

Fidel Castro demands unconditional return of Guantanamo

By [Global Research](#)

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30/01/2009 15:27 MOSCOW, January 30 (RIA Novosti) – Former Cuban leader Fidel Castro has demanded the United States unconditionally return the Guantanamo Bay military base to Cuba in an article published on the CubaDebate website. (Fidel Castro: moments from his life – Image gallery)

The present Cuban leader, Fidel's younger brother Raul, who is on an official visit to Moscow until February 4, has also demanded the return of the military base to Cuba. Raul officially became Cuba's president in February 2008 after Fidel ceded power to him in July 2006 following an intestinal operation.

In his article published on Thursday, Fidel sharply criticized the new U.S. administration, accusing President Barack Obama of supporting Israel in its "genocide" of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

Fidel Castro, 82, is famous for his criticism of the United States, and Obama is the 10th president to come under fire since the Cuban Revolution.

"No one can doubt the sincerity of his words," Castro said of Obama in last week's edition of his column, Reflections, adding that he doubted that the United States' 44th president will be able to overcome the "contradictions of the system."

He also referred to Obama as "an honest man with good intentions" and said he hoped that the new U.S. leader would not repeat the mistakes of his predecessors.

Obama has said relations between Washington and Havana need to be normalized, but that he is not ready to remove the trade embargo placed on Cuba 46 years ago.

In one of his first acts as president, Obama announced that the Guantanamo prison for terrorist suspects would be closed within a year, but there has been no suggestion of closing the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, where some 10,000 military personnel are stationed.

On Thursday, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, a long-time friend of Fidel Castro and critic of the United States, welcomed Obama's announcement on Guantanamo but called on Washington to close the entire base.

After the Spanish-American War, the United States occupied Cuba, and in 1903 signed a perpetual agreement with the new government on renting the base at Guantanamo Bay. Since the revolution, Cuba has insisted that the agreement is illegal under international law.

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