

1984

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W/ LEN NYK BAS LCT LCF
ECO: CASTRO-SUGAR/ECONOMY

PRESIDENT CASTRO SAYS SUGAR AND GENERAL ECONOMY FACE GLOOMY 1987
BY LIONEL MARTIN

HAVANA, DEC 4, REUTER -- BECAUSE OF AN EXPECTED SHORTFALL IN SUGAR PRODUCTION FOR THE PRESENT 1986-87 HARVEST WHICH BEGAN LAST MONTH, CUBA WILL HAVE VERY LITTLE CRUDE SUGAR AVAILABLE FOR SALE ON THE FREE MARKET BUT WILL STRIVE TO FULFILL ITS SUGAR EXPORT COMMITMENTS TO THE SOCIALIST NATIONS, CUBAN PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO SAID IN HIS CLOSING SPEECH TO THE CUBAN THIRD COMMUNIST PARTY CONGRESS WHICH ENDED HERE TUESDAY.

CASTRO PAINTED A GLOOMY PICTURE OF THE CUBAN ECONOMY IN 1987 AND SAID THAT BECAUSE OF A PROLONGED DROUGHT, SUGAR, DAIRY, MEAT AND VEGETABLE PRODUCTION ON THE ISLAND WOULD FALL.

OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, CASTRO SAID, RAINFALL HAS BEEN BETWEEN SIXTY AND SEVENTY PERCENT OF ITS HISTORICAL AVERAGE.

THE CUBAN LEADER SAID THAT "THE DROUGHT HAS ALREADY REDUCED SUGAR PRODUCTION BY MORE THAN A MILLION TONNES." HE ADDED, "WE HAVE COMMITTED OURSELF TO FULFILLING OUR OBLIGATIONS WITH SOCIALIST NATIONS...AND THERE IS VERY LITTLE SUGAR AVAILABLE FOR THE CAPITALIST MARKET IN 1987."

IT WAS NOT ABSOLUTELY CLEAR IF THE ONE MILLION TONNE SHORTFALL REFERRED TO LAST YEAR'S HARVEST OR THE PRESENT ONE BUT MANY INTERPRETED HIS WORDS TO MEAN THE 1986-87 HARVEST NOW IN PROGRESS.

LAST YEAR CASTRO ALSO PROJECTED A MILLION TONNE SUGAR SHORTFALL. FINAL PRODUCTION WAS MORE THAN A MILLION TONNES LESS THAN THE ORIGINAL PROJECTIONS OF 8.3 MILLION TONNES FOR THE LAST HARVEST.

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CASTRO-SUGAR/ECONOMY 2HAVANA

THE SIXTY YEAR OLD REVOLUTIONARY HERO SAID THAT BECAUSE OF LOW SUGAR AND PETROLEUM PRICES AND THE SHORTFALL IN SUGAR PRODUCTION CUBA'S HARD CURRENCY EARNING WILL FALL FROM 1.2 BILLION DOLLARS THIS YEAR TO 600 MILLION DOLLARS IN 1987.

ALTHOUGH CUBA PRODUCES LITTLE PETROLEUM, IT EXPORTED ABOUT THREE MILLION TONNES OF IT IN 1985 FROM ITS QUOTA OF SOVIET OIL. THE REEXPORTATION OF PETROLEUM BROUGHT CUBA THE LION'S SHARE OF ITS HARD CURRENCY LAST YEAR.

+I THINK THAT THE PEPOLE SHOULD BE INFORMED OF ALL THESE FACTORS, THEY ARE REALITIES, + CASTRO TOLD THE PARTY DELEGATES AND THE NATIONWIDE AUDIENCE. (YO CREO QUE LA POBLACION DEBE SER INFORMADO DE TODOS ESTOS FACTORES, SON REALIDADES)

CUBA'S CRITICAL HARD CURRENCY SHORTAGE HAS FORCED HER, FOR THE FIRST TIME, TO FALL IN ARREARS ON PAYMENTS OF 1986 MATURITIES ON SHORT TERM COMMERCIAL LOANS. CUBA HAS ASKED CREDITOR BANKS FOR THREE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS IN FRESH MONEY TO PAY OFF THIS YEAR'S MATURITIES.

CASTRO SAID THAT BECAUSE OF THE HARD CURRENCY SHORTAGE THERE WILL BE FEWER SPARE PARTS, RAW MATERIALS AND OTHER GOODS ACQUIRED FROM MARKET ECONOMY NATIONS AVAILABLE.

CASTRO, ATTIRED IN HIS DRESS MILITARY UNIFORM SAID IT WOULD BE NECESSARY +TO OPTIMIZE OUR WORK IN EVERY SENSE AND TO CARRY OUT A MUCH MORE ENERGETIC BATTLE AGAINST THE SQUANDERING OF RESOURCES, AND ABOVE ALL, BE CONSCIOUS OF THE PROBLEMS AND READ TO FACE THEM WITHOUT SACRIFICING THE FUTURE. (LIBRAR UNA BATALLA MUCHO MAS ENERGETICA CONTRA TODO LO QUE SEA DISILFARRO DE RECURSOS DE CUALQUIER CLASE Y SOBRE TODO, ESTAR CONSCIENTES DE LOS PROBLEMS, PREPARADOS PARA ENFRENTAR LOS SIN SACRIFICAR EL FUTURO)