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AM-CUBA-CASTRO

CASTRO FORESEES SENDING 10,000 PHYSICIANS TO WORK OVERSEAS:

HAVANA, SEPT 2, REUTER - CUBAN PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO SAID THURSDAY NIGHT THAT BEFORE THE TURN OF THE CENTURY CUBA WILL BE ABLE TO SEND 10 THOUSAND MEDICAL DOCTORS OVERSEAS TO RAISE THE HEALTH STANDARDS IN UNDERDEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING NATIONS, THE CUBAN NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY, AIN, REPORTED FRIDAY.

THE CUBAN LEADER WAS THE MAIN SPEAKER AT THE LARGEST GRADUATING CLASS IN THE HISTORY OF CUBA OF MEDICAL DOCTORS.

AIN SAID THAT DIPLOMAS WERE GIVEN TO 3282 CUBAN PHYSICIANS AND 147 FOREIGNERS FROM 47 NATIONS. MORE THAN HALF OF THE GRADUATING CLASS WERE WOMEN.

CASTRO HAS DECLARED REPEATEDLY OVER PAST YEARS THAT CUBA AIMS TO BECOME A GREAT MEDICAL POWER (POTENCIA) OF THE DEVOLOPING WORLD.

THE SIXTY-TWO YEAR OLD CASTRO SAID HE HAS CALCULATED THAT BY THE YEAR 2000 +10 THOUSAND PHYSICIANS COULD COLLABORATE IN INTERNATIONALIST (OVERSEAS) TASKS AND ANOTHER 10 THOUSAND COULD ACT AS A RESERVE SO THAT EVERY SEVEN YEARS CUBAN DOCTORS CAN DEVOTE ONE YEAR TO STUDY.+

CASTRO SAID THAT AT PRESENT THERE ARE 31 THOUSAND DOCTORS IN CUBA. +THIS IS HIGHLY SIGNFICIANT,+ HE SAID, +BECAUSE WHEN THE REVOLUTION TRIUMPHED IN 1959 WE HAD ONLY 6000 DOCTORS AND OF THOSE, 3 THOUSAND LEFT THE COUNTRY AT THE CALL OF IMPERIALISM.+

CASTRO SAID THE EIGHTY OF THE NEW CUBAN PHYSICIANS WILL SOON BE LEAVING FOR ZAMBIA IN AFRICA +TO FIGHT TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF THOUSANDS OF PERSONS.+ HE ALSO SAID THAT +ONE COUNTRY HAS ASKED US FOR FIVE HUNDRED PHYSICIANS+ BUT HE DID NOT NAME THE NATION.

A CUBAN PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIAL SAID THAT CUBA DOES NOT CHARGE POORER NATIONS FOR THE SERVICES OF ITS PHYSICIANS BUT DOES COLLECT FROM THOSE THAT CAN AFFORD TO PAY.

CUBAN DOCTORS VOLUNTEER FOR WORK OVERSEAS AND THE TITLE, +INTERNATIONALIST+ WHICH IS USED TO DESCRIBE THEM IS VIEWED AS A BADGE OF HONOR AMONG CUBAN REVOLUTIONARIES.

A CUBAN PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIAL SAID THAT CUBAN DOCTORS RECEIVE A SALARY OF BETWEEN 500 AND 700 DOLLARS A MONTH.
==REUTER/LEM
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