

# Chávez: Castro is feeling better, thanks to God

**Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez said Cuban leader Fidel Castro continues to recover and that he's wearing his olive green uniform again.**

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**NEW YORK** - (AP) -- President Hugo Chávez reiterated that his close friend and ally Fidel Castro is improving after intestinal surgery and that he is even wearing his olive green uniform again.

Chávez offered warm words for the 80-year-old Cuban leader during his visit to New York this week, saying in a speech Thursday at a Harlem church, that Castro has enjoyed divine help in his recuperation.

"Fidel is continuing to recover, thanks to God," Chávez said.

"He's a communist and therefore an atheist, but the conclusion he's reached is that God helps Chávez and his friends, and so He helps him also."

Chávez says Castro has made that remark to him, suggesting the Venezuelan enjoys help from God.

"We're going to pray to God here for Fidel, for the health of Fidel . . . who is coming out of a difficult surgical operation," Chávez said.

Hundreds of people in the crowd chanted, "Fidel! Fidel!"

The Venezuelan leader has followed Castro's health closely since Cuba announced on July 31 that Fidel was temporarily ceding power to his brother, Raúl, after the surgery.

Chávez also strongly criticized the U.S. embargo on trade with Cuba and praised the island's people for managing to get by for decades despite the sanctions.

The Venezuelan leader said the economic conditions on the island, from electricity to fuel availability, have improved dramatically.