

Raul Castro's year: a chronology

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- **July 31:** Fidel Castro delegates power to his brother Raúl after undergoing surgery for intestinal bleeding.
- **Aug. 4:** Granma newspaper publishes long article describing Raúl's style of command as based on the "collective elaboration of ideas" and "the strategic role of unity."
- **Aug. 18:** In his first public statement since July 31, Raúl announces the mobilization of regular troops, defense councils and thousands of reservists and militias for a possible confrontation with the United States. He also offers to negotiate with Washington "in a spirit of equality."
- **Aug. 31:** The Minister of Communications and Computer Sciences is removed and replaced by Ramiro Valdés, long reputed to be a hard-liner and Raúl rival.
- **Sept. 27:** Raúl delivers closing speech at the 19th Congress of the Cuban Workers Central, calling for improved productivity, discipline and management. A close aide, Salvador Valdés Mesa, is elected head of the state-controlled labor union.
- **Oct. 20:** He appoints Jorge Luis Sierra as new Minister of Transportation.
- **Dec. 2:** He presides over a military parade in Havana to mark Fidel's 80th birthday and the 50th anniversary of the landing of the yacht Granma. He restates Cuba's willingness to negotiate with the United States.
- **Dec. 20:** He closes the Seventh Congress of the University Students Federation (FEU) with a speech in which he states that Fidel can be succeeded only by the Communist Party.
- **Dec. 22:** Addressing the Cuban legislature, he demands rigor, discipline and transparency to confront the serious problems affecting food, housing and transportation.
- **Jan. 23:** Granma reports on a project to improve business practices, based on the efficiency standards of the Armed Forces, which Raúl has led for nearly five decades.
- **Feb. 28:** He presides over a meeting of the Joint Inter-Government Commission Cuba-Venezuela, which authorizes projects worth \$1.5 billion.
- **March 23:** Makes third and fourth changes in the Cabinet. He appoints María Esther Reus as Minister of Justice and René Mesa as Minister of Water Resources.
- **March 28:** Signs decree for the creation of a system of crime prevention and social care of victims.
- **March 29:** After eight months of convalescence, Fidel Castro publishes his first newspaper article, assailing President Bush's plans for alternative fuels.
- **April 1:** Nationwide regulations to curb workplace indiscipline and improve efficiency go into effect.
- **April 3:** Raúl welcomes Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos.
- **April 20:** Along with Fidel, Raúl welcomes a high-ranking delegation of Chinese officials.
- **June 6:** He oversees the inauguration of power generators in Havana and the signing of an accord between Cuban companies and the Canadian firm Sherritt International.
- **June 18:** His wife, Vilma Espín Guillois, dies.

- **June 22:** He attends private burial for his wife at mausoleum in Santiago de Cuba.
- **June 29:** Addressing the Cuban legislature, he refers again to the battle against crime and social indiscipline.
- **July 9:** As acting president, he calls for elections, from municipal to national levels, beginning in October.
- **July 26:** Addresses ceremony in Camagüey marking Revolution Day.