

# Castro still hitting the Yankees hard WR 98

From Lionel Martin  
in Santiago de Cuba

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A forceful and still charismatic Fidel Castro, now 57 years old, marked the 25th anniversary of the Cuban revolution with one of his most cutting attacks on the US Administration's foreign policy.

"Because of the Reagan Administration's warlike, adventurous and irresponsible policy, tensions have increased," he said. "Only ignorant and insane people would lead the world to the brink. . . . There are solid scientific arguments for the belief that humanity would not survive a total nuclear war."

Dr Castro appeared more rested than two months ago when he spoke after the Grenada invasion, prompting speculation in the US press that he might have a serious blood ailment, or a bad heart.

Dr Castro accused the US of taking upon itself the role of international gendarme, especially in Latin America. He said: "The lies and pretexts used to justify the monstrous crime in Grenada demonstrate the cynicism, immorality, lack of scruples, and total contempt

for international law and people's sovereignty, of the United States."

The crowd broke in several times with chants of "Fidel, Fidel, Fidel," and "Fidel for sure, hit the Yankees hard."

He accused the US "of arming and advising the genocidal government of El Salvador, of organising, equipping, and leading the counter-revolutionary bands that attack Nicaragua, of invading Grenada, of encouraging the South African racists' attacks against Angola, of bombing Lebanon and of attacking Syria.

"Those Nazi-Fascist barbarians, like their Hitlerian predecessors, underestimate the capacity for struggle and sacrifice of the peoples," he said. Nevertheless, "the very system of imperialist domination is in crisis. Profound structural and social changes in Latin America are inevitable. Cuba cannot export revolution, but neither can the United States prevent revolution."

Dr Castro predicted that "one way or another, the United States will have to resign itself to co-existing with

different social and economic systems and with independent countries in this hemisphere."

Danton's dictum of "audacity, audacity, and more audacity" is still Dr Castro's guiding star. He said that Cuba could not be intimidated by the US invasion of Grenada and by threats. Grenada had, instead, "multiplied the patriotism, fighting spirit and revolutionary consciousness" of not only the Cubans, but also the Nicaraguans and the Salvadoran revolutionaries.

"If Cuba is invaded," he said, "men and women, old and young, will take up weapons to give the aggressors a lesson they will never forget."

Many observers feel that, despite the fighting words, Cuba will move carefully in foreign affairs while Mr Reagan is in the White House. Dr Castro once said in a letter during one of the darkest moments of the revolutionary struggle that "to know how to wait is the great secret of success."

Dr Castro left the door open for peaceful negotiations. "Cuba needs peace which means for our people a bright and secure future." He said

that Cuba would always be ready to discuss differences with its enemies and "to contribute to overcoming tensions in our area."

Dr Castro was born and raised near Santiago and was sent to a Jesuit school in the city when he was 12. As a 26-year-old lawyer, he returned here from Havana to attack Cuba's second biggest army garrison in an attempt to bring down the Batista dictatorship. He was tried and convicted in Santiago where he later made his defence plea, ending with the words — history will absolve me."

When Batista fled the island in the early hours of the new year in 1959, Santiago de Cuba was occupied by Castro's forces. The town was also the venue for Dr Castro's first address to a mass rally from the same balcony from which he spoke on Sunday.

In that speech a quarter of a century ago, Dr Castro told the people: "This time, luckily for Cuba, the revolution will truly arrive at its goal." In Sunday's speech, he reviewed the achievements of the revolution since 1959 and said that his promises had been fulfilled.