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AM-CASTRO

CASTRO OPTIMISTIC BUT CALLS 1987 YEAR OF TRIALS

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HAYANA, FEB 2, REUTER - STRIKING A NOTE OF OPTIMISM, CUBAN PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO PREDICTED IN A SPEECH PUBLISHED TODAY THAT THE NEXT HALF DECADE WOULD BE THE BEST FIVE YEARS OF THE REVOLUTION.

REFERRING TO THE SO-CALLED RECTIFICATION PROCESS BEGUN LAST YEAR, CASTRO SAID THAT 1986 HAD BEEN THE +YEAR OF THE HISTORIC TURNABOUT+ AND 1987 WOULD BE THE +YEAR OF TRIALS+.

THE RECTIFICATION PROCESS IS AIMED AT PLACING THE CUBAN ECONOMY ON A MORE RATIONAL BASIS BY IMPLEMENTING CONTROLS TO FIGHT THE INEFFICIENCY, CORRUPTION AND LETHARGY THAT HAS PLAGUED THE REVOLUTION.

+WE OUGHT TO FEEL ASHAMED OF THE ABSENCE OF DISCIPLINE, FOR THE WAY IN WHICH WE HAVE USED OUR RESOURCES, AND THE MOMENT HAS COME TO PUT AN END TO THIS SITUATION,+ CASTRO SAID.

CASTRO RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT IMPORTS FROM HARD CURRENCY AREAS WOULD BE CUT IN HALF AND SAID A SERIES OF AUSTERITY MEASURES WERE PLANNED, INCLUDING AN INCREASE IN ELECTRICITY RATES AND BUS FARES.

CASTRO SAID THAT PART OF THE MENTALITY OF INEFFICIENCY STEMMED FROM THE FACT THAT CUBA +HAS HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF RECEIVING GENEROUS RESOURCES FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND THE REST OF THE SOCIALIST BLOC.+

+WE HAVE CONDEMNED HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF COMPATRIOTS TO THE USELESS WORK OF CARRYING ROCKS FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER,+ CASTRO SAID, REFERRING TO THE SUPERFLUOUS WORKFORCE IN MANY AREAS.

CASTRO SAID THAT IN 1987 CUBA WOULD BE IN A POSITION, FOR THE FIRST TIME, TO PRODUCE ONE MILLION TONS OF PETROLEUM.

THE SPEECH, DELIVERED SATURDAY TO MANAGERS OF HEAVY INDUSTRY WAS PUBLISHED TODAY IN THE OFFICIAL GRANMA NEWSPAPER.

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