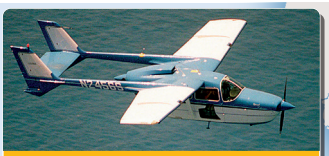
U.S. charges Raúl Castro with murder

U.S. murder charges against former Cuban President Raúl Castro, brother of revolutionary leader Fidel Castro, mark a major escalation in Washington's pressure campaign against Cuba's communist government



Feb 24, 1996: Cuban ***MiG*** fighter jet shoots down two ***Cessna*** aircraft operated by Cuban exile group ***Brothers to the Rescue,*** killing four



Raúl Castro *(right)* and Secretary of State ***Marco Rubio*** *(left),* who is making more assertive U.S. role in Latin America key part of his legacy

May 20, 2026: U.S. confirms deployment of *USS Nimitz* aircraft carrier in Caribbean

RAÚL CASTRO PROFILE

- **1931:** ***Raúl*** born in Cuba
- **1959:** Joins brother ***Fidel Castro*** in revolution that overthrows U.S.-backed dictator ***Fulgencio Batista*** and establishes communist rule
- **1959-2000s:** Serves for decades as defence minister, consolidating influence over military and state institutions
- **1961:** Helps repel U.S.-backed ***Bay of Pigs*** invasion; later directs Cuban military operations abroad, especially in Africa
- **2006:** Becomes acting president after Fidel's illness; formally assumes presidency in 2008
- **2016:** Emerges as Cuba's dominant political figure following Fidel's death
- **2018:** Steps down as president, but retains title of "army general"
- **2020s:** President ***Miguel Díaz-Canel*** widely viewed as governing with Castro's backing
- **May 20, 2026: Raúl Castro, 94, charged with conspiracy to kill U.S. nationals over 1996 downing of two planes**

Picture above shows *Brothers to The Rescue* plane, similar to two planes shot down

Sources: Reuters, BBC Pictures: Newscom, Getty Images © GRAPHIC NEWS