

Raul Castro Reaffirms Full Support of Venezuela in the Face of US Interference

Caracas, March 18 (acn) Cuban President Raul Castro said that the arbitrary, aggressive and groundless executive order issued by US President Barack Obama against the government of Venezuela, which declared the South American country a threat to US national security, reveals that the United States is capable of sacrificing peace and the course of hemispheric relations in the interest of domination and its domestic policy.

The Cuban President addressed the extraordinary summit of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our Americas, a regional integration bloc known as ALBA, held in Caracas on Tuesday.

Raul described as unsustainable the idea that a supportive country like Venezuela, which has never invaded or attacked any other nation and that substantially contributes with altruism to the energy security and economic stability of a considerable number of nations of this continent, may represent a threat to the security of the strongest power in history.

“We back the honorable, brave and constructive position of president Nicolas Maduro, who despite the serious threat, has extended his hand to the president of the United States to open a dialog based on international law and mutual respect that leads to the unconditional repeal of that executive order and to the normalization of relations,” Raul noted.

Venezuela is not alone and our region is not the same as 20 years ago, said the Cuban president who added that “we will not tolerate the violation of sovereignty or the damage of peace with impunity in the region.” He stressed that the threats against peace and stability in Venezuela represent a threat against regional stability and peace.

Raul Castro noted that the United States should understand once and for all that it is impossible to seduce or buy Cuba or to intimidate Venezuela. “Our unity is indestructible,” he pointed out.

He said that “we will not yield a bit in the defense of sovereignty and independence nor we tolerate any kind of interference, or conditioning in our internal affairs.”

The Cuban head of state also said “we will never leave our brothers in struggle on their own.”

Finally, Raul Castro said that the principles are not negotiable and in order to defend such conviction, Cuba will go to the 7th Summit of the Americas in April to expose its position with firmness, clarity and respect. In that meeting, we will strongly reject all attempts to isolate or threaten Venezuela and we will demand the definitive cease of the US blockade of Cuba.

Cuba's First Vice-president Attends Inauguration of Namibian President

HAVANA, Cuba, Mar 20 (acn) Cuba's first vice-president Miguel Diaz-Canel is in Namibia to attend the swearing-in ceremony for president-elect Hage Geingob and to participate at celebrations for the 25th anniversary of that country's national independence.

According to Granma newspaper, Diaz-Canel will meet in the capital Windhoek with top government Namibian officials and with the country's founding father Sam Nujoma. He will also visit places of historic interest.

The Cuban official arrived Thursday afternoon in Namibia and first on his agenda was a visit to Cuban workers who are offering their services in that sister African nation. On the occasion, Diaz-Canel stressed the internationalism, altruism and humanistic vocation as values that must always be defended.

In briefing the workers about the events underway in Cuba he pointed to two scenarios: the economy and the ideological work.

He said that Cubans celebrate Namibia's independence as we recall all we did together, in reference to the contribution by Cuban combatants to the liberation of Angola, Namibia and South Africa.

Diaz-Canel also stressed the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of relations between Namibia and Cuba shortly after the African nation got its independence on March 21st, 1990. That same year, he said, Cuba began assisting Namibia in the field of health in tune with a request made by then president Sam Nujoma.

At present, a total of 139 Cuban health workers are offering assistance in 13 out of 14 Namibian regions.

Diaz-Canel, who will depart Windhoek on Monday for India, is heading a delegation that includes the general director of bilateral affairs at Cuba's Foreign Ministry, Gerardo Penalver, and the director for Sub-Saharan Africa at the Ministry Angel Villa.

WHO to Evaluate Cuban Syphilis and HIV Transmission Levels

HAVANA, Cuba, Mar 20 (acn) Experts with the World Health Organization (WHO) will arrive March 22 in Havana to consider the certification of Cuba as the first country in the world to have wiped out the transmission of Syphilis and HIV via mother to child.

The announcement was made by first deputy Health minister Doctor Jose Angel Portal during a meeting with the press in Havana also attended by Health minister Roberto Morales and other officials.

The WHO representatives will visit doctor's offices in neighborhoods in Havana, central Villa Clara and eastern Santiago de Cuba provinces, where they will evaluate the results of the Cuban Prevention Program for Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

The deputy minister said Cuba is in conditions to be certified by the world organization given its notable results in the area.

The certification of a country for having eliminated the mother-to-child transmission of congenital syphilis must include indicators such as a vertical transmission rate equal or below 0.5 in every 1 thousand live births, and for HIV the rate must be equal or below 2 percent, said Doctor Rosaida Ochoa, director of the Promotion of Health and Disease Prevention Unit.

Namibian Street Named after Fidel Castro

HAVANA, Cuba, Mar 20 (acn) In the heart of downtown Windhoek, capital of Namibia, a street flanked by main commercial offices and businesses bears the name of Fidel Castro, in honor to the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution.

This we learned from a PL news reporter Daisy Francis, who described the street as peculiar in its design, starting right at the entrance of Parliament and stretching one kilometer downwards to meet other important metropolitan avenues.

The fact that it was named after a live world figure is part of African culture, which not only names landmarks after deceased personalities as it usually happens in Latin America for instance. This way, you can also find in Windhoek the streets named after Namibia's founding father, Sam Nujoma and independence Namibian leader Herman Andimba. However, it is Fidel Castro the only name of Latin American figure naming one of the city's streets.

In Pretoria, when Nelson Mandela was still alive, there was a main avenue near the University of South Africa that had been named after him. The name of first black South African President is also present on a Windhoek street, as well as that of the leader of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, Agostinho Neto.

Other streets paying homage to Namibian and African figures are Hendrik Witbooi, a warrior that headed the Witbooi clan and who was killed in action in 1905 and Mandume Ya Ndemufayo, an anti-colonialist leader murdered in 1917 who defeated the Portuguese invaders in October 1916.

It is Windhoek, a city to be visited by Cuban First Vice-President Miguel Diaz-Canel as his last leg of an African tour that has taken him to South Africa and Angola this week.

It is Windhoek that has preserved a touch of African, Namibian and world history right on the corners of its street, like an honor to the legacy of the great leaders of contemporary history.

Cuban Youth Contributes Experience to Panama Civil Society Forum

HAVANA, Cuba, Mar 20 (acn) Members of Cuban student organizations and youth movements are gathering in Havana to contribute, from their experience and reality, ideas and proposals to the Civil Society Forum that will take place in Panama April 8-10, during the 7th Summit of the Americas.

The forum, entitled The Youth and The Americas includes four panels addressing issues like citizen's participation and governance, the environment and energy, education and health, and urban security.

The forum is being hosted by the University of Havana, the Higher Education Institute of Science and Technology and the Cuba Pavilion cultural exhibit hall. Also scheduled till April 1 is an on-line forum on the Soy Cuba website, to allow for larger participation by the Cuban youths.

This initiative, which was preceded by a similar forum with representatives of Cuban society earlier this week, will also include book launchings, performances by young artists, audiovisuals and different arts exhibits.