

# *Raul Castro says Cuba will always support Venezuela*

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Caracas, March 5 (RHC)-- Historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Raúl Castro, ratified today that the homage of Cuba and its people to Hugo Chávez will be to accompany and follow him always.

At the closing of the World Encounter for the validity of the revolutionary leader's Bolivarian Thought, the Army General of the Caribbean island highlighted that Chavez and his comrades in struggle shook our continent and impacted the contemporary history of our America.

Raul highlighted that we have been marked by Chavez and witnessed the aggressions and the economic war to overthrow the Bolivarian process, but also, he said, we have proudly witnessed that the Venezuelan people have known how to defend their conquests and not let them down.

He stressed that we have also witnessed Nicolás Maduro's leadership to continue Chávez's work and his capacity to resist and overcome.

He assured that "Cuba was and will be at the side of the Venezuelan people, at the side of Maduro and of the civic-military union of the Bolivarian and Chavista people".

In his speech, the Army General stated that one of the strengths of Chavez' leadership was his loyalty to the principles and commitments he assumed, and assured that he set goals that also show us the way.

He pointed out that the Cuban people quickly identified Chavez's qualities, his charisma, sympathy and gift with the people, and when they knew of his illness, they inquired about his condition, evolution and what could be done.

Chavez' death, he expressed, caused a deep pain in the Cuban people, and the people do not make mistakes with their leaders..

He recalled that a few days after his departure, Fidel vehemently and painfully wrote in one of his Reflections, published in the Cuban press: "The best friend the Cuban people had throughout its history passed away."

Raul stated that very early on, Commander in Chief Fidel saw in Chavez a leader and foresaw his political future, when many did not even know him yet.

Chavez had the same revolutionary impetus that animates the Cuban Revolution, Fidel's idea that victory exists as long as one fights; this was in his ideology, he pointed out.

He remarked that the concept that "Yes we can", even though the challenges are immense, Chávez put it into practice on a daily basis.

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