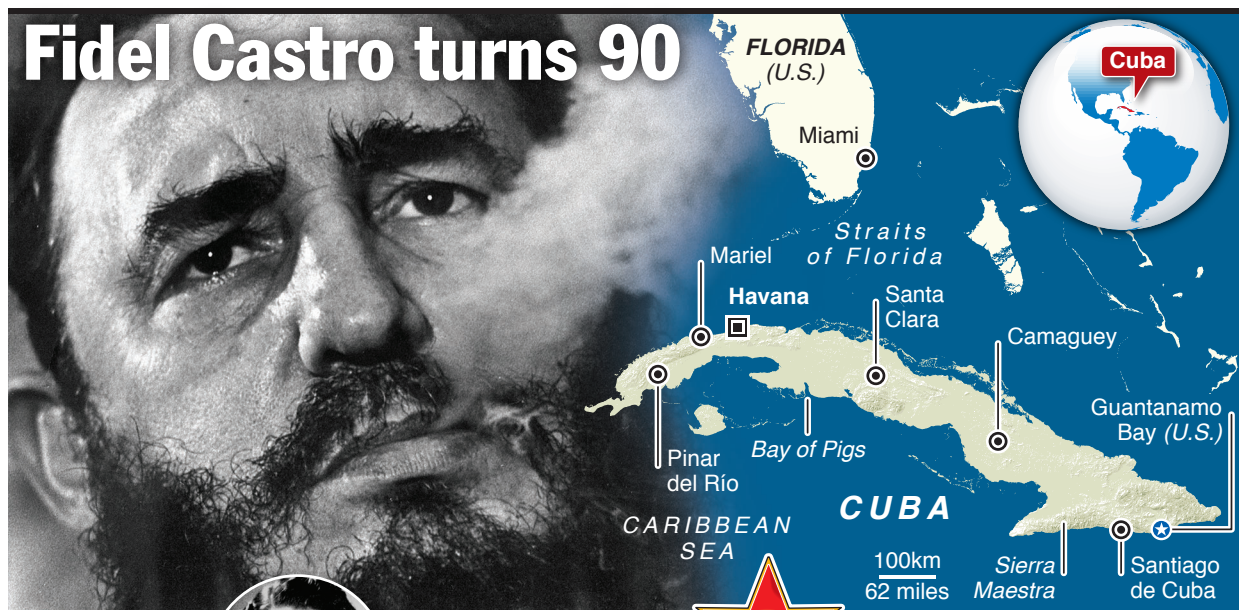


Fidel Castro turns 90



■ **Aug 13, 1926:** **Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz** born to wealthy sugar planter and maid



■ **1945-50:** Becomes involved in revolutionary politics while studying law at University of Havana

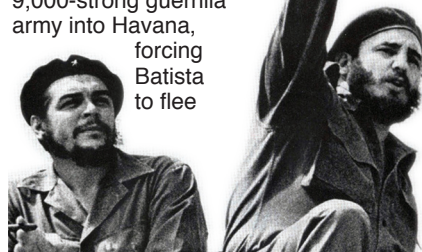
■ **1952:** Candidate for Congress, but election is cancelled after coup led by **General Fulgencio Batista**

■ **1953:** Castro leads unsuccessful revolt in July 26 attack on Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba. Castro and younger brother **Raúl** taken prisoner – released two years later as part of general amnesty

■ **1955:** Relocates to Mexico to reorganize **26th of July Movement** into disciplined guerrilla force

■ **Dec 2, 1956:** Castro and 80 rebels land in Cuba from yacht **Granma**, but are ambushed. 12 survivors – including **Raúl** and **Ernesto "Che" Guevara** – take to Sierra Maestra mountains to wage guerrilla war

■ **1959:** Castro leads 9,000-strong guerrilla army into Havana, forcing Batista to flee



■ **1960-61:** Forges close alliance with Soviet Union, led by **Nikita Khrushchev**.

U.S. breaks off diplomatic relations and imposes commercial embargo after Castro nationalizes all U.S. interests



■ **1961:** U.S. sponsors abortive invasion by 1,300 CIA-trained Cuban exiles at **Bay of Pigs** – misjudging support in Cuba for Castro



■ **1962:** Presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba brings world to brink of nuclear war. **Cuban Missile Crisis** only resolved when Soviets remove weapons after President **John F. Kennedy** secretly agrees to withdraw U.S. missiles from Turkey

■ **1975-1989:** Castro sends troops to support Communist forces in Angola, Ethiopia and Yemen



■ **1976:** Communist Party of Cuba approves new socialist constitution – Castro elected president

■ **1980: Mariel Boatlift** – Castro allows exodus of 125,000 Cubans to U.S. via port of Mariel

■ **1991:** Collapse of Soviet Union leads to crippling financial hardship. To boost economy, Castro allows some economic liberalization and free-market activities while retaining tight political control

■ **1998:** Castro welcomes **Pope John Paul II** in first visit by pontiff to Cuba



■ **2002:** Castro blasts U.S. for detaining prisoners in "concentration camp" at Guantanamo Bay

■ **2003: Black Spring** crackdown on dissidents draws international outcry



■ **2008:** Ill health forces Castro to stand down as president at age of 81. Power handed to brother Raúl, 76

■ **2015:** The U.S. and Cuba restore diplomatic ties after 54 years, paving way for visit by President **Barack Obama**

■ **Apr 2016:** In failing health, Castro exhorts Communist Party members to ensure his ideas survive

