

Report: Castro says Cuban model doesn't work



By PAUL HAVEN, Associated Press Writer

1 hr 15 mins ago

HAVANA – Fidel Castro told a visiting American journalist that Cuba's communist economic model doesn't work, a rare comment on domestic affairs from a man who has conspicuously steered clear of local issues since stepping down four years ago.

The fact that things are not working efficiently on this cash-strapped Caribbean island is hardly news. Fidel's brother Raul, the country's president, has said the same thing repeatedly. But the blunt assessment by the father of Cuba's 1959 revolution is sure to raise eyebrows.

Jeffrey Goldberg, a national correspondent for The Atlantic magazine, asked if Cuba's economic system was still worth exporting to other countries, and Castro replied: "The Cuban model doesn't even work for us anymore" Goldberg wrote Wednesday in a post on his Atlantic blog.

He said Castro made the comment casually over lunch following a long talk about the Middle East, and did not elaborate. The Cuban government had no immediate comment on Goldberg's account.

Since stepping down from power in 2006, the ex-president has focused almost entirely on international affairs and said very little about Cuba and its politics, perhaps to limit the perception he is stepping on his brother's toes.

Goldberg, who traveled to Cuba at Castro's invitation last week to discuss a recent Atlantic article he wrote about Iran's nuclear program, also reported on Tuesday that Castro questioned his own actions during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, including his recommendation to Soviet leaders that they use nuclear weapons against the United States.

Even after the fall of the Soviet Union, Cuba has clung to its communist system.

The state controls well over 90 percent of the economy, paying workers salaries of about \$20 a month in return for free health care and education, and nearly free transportation and housing. At least a portion of every citizen's food needs are sold to them through ration books at heavily subsidized prices.

President Raul Castro and others have instituted a series of limited economic reforms, and have warned Cubans that they need to start working harder and expecting less from the government. But the president has also made it clear he has no desire to depart from Cuba's socialist system or embrace capitalism.

Fidel Castro stepped down temporarily in July 2006 due to a serious illness that nearly killed him.

He resigned permanently two years later, but remains head of the Communist Party. After staying almost entirely out of the spotlight for four years, he re-emerged in July and now speaks frequently about international affairs. He has been warning for weeks of the threat of a nuclear war over Iran.

Castro's interview with Goldberg is the only one he has given to an American journalist since he left office.

—

On the Web: <http://www.theatlantic.com/jeffrey-goldberg/>

Copyright © 2010 Yahoo! Inc. All rights reserved. [Questions or Comments](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [About Our Ads](#) [Terms of Service](#) [Copyright/IP Policy](#)