

Cuban exiles pour onto Miami streets to celebrate Fidel Castro's death

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|
| Required Annotations | | Student-Created Annotations | | Summary / Questions / Reflection | |
|----------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|

| | | |
|---------------|--|----------|
| Comprehension | ex, e = out, from, forth; mal = bad, ill; re = again | Comments |
|---------------|--|----------|

Shortly after midnight, Cuban leader Raúl Castro announced on state television, his voice trembling, that his older brother[, Fidel Castro, who had led a communist revolution in Cuba in 1959 and led the country until 2006,] had died at 10:29 p.m. "Toward victory, always!" he said.

The streets in Havana, where a nine-day mourning period was announced, appeared to remain quiet. Not so in Miami, the city across the Florida Straits shaped by **exiles** who fled Fidel Castro's 1959 revolution. [...]

Some even yelled profanities about Castro and showed their **malevolence** about him. "Fidel, tirano, llévate a tu hermano," they chanted outside Versailles. Fidel, tyrant, take your brother. There was also a variant: "Raúl, tirano, vete con tu hermano" (Raul, tyrant, go with your brother).

Someone outside the restaurant brought a portable karaoke system, and the crowd sang Cuban star Willy Chirino's exile anthem, "Nuestro día ya viene llegando" (Our day is coming), as the scent of long-saved Cuban cigars burned at last.

"Libertad!" young and old yelled. Liberty.

People were still popping champagne bottles in the middle of the street after 4 a.m. — an eruption of **jubilation** that remained peaceful throughout the night and into Saturday morning.

"I don't think we've made any arrests and don't expect to have any violence due to this long awaited day," said Miami Police Officer Rene Pimentel. Pimentel, a Cuban-American whose family tried for 15 years to leave the island, said he awoke early Saturday to text messages alerting him of Castro's death — news he was eager to share with his father, who moved the family out of Cuba on Sept. 29, 1975. "It was a great feeling to wake my dad and tell him that the day so many of us had been waiting for was finally here," he said. "Fifteen long years to get to this great country."

Miami Mayor Tomás Regalado **deployed** himself to Versailles after midnight and was there when the sun came up, chatting up the crowds and conducting interviews in what has become the unofficial media staging ground for capturing Miami's reaction to major Cuban news. The Cuban-born mayor, whose father served 14 years in prison under Castro, said there was little use in trying to steer the celebration toward any sort of official venue or event. "Everything has been spontaneous," said Regalado, 69, who came to the United States in 1961 under the Pedro Pan program. "The only thing that the city has done is accommodate the people."

"The written plans are no good because people do what they want," he continued. "I've gotten calls from some organizations saying how they want to organize an event. But to tell people to go to a specific place, you can't. People go where they want to go."

A relative hard-liner on U.S.-Cuba relations — Regalado opposed putting a Cuban consulate in Miami but didn't object to the idea of running Havana-bound ferries out of Port Miami — the mayor said the Cuban people should feel a sense of unity in the celebrations on Miami's streets. "I think what's happening right now is a sign of solidarity with the people of Cuba," he said.

As the crowd swelled to hundreds outside Versailles' cafecito window in the predawn hours, a **panoply** of Latin American immigrants who have followed Cubans to Miami, including Venezuelans, Colombians and Puerto Ricans, turned out in a show of support.

The mood was festive, with **periodic** outbursts of anger at Raúl Castro. "One down, now comes the other," yelled Enrique Rodriguez, 58, to cheers. "He can go to hell just like his brother."

Barely half an hour after the news broke, several street sellers had parked on the sidewalk selling everything from flags to beaded necklaces in Cuba's colors. The Cuban flags went very quickly: Tony Erst, one of the sellers, said he was sold out of 100 Cuban flags with car clips within 20 minutes.

On the outskirts of the rowdy crowd, Vivian Trigo, 57, stood quietly with a yellowed, framed photo of her parents. She came to Miami from Cuba in 1961, when she was 2 years old. "They passed away before they could see this day," she said. "I wish they could be here, but I know they are. And they can rest in peace now that the devil is gone." [...]

An apparent march, destination unclear, got under way on foot along westbound Southwest Eighth Street shortly before 3:30 a.m. At least one couple danced salsa in the middle of the street, surrounded by a crowd.

Carlos Lopez, 40, brought his 12-year-old daughter, Tiffany, to witness history. In Miami, it felt like the sort of moment people would recall for years to come: Remember where you were when Fidel died? "We are not celebrating one man's death, but the death of an **ideology**," Lopez said. "We are celebrating that little piece of liberty we got back today." He hugged his daughter tight: "She'll tell her grandchildren about this one day."

Victor Perez-Aubreu, 21, came out with four friends to join the action. Little will change on the island immediately, he predicted, but the wee hours of Saturday were for celebrating. "I don't think this means anything will change tomorrow," he said. "But there's an emotional excitement to this."

"The head of the snake is gone," said 20-year-old Sergio Morales, who came to Miami from Cuba with his parents and younger brother in 2003. He waved a Cuban flag.

So many reporters **descended** on Versailles that Miami police had to designate an area for a spokesman to give interviews. Media choppers swirled overhead.

Regalado held court by the restaurant entrance, surrounded by microphones. He outlined how the city recalled officers to work, and posited that perhaps the Cuban government waited until late on a Friday night to announce Castro's death in order to avoid outbursts on the island.

Summary

1. Why is this phrase "Regalado opposed putting a Cuban consulate in Miami but didn't object to the idea of running Havana-bound ferries out of Port Miami" in the first sentence of paragraph 11? What does it tell us?
2. What do the people say they're celebrating?
3. What kind of a leader do you think Castro was? What evidence from the text backs this up?