

No Pasaran, Comandante Fidel!

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Many years ago, Fidel declared: "Men do not shape destiny. Destiny produces the man for the hour."

It did; destiny shaped them all, los Barbudos, and threw them right into the center of the whirlpool of world history.

As they fought for the freedom of Cuba, of Latin America and the entire oppressed world, they actually managed to defy their own words: in the end they irreversibly shaped the fate of our Planet, of the entire humanity.

Fidel stood firmly at the forefront of the struggle, from the very outset to his last breath. As always, when the giants get reunited with mother Earth, the entire world shook and the ground trembled on all continents.

For several moments, everything stopped, got frozen.

I was driving through Central Vietnam when the message of Fidel's death arrived on my phone screen. For several minutes there was absolute emptiness and silence inside me.

Then, on a wide and beautiful river I spotted several marvelous ships belonging to an ancient Vietnamese fishing fleet, and a boat proudly flying both the Communist red flags with yellow stars, as well as several desolate black flags – symbols of mourning.



Fidel

In a remote place in Asia, Fidel's death managed to disturb the calm, to stir the serene surface of the river.

Later everything fell back to where it was supposed to be, and the sounds returned. The emptiness inside me also evaporated. A great man has left, but the revolution has not stopped. It can never stop, as the very existence; the very survival of humanity now depends on it.

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Cuban villagers before the Revolution

What was Fidel's gift to the world and what did his Cuba achieve?

Results do not always have to be material. Although yes, of course, we could talk for days about the great education, culture, creativity, medical care and equality.

Socialist Cuba gave more, much more than that.

It gave hope, where hope was fading.

It gave strength, where only resignation reigned.

It gave heart to those places where only vulgar mercantile interests were recognized.

It gave optimism to counter the deadly embrace of nihilism.

Once Fidel shouted: "They talk about the failure of socialism but where is the success of capitalism in Africa, Asia and Latin America?"

Cuba, under the leadership of Fidel and his comrades, fought wars of independence in the most devastated parts of Africa; it stood by Vietnam during its most testing moments; and it

offered its intellectual and ideological leadership and skills to the latest wave of Latin American revolutions, from Venezuela to Bolivia.

Cuban doctors and teachers were sent to some of the most remote parts of our planet, in order to offer unconditional internationalist help. I saw them in action in places such as Kiribati, Timor Leste, and post-apartheid South Africa. They fought for human lives in the poorest countries, and in those places devastated by natural calamities. They fought with courage and dignity, and also with kindness and respect, learning to communicate in local languages and valuing local cultures.

Fidel's Cuba never broke down, never surrendered under the pressure. It defended itself when attacked by the mightiest nation on earth. It survived a brutal embargo, ideological propaganda and even biological warfare.

It inspired the world with its determination and its valor, just as it inspired millions worldwide with its music, cinema and poetry.



Playa Giron - first major defeat of Yankee imperialism in Latin America copy

"Patria no se vende!" - "One does not sell the Fatherland!" This is one of the greatest slogans of this marvelous country: a slogan which brought a clear message to all the countries humiliated and plundered by the Western Empire: 'Not everything is lost. It is worth standing tall. It is better to die than to lose one's pride and dignity!'

When Hugo Chavez was standing in the rain, bald after chemotherapy, clenching his fist in heroic defiance, and shouting at the enemies of the revolution *"Here no one surrenders!"* it

was clear and obvious where his inspiration had come from: Cuba, and from his mentor Fidel.

Color-blind, passionately internationalist, resentful of all forms of racism and imperialism, Cuba gave itself fully to Latin America and to the world. She did not do it as some sort of sacrifice, but as a revolutionary obligation. She did it with simplicity and humanism, asking for absolutely nothing in return. To quote the closest comrade of Fidel Castro, Ernesto "Che" Guevara:

The sacrifices that one makes should not be exhibited as some ID card, instead they ought to be seen as the completion of one's duty.

Fidel Castro was very well aware of the fact that "a revolution is not a bed of roses.

A revolution is a struggle between the future and the past."

Decisions one has to make when changing history are tough. A revolution is not a discussion club, or a charity gala concert, or a managerial meeting of some human rights NGO.

The main adversary, imperialism, has murdered hundreds of millions of people all over the world, and it would not hesitate to slaughter further multitudes.

Any show of weakness is often synonymous with defeat, and defeat means further suffering, hopelessness and humiliation for the masses, which have often for the first time tasted both the sweetness and intoxication of hope. That is why a true revolutionary has no right to show weakness, to back up, or to betray principles. He or she has to always stand at the vanguard, to lead his or her troops into battle, to risk everything, even his or her own life, unconditionally.

Both Fidel Castro and his closest comrades were made exactly of such pure revolutionary stuff: they had both guts and hearts.

They were no saints, definitely not ... because sainthood was not what Latin American people truly needed. Saints only pray and periodically sacrifice themselves. Fidel and his comrades were expected to fight and to win, not for themselves and for their personal interests, but for the hundreds of millions of the wretched of this world.

On 1st May 2004, when it appeared that the United States might once again attack Cuba, President Castro spoke in Havana, addressing the then President, G.W. Bush:

You have neither the morality nor the right, none whatsoever, to speak of freedom, democracy and human rights when you hold enough power to destroy humanity and are attempting to install a world tyranny, side-stepping and destroying the United Nations Organization, violating the human rights of any and every country, waging wars of conquest to take over world markets and resources and installing decadent and anachronistic political and social systems which are leading the human race into the abyss.

At the end, Fidel declared that if Cuba was attacked, he would do what he was expected to

do, and what he had already done on several previous occasions – he would go and fight! And none of us had any doubt that he would. But he had one regret in regard to President Bush:

My only regret is that I would not even see your face because in that case you would be thousands of miles away while I shall be on the frontline to die fighting in defense of my homeland.

While Cuba is mourning the departure of its great national hero, the President-elect of the United States, Donald Trump, is overjoyed:

Today, the world marks the passing of a brutal dictator who oppressed his own people for nearly six decades. Fidel Castro's legacy is one of firing squads, theft, unimaginable suffering, poverty and the denial of fundamental human rights ... I join the many Cuban Americans who supported me so greatly in the presidential campaign, including the Brigade 2506 Veterans Association that endorsed me, with the hope of one day soon seeing a free Cuba.

Just to refresh readers' memories: Brigade 2506 (*Brigada Asalto 2506*) was a CIA-sponsored group of Cuban exiles/terrorists, formed in 1960. Its mission was the overthrow of the Cuban revolutionary government headed by Fidel Castro. It carried out the abortive Bay of Pigs Invasion landing on 17th April 1961.



US terrorism – after bombing of Santiago de Cuba passenger airport

The scum that terrorized the Island is now celebrating in Miami and elsewhere. At the same time, the true friends of Cuba and Latin American revolutions have been in deep mourning.

As *Xinhua* reported:

Chinese President Xi Jinping said Saturday that history and people will remember Fidel Castro, calling the Cuban revolutionary leader “a great figure of our times.

Fidel Castro, founder of the Communist Party of Cuba and Cuba’s socialist cause, was a great leader of the Cuban people, Xi said, adding that he has made immortal historic contributions and devoted all his life to the Cuban people’s great cause of struggling for national liberation, safeguarding state sovereignty and building socialism.

“The late Cuban leader has also made immortal historic contributions to the world socialist development,” Xi added.

“The death of Fidel Castro has made the Chinese people lose a close comrade and sincere friend. His glorious image and great achievements will go down in history,” Xi said.”

President Xi then concluded: “The Chinese people have lost a good and true comrade. Comrade Castro will live forever.”

From Uganda to Chile, Kenya to Moscow, people have been writing to me that their nations are in deep shock.

The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, remembered Fidel with warmth and respect:

Fidel Castro was a sincere and reliable friend of Russia. He embodied the high ideals of a politician, a citizen and a patriot sincerely, convinced of the rightness of the cause to which he dedicated his whole life. His memory will forever remain in the hearts of the citizens of Russia.

Nicolás Maduro, President of Venezuela, parted with his friend by sending a revolutionary message to all corners of the world:

To all the revolutionaries of the world, we have to continue his legacy and his flag of independence, of socialism, of homeland.

Here in Vietnam, Fidel Castro is remembered with admiration, love and great respect. Like two brothers, shoulder-to-shoulder, the two countries fought against Western imperialism and colonialism, for many years and decades.

Trần Đại Quang, President of Vietnam, declared:

“For all Vietnamese, Fidel was a great friend, a comrade and a very close brother.”

On November 15th 2016, President Trần Đại Quang was one of the last world leaders to see Fidel, during what was seen as a warm and symbolic encounter.

Now walking through the ancient towns of Central Vietnam, I felt overwhelmed by sadness and an irreversible feeling of loss. But despair did not last for long.

Deep inside I was convinced that Maduro was correct: the revolution has to continue, under those flags, exactly under those flags that were raised by Fidel and his comrades in Cuba and all over the world.

Precisely now, when Western imperialism is showing its horrific fangs, when it is ready to lead its soldiers and mercenaries into the final battle for global domination, there is no time for weakness, for respite, for hesitation.

Fidel has departed, but the revolution goes on!

Instead of mourning, we should celebrate an exemplary, heroic life. A man is mortal, but his great works, his struggle, his victories, can be eternal.

In Vietnam, I recalled a poem by Antonio Guerrero Rodriguez, one of the 'Cuban 5' patriots who were imprisoned brutally in Miami, for infiltrating US anti-Cuban intelligence operations.

In this stunning poem written in a Miami prison, Rodriguez argues that love that can pass is not really love. That true love could resist even death itself and is, like nature, eternal.

So is true revolution, comrades. Like true love, true revolution cannot be broken, or extinguished, even by death itself.

Comrade Fidel Castro has just departed ... But millions of his sons and daughters are still here, damn it! Therefore nothing is lost. Therefore, everything is just beginning!

Andre Vltchek is a philosopher, novelist, filmmaker and investigative journalist. He has covered wars and conflicts in dozens of countries. Three of his latest books are revolutionary novel "[Aurora](#)" and two bestselling works of political non-fiction: "[Exposing Lies Of The Empire](#)" and "[Fighting Against Western Imperialism](#)". View his other books [here](#). Andre is making films for teleSUR and Al-Mayadeen. After having lived in Latin America, Africa and Oceania, Vltchek presently resides in East Asia and the Middle East, and continues to work around the world. He can be reached through his [website](#) and his [Twitter](#).

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