

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel speaks at the commemoration of the start of Mexico's war of independence



Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel addressed a special commemoration of the 211th anniversary of the beginning of Mexico's war of independence against Spain.

We bring you the English-language translation of the speech by Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel in Mexico City on September 16, 2021. The Cuban president addressed a special commemoration of the 211th anniversary of the beginning of Mexico's war of independence against Spain.

Dear Andrés Manuel López Obrador, President of the United Mexican States, distinguished guests, dear Mexico.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to bring Cuba's grateful embrace to your beautiful national celebrations for that "Cry of Dolores" that aroused the pursuit for liberation in our region, more than 200 years ago.

We have been granted several brother countries in our America, but Mexico represents, for many reasons, one of the most cherished nations to Cuba.

That affection that unites our lands begins with the dazzle caused by its diverse and deep indelible traces in the literature and history of America.

"How beautiful is the land inhabited by the brave Aztecs", Cuban poet José María Heredia expressed in "On the Teocalli de Cholula", which opened a door into that fascinating world of ours, a world that existed long before the terrible conquest that began centuries later with unrestrained slaughter and destruction by the Spanish troops, coming from Santiago de Cuba led Hernán Cortéz.

Still, no one would talk with greater enthusiasm about Mexico than José Martí. I now quote some excerpts from his memorable speech delivered at the Hispanic American literary society in 1981, in honor of Mexico: "Today we gather here to pay tribute to the nation girded with palm trees and orange blossoms that rises like a glorious jewel to the blue sky, the free mountains, where the whistle of the railroad wakes up, crowned with roses as yesterday with the joy of work on the cheek, the indomitable soul that still sparkled in the embers of the ashes never extinguished. We greet a nation that melts, in crucible of its own metal, the civilizations that lurked over them to destroy them."

Afterwards, referring to the significant date that we celebrate here today, Martí said: "Three hundred years later, a priest summoned his village to war against those parents who denied the life of the soul to their own children; under the sun, when the mud huts of the poor Indians were shining through the mulberry trees; and never, although covered 100 times by blood, has the sun of Hidalgo ceased to shine since then. They hung the heads of the heroes in iron cages, bit the heroes the dust of a bullet in the heart, but on September 16 of every year, at dawn, the president of the Republic of Mexico, cheers before the people, the free homeland, while waving the flag of Dolores." End of quote.

The Mexican independence process, triggered by Cry of Dolores, led by Father Miguel Hidalgo on this date in 1810, and carried out 11 years later with the entrance of the Trigarante army in Mexico City, had a notorious component of social and indigenous demands that set it apart from other processes that typified the independence era. Its impact was definitely extraordinary in the libertarian and anticolonialist struggle of our region, and particularly in Cuba. It gathered ancestral ambitions of entire peoples that inhabited, not only the Mexican territory, but also Central and South America and the Antilles.

It vindicated all poor Creole sectors, mulattos, white and black people, that were plunged into misery, hunger and exploitation and opposed black slavery. The broad popular presence had a decisive influence in its radicalization and in the fulfillment of important social and political demands, which constituted an

huge inspiration and encouragement for our independence movement.

There are many Cubans who left their blood and their names in the history of Mexico, especially the solidarity shown by Cuba in Mexico's confrontation with the Texan invasions in 1835-1836 and the U.S. invasion of 1846-1848.

The following generals stand out: Pedro Ampundía, Juan Valentín Amador, Gerónimo Cardona, Manuel Fernández Castrillón, Antonio Gaona, Pedro Lemus and Anastasio Parrodi. Cubans Vicensio Villareal and José María Pérez Hernández launched in March 1854 the historic Ayutla Plan, which was crucial in the army's defeat and the end of the Mexican society with the dictatorial government of General Santa Ana.

The prestigious researcher René González Barrios, confirmed that several of those men held key positions in Mexican political-military life and were governors or military commanders in important places in the country.

Two of them, Major Generals Anastasio Parrodi and Pedro Ampundía Grimarés were Ministers of War and Navy in the government of Benito Juárez during the Reform War. Either in Congress, government, exile or war, Cubans always stood Juárez's side. Their work has been praised by famous compatriots such as General Domingo Goicuría y Cabrera and the poets Juan Clemente Xenea and Pedro Santasilia, the latter was his son-in-law, his secretary and an agent of the Republic of Cuba in the Mexican government. In the war against the France, brothers Manuel and Rafael de Quezada y Loinas; general and colonel respectively, served the Mexican army, along with colonels Luis Eduardo del Cristo, Rafael Bobadilla and Francisco León Tamayo, Dr. commander Rafael Argilagos Rimenferril and Captain Félix Aguirre; all of them returned to Cuba at the beginning of the 10 years war.

Mexico was then the first country to recognize our armed struggle and to open its ports to Cuban ships. The congress approved it, Juárez announced it and Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, the president of the Republic, showed his appreciation through a memorable letter to his Mexican counterpart. I quote; "It is highly rewarding that Mexico has been the first nation in America to have, thus, professed its generous empathy to Cuban independence and freedom".

One of the main tasks that Pedro Santasilia had then fulfilled, with Juárez's consent, was to send a group of Mexican soldiers to contribute to the training of the rising liberating army in Cuba. Mexican fighters in the fields of Cuba stood out, and their feats inspired troops and everyone who heard about them.

Once again, on a letter to the "Benemérito de las Américas", Céspedes wrote: "Some Mexican gentlemen have come here and have shed their generous blood on our soil and for our cause, and the whole country has shown its gratitude for their heroic deed".

Two of those brave soldiers, veterans of the War of the Reform and the battle against the French Empire, reached the rank of Brigadier General of the Cuban Liberation Army: José Inclán Risco and Gabriel González Galván.

Dear friends, because of these precious memories we share, we are moved and inspired by these acts that worship history, and we return again and again to each line addressed to Mexico by José Martí, who forever links our two nations in his literary works, but specially in his letters to his great Mexican friend Manuel Mercado.

It is also to this friend that he leaves, his resounding political will as an unfinished letter; the will devoted to support Cuba's independence, to prevent the United States from spreading through the Antilles and falling over our lands of America.

Some years before, on his way to Veracruz, Martí wrote: "Oh, dear Mexico, oh beloved Mexico, you must notice the dangers that lie ahead, hear the clamor your son, to the north a greedy neighbor is curdling... You will understand, you will be guided, I will have died, oh Mexico, defending you and loving you."

Young Communist Julio Antonio Mella died here defending the revolution. He was assassinated in this city where Ernesto Che Guevara and Fidel Castro Ruz would meet years later with his brother Raul.

Likewise, the young people of the Centenary Generation trained and organized their expedition here. They forged friendships that still linger, and that were immortalized in a song that is like an anthem of those epic times, "La Lupe" by Juan Almeida Bosque.

The names of María Antonia González, Antonio del Conde (El Cuate), key figures in the acquisition of the Granma yacht, Asancio Venegas and Kim Medrano, professional wrestlers who gave physical training to the troops, among many others, will be forever remembered in Cuban history when talking about that Mexican period.

Irma and Joaquina Venegas, who offered their house as a camp.

The passage of Fidel and his comrades through Mexico left a deep impression on the future Granma expeditionaries, as well as several legends that are still narrated with admiration and respect.

We will never forget that thanks to the support of many Mexican friends, the Granma yacht set sail from Tuxpan, Veracruz on November 25, 1956, and 7 days later, on December 2, the rising rebel army that came to liberate Cuba disembarked from that historic ship. Nor do we forget that just a few months after the historic triumph of the revolution in 1959, General Lázaro Cárdenas visited Cuba, and expressed his willingness to stand by our people after the mercenary invasion of Playa Girón in 1961, marked the character of our relations.

Faithful to its traditions, Mexico was the only Latin American country that did not break off relations with revolutionary Cuba when we were expelled from the OAS by an imperial order.

Throughout the years, we have never broken what history has united, our two countries have honored their sovereign policies regardless of the distance between governments.

A very Mexican principle prevails: "respect for the rights of others is peace". There is unquestionable merit in those who have dedicated their lives and energies, heart and soul, to nurture the brotherhood ties.

I pay tribute here to the sustained, invariable, passionate and firm solidarity that we always find in this land, which all Cubans must love as our own.

The Cuban apostle said it, who also described this generous people with his prose: "As from the roots of the earth, it comes to the Mexican citizens that character of his, astute and stately, attached to the country he adores...".

From those words until today, the common heritage raised by a large list of prestigious intellectuals and artists of both nations has not ceased to grow. We are united by literature, cinema, visual arts, bolero and mambo.

It could be said that the significant cultural exchange between Mexico and Cuba reaches all manifestations of culture in the broadest sense, since the relationship in sports is no less influential, especially baseball and boxing, where the connection is so natural and deep that for a moment, the exact origin of the works and facts is lost, and we must conclude that it comes from both nations.

My friends, for these and other reasons that do not fit in a necessarily brief speech, it is a great honor to participate in the military parade commemorating the beginning of the struggle for Mexico's

independence, and to express our feelings before your government and your people.

I do so, believing that it is a recognition of the historical ties and brotherhood between Mexico and Cuba, a genuine token of gratitude, affection and respect that I deeply appreciate on behalf of my people.

The decision to invite us has an immeasurably greater value at a time when we are suffering the onslaught of a multidimensional war with a criminal blockade opportunistically intensified with more than 240 measures in the midst of the covid-19 pandemic that has such dramatic costs for everyone, but particularly for the least developed countries.

We are also facing an aggressive campaign of hatred, disinformation, manipulation and lies backed by the most diverse and influential digital platforms, which ignores all ethical limits.

Under the fire of this war, Mexico's solidarity with Cuba has awakened in our people a greater admiration and the deepest gratitude.

Allow me to tell you, dear President, that Cuba will always remember your expressions of support, your permanent demand for the lifting of the blockade and for the annual vote of the united nations to be turned into concrete deeds, something that your country has fulfilled in an exemplary manner.

We are deeply grateful for the aid received in the form of medical supplies and food to alleviate the combined effects of the economic harassment and the pandemic.

Mexican sisters and brothers, in the face of the complex epidemiological situation facing the world, solidarity and cooperation among our peoples takes on greater significance.

For this reason, our health professionals and technicians did not hesitate to assist the Mexican people whenever necessary, and we will do so again whenever they need it.

We recognize the excellent work carried out by Mexico at the head of the protempore presidency of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, a mechanism of genuine Latin American and Caribbean vocation aimed at defending the unity in diversity of our America against the neoliberal recolonization project that they are trying to impose on us.

As Fidel expressed during a ceremony of Cuban-Mexican friendship held on August 2, 1980: "We will bear nothing against Mexico, we will feel it as our own, we will know how to be faithful to the friendship forged by centuries of history and beautiful common principles."

Long live Mexico!

Long live the friendship between Cuba and Mexico!

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/especiales/exclusivas/270513-cuban-president-miguel-diaz-canel-speaks-at-the-commemoration-of-the-start-of-mexicos-war-of-independence>



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