more current than they were then, since many of them had to do with the future, and events have gone on as they were foreseen, only that today, with the knowledge available about phenomena such as climate change, the economic crisis that surpasses any previous one, the dangers of war and the drifting off of imperial power towards fascism demand the maximum of dedication and effort from our university youths in the ideological battle.

One of the first ideas I expressed was:

“The combination of factors that made life possible occurred after billions of years on planet Earth, this very fragile life form that can only survive between a few limited degrees of temperature, between a few degrees below zero and a few degrees above zero...”

“I was trying to recall how those universities were, what we did, what our concerns were. We were concerned about this island, [...] There was no talk then of globalization; there was no television or Internet; instant communication were not possible from one end of the planet to the other; [...] In my time, back in 1945, our passenger planes could hardly make it to Miami...”

“...there had been a terrible war that took the lives of some 50 million people. I am speaking of the time in 1945 when I entered the university, on September 4th. Well, I started on that date, and you, of course, have taken the liberty to celebrate the anniversary any day of that year.”

Later on, I asked: "What kind of world is this? What kind of world is this where a barbaric empire proclaims its right to launch pre-emptive attacks on 60 or more countries, and is capable of bringing death to any corner of the globe, using the most sophisticated weapons and killing techniques?"

"Even today, the empire is threatening to attack Iran if nuclear fuel is produced there."

"There is already an international debate on what day and at what time a pre-emptive attack will be launched on the research centers for production of nuclear fuel and on whether it will be the empire that does it, or its satellite Israel as it was the case in Iraq."

"...and Iran is demanding its right to produce nuclear fuel just like any industrialized nation and not be obliged to destroy the reserves of a raw material, which can be used not only as an energy source but also as a raw material for numerous products such as fertilizers, textiles and many others currently used worldwide."

".... Let's see what happens if they decide to bomb Iran in order to destroy any facility used in the production of nuclear fuel."

"We have never considered producing nuclear weapons. We have a different type of nuclear weapon: it's our ideas [...] Our nuclear weapon is the invincible power of moral weapons. [...] nor have we ever considered seeking biological weapons [...] weapons that defeat death, that defeat AIDS and cancer that we dedicate our resources."

"...anywhere in the world you can find a secret prison where defenders of human rights are tortured. They are the same people who order their little lambs to vote in Geneva, one after another, against Cuba, a country where torture is unknown, something that brings honor and glory on this generation. It is the honor and glory of this Revolution struggling for justice, for independence and for human decorum, and we must keep its purity and dignity untouched!"

".... This morning there was news about the use of live phosphorus in Fallujah. It is there that the empire discovered that a nation, to all intents and purposes unarmed, could not be defeated and the invaders found themselves in the situation of not being able to leave or to stay. If they leave, the combatants would return; if they stay, these troops would be required in other locations. Over 2,000 young US troops have already died, and some are asking: How long will these men continue to give their lives for an unjust war?..."

"...enlisting in the army has become an employment opportunity. The ones who enlist are the unemployed and very often they try to enlist greater numbers of Afro-Americans to fight their unjust war. However, news is coming out that fewer Afro-Americans are enlisting in the army, despite their high levels of unemployment and their marginalization..."

“They are chasing after Latinos, immigrants, who cross the border trying to escape hunger; this is a border where more than 500 emigrants die every year, many more in only 12 months than those who died during the 28 years of the Berlin Wall.”

“Young people entered this University exactly like that. It must be remembered that this University was not for the poor, it was for the middle class, for the rich, although young people tended to rise above class ideas and many of them were capable of struggling, as in fact they did throughout the history of Cuba.”

“Eight students were executed in 1871. They were like the seeds of the noblest of sentiments and of the rebellious spirit of our people...”

“Mella was one of them, also coming from the middle class because the children of farmers who could neither read nor write ...”

“...I mentioned Mella. I could have mentioned Guiteras, or Trejo who died [...]who died in one of those demonstrations on September 30...”

“...when the Batista tyranny returned with a vengeance, many students fought and many students died, and that young man from Cardenas, Manzanita as he was called, always smiling, always jovial, always affectionate with everyone, became well-known for his bravery, his integrity [...] when he faced the police.”

“If you visit the house where [Jose Antonio] Echevarria lived —Jose Antonio, we’ll call him—you’ll see that it is a good house, an excellent house. You could see how the students were often oblivious of their social or class origins; at that age of so many hopes and dreams.

“At that university, there was only one medical faculty, and one teaching hospital, yet, many students received prizes and awards, first prize in medicine and even in surgery without ever having operated on anybody.”

“Some made it [...]That’s how there were good doctors, not a huge numbers of good doctors [...] they were unemployed and with the triumph of the Revolution, that’s where they went, straight to the USA and Cuba was left with half of all her medical doctors, 3,000 of them, and 25% of her professors. We started at that point, until we got to where we are today, standing up almost like the capital of world medicine.”

“...the country [...] have more than 70,000 medical doctors.”

“We came to the university at the end of 1945 and we began the armed struggle in Moncada on July 26th, 1953, [...] only eight years later, and the Revolution triumphed five years, five days and five months after Moncada, after a long journey by way of prison, exile and fighting in the mountains.”

“...not even being too knowledgeable about the laws of gravity. We headed upwards, struggling against the empire which was already the most powerful one [...] when another super-power also existed. [...] marching upwards, gaining experience, seeing our people and the Revolution gain in strength, until this point where we are today.”

“...the human being is the only one capable [...] of rising above all instincts [...] Nature fills us with instincts; it is education that fills us with virtues ...”

“...in spite of the differences between human beings, they can become as one in a single instant or [...]they can be a million strong just through their ideas.”

“Ideas make us a combatant people on a collective and not just an individual basis; ideas make us a mass of revolutionaries. Then, the people can never be defeated...”

“...90 miles away from the colossal empire, the most powerful empire ever in the history of the world. Forty five years have passed and there it is, farther away than ever from the possibility of forcing the Cuban nation to its knees, the same nation they humiliated and offended for some time ...”

“I think it was Agramonte, others say it was Céspedes, who responded to the pessimists when he had just 12 men with him: [...] with these 12 men I can make a nation [...] what we call a revolutionary conscience [...] nation is born of love for the homeland and love for the world; and we cannot forget that the homeland is humanity, a statement made more than a hundred years ago.”

“Never forget those who for years were our working class, going through decades of sacrifice, suffering the attacks of mercenary bands in the mountains, invasions like Girón, thousands of acts of sabotage that killed our sugar cane workers, our industrial and factory workers, those in the merchant marine or in the fishing industry, those who were suddenly attacked with cannons and bazookas, only because they were Cuban, only because they wanted to be independent, only because they wanted to improve the lot of our people...”

“Cuba speaks whenever it is necessary, and Cuba has much to say; but we are not in a hurry, we are not impatient. We know very well when, where and how to deliver the blows to the empire, its system and its lackeys.”

“...I believe that this humanity and all the great things it is capable of creating must be preserved while it is still possible to do so.”

“...this admirable and marvelous nation. Yesterday, it was but a seed and today it is a mighty tree with deep roots. Yesterday, it was filled with noble potential and today it is filled with true nobility. Yesterday, it dreamed of knowledge and today that knowledge is real, when we are just beginning in this huge university that today is Cuba.”

“...new cadres are springing up, young cadres.”

“As you know, we are presently waging a war against corruption, against the re-routing of resources, against thievery ...”

“...But don't you think for a moment that stealing resources and materials is just a present-day illness, nor is it an exclusive phenomenon of the Special Period. The Special Period aggravated it, because in this period we saw the growth of much inequality and certain people were able to accumulate a lot of money.”

“. In the times I'm referring to, we needed 800 kilograms of cement to produce a ton of concrete; it was good quality concrete [...] they should use only around 200 kilograms. See the wastage, the re-routing of resources, see the larceny”

“In this battle against vice there will be no truce for anyone and we shall be thoroughly scrupulous. We will appeal to everyone's sense of honor. We are sure of one thing; every human being possesses a healthy dose of honor. When one looks in the mirror, one is not always the harshest of judges, even though, in my opinion, the first responsibility of a revolutionary is to be extremely severe with oneself.”

“Criticism and self-criticism, it's all very good, as it did not exist in the past. However, if we are going to war we need weapons of greater caliber; we must carry out criticism and self-criticism in the school room, in the party cells and then outside the party cells, in the municipality and finally in the entire country.”

“Afterwards, we might have other questions. How much are we earning? And if the question deals with how much we are earning, we might begin to understand the dream of everyone being able to live on their salary or on their adequate pension. “

“I can assure you that we have become aware of this. The entire life is a learning process, right up to our last breath...”

“Here is a conclusion I've come to after many years: among all the errors we may have committed, the greatest of them all was that we believed that someone really knew something about socialism, or that someone actually knew how to build socialism. It seemed to be a sure fact, as well-known as the electrical system conceived by those who thought they were experts in electrical systems. [...]be idiots if we think, for example, that economy is an exact and eternal science and that it existed since the days of Adam and Eve, and I offer my apologies to the thousands of economists in our country.

“All sense of dialectics is lost when someone believes that today's economy is identical to the economy 50 or 100 or 150 years ago, or that it is identical to the one in Lenin's day or to the time when Karl Marx lived. Revisionism is a thousand miles away from my mind and I truly revere Marx, Engels and Lenin.”

“When I was a student, once I learned what utopian communism was, I realized that that’s what I was a utopian communist because all my ideas took off from the idea: “This is not good, this is bad, this is a crime. How can we possibly have an overproduction crisis and hunger at the same time, when there is more coal, more cold, more unemployed, because there is more capacity to create wealth? Wouldn’t it be simpler to produce and distribute the wealth?”

“Just as Karl Marx thought in the period of the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, it seemed like limits for abundance were inherent in the social system; it seemed that just as production forces developed, they could produce everything that the human being needed to satisfy all his essential requirements almost limitlessly, be they material, cultural, etc.”

“When he wrote political books like *The 18th Brumaire* and the *Civil War in France*, he was a genius with a crystal clear interpretation. His *Communist Manifesto* is a classic. You can analyze it and be more or less satisfied with this and with that. I moved on from utopian communism to a communism that was based on serious theories of social development ...”

“In our real world, which must be changed, every revolutionary tactician and strategist has the obligation to conceive of a strategy and a tactic that will lead to the fundamental objective, to change the real world. No divisive tactic or strategy can be a good one. “

“I had the privilege of meeting the followers of the Liberation Theology once when I visited Allende in Chile, in 1971. I met many priests, representatives of various religious denominations, and they were presenting the idea of united forces in the struggle, regardless of any specific religious beliefs. “

“The world is desperately crying out for unity and if we cannot achieve a minimum of unity, we are not going to go anywhere.”

“Above all, Lenin studied State issues; Marx did not speak of the worker-peasant alliance because he lived in a country that had a highly developed industrial base; Lenin recognized the under-developed world, he was aware of the country where 80 to 90 percent were peasants, and even though it had considerable strength in its railroad workers and in some other industries, Lenin saw with utmost clarity the necessity to forge a worker-peasant alliance. No one before had spoken of this; they had philosophized, but they hadn’t talked about this. The first socialist revolution, the first real attempt at a just and egalitarian society, takes place in a huge semi-feudal, semi-under developed country. None of the previous societies slave-based, feudal, medieval or anti-feudal, bourgeois, or capitalist could ever propose the existence of a just society even though much was said about liberty, equality and fraternity. “

“Throughout history, the first serious human attempt to create the first just society began less than 200 years ago...”

“One could never have arrived at a strategy through dogma. Lenin taught us a lot, because Marx taught us to understand society. Lenin taught us to understand the State and the role of the State. “

“... when the USSR crumbled, many people were left on their own, including the Cuban revolutionaries. But we knew what we had to do, what our options were. Everywhere, revolutionary movements were carrying on their struggle. I am not going to say which ones, I’m not going to say who they were; but they were all very serious revolutionary movements and they asked us whether there should be some negotiation process in the face of such a desperate situation, whether the struggle should continue or not, whether negotiations should begin with the other side to strike a peace accord, even though everyone knew the consequences of such a peace. “

“...I would tell them: “You cannot ask us our opinion, as it will be you fighting the battle, and you alone who will die, not us. We know what we are going to do and what we are prepared to do: but these are decisions which each one must make for themselves.” That was the highest expression of our respect for the other movements. We have never attempted to impose ourselves on the basis of our knowledge and experience, or the enormous respect they show for our revolution which motivated them to listen to our point of view. “

“I believe that the experience of that first socialist State, a State that should have been fixed and not destroyed, was a bitter one. You may be sure that we have thought many times about that incredible phenomenon where one of the mightiest powers in the world disintegrated the way it did; for this was a power that had matched the strength of the other super-power and had paid with the lives of more than 20 million of her people in the battle against fascism. “

“Is it that revolutions are doomed to fall apart, or that men cause revolutions to fall apart? Can either man or society prevent revolutions from collapsing? I could immediately add to this another question: Do you believe that this revolutionary socialist process can fall apart, or not? (Exclamations of: “No!!”) Have you ever given that some thought? Have you ever deeply reflected about it? “

“Were you aware of all these inequalities that I have been talking about? Were you aware of certain generalized habits? Did you know that there are people who earn forty or fifty times the amount one of those doctors over there in the mountains of Guatemala, part of the “Henry Reeve” Contingent, earns in one month? It could be in other faraway reaches of Africa, or at an altitude of thousands of meters, in the Himalayas, saving lives and earning 5% or 10% of what one of those dirty little crooks earns, selling gasoline to the new rich, diverting resources from the ports in trucks and by the ton-load, stealing in the dollar shops, stealing in a five-star hotel by exchanging a bottle of rum for another of lesser quality and pocketing the dollars for which he sells the drinks. “

"I could also explain why we no longer cut cane today; there are no cane cutters here and the heavy machinery destroys the sugar cane fields. The abuses of the developed world and the subsidies have led to sugar prices that were scraping the bottom of the trash bins, on the world markets. In the meantime, Europe was paying its growers two or three times more. "

"So, we are now coming to the point of asking ourselves this question –I have already reached this point myself, some years ago-- in the face of this super-powerful empire that stalks us and threatens us, that has transition plans and military action plans in this specific historical moment. "

"They are awaiting a natural and absolutely logical event, the death of someone. In this case, they have honored me by thinking of me. It might be a confession of what they have not been able to do in a long time. If I were a vain man, I could be proud of the fact that those guys admit that they are waiting for me to die, and this is the time. They are waiting for me to die, and everyday they invent something new: Castro has this, he's suffering from that, and now the latest is that they say Castro has Parkinson's disease. "

"Yes, it's true, I had a very bad fall and I'm still in rehab for this arm (He shows the arm), and its improving. I'm very grateful for the circumstances which caused me to break my arm, because now I'm forced to be even more disciplined, to work more, to dedicate more time (almost 24 hours a day) to my job. I had been doing this ever since the Special Period began, and now I dedicate every second to my work and I fight harder than ever..."

"That's a little like the guy (I was making reference to Forbes Magazine) who discovered that I was the wealthiest man in the world. "

"I asked you a question, comrade students; don't worry, I haven't forgotten, and I'd like to believe that you will never forget it. It is the question that I ask in view of historical experiences we have known, and I ask you all, without exception, to reflect on it: Can the revolutionary process be irreversible, or not? Which are the ideas or the degree of conscience that would make the reversal of the revolutionary process impossible? "

"A leader has a tremendous power when he enjoys the confidence of the masses that put full trust in his abilities. The consequences of errors committed by those in authority are terrible, and this has happened more than once during the revolutionary processes. "

"Such is the stuff for meditation. One studies history, one meditates on what happened here and there, on what happened today and on what will happen tomorrow, on where each country's processes will lead, what path our own process will take, how it will get there, and what role Cuba will play in this process. "

“That was why I commented that one of our greatest mistakes at the beginning of, and often during, the Revolution was believing that someone knew how to build socialism. “

“What kind of a society would this be, how worthy of joy could we be when we assemble on a day like today, in a place like this, if we were not minimally aware of what we need to know, so that on our heroic island, this heroic people, this nation which has written pages in the history books like no other nation in the history of mankind can preserve the Revolution? Please, do not think that this who is speaking to you is a vain man or a charlatan, or someone inclined to bluff. “

“Forty-six years have passed and the history of this country is known and the people of this nation know it well. They also know their neighbor very well, the empire, with its size and its power, its strength and its wealth, its technology and its control over the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, all the world of finances. That country has imposed on us the most incredibly iron-clad blockade, which was discussed at the United Nations where 182 nations supported Cuba, voting freely even though they ran a risk voting against the empire. [...] We forged this Revolution alone, against all risk, for many long years and we had realized that if the day ever come when we would be under direct attack by the US, no one would ever fight for us, nor would we ask anyone to do so. I was making reference to the USSR. “

“It would have been naïve of us to think, or to ask for, or to expect that one super-power would fight against the other, in this day and age of modern technological development, to intervene in this island 90 miles away. We came to the conclusion that such support would never happen. And another thing: once we asked them directly, a few years before the collapse: “Tell us frankly.” : “No,” they said. It was the answer we knew they would give and from that point on, more than ever, we accelerated the development of our concept and we perfected the tactical and strategic ideas which have seen to the triumph and victory of the Revolution. The Revolution’s strength began with the struggle of seven armed men against an enemy with 80,000 troops including marines, soldiers and police, tanks, airplanes and all kinds of modern weaponry of the time. What an infinitely huge difference between our weapons and the weapons of that army, trained by the US, supported by the US and supplied by the US. “

“Today, we possess much more than those seven guns. We have a people who have learned to handle weapons; we have an entire nation which, in spite of our errors, holds such a high degree of culture, education and conscience that it will never allow this country to become their colony again. “

“This country can self-destruct; this Revolution can destroy itself, but they can never destroy us; we can destroy ourselves, and it would be our fault. “

“I have been fortunate to have lived many years. That is not a special merit but rather, it is an exceptional opportunity to share with you everything that I am telling

you, young leaders, all the leaders of the masses, all the leaders of the workers' movement, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, the women's groups, the farmers, the veterans of the Revolution, organized throughout the country, hundreds of thousands who have struggled through the years carrying out glorious internationalist missions..."

"...it is impressive to see people from the most humble backgrounds in this country transform into 28,000 social workers and thousands of university students, university students!! What a force! And soon we shall also be seeing those who graduated a while ago in the Sports Coliseum. "

"The coliseum teaches us about Marxist-Leninism; it teaches us about social classes. A short while ago, about 15,000 doctors and medical students, some of them from ELAM (Latin American School of Medicine), and some from as far away as Eastern Timor, were gathered in the coliseum. It was an unforgettable event. "

"The image of those 15,000 white coats all together on graduation day can never be forgotten. That was the day that the "Henry Reeve" Contingent was created following in the tradition of many doctors who have been to places where exceptional events have taken place, in a time span much too brief to even imagine. "

"Allow me to tell you that today, human capital is practically superior to almost all of the others put together, and it is advancing very quickly to become the country's most valuable resource. I'm not exaggerating. "

"They have discovered private gas stations, supplied with oil from these trucks. "

"We all know that many of the state owned trucks go all over the place, and sometimes they visit a relative, a friend, a family or a girl-friend. "

"I remember the time, several years before the Special Period, I saw a brand new Volvo front-loader on Fifth Avenue...one of those at the time would have cost 50,000 or 60,000 dollars. I wanted to know where the truck was heading at that speed so I asked my escort: "Hold on, ask him where he's going; try to get an honest answer." The driver confessed that he was off to visit his girl-friend in that new Volvo, going down Fifth Avenue at top speed. "

"Some things you'll see, Mio Cid —I think it was Cervantes who said this— that would make the stones talk. "

"...this is some of what has been happening. In general, we all know, and many have said: "The Revolution can't do that; no, it's impossible; no, nobody can fix that." But yes, the people are going to fix it this time, the Revolution is going to fix it, any way we can. Is it merely an ethical matter? Yes, it is above all an ethical matter; but even more, it is a vital economic matter. "

“Our nation is one of those that waste the most combustible energy in the world. We had proof of it right here, and you very honestly pointed it out; it is very important. No one knows the cost of electricity; no one knows the cost of gasoline; no one knows its market value. I was about to tell you that it is very sad when a ton of oil can cost 400 dollars and a ton of gasoline can cost 500, 600, 700 or on occasion 1000; this is a product which does not get cheaper. Whenever that happens it is circumstantial, and it does not last long...”

“Take a look at our nickel mines, leaving great holes where once there used to be a lot of nickel. This is happening to oil; the great oil fields have all been found and every day there is less of them. This is a subject about which we have had to think long and hard...”

“...if I remember correctly, there were around 3,000 entities that were handling convertible currency and were managing their profits with generous expenditures in convertible currency, buying this and that, painting their houses, buying a new car and getting rid of the old clunker. We realized that, given the conditions this country is living in, such habits must be broken...”

“Quite simply, we had to shut down sugar mills or we were going to disappear down the Bartlett Trench. The country had many, many economists and it is not my intention to criticize them, but speaking with the same honesty I used to describe the errors of the Revolution, I would like to ask why we hadn’t discovered that maintaining production levels of sugar would be impossible. The USSR had collapsed, oil was costing 40 dollars a barrel, sugar prices were at basement levels...so why did we not rationalize that industry instead of sowing 20,000 *caballerias* that year, equivalent of almost 270,000 hectares, obliging us to till the land with tractors and heavy ploughs, sowing cane that afterwards had to be cleaned using machinery, fertilize with expensive herbicides, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.”

“The USSR had already collapsed, we had been left without oil overnight, with no raw materials, no food, no cleaning products, nothing. Probably, it was good that this happened, after all. Maybe it was necessary that we suffered as we did, so that we are ready to give our lives a hundred times over before we surrender the country or the Revolution...”

“Maybe it was all necessary, for we have committed many errors. It is these errors that we are trying to correct, if you will, that we are in the process of correcting. “

“...without abuse of power! for nothing would ever justify the abuse of power. We must be audacious enough to tell the truth, but not all of it, because we don’t need to say everything at once. Political battles follow certain tactics, with adequate information, following their own path. [...] Don’t worry about what the bandits are saying or what the news services will report tomorrow or the day after: he who laughs last, laughs best. “

“It’s not just a matter of printing bills and distributing them without having them backed up with merchandise or services...”

“We ended up giving away the houses, some people bought theirs, they were the owners, they had paid 50 pesos a month, 80 pesos, or, if the money was sent to them from Miami, it amounted to about 3 dollars; some sold theirs in 15 000 or 20 000 dollars, when they had originally paid less than 500. “

“Can the country resolve its housing problem by giving away houses? And who will get them, the proletariat or the humble people? Many humble people were given houses for free and then they sold them to the new rich. How much can the new rich spend on a house? Is this socialism? “

“Maybe it’s down to necessity at a certain moment in time, maybe it’s a mistake, because the country suffered a shattering blow when overnight the great power fell and we were left alone, all on our own, and we lost all the markets on which to sell our sugar and we stopped getting supplies, fuel, even the wood with which to give a Christian burial to our dead. And everyone thought: ‘This will fall apart’, and the idiots still believe that it is all going to fall apart here and that if it doesn’t fall apart now it will fall apart later. And the more illusions they entertain and the more they think, the more we should think, the more we should draw our own conclusions, so that this glorious people who has so trusted all of us is never defeated. “

“The empire shall not come here to set up secret jails in which to torture progressive men and women from other parts of this continent that are today rising to fight for the second and final independence! “

“Before we go back to living such a repugnant and miserable life there better not be any memory, even the slightest trace, of us or our descendents. “

“They had fooled the world. When the mass media grew in full force it took control of peoples’ minds and exercised its power through not only lies, but also conditioned response. A lie isn’t the same as a conditioned response: a lie affects one’s knowledge whereas the conditioned response affects one’s ability to think. And being misinformed isn’t the same as having lost the ability to think, because responses have been created for you: ‘This is bad, that is bad; socialism is bad, socialism is bad’, they say, and all the ignorant people and all the humble people and all the exploited people are saying: ‘Socialism is bad’. ‘Communism is bad’. And all the poor people, all the exploited people and all the illiterate people are repeating it: ‘Communism is bad’. “

“‘Cuba is bad, Cuba is bad’, the empire has said it, it has been said in Geneva, it has been said all over the place, and all the exploited people around the world, all the illiterate people and all those who don’t receive medical care, or education or have any guarantee of a job, or of anything are saying: ‘The Cuban Revolution is bad, the Cuban Revolution is bad’. “

“What are they talking about? What can the illiterate people do? How can they know if the International Monetary Fund is good or bad, or that interest is higher, or that the world is being ceaselessly subjugated and pillaged by a thousand different methods put into practice by this system? They don't know. “

“They don't teach the masses to read and write, yet they spend a million dollars on publicity every year; but it isn't the fact that they spend it, it's the fact that they spend it on creating conditioned responses, because someone bought Palmolive, someone else bought Colgate, and someone else bought Candado soap, just because they were told to a hundred times over, because they associated the products with a pretty image and this sowed its seed and carved its place in the brain. They who talk so much of brainwashing, it is they who carve their place, who mould the brain, who take away from the human being his capacity to think; it would be less serious if they were taking away the ability to think from someone who had been to university, who could read a book. “

“What can the illiterate read? What means have they of realizing that they are being conned? What means have they of knowing that the biggest lie in the world is the one that claims that the rotten system that reigns over there and what they have in many places, if not almost all of the countries that copied that system is a democracy? [...] This is what, in the end, makes everyone much more revolutionary than they were when they were unaware of many of these things, when they only knew about elements of injustice and inequality. “

“At the moment, while I'm talking to you about this, I'm not theorizing, although it is necessary to theorize; we are working, we are moving towards full changes in our society. “

“The price of oil nowadays is not in keeping with any supply and demand rule; it conforms to other factors like the shortages, the extensive squandering by the rich countries, and it's not a price that is anyway in keeping with economic rules either. The reason behind it is the shortage of this product together with the increasing and extraordinary demand for it. “

“We invite everyone to take part in a great battle, it's not just a fuel and electricity battle, it's a battle against larceny, against all types of theft, anywhere in the world. I repeat: against all types of theft, anywhere in the world. “

“I'm not against anyone, but neither am I against the truth. I don't believe any lies, I'm sorry, but I'm telling them all now that they are going to loose the battle, and it won't be an act of injustice or abuse of power. “

“In total you spend 1.9 dollars for 300 kilowatts of electricity; that is to say, 0.63 cents of a dollar for one Cuban kilowatt of electricity. How amazingly brilliant! “

“How much do the Cuban people spend because of that dollar that is sent to you from over there? Because that wasn't a dollar that you earned, or a peso, by

working for it [...]; it was sent to you by a healthy person, who studied free of charge right from primary school, who isn't ill, they are the healthiest citizens that go to the United States, where there is an Adjustment Act, and where the sending of remittances is also prohibited. “

“Obviously, you didn't spend any of what they sent you on medicine, for medicine here are subsidized, if you bought it in the drugstore, that is, what wasn't stolen and resold, and then you spent 10% of what it costs in hard currency. If you went to the hospital and had an ankle or even heart operation, your operation could cost 1000, 2000, 10,000 in the United States; if you suffer a stroke and are given a valve, this could cost one of our employees over in the Interests Section 80,000 dollars, but here you're treated. There could an incident of mistreatment in a hospital, but have you ever been to a hospital where you have not been treated? “

“One day, the Revolution will be able to trace the location of every truck anywhere, using the most sophisticated technical instruments. Nobody will be able to take that truck to pay a visit to auntie or to the sweetheart. Not that there is anything wrong with looking after your private business, but it cannot be done in a vehicle used for work...”

“We have to apply maximum rationality to salaries, prices, pensions. There should be zero over-spending and wastage. We are not a capitalist country where everything is left to chance. “

“Subsidies and free services will be considered only in essentials. [...] “What are we going to pay all this with?”[...] Everything that is within our reach, everything belongs to the people, the only thing not to be allowed is egotistical and irresponsible wastage of our wealth. “

“I really had no intention of getting involved in a dissertation on such sensitive matters, but it would have been a crime not to take advantage of the moment and tell you some of the things related to the economy, to the material life of the country, to the future of the Revolution, to revolutionary ideas, to the reasons why we began this struggle, to the colossal strength we possess today, the country we are today and we may continue to be, which is much more than we are now. “

“I have been speaking to you with all the trust that I can. “

“...the country will have much more but it will never be a consumer society. It will be a society of knowledge, of culture, of the most extraordinary human development imaginable, development in art, culture, science [...] with a breadth of liberty that no one will be able to dismantle. We know this already, we don't need to proclaim it, but it is worth remembering. “

“Nobody should have the right to manufacture nuclear weapons. There should be no privileges for imperialism to impose its hegemonic rule and to take the natural resources and raw materials away from the nations of the Third World. “

“There must be an end to stupidity in the world, and to abuse, and to the empire based on might and terror. It will disappear when all fear disappears. Every day there are more fearless countries. Every day there will be more countries that will rebel and the empire will not be able to keep that infamous system alive any longer. “

“It’s only fair to struggle for that and that is why we must use all our energy, all our effort and all our time to be able to say with the voice of millions, or hundreds of thousands of millions of people: It is worthwhile to have been born! It is worthwhile to have lived! “

This way I ended my speech, which I ratify today once again.

Thank you.

November 17, 2010.