

Castro: U.S. falsely justifies war on terror

The Bush administration has failed to stop attacks against Americans to justify its war on terrorism, Cuban leader Fidel Castro wrote in an essay.

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HAVANA --

Fidel Castro suggested Sunday that Washington has deliberately failed to stop terrorist attacks against Americans because it needed "to deliver a bang" that would justify its war on terrorism.

In the latest in a series of essays that Cuba's 80-year-old Maximum leader has begun writing every few days, Castro seized on Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff's comments this past week expressing a "gut feeling" that the United States faces an increased risk of attack this summer.

"The government of the United States sees and hears all, with or without legal authority," Castro wrote. "They can prevent any attack on their people, unless there is some imperial need to deliver a bang so that they can carry on with and justify the brutal war which has been declared against the culture, religion, economy and independence of other peoples."

The accusation came at the end of an essay titled *Bush, Health and Education*, in which Castro claimed Cubans are better cared for than Americans, and that his poor island nation and its legions of doctors working around Latin America have done more for the region than the United States ever will.

Published in the Communist Party youth newspaper *Juventud Rebelde*, the essay criticized President Bush for suggesting that recent U.S. initiatives have provided quality medical care to Latin Americans.

"In Cuba, where healthcare is not a commodity, we can do things that Bush cannot even dream of," Castro wrote.

Castro criticized the USNS Comfort, a Navy medical ship staffed by hundreds of American doctors and nurses dispatched to treat the poor in Central America, saying it will "not be able to look after great numbers of people."

"Bush knows that he is lying and that his tall tales are hard to swallow, but he doesn't care," Castro wrote. "He is confident that if he repeats it a thousand times, many will finally believe him."

He added that despite Washington's 45-year-old trade embargo, "Bush is discovering that the economic and political system of his empire cannot compete with Cuba in vital services, such as healthcare and education."

Castro did not mention the recent U.S. movie *Sicko*, in which filmmaker Michael Moore compares Cuba's healthcare system favorably to the United States'.

Castro has not been seen in public since announcing on July 31, 2006, that emergency intestinal surgery had forced him to cede power to a provisional government headed by his 76-year-old brother, Raúl.

For weeks now, he has published the frequent essays, known as *Reflections of the Commander in Chief*, in which he has touched on issues including U.S.-backed plans to use food crops for biofuels, complaints about Cuba's economy and hints about why his recovery from surgery is taking so long.