

Final excerpt of Fidel's speech given to the Cuban radio and television stations on November 1, 1962 [1]

Date:

01/11/1962

There is one matter I would like to emphasize, an observation I want to make, and it involves the people, the conduct of the people during the past few days. The people's attitude, in terms of determination, courage and discipline, has been more impressive than even the greatest optimists could ever have imagined.

It must be said that thousands of men who were not militiamen, who did not become militiamen during these four years of Revolution, became militiamen during this crisis.

It must be said that thousands of persons who did not belong to mass organizations or committees for the defense of the revolution, went to register in the mass organizations during these days. It must be said that the enemy was unable to count on allies of any sort inside our country. It must be said that during these days of dire crisis, it was not necessary to arrest anyone. Even men and women who criticized the Revolution -in this decisive hour their patriotic and revolutionary core became apparent in them- and they went to enlist. They went to enlist for a battle that according to every prospect was a serious battle, a terrifying battle, a battle that could be fought with conventional weapons or nuclear weapons.

The President of the United States attempted to intimidate our people, these people whom he called a "captive" people, when he spoke of how we might be a target for nuclear weapons, and the result was that there were more militiamen than ever, more revolutionary militants than ever.

It must be told how women went to work, and how pensioners went to work to replace the men in the trenches. And it must be noted that although this was the greatest mobilization of all, it was the one that affected production the least. Never during a mobilization, had production gone as it did.

The people's discipline was truly impressive, the people's ardor, the people's valor. It was impressive to see the organization acquired by our people, particularly by our Revolutionary Armed Forces, and the efficiency with which the commands operated. It was demonstrated how the Revolution has been creating a discipline and has been shaping a people.

By harassing us, the enemy has made us disciplined, organized and battle-hardened. The result of these four years of harassment has made a heroic people, a people more than Spartan for it is said that Spartan mothers bid farewell to their sons and said: "Come back with your shield - or on it". And here, an entire people, men, women, and children, young and old told themselves "with your shield - or on it"

A people like that are an invincible people. A people like that, who in that manner so calmly, so admirably, confront such situations, are a people who have the right to win what they aspire to, which is peace, respect, dignity and prestige because we have long-range moral missiles that cannot and will never be dismantled. And that is our most powerful strategic weapon, for both defense and attack. That is why, here and now, I want to express my admiration for the Cuban people. All revolutionaries feel doubly obliged to struggle and work tirelessly for our people. In closing, I would like to say, from the bottom of my heart, that today I am prouder than ever before of being a son of this nation.

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