

# *Cuban President Reaffirms that Cuba Will Never Abandon Socialism*

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Havana, December 20 (RHC)-- Cuban President Raúl Castro reaffirmed that Cuba will never abandon socialism, as stipulated in the new guidelines of the Cuban Communist Party.

In his closing remarks Saturday morning at the 4th Session of the 8th Legislature of the National Assembly of People's Power (Cuban Parliament), the Cuban president reiterated that the Cuban people will never renounce the ideals they have defended for over a century now, and for which many fought and gave their lives.

President Raúl Castro recalled that Cubans ratified the irrevocable character of their socialist political, economic and social system in a public referendum. Raúl referred to what he called truly fruitful meetings here in Cuba this month of December 2014, and pointed to the 5th CARICOM-Cuba and the ALBA-TCP summits.

Speaking on behalf of all Cuban deputies, Raúl welcomed the presence at Saturday's session of the five Cuban anti-terrorist fighters — Fernando González and René

Gonzalez, along with Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, who were released and returned to Cuba this past Wednesday, after serving more than 16 years of unjust imprisonment in U.S. jails.

In another part of his speech, the Cuban head of state said that currency unification by itself will not solve all of Cuba's economic problems. "It should be accompanied by a group of macro-economic measures to guarantee the financial balance," he affirmed.

"We have huge challenges ahead of us," said Raúl, and urged to make the Cuban economy match up to the high political prestige the country now enjoys internationally. The Cuban president insisted: "It is our

duty to direct the country towards prosperous, sustainable and irreversible development under socialism.”

Raúl announced that the 7th Congress of the Cuban Communist Party will be held in April 2016 and stressed that it will be preceded by broad, open debates at all levels of the political organization and with the people, regarding the ongoing process to update the country's economic system.

The Cuban president also reiterated our country's willingness and readiness to engage in respectful, open dialogues with the U.S. government as equals to address our differences and announced that he will personally attend the next Summit of the Americas in April 2015 in Panama.

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