

Jose Pertierra shares with RHC his cherished memories of Fidel Castro



On the occasion of the 94th birthday of the leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, Cuban American attorney José Pertierra shared with RHC some of his most cherished memories of him. Transcript and audio of his remarks follow:

Today we celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Fidel, who turned our country into a Nation respected throughout the world.

I have several memories of Fidel. His brilliance during the Elián case. He knew what the US Government would do, even before Clinton or Attorney General Reno did. His humanity and concern for the little boy, his optimism about the eventual outcome

Also, with the Cuban Five case. He knew that the Five would one day return to Cuba, and he said as much when he pronounced those famous words of his: “Volverán” (They will return). He resolved every day to fight for their liberation, and consequently, the people of Cuba never ceased to work for the liberation of the Five.

I remember speaking with him before I went to El Paso regarding the Posada case. He knew it would be

dangerous because people surrounding Posada were terrorists capable of anything. I remember Fidel grabbed my left forearm, squeezed it, told me to be careful and to remember that the Revolution never abandons its own.

But the memory of Fidel that I cherish was a Christmas Day dinner at his house in 2010. After dinner and a long conversation over topics as varied as Posada, Elián, the difference between French and Argentine wines, US politics, and the blockade, Fidel asked me to excuse him because he had to make several calls.

I thought he wanted some privacy, and I stood up to leave. “No, no, no,” he said, Stay right here, “ he said. “We are going to speak to the doctors of the Medical Brigade we have in Haiti combatting cholera.” He put his cell phone on speaker and began speaking to the doctors one at a time—much as a general would speak to his troops, giving them encouragement. Moving them from one area of the country to another, depending on where the cholera was most prevalent in Haiti.

He also spoke to the foreign doctors who had graduated from the School of Medicine in Cuba, the ELAM. After speaking with many of them, the last doctor to take the phone had a marked accent.

Fidel asked him where he was from—and the doctor replied. “From Bolivia, Comandante, from La Higuera”. Fidel’s mouth opened, his eyes closed briefly, and with his voice broken a bit, he looked at me and said:

“Ché’s dream has been realized. He lost his life in La Higuera, fighting for justice and the poor. Now we have a Bolivian from La Higuera, educated in Cuba, risking his own life to save people in Haiti from the ravages of cholera.

That, to me, is and will always be who Fidel was.

To listen to Pertierra’s remarks press [here](#)

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