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**Fidel Castro Blames Ukrainian Government for Taking Down Plane**

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Former Cuban President Fidel Castro blamed the "warmonger" government of Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko for shooting down a Malaysian airliner with 298 people on board over eastern Ukraine.

World leaders are demanding an international investigation into Thursday's tragedy, which could mark a pivotal moment in the worst crisis between Russia and the West since the Cold War.

While U.S. officials suspect it was downed by a sophisticated surface-to-air missile fired by Moscow-backed Ukrainian separatists, Castro blamed the other side in the Ukrainian conflict.

"Cuba ... cannot go without expressing its repudiation over the action of such an anti-Russian, anti-Ukrainian and pro-imperialist government," the retired revolutionary wrote in a 270-word article published in official Cuban media on Friday.

Castro, 87, retired for health reasons in 2008 after 49 years as leader of communist Cuba, which was a close ally of the former Soviet Union during the Cold War.

There was a rift between Havana and Moscow following the collapse of the Soviet Union, but Cuba has again grown close to Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Castro last Friday during his state visit to the island.

Castro, who occasionally writes about world and local events, also criticized Israel's ground offensive in Gaza over its conflict with Hamas, particularly the rising death toll of civilians.

"The president of the United States supports this action, calling this repugnant crime an act of legitimate defense," Castro wrote in the same article. "Obama does not support David against Goliath but rather Goliath against David."

