

Text of Castro's Letter Ceding Authority

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Full text of the letter from Fidel Castro read on state television by his secretary, Carlos Valenciaga:

Because of the enormous effort involved in visiting the Argentine city to attend the Mercosur meeting, at the closing of the Summit of the Peoples in the historic University of Cordoba and the visit to Alta Gracia, the city where Che (Guevara) lived in his childhood and immediately afterward attending the commemoration of the 53rd anniversary of the attack on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Cespedes barracks, the 26th of July of 1953, in the provinces of Granma and Holguin, days and nights of continuous work with hardly any sleep, have caused my health, which has withstood all tests, to fall victim to extreme stress and to be ruined.

This has caused in me an acute intestinal crisis with sustained bleeding that has obliged me to undergo a complicated surgical operation. All the details of this health accident can be seen in X-rays, endoscopies and filmed material. The operation will force me to take several weeks of rest, away from my responsibilities and duties.

As our country is threatened in circumstances like this by the government of the United States, I have made the following decision:

- 1) I delegate in a provisional manner my functions as first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba to the second secretary, comrade Raul Castro Ruz.
- 2) I delegate in a provisional manner my functions as Commander in Chief of the heroic Revolutionary Armed Forces to the same comrade, Army Gen. Raul Castro Ruz.
- 3) I delegate in a provisional manner my functions as president of the Council of State and of the government of the Republic of Cuba to the first vice-president, comrade Raul Castro Ruz.
- 4) I delegate in a provisional manner my functions as the main driving force behind the National and International Program of Public Health to Politburo member and Public Health Minister, comrade Jose Ramon Balaguer Cabrera.
- 5) I delegate in a provisional manner my functions as the main driving force behind the National and International Education Program to comrades Jose Ramon Machado Ventura and Esteban Lazo Hernandez, members of the Politburo.
- 6) I delegate in a provisional manner my functions as the main driving force behind the National Program of the Energy Revolution in Cuba and cooperation with other countries in this field to comrade Carlos Lage Davila, member of the Politburo and secretary of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers.

The relevant funds for these programs _ health, education and energy _ should continue to be assigned and prioritized, as I have been doing personally, by comrades Carlos Lage Davila, Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers;

Francisco Soberon Valdes, Minister President of the Central Bank of Cuba; and Felipe Perez Roque, Foreign Relations Minister, who have accompanied me in these duties and should constitute a committee for this purpose.

Our glorious Communist Party, supported by mass organizations and the entire public, has the mission of carrying out the duties outlined in this proclamation.

The summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement, to be held Sept. 11-16, should receive the greatest attention of the state and the Cuban nation so it is held with the most brilliance possible on the scheduled date.

The 80th anniversary of my birthday, which thousands of people so generously agreed to celebrate next Aug. 13, I ask that it be postponed for Dec. 2 of this year, the 50th anniversary of the landing of the Granma.

I ask the Central Committee of the party and the National Assembly of Popular Power to give their firmest support to this proclamation.

I do not have the slightest doubt that our people and our revolution will fight to the last drop of blood to defend these and other ideas and measures that are necessary to safeguard this historic process.

Imperialism will never be able to crush Cuba.

The Battle of Ideas will continue.

Long live the fatherland!

Long live the revolution!

Long live socialism!

Always toward victory!

Fidel Castro Ruz Commander in Chief First Secretary of the party and President of the Councils of State and of Ministers of the Republic of Cuba. July 31, 2006 6:22 p.m.