Fidel Castro Dies

What has been the reaction in your country to Fidel Castro’s death?

What has been the reaction around the world? Can you match these quotes to the people who said them?

Vladimir Putin
Donald Trump
China’s president Xi Jinping
EU trade commissioner Cecilia Malmström
Cuban playwright Norge Espinosa
President Obama
EU President Jean-Claude Juncker

“It’s the end of an era. In his time he managed to leave no one indifferent. His charisma, his speeches, his impulses and also his errors gave the world another view of Cuba.”

“History will record and judge the enormous impact of this singular figure on the people and world around him.”

“Today, the world marks the passing of a brutal dictator who oppressed his own people for nearly six decades. Fidel Castro’s legacy is one of firing squads, theft, unimaginable suffering, poverty and the denial of fundamental human rights.”

“A symbol of an era.” “A true comrade and friend.” “A hero for many.”

“Fidel Castro was a dictator who oppressed his people for 50 years. Strange to hear all the tributes.”

Whose comments do you identify with the most? Are you surprised by anyone’s comments?

From the comments you see that Castro had his enemies. Do you know how many attempts there were on Castro’s life?

The CIA devised two assassination plans based on the fact that Castro was a keen scuba-diver. What do you think they planned to do?

Read the first part of the article and then explain the plans in your own words.

The Guardian

Close but no cigar: how America failed to kill Fidel Castro

The CIA and Cuban exile groups spent nearly 50 years devising ways to kill Fidel Castro. None of the plots,
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of course, succeeded, but one of his loyal security men calculated that a total of 634 attempts, some ludicrous, some deadly serious, had been made on the life of El Comandante.

On one occasion, aware that Castro was a keen scuba-diver, the CIA devised a cunning plan. Documents released under the Clinton administration confirm that the agency invested in a large volume of Caribbean molluscs with the intention of finding a shell big enough to contain a lethal quantity of explosives. The idea was that the molluscs would be painted in vivid colours to attract the attention of an underwater Castro.

Eventually this plan was abandoned, as was another that involved preparing a custom-made diving suit infected with a fungus that would cause a debilitating skin disease.

Discuss these questions and then read the next part of the article to check your ideas:

1. During which US presidency do you think there were the most assassination attempts?
2. When was the Bay of Pigs debacle and what was the plan?
3. How did the would-be assassins plan to kill Castro using a cigar, a toxic fountain-pen and a chocolate milkshake?
4. What do you think the idea was behind an LSD aerosol?

While the assassination attempts started under the presidency of Dwight Eisenhower and continued under John F Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, there were more – 184, to be precise – during Richard Nixon’s tenure than at any other time; many attempts were without the knowledge of the administrations but planned by Cuban exiles, often with CIA assistance.

The plotting began almost immediately after the 1959 revolution. In 1961, when Cuban exiles, with the backing of the US government tried to overthrow him in the Bay of Pigs debacle, the plan was to assassinate Fidel and Raúl Castro along with Che Guevara.

Plots seemingly straight from a James Bond novel include that of the famous exploding cigar, which was supposedly to have been given to Castro when he visited the UN in New York. Another idea was to contaminate a cigar with botulinum toxin but it never actually reached him and he quit smoking in 1985.

The CIA’s operations continued with tests on bacterial poisons that would be put into his tea or coffee. There were other schemes: a toxic fountain-pen, a botulin-poisoned chocolate milkshake to be served at the former Havana Hilton, and a non-fatal plan to discredit Castro by having an LSD aerosol sprayed near him while he was making a broadcast which would, supposedly, lead to national humiliation as he freaked out on air.
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Say whether you think these statements are true or false and then read the final part of the article and check your ideas:

☐ As recently as 2000, there was a plot to put 200lb of high explosives under the podium where Castro was due to speak in Panama.
☐ The CIA considered outsourcing the assassination of Castro to the mafia.
☐ Doubles were used to confuse potential assassins.
☐ Asked once if he wore a bullet-proof vest, Castro replied: “I have a bomb-proof vest.”
☐ The Cuban security service remained wary of any gifts sent by foreign “well-wishers”, but Castro did accept a present of a Galápagos turtle.

When Castro travelled abroad, the CIA cooperated with Cuban exiles for some of the more serious assassination attempts. As recently as 2000, when Castro was due to visit Panama, they plotted to put 200lb (90kg) of high explosives under the podium where he was due to speak. Castro’s personal security team carried out their own checks before he arrived and foiled the plot.

While the CIA used their own operatives and anti-Castro Cubans, they also considered outsourcing the assassination. American underworld figures from the mafia — still smarting at being kicked out of Cuba by Castro — were approached to see whether they would carry out a hit.

Officials, the US eventually abandoned its attempts and instead introduced a trade embargo on the island in an effort to dislodge Castro. However, the Cuban security service remained wary of any gifts sent by foreign “well-wishers”. Doubles were used to confuse potential assassins and he moved around the country constantly. Asked once if he wore a bullet-proof vest, Castro replied: “I have a moral vest.”

His ability to survive the many efforts to eliminate him prompted many jokes. One tells of him being given a present of a Galápagos turtle. Castro politely declined the gift after he learned that the turtle was likely to live only 100 years. “That’s the problem with pets,” he said. “You get attached to them and then they die on you.”

Which do you think was the most inventive and the most ludicrous assassination plan? How do you think Cuba will change after Castro’s death?

Find words in the article that mean the following:

1. invent a method of doing something
2. a secret plan to do something bad
3. extremely silly
4. support
5. stop (doing something)
6. become so angry, surprised, excited, or frightened that you cannot control yourself
Complete this paragraph with the words above:
The gang’s usual assassin _____________ because he did not have the ______________ of the leader, so they decided to ______________ the murder. The person they chose for the ___________ was famous for ______________ strange but successful ______________. But this one seemed more ______________ than ever and the gang’s leader _______________ when she heard the plan.

Underline all the verbs in the article that are the same in the noun form.

Make all the verbs in the article that are the same in the noun form.

All these words are written the same in the noun and verb form, but four are pronounced differently. Identify the four words and the difference in pronunciation.

Write examples of the above words used as both nouns and verbs. Try to use the noun and the verb form in the same sentence.
Can you match these quotes to the people who said them?

“It’s the end of an era. In his time he managed to leave no one indifferent. His charisma, his speeches, his impulses and also his errors gave the world another view of Cuba.” Cuban playwright Norge Espinosa

“History will record and judge the enormous impact of this singular figure on the people and world around him.” President Obama

“Today, the world marks the passing of a brutal dictator who oppressed his own people for nearly six decades. Fidel Castro’s legacy is one of firing squads, theft, unimaginable suffering, poverty and the denial of fundamental human rights.” Donald Trump

“A symbol of an era.” Vladimir Putin

“A true comrade and friend.” China’s president Xi Jinping

“A hero for many.” EU President Jean-Claude Juncker

“Fidel Castro was a dictator who oppressed his people for 50 years. Strange to hear all the tributes.” EU trade commissioner Cecilia Malmström

Find words in the article that mean the following:

1. devise
2. plot
3. ludicrous
4. backing
5. quit
6. freak out
7. outsource
8. hit

Complete this paragraph with the words above:

The gang’s usual assassin QUIT because he did not have the BACKING of the leader, so they decided to OUTSOURCE the murder. The person they chose for the HIT was famous for DEVISING strange but successful PLOTS. But this one seemed more LUDICROUS than ever and the gang’s leader FREAKED OUT when she heard the plan.

Underline all the verbs in the article that are the same in the noun form.

Part 1: kill - release - find - paint
Part 2: start - visit - spray
Part 3: travel - move

All these words are written the same in the noun and the verb form, but four are pronounced differently. Identify the four words and the difference in pronunciation.

house, record, import and export are pronounced differently in the verb and noun forms.