

VIVA

Commandate Fidel

The Cuban People openly wept for you!
The Universal Familia mourn for you!

Some People Danced IN Miami
Streets Paved "With God"

No man is an Island
— JOHN DONNE

SWIFTEST TIME Shall
"Jigger Bug" Upon Their
Shallow graves !!!

They sat IN The LAND OF PLENTY"
Demanding Their Familia
IN The HOMELAND be
"EMBARGOED" !!!

Deprived / Starved So:
Till They can Return "HOME"
To Replace Commandate Fidel
As defacto "CONQUERS"
To oppress you and starve

You as
Antedated
The Peoples Revolution!!!

VIVA !!!
COMMANDATE Fidel

ONE LOVE / Marley

CHECK-OUT THE REST OF THE STORY BELOW, P.3 OF 3

Others moved south into areas still controlled by rebels, only to find themselves still under bombardment. Modar Sheko, a nurse, fled his house with his brother, who was killed by a shell in the chaos. Their father, too, was killed as he looked for a grave site, several of Mr. Sheiko's colleagues said.

Mr. Sheiko's friend Abdelkafi al-Hamdo, a schoolteacher and activist, said in a text message that Mr. Sheiko would now have to choose between burying the dead, accepting condolences and looking for a house for his surviving relatives.

"What should he do?" Mr. Hamdo said.

FIDEL CASTRO FUNERAL: PUTIN DECLINES INVITE, OBAMA AND OTHERS PONDER

Russian President Vladimir Putin has ruled out attending the late Cuban leader Fidel Castro's funeral, as the U.S. president and other world leaders ponder whether to send delegations to the upcoming funeral ceremony at Santa Ifigenia cemetery in the city of Santiago de Cuba, later this week. Castro died aged 90 at the weekend, prompting a wave of tributes from world leaders, some praising his leadership personally, while others, such as U.S. President Barack Obama, gave more measured comments.

Putin hailed Castro as "a symbol of an era" and expressed his condolences to the late leader's brother and the Cuban people. The Russian president's spokesman announced Monday that Putin would not be going to Cuba for Castro's funeral ceremony as Putin is in the midst of preparing the end-of-year statement for Russian lawmakers, which will not allow him time for any unplanned trips. The speaker of Russia's lower house of parliament, Vyacheslav Volodin, will lead a Russian delegation instead.

Members of U.S. Congress, dominated by the Republican party, who are currently in opposition, have strongly opposed the prospect of President Barack Obama or any U.S. official attending Castro's funeral, despite his overseeing a historic thawing of ties between the two countries.

Both Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Speaker of the House Paul Ryan highlighted the "oppression" of Castro's regime in their statements after his passing and Florida Senator Marco Rubio, who is of Cuban descent, said he hopes Obama sends "no one" to the funeral. Senator Ted Cruz, who also has Cuban heritage, said he does not want to see "any U.S. government officials" at the funeral.

The narrative of Castro's funeral has given cause for the Republican party to renew their criticism of Obama's rapprochement with Cuba, with the president not giving much indication that he intends to attend the event personally. Such appearances are normally reserved for funerals of the very closest of allies, such as the funeral of former Israeli president Shimon Peres, which Obama attended in September.

Obama did, however, shock conservatives in 2013 when he dispatched a small U.S. delegation to the funeral of Venezuelan Communist leader Hugo Chavez—a staunch critic of the U.S.—but sent no senior officials to the funeral of ex-British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

The British Prime Minister Theresa May has refrained from commenting and the London Evening Standard cites government sources who claim that neither she nor any senior government figures are expected to attend Castro's funeral.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau suffered a huge backlash from his liberal supporters following his glittering statement hailing Castro as a friend, and his office announced on Sunday that while a Canadian representative will attend the funeral, "no decision has been made" if this will be Trudeau himself.

India's social media-savvy prime minister Narendra Modi was among the first to post his condolences to Castro's family on Twitter, declaring "India mourns a great friend." According to Indian newspaper the Hindu, it is likely that India's Home Minister Rajnath Singh and not Modi will lead India's delegation to Havana on Tuesday.

Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro and Bolivian president Evo Morales, both long-time allies of Castro, vowed to honor his "legacy" in separate statements and are expected to attend, although they are yet to give official confirmation.

Equally China's President Xi Jinping, leader of the biggest remaining Communist state saluted the loss of a "comrade" of the Chinese people, but it is unclear if he will make his first trip to Cuba since 2014 to pay his respects to Castro and it seems likely that Beijing will send a representative.

Austria, Italy latest to test global populist revolt

BERLIN — Austria and Italy on Sunday become the latest countries to test the strength of a global popular revolt that led to Donald Trump's presidential win and the historic British vote to leave the European Union.

Growing anxieties over immigration, security and the economy have created vast support for anti-establishment parties and nationalist movements in Europe, the United States, the Philippines and beyond.

On Thursday, French President François Hollande, whose popularity has plummeted, announced he won't seek re-election next year, saying he wants to give his Socialist party a chance "against conservatism and, worse still, extremism."

Austria will be the first EU nation to hold a presidential election and face this growing populist sentiment since Trump's surprise victory last month in the United States.

Austria's Sunday vote is a repeat match between left-leaning moderate Alexander Van der Bellen, 72, and Norbert Hofer, 45, of the right-wing Freedom Party.

While the president's role in Austria is largely ceremonial, a win by Hofer — whose Euro-skeptic and anti-immigration party was founded by a former Nazi general — would make him Europe's first far-right head of state since World War II.

In Italy, Prime Minister Matteo Renzi had offered to resign if he loses Sunday's referendum on a constitutional reform package aimed at simplifying how laws are passed. Renzi, 41, who has been prime minister less than three years, proposed the constitutional changes as a signature effort to revamp one of Europe's worst economies. Austria's presidential vote will likely be close. Hofer narrowly lost to Van der Bellen in May's vote, but the outcome was canceled after an Austrian court ruled there were ballot irregularities.

Any "Trump effect" will be negligible because Austrians had already decided how to vote before the U.S. election, said Anton Pelinka, an Austrian-born political scientist who teaches at the Central European University in Budapest.

But a recent Gallup survey in Austria showed that 53% of respondents thought Trump's win would benefit Hofer, while only 9% thought the same for Van der Bellen.

Hofer, like Trump, has pledged to back law-and-order measures, to reduce illegal immigration and the burden of asylum seekers, and to support tougher counterterrorism laws.

Although Hofer does not explicitly favor having Austria leave the 28-nation EU, Pelinka said a Hofer victory could amount to a "falling domino" and jeopardize Austria's current pro-EU position.

And next year, if France's far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen wins there, Hofer could change his mind about being part of the EU. Le Pen blames the EU for the region's migrant crisis and other problems. Her supporters have been emboldened by Trump's victory.

Italy's yes-or-no vote on the referendum is also viewed as a vote on Renzi, the country's youngest premier. Renzi wants regional governments in Italy to have less power and wants to overhaul the parliamentary system, including cutting the number of senators to 100 from 315.

If the "no" camp prevails, Renzi has promised to resign, although it's unclear if Italy's president would allow him to step down immediately.

Renzi "handed his critics a golden opportunity to boot him out. ... The referendum is now being framed as a national confidence vote on his government," wrote Stefan Koopman and Maartje Wijffelaars, economists at Dutch financial services firm Rabobank, in a research note to investors this week.

They noted that polls switched from "yes" to "no" as soon as Renzi "made the plebiscite personal," a switch that belies the nature of some of the dissent.

POSTED: BY LEON IRBY 3 of 43 DATED: DECEMBER 19, 2016

For example, a "no" vote is strongly supported by the Five Star Movement, a populist group led by Beppe Grillo, a former comedian who has expressed admiration for Trump and wants Italy to hold a separate referendum on its EU membership. Grillo opposes the proposed constitutional changes, saying they don't go far enough.

Also opposed are establishment figures, such as former prime minister Mario Monti and some members of Renzi's center-left government.

"This referendum is being dubbed the 'third popular upheaval' after Brexit and Trump," said James Newell, a specialist in Italian politics at the University of Salford in the United Kingdom. "The divisions cut across many political and social divisions. It's hard to see who is rebelling against whom."

Russian ISS cargo ship fails to reach orbit

A unmanned Russian cargo ship bound for the International Space Station failed to reach orbit after a problem during its launch Thursday morning from Kazakhstan. The Progress 65 ship launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome on a Soyuz-U rocket at 9:51 a.m. EST and the early flight went as planned. But something went wrong during the firing of the rocket's third and final stage before the spacecraft was put in orbit, NASA confirmed. The third stage may have separated too early, a NASA TV commentator said, and the flow of telemetry to the ground became choppy. The Russian space agency, Roscosmos, later reported that it had lost contact with the Progress, and then that the ship had fallen back through the atmosphere "above the rugged uninhabited mountainous territory of the Republic of Tyva, and most of the fragments were burned in the dense layers of the atmosphere."

S. Korea political crisis could derail U.S. priorities

The pro-U.S. foreign policy of South Korean President Park Geun Hye is at risk now that she appears to be on her way out over a growing corruption scandal. Park, whose approval ratings are an abysmal 4%, faces possible impeachment by South Korea's legislature — if she doesn't resign first — and massive street protests over the power she is accused of granting to a controversial personal friend, Choi Soon-sil. Prosecutors allege that Choi, the daughter of a deceased cult leader who mentored Park, used her relationship with Park to extort \$68 million in corporate donations to foundations Choi controlled, and invested the money. Here is a look at several policies Park spearheaded with U.S. approval that could be jettisoned along with her:

Colombia's congress ratifies peace deal with FARC rebels

Colombia's congress ratified a new peace deal with the leftist rebel group Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, known by its Spanish acronym, the FARC, late Wednesday, in yet another bid to end five decades of civil war.

The lower house unanimously approved the 310-page revised accord after Colombians rejected the original peace deal in a referendum on Oct. 2. Colombians who opposed the deal complained that it treated rebels too leniently. The Senate on Tuesday had approved the new deal, which has 50 amendments, following a walkout in protest by members of the opposition.

More than 220,000 Colombians have been killed in the 52-year-long war, while 360,000 have been forced to flee the country and 6.7 million people have been displaced.

The changes require the FARC to be more open about the illicit activities it engaged in to support its resistance, such as drug trafficking and kidnappings for ransom. The new deal also exposes more rebels to criminal prosecution.

But the FARC wouldn't agree to the opposition's strongest demands — jail sentences for rebel leaders for war crimes and stricter limits on their future participation in politics.

The FARC has waged its battle mostly in the remote jungles and rural regions of Colombia. Its leaders agreed to sit down for peace talks with President Juan Manuel Santos in 2011, starting a five-year process of intense negotiations held mainly in the Cuban capital of Havana.

Santos says ratification will set in motion the start of a six-month process in which the FARC's 8,000-plus guerrillas will gather in some 20 rural areas to turn over their weapons to United Nations monitors. But the rebels insist that their troops won't start demobilizing until lawmakers pass an amnesty law freeing about 2,000 rebels in jail.

"D-Day starts after the first actions are implemented," the rebel leader "Pastor Alape," a member of the FARC's 10-member secretariat, told foreign journalists last week after the new accord was signed. "The president unfortunately has been demonstrating an attitude that creates confusion in the country."

The first deal led to a Nobel Prize for Santos, who was credited with ending the longest-running armed conflict in the Western Hemisphere. Santos said the impact of the revised plan will be the same as the previous deal.

Australia's Great Barrier Reef has worst coral die-off ever

One of the world's treasures, the Great Barrier Reef, just suffered from its worst coral die-off ever recorded, Australian scientists announced Monday. Stress from unusually warm ocean water heated by man-made climate change and the natural El Niño climate pattern caused the die-off. "The coral was cooked," Terry Hughes, director of the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies, told the BBC. At more than 1,400 miles long, Australia's Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest coral reef and the planet's biggest structure made by living organisms. In the

northernmost section of the reef, which had been considered the most "pristine," some 67% of the coral died.

Pilot told Colombia controllers plane ran out of fuel before crash

The pilot of the chartered plane that crashed in the Andes with a Brazilian soccer team aboard told air-traffic controllers he had run out of fuel, the Associated Press reported, based on a leaked recording of the conversation.

The pilot repeatedly asked for permission to land because of "total electric failure" and a lack of fuel, before slamming into a mountain Monday during the flight from Santa Cruz, Bolivia, to Medellin, Colombia, according to the recording leaked to several Colombian media outlets.

A controller gave the pilot instructions as the British-made Avro RJ85 lost speed and altitude about eight miles from the airport in Medellin.

The crash killed 71 of 77 aboard, including members of Brazil's Chapecoense soccer team who were traveling to the Copa Sudamericana finals.

A Bolivian flight attendant who survived the crash, Ximena Sanchez, told rescuers the plane had run out of fuel moments before the crash. Investigators were expected to interview her on Wednesday at the clinic near Medellin where she is recovering.

"We ran out of fuel. The airplane turned off," Sanchez told Arquimedes Mejia, who helped pull the flight attendant from the wreckage. "That was the only thing she told me," he told The Associated Press in an interview.

Authorities have avoided naming a specific cause for the crash yet. But the lack of explosion suggested the plane ran out of fuel. The full investigation could take months. "If this is confirmed by the investigators it would be a very painful because it stems from negligence," Alfredo Bocanegra, head of Colombia's aviation agency, told Caracol Radio on Wednesday.

Bocanegra said evidence initially pointed to an electrical problem, but the possibility the crash was caused by lack of fuel has not been ruled out.

Investigators also want to speak to Juan Sebastian Upegui, the co-pilot on an Avianca commercial flight who was in contact with air traffic controllers. Upegui described in a four-minute audio recording to a friend how he heard the doomed flight's pilot request priority to land because he was out of fuel. "I remember I was pulling really hard for them, saying 'Make it, make it, make it, make it,'" Upegui says in the recording, which AP said had circulated on social media. "Then it stopped... The controller's voice starts to break up and she sounds really sad. We're in the plane and start to cry."

Planes are supposed to have enough extra fuel to fly at least 30 to 45 minutes to another airport in the case of an emergency. They rarely fly straight to their destination because