19 October 1967

FIDEL CASTRO DELIVERS EULCGY ON CHE CHEYADA

Havana Domestic Television and Radio Services in Spanish 0144 CMT 19 Oct 67 7/E

[Speech by Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro from Havene's Plaza de'la Revolucion at a mass public ceremony in tribute to Ernesto Che Guevara--live]

[Text] Revolutionary comrades: It was a day in July or August of 1955 when we first not El Che. And in one night, as he tells in his accounts, he became a future Granma expeditionary. But at that time that expedition had neither ships, weapons, nor troops. And this was the way El Che, together with Raul, joined the first two groups on the Granma list.

Since then, 12 years have gone by, 12 years fraught with struggles and obstructions. Through these years death reaped many valuable and irreparable lives, but at the same time, through these years, extraordinary people energed in our revolution and were noted among the men of the revolution. And ties of affection and friendship were made among these men and the people, ties which went further than it is possible to express.

Tonight we are gathered here, you and I, to try to express these centiments in some way with regard to one who was one of the most familiar, one of the most admired, one of the most beloved, and, without any doubt, the most extraordinary of our comrades of revolution, to express these centiments to him and to the heroes who have fought and have fallen beside him--his internationalist army which has been writing a glorious page of history.

One was one of those persons whom everybody liked immediately because of his simplicity, because of his nature, because of his naturalness, because of his comradeship, because of his personality, because of his originality, even before his other singular virtues were revealed. During those first moments he was the doctor of our troop, and thus our bonds emerged and thus our feelings emerged. He was seen to be impregnated with a prefound spirit of hatred and contempt for imperialism, not only because his political makeup was already considerably developed, but because only a short time before he had had the opportunity to witness in Guatemala the criminal imperialist intervention through the percenary soldiers who overthrew the revolution in that country.

For a name such as he, many arguments were not necessary. It was enough for him to know that Cuba lived under a similar situation. It was enough for him that there were non determined to fight that situation with weapons in hand. It was enough for him to know that those men were inspired by genuinely revolutionary and patriotic sentiments. That was more than enough. In this manner, one day near the end of November 1955, he began the trip to Cuba with us. I recall that the crossing was very difficult for him because, in the circumstances under which it was necessary to organize the departure, he could not even obtain the pedicines that he needed, and he suffered a severe attack of asthma during the entire crossing without any relief, but also without a single complaint.

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We strived. We began the first parches. We suffered the first setback. And after a few weeks, we get again, as you know, that small group of those who were left of the Granda expedition. Che continued to be the doctor of our troop.

The first victorious battle was waged and the then became a soldier of our troop; at the same time to was still the doctor.

The second victorious battle was waged and the the soldier became the most distinguished of the soldiers in that battle, for the first time accomplishing one of those singular emploits which characterized him in all the actions.

Our force continued to develop and a battle of extraordinary importance at that time was waged. The mituation was difficult. Reports were erroneous in many aspects. We were going to attack a strongly defended position in full daylight, in the morning, at the edge of the son. It was well armed and we had enemy troops at our year, very near. Under conditions of confusionin which it was necessary to ask the men to make a supreme effort, after Comrade Juan Almeida had begun one of the most difficult nissions, one of the flanks still did not have enough men. It lacked an attacking force, which could endanger the operation. At that moment, Che, who was still the doctor, asked for three or four men, among them a man with an automatic rifle. In a natter of seconds he quickly began to assume the mission of attack from that direction. On that occasion he was not only a distinguished fighter but he also was a distinguished doctor, giving assistance to the wounded conrades and at the same time caring for the wounded energy soliders. And when it was necessary to abandon that position, once all the weapons were captured, and begin a long march besieged by various enemy forces, it was necessary for somebody to stay with the wounded. El Che stayed with the wounded, helped by a small group of our soliders. He cared for thesm. He saved their lives and joined them in the column later.

From that moment in which he was outstanding as a capable and brave commander. El Chethis type of man who when I difficult mission has to be done does not wait, does not wait to be asked--arrived and completed the mission. This he did during the battle of Uvero, and he did this, too, on an occasion, not mentioned in the early stages, when, because of a betrayal, our small force was attacked by surprise by many planes. As we were retreating under the bombing and had already walked some distance, we remembered some rifles of some peasant soldiers who had been with us during the first actions and who had later asked permission to visit their families--there was still not much discipline in our young army--and at the moment we considered the possibility that the rifles would be lost. No sooner was the problem brought up, under the bombing, when El Che volunteered and, as he did so, left rapidly to bring back the rifles.

That was one of his outstanding characteristics-immediate willingness, instantaneous readiness to volunteer for the most dangerous mission. Haturally this elicited admiration, double admiration for that comrade who fought beside us, who was not born in this land, who was a man of profound ideas, who was a man in whose mind surged dreams of struggle in other parts of the continent--and yet, that altruism, that unselfishness, that willingness to do the most difficult always, to risk his life constantly. It was in this way that he won his rank of major and of commander of the second column that was organized in the Sierra Haestra. In this way his prestige grew. His fame began to grow as a magnificent fighter, which was to carry him to the highest ranks in the course of the way.

Che was an unbeatable doldier, commander. Prom a military standpoint Che was an extraordinarily capable man, extraordinarily brave, extraordinarily aggressive. If he had an achilles heel as a guerrilla, that achilles heel was his excessive aggressiveness. It has his absolute scorn for danger. The enemies try to draw conclusions about his death. Che was a master of war.

The was an artist in guerrilla warfare. He demonstrated this an infinite number of times, but above all in two extraordinary exploits. One of them was the invasion at the head of a column, a column which was pursued by thousands of soldiers through territory that was absolutely open and unknown. He accomplished with Camilo a formidable military feat.

But, in addition, he demonstrated it in his brilliant campaign in Las Villas, and he demonstrated it above all in his daring attack on the city of Santa Clara, entering a city defended by tanks, artillery, and several thousand infantry soldiers with a column of barely 300 men.

Those two exploits mark him as an extraordinarily able chief, a master, an artist of revolutionary varfare. Nevertheless, after his heroic and glorious death they attempt to deny the veracity or worth of his guerrilla concepts and ideas. The artist can die, particularly when he is an artist in such a dangerous art as the revolutionary struggle, but what cannot die under any circumstances is the art to which he dedicated his intelligence.

Why is it so strange that this artist should die in a battle? It is much wore extraordinary that on the many occasions that he risked his life he was not killed during some battle. Many were the times in which it was necessary to take action to prevent him from getting killed in actions of minor importance. And so in a battle, in one of the many battles that he waged, he lost his life. We do not have enough evidence to make a judgment as to all the circumstances preceding that battle, as to the degree in which he may have acted in an overly aggressive manner, but we repeat that if as a guerrilla he had an achilles heel, that achilles heel was his excessive aggressiveness, his absolute contempt for danger.

That was where it was difficult to agree with him, because we understand that his life, his experience, his ability as a veteran chief, his prestige, and everything that he signified in life, were much more, incomparably more, walmable than he perhaps realized himself. The idea that men have a realetive value... in history may have profoundly influented his conduct; the idea that causes cannot be defeated them men fall and that the uncontainable march of history does not stop nor will it stop because the commanders fall. And this is certain, this cannot be doubted. This shows his faith in mankind, his faith in ideas, his faith in setting an example.

Yet, as I said a few days ago, I would have wholeheartedly wished to have seen him as the molder of victories, molding under his leadership, molding under his direction, the victories, because sen of his experience, of his caliber, of his singular ability are uncommon sen. We are able to appreciate all the value of his example and we have the most absolute conviction that this example will serve as emulation and will serve to being men similar to him from the bosom of the peoples.

It is not easy to find in one percental the virtues found in him. It is not easy for a person to be able spontaneously to develop a personality like his. I would say that he is the type of man who is difficult to equal and practically impossible to improve upon. But I would also say that men like him are able with their example to help the rise of other men like him.

We not only admire the warrior in El Che, the nan capable of great feats, and what he did and what he was doing, that fact in itself of facing alone with a handful of men an entire oligarchic army trained by Yankee advisers, supplied by Yankee imperialism, supported by the oligarchies of all the neighboring nations, that fact in itself is an extraordinary feat. If one seeks in the pages of history one may not possibly find a single case in which somebody with such a small number of men had embarked on such a large-scale task, in which somebody with such a small number of men had embarked on a struggle against such considerable forces. It is proof of his self-confidence. It is proof of his confidence in the capacity of men for combat. One may seek in the pages of mistory and nothing comparable will be found.

An he fell. The energies believe that they have defeated his ideas, that they have defeated his guerrilla concepts, that they have defeated his viewpoints on the armed revolutionary struggle. What they gained with a lucky blow was to climinate his physical life. What they did was to achieve the accidental advantages which an energy may achieve in war. That lucky blow, that stroke of fortune, we do not know to what degree it was helped by that characteristic, to which we referred before, of excessive aggressiveness and absolute contempt for dangerin a battle like so many battles. It also happened during our war of independence, in a battle at Dos Rios, where they killed the apostle of our independence. In a battle at Punta Brava they killed Antonio Hacco, veteran of hundreds of battles. In similar battles a number of chiefs were killed, a number of patriots of our independence wars. Nevertheless, that was not the defeat of the Cuban cause.

The death of Che, as we said a few days ago, is a hard blow, it is a tremendous blow to the revolutionary novement because, without any doubt, it deprives it of its most experienced and capable shief. But they who sing victory are mistaken. They are nistaken who believe that his death is the defeat of his ideas, the defeat of his tacties, the defeat of his guerrilla concepts, the defeat of his thesis, because that man who fell as a nortal man, as a man who many times exposed himself to bullets, as a military man, as a chief, he was a thousand times more capable than those who with one stroke of luck killed him.

However, how must revolutionaries face this adverse blow! How must they face this loss? What would be Che's opinion if he had to make a judgment on this subject? He expressed that opinion very clearly when he wrote in his message to the Latin American Solidarity Organization that if death surprised him at any place, it would be welcome, providing that his battle cry had reached a receptive ear and another hand was stretched out to wramp a weapon. And that was his battle cry. It will not reach one receptive ear, but millions of receptive ears, not one hand, but millions of hands outstretching to gramp weapons, inspired by his example. New commanders will arise. Hen will need commanders who will rise from the rank and file of the people, just as commanders have arisen in all revolutions. Those hands will not be able to gount on a commander of the extraordinary experience, of the enomous ability of El Che. Those commanders will be formed from among the millions who some or later will take up arms.

It is not that we think that in the practical order of revolutionary struggle his death is to have immediate repercussions, it is that El Che, upon taking up arms again, was not thinking about an immediate victory, he was not thinking about a swift victory against the forces of the oligarchies and of imperialism. His experienced guerrilla mind was trained for a long struggle of 5, 10, 15, or 20 years if necessary.

And he was ready to struggle 5, 10, 15, 20 years, his whole life, if necessary, and it is with this time perspective that his death--his example, I ought to say--will have a tremendous repercussion, will have an invincible influence.

In vain they try to dery his ability as a commander and his experience, those who cling to the stroke of luck. The was a military commander who was ex'raordinarily capable, but when we remember El Che, when we think about El Che, we are not thinking basically about his military virtues. No, for war is a means to and end, war is a tool of revolutionaries. What is important is revolution, what is important is the revolutionary cause, the revolutionary ideas, the revolutionary objectives, the revolutionary sentiments, the revolutionary virtues, saind it is in this field, in the field of ideas, in the field of sentiments, in the field of revolutionary virtues, in the field of intelligence, aside from his military virtues, that we feel the tremendous loss for the revolutionary movement, because Che, in his extraordinary personality, had virtues which rarely appear together. He was outstanding as an incomparable man of action. Che was not only an incomparable man of action, but a man of profound intellect, of visionary intelligence, a man of profound culture. I mean to say he was a man of ideas and a man of action.

Enweyer, it is not just that he was both a man of profound ideas and a man of action, but that as a revolutionary he had the virtues which could be defined as the most full-fledged expression of the virtues of a revolutionary, and integral man in the fullest sense of the word, a man of supreme honesty, of absolute sincerity, a can of stoic and Spartan life, a can in whose conduct practically no fault can be found. Because of his virtues he was what can be called a true model of a revolutionary. Speeches can be made when men die, virtues can be pointed out, but few are the times when, as on this accasion, what we say about the, who was a true example of revolutionary virtues, can be said with more justice, more exactitude.

In addition, he had another quality which is not a quality of the intellect, which is not a quality of will, which is not a quality derived from experience, struggle, but a quality of heart. He was an extraordinarily humane man, extraordinarily sensitive. That is why we say that, when we think about his life, when we think about his conduct, this was the case of a very rare man, because he was able to blend in his personality not only the characteristics of of a ran of action but also those of a thinking man, a man of shining revolutionary wirtues and extraordinary human sensitivity blended with a character of iron, a steel will, and indomitable tenacity.

That is why he has willed to future generations not only his experience, his knowledge as an outstanding soldier, but also the work of his intelligence. He wrote with the virtuousity of a classicist of the language. His narrations of the War are unsurpassable. The profundity of his thinking is impressive. He absolutely never wrote on anything without extraordinary seriousness, without extraordinary profundity.

We do not doubt that some of his writings will pass on to posterity as classical ... documents of revolutionary thinking. And so, as a fruit of that vigorous and profound intelligence, he left us an infinite number of memories and stories which, without his work, his effort, would perhaps be forgotten forever.

A tireless worker in the years that he was at the service of our country, he did not know one single day or rest. Many responsibilities were assigned to him, such as the presidency of the naticual bank, the directorship of the planning board, the Ministry of Industry, as a commander of military regions, as a chief of delegations of a political, economic, or fraternal type. His multifaceted intelligence was capable of undertaking any task with a maximum of assurance in any field, in any way of thinking. And thus he represented our country in a brilliant manner in many international conferences. In the same manner that he brilliantly led soldiers in combat, in the same way he was a model worker in any of the institutions to which he was assigned.

For him there were do days of rest, no hours of rest. If we looked at his office window the lights burned until late at night. He was studying or, better said, was working because he studied all the problems. He was a tireless reader. His thirst for knowledge was practically insatiable, and the hours he did not sleep, he studied. He dedicated regular days off to volunteer work. He was the inspiration and the top promoter of that work which today occupies hundreds of thousands of persons throughout the mation. He was the promoter of that activity which doily grows stronger among the masses of our people.

As a revolutionary, as a communist revolutionary, really communist, he had infinite faith in noral values, he had infinite faith in the conscience of men and—we ought to say it—in his conception he saw with absolute clarity that morality was the basic fulcrum for the construction of communism in human society.

He thought, developed, and wrote about many things. And there is something that ought to be said on a day like today. It is that Che's writings, Che's political and revolutionary thoughts, will have a permanent value in the Cuban revolutionary process and the revolutionary process of Latin America. And we have no doubt that the value of his ideas—of his ideas as a man of action, as a man of thought, as a man of proved moral virtues, as a man of extreme human sensitivity, as a man of irreproachable conduct—have and shall have universal value.

The imperialists sing victory songs over the fact of the guerrilla killed in combat. The imperialists sing of victory over the stroke of fortune which led them to eliminate such a formidable man of action. However, the imperialists perhaps ignore or pretend to ignore the fact that the quality and personality of this fighter, man of action, was one of many facets. It is a question of puin-we feel pain not only ever what has been lost in terms of a man of action, we feel pain over what has been lost in terms of a man of exquisite human sensitivity; and we feel pain over the intelligence which has been lost. It pains us to think that he was only 39 at the moment of his death. It pains us to think that he was only 39 at the moment of his death. It pains us to think of how many of the fruits of that intelligence and that experience, which was developing all the time, we have lost the chance to perceive.

We have ideas of the dimension of the loss to the revolutionary povement. Reverticless, this is the weak side of the imperialist energy, thinking that, along with the physical man, it has liquidated his virtues; thinking that, along with the physical man, it has liquidated his example. And they do not hesitate in publishing in such an impudent manner, he the most natural thing in the world, the circumstances -now elecst universally accepted -- in which he was executed by them after having been seriously wounded in battle. They have not even reflected on the loathsomeness of the action. They have not even reflected on the impudence of the admission. And they have publicized, as the right of the thugs, they have reported, as the right of the eligarchs and the mercenaries, the act of firing at a re stionary fighter who was seriously wounded. What is worse is that they also explain why they did it, claiming that it would have required an overwhelming process to try fire; claiming that it would have been impossible to place such a revolutionary in the dock of a court. Not only that, they also have not hesitated in secreting his remains. And, true or false, it is a fact that they announce having cremated his body, thereby demonstrating their fear, thereby demonstrating that (?they believe that) by liquidating the physical life of the fighter, they liquidate his ideas and liquidate his example.

One did not fall defending any interest, defending any cause other than the cause of the exploited and the oppressed in this continent. Che did not fall defending any exuse other than the cause of the poor, the humble, of this land. And the exceptary manner and the selflessness with which he defended that cause is not even debated by his greatest enemies. Before history, the men who acted he he did, the men who do everything and give everything for the cause of the humble, become greater with every passing day; they enter deeper into the hearts of the peoples with every passing day. And the imperialist enemies are already beginning to perceive this. They will not be long to realize that his death will in the long run be like a seed from which will emerge many men determined to emulate him, many men determined to follow his example. And we are absolutely convinced that the revolutionary cause in this continent will recover from the blow, that the revolutionary cause in this continent will not be defeated by that blow.

From the revolutionary standpoint, from the standpoint of our duty, how should we vicu Che's example? Do we perhaps believe we have lost him? It is true that we will not again see new unitings. It is true that we will not again hear his voice. But Che has left the world a patrimony, a great patrimony. And from that patrimony we who know him so intimately can to a considerable degree be his heirs. He left us his revolutionary throughts. He left us his revolutionary virtues. He left us his character, his will, his tenacity, his spirit for work. In a word, he left us his example. And Che's example should be a model for our people. Che's examples should be the ideal model for our people.

If we want to say how we want our revolutionary fighters, our militants, our men to be, we should say without any hestitation: Let them be like the.

If we want to say how we want the men of future generations to be, we should say: Let then be like Che.

If we want to say how we want our children to be educated, we should say without hesitation: We want them to be educated in Che's spirit.

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If we want a model of a man, a model of a man who does not belong to this time, a model of a man who belongs to future times, from the heart, I say that the model, without a single blemish in its conduct, without a single blemish in its actions—that model is Che.

If we want to know how we want our children to be, we should soy, with all our (!revolutionary mind) and heart: We want them to be like Che.

Che has become a model of man not only for our nation but for any Latin American nation. The raised revolutionary stoicism, the spirit of revolutionary sacrifice, the combativeness, the working spirit of the revolutionary to their highest expression. The gave the ideas of Marxism-Leninism their freshest, purest, most revolutionary expression. No man like him in these times has raised the spirit of proletarian internationalism to its highest level. And when one speaks of a proletarian internationalism and when one seeks an example of a proletarian internationalism, that example, above any other example, is the example of Che.

In his mind and in his heart, the flags, the prejudices, the chauvinians, the egoisms had disappeared. He was willing to shed generously his blood for the fortune of any people, for the cause of any people. He was ready to shed it freely, ready to shed it instantly. And so his blood was shed in this land where he was wounded in various battles. His blood was shed in Bolivia for the redemption of the exploited and the oppressed, the humble and the poor. That blood was shed for all the exploited, for all the oppressed. That blood was shed for all the peoples of America, and it was shed for Vietnam, because he knew that, in fighting against imperialism there, he was offering Vietnam the highest expression of his solidarity.

That is why, compade ladies and gentlemen of the revolution, we should look to the future with firmness and determination. That is why we should look to the future with optimism, and we will always seek inspiration in Che's example, inspiration for struggle, inspiration for tenacity, inspiration for intransigence before the enemy, and inspiration for internationalism sentiment.

That is why we, on this night, after this impressive cremony, after this incredible—because of its magnitude, discipline, and devotion—mass demonstration of recognition, which shows that this is a sensitive people, which shows that this is an appreciative people, which shows that this people knows how to pay homage to the nemony of the courageus men who fall in battle, which shows that this people knows how to acknowledge those who serve it, which demonstrates how this people supports the revolutionary struggle, how this people raises and will always keep high the revolutionary banners and the revolutionary principles—today, at this moment of commemoration, we shall elevate our thoughts and, with optimism in the future, with absolute optimism about the final victory of the peoples, tell Che and, along with him, the heroes who fought and fell with him: To victory always! Patherland or death, we shall win!

Ceremonies Before Speach

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[Editorial Report] Havana Domestic Television and Radio Services in Spanish at 0107 GHT on 19 October 1967 begin live coverage of a mass meeting in Havana's Plaza de 1s Royolucion in memory of Ernesto Che Guevara. Opening camero shots show a large crowd, most of whom are in military fatigues, gathered under the lights in the plaza facing a speaker's platform placed 21 the foot of the Jose Marti monument.

Among the prominent Cuban personalities identifiable on the speaker's platform are: Prime Minister Fidel Castro, Deputy Prime Minister Raul Castro, President Osvaldo Dorticos, Cuban Communist Party Central Committee Organization Secretary Dr Armando Mart, Transportation Minister Faure Chonon, Poreign Minister Raul Ros, Cuban Women's Esceration President Vilma Espin, Interior Minister Ramino Valdes, Deputy Armed Porces Minister Juan Almeids, Minister Without Portfolio Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Cuban Academy of Sciences President Antonio Munez Jimenez, and others.

Nicolas Guillen, the Cuban poet, opens the program with a poen eulogizing Guevara. A projection screen on the plaza is used to show a movie on an unidentified country. Old film clips of the Guevara with Pidel Castro in the Sierra Haestra then follow. There are still shots of Camiri followed by a film sequence of the Vallegrande area and Bolivian rangers with what appears to be U.S. military personnel. The voice of Guevara is heard in the background while film clips shows U.S. counterinsurgency operations and Bolivian government officials. A filmed Guevara speech then follows, concerning the increasing victories of the people of Vietnam against Ya. ...e imperialism, the action in Stanleyville, and other liberation movements elsewhere in the world.

A film clip ridicules the first five years of the Alliance For Progress by showing poor Latin Americans. Magazine and newspaper articles on the return of the and guerrilla operations are shown. Scenes then follow of military and paramilitary counterinsurgency personnel, in various countries. Teletype machines and code sound effects are used to point up the "increasing wave of liberation movements."

Projected to conclude the film show are extreme closeups, filling the outdoor screen, of the Guevara's face. The film ends with excerpts of Guevara's speeches being heard while the cameros pan to huge photomurals of Guevara illuminated by floodifghts.

The ceremony continues with pan shots of Jose Marti statue and of the crowd in the plaze. Shots of half-masted Cuban flags are superimposed on the huge Guevara photomural while the crowd listens to a recorded Guevara speech.

A 21-gun salute follows and as the volleys are fired the camera pans to the Guevara photogeral and then to the guns and their muzzle flashes. A bugler blows taps, Premier Castro them steps to the microphone and begins his speech at 0144 SMT 19 October.

CONDOLENCE MESSAGES ON DEATH OF THE QUEYARA

Rumanian Communist Party

Bucharest Domestic Service in Rumanian 1800 GMT 18 Oct 67 A

[Text] Comrade Micolae Ceausesou, secretary general of the Rumanian Communist Party Central Committee, has sent the following cable to Comrade Fidel Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) Central Committee and prime minister. of the Revolutionary Covernment of the Republic of Cuba: