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**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA MIGUEL DÍAZ-CANEL BERMÚDEZ IN THE XVIII SUMMIT OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT**

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25/10/2019



Esteemed President Ilham Aliyev,

Distinguished Heads of State and Government,

Delegates and guests,

With heartfelt emotion, I thank you for the warm welcome given by the people and government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, to which we are bound by 27 years of continuous relations. We have taken a long though indispensable trip to get here.

We have arrived in the beautiful and prosperous Baku, after travelling more than 11 300 kilometres. And we have broken the siege imposed by the blockade, whose brutality has increased in the last few months, because the tremendous present challenges demand that we take the role that, as the movement gathering the majority of the planet, Non-Aligned countries should play in the international arena.

This time, as in 1961, it is crucial that we work together, in adherence to the Bandung founding principles, to guarantee the peace and development of our peoples. This is our responsibility as politicians because no one else will do it for us.

Others may remain indifferent to the contempt openly shown by the US and other governments for the just claims of the South nations; to the obscene politicization of human rights and the

flagrant disrespect for the right of peoples to determine their political, socio-economic, and cultural system; to the lack of commitment to multilateralism and international treaties. We are not indifferent to this, because all of these actions go against our people's interests.

There are nations that have paid the highest price for progress with their blood, sweat and suffering, and that were born out of colonial looting and exploitation, after centuries of economic and social underdevelopment. They are more than entitled to ask the following questions:

- Why does military spending continue to be irrationally increased while the investment in development and cooperation is being reduced?
- Why is the seriousness of climate change being underestimated when it threatens the existence of Small Island States and the survival of the whole humankind?
- Why do not we silence weapons and compensate the most underdeveloped and impoverished nations for their plunder by giving them a fair, special and differentiated treatment?

Your Excellences,

Cuba feels honoured to have been the first Latin American country that joined the NAM. This comity of free nations operating under democratic rules with no veto is what we defend and dream of seeing in the United Nations someday. We rely on the strength of these values to reaffirm here:

- Our solidarity with all the peoples that struggle to have their free right to self-determination recognized.
- Our rejection of the unilateral decisions taken by the US in support of Israel and against Iran, which lead to a greater instability in the volatile Middle East region.
- Our call to put an end to the war against the Syrian people and find a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- Our welcome to the process of inter-Korean rapprochement and dialogue, and our condemnation of unilateral sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
- Our strong rejection of the US campaigns against the political forces, left-wing leaders and progressive governments of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Our steadfast solidarity with the constitutional President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro, the Bolivarian and Chavista Revolution, and the civic and military unity of its people. Venezuelan people have been capable of defending the country's sovereignty in the face of the greatest threats and dangers.
- We also reaffirm our support for and solidarity with the government of Nicaragua in the face of the United States' attempts to destabilize this sister nation.
- We congratulate the people of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for their active participation in the electoral process and President Evo Morales Aymapor for his reelection.
- We denounce the coup d'état attempt and the campaign of misrepresentation, destabilization, and violence, unleashed by sectors of the opposition, and instigated by the United States

against the peace and security of citizens in Bolivia. This is the Bolivia of native peoples that have been vilified for centuries, and which was positioned by its extraordinary leader among the countries with the greatest growth and reserves in our region.

- We particularly reject the decision to activate the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR) because of the great risks it poses to our region and the whole world. This treaty is aimed at giving military support to the US desire to revive the Monroe Doctrine, in their stale efforts to make "America great", at the expense of turning the free nations of the continent into their backyard again.

Esteemed leaders that have gathered here today,

During the Cold War they called us the Third World. Since we did not belong to any of the two blocs, we were supposed to remain free from wars. However, our peoples do know that if the weapons got ever cold, it was only between the powerful nations, because we were the ones that suffered the casualties and the losses.

Practically every nation in Africa, Asia and Latin America has suffered the painful cost of either liberation or interventionist wars, and low, middle and high-intensity conflicts, from the second half of the 20th century until present.

Even where there was no death and destruction, prices increased because the cost of what we buy shot up while the cost of what we sell went down. We lived the establishment of the dictatorship of the US dollar and the abusive financial institutions, arising from the so-called Bretton Woods agreement, a major sham that made the world revolve around the swings of imperial politics.

The powerful players have acted from their comfortable bullet-proof rooms and turned our countries into laboratories and markets for their weapons, leaving behind millions of dead, displaced, hungry and abused persons, and refugees.

They have dictated universal rules of conduct that they constantly break and made lists to exclude or punish us, if we do not submit to the blind laws of the imperial hegemony and market.

The Third World War is not the next War. It is the war whose start date is undetermined and whose end date has not been calculated. It is the war that has been bleeding noble and peaceful nations for many years, with the weapons of imperial armies, mercenary soldiers, and terrorists disguised as emancipators, supposedly on behalf of the fight against terrorism, the defence of democracy, freedom or human rights. This is a lie!

Never before were so many lies told, with such shamelessness and at a terrible cost to the vast majority of humankind, to serve the interests of a minority that has taken their wealth to mind-blowing excesses.

In the 21st century, there is a shower of threats and various degrees of aggression against all the sovereign governments refusing to serve the hegemonic power to allow the establishment of military bases, surrender their resources, or yield to its command.

We have the example of heroic Venezuela, whose great and practically endless energy reserves had been plundered for decades, until they were rescued by the Bolivarian Revolution

that put them at the service of its people, solidarity, and regional and international cooperation.

Venezuela withstands the most wicked accusations, the application of psychological war techniques, and the promotion of destabilization, with the intention to trigger an internal conflict, which has failed a thousand times.

Most infamously and cynically, the empire is accusing the Bolivarian Government of being Cuba's instrument.

Since they do not practice solidarity or even know what it is, blinded by their evilness and impotence, they accuse our health care workers of being soldiers in disguise, and they persecute and block the trade between our nations, damaging the vitality of our economies.

They break agreements, and unleash commercial, electronic and media wars. They close doors, build walls, confiscate assets, steal funds, ban exchanges. They ignore and infringe international laws. They promise to make America great, their America that is different from ours, at the expense of reducing the space that is left for the rest of the planet.

As our José Martí would say, they "go through the air asleep, gulping down worlds".

The time has come to reply to them.

Non-Aligned countries represent more than two thirds of the United Nations and around 55 per cent of the global population. We bring together nationalities, cultures, identities, human and political forces of every kind, who love peace and wish to accomplish their own development, with no exclusion or hegemonism.

If we go over our common history, the remarks, and the agreements of our leaders in the course of six decades, we learn first of all that our movement has a libertarian and anti-imperialist vocation and that an extraordinary strength may arise from solidarity and cooperation.

Together we have defeated colonialism and apartheid, we have faced aggressive and interventionist actions, famines and natural disasters, epidemics, and economic and political siege.

We thank the Non-Aligned Movement for its historic stance of condemnation and rejection of the blockade imposed for more than five decades against our nation, and the Helms-Burton Act. The latter has a marked extraterritorial nature and is a reflection of the exacerbated aggressiveness of the US against the resistance of our people.

This criminal policy remains the main obstacle to our development, and it is also an expression of this great power's disrespect for the human rights of Cubans, international law, and free trade.

Going against any human logic of coexistence on the basis of respect for differences, the blockade is hardened day by day. Barely a week goes by before the announcement of new measures that strangle our economy.

Like the pirates of old times, the current United States administration has expanded its siege policy to the seas, by obnoxiously persecuting and sanctioning the companies, vessels, and shipping companies engaged in transporting fuel to the island.

Today we want to reiterate to you that we will not give in to the threats and pressure. We will not abandon our efforts to make progress in our project for the construction of a prosperous and sustainable nation; a nation that will become more prosperous and sustainable if it is freer, and more independent, socialist, and sovereign.

Your Excellences,

On behalf of Cuba I want to acknowledge the work of Venezuela in the chairmanship of the Movement, in the midst of the most complex and difficult conditions under the empire's political siege.

At the same time, we commit to fully support the work of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the 2019-2021 triennium.

If you allow me, in conclusion, I will take a short page in the long history of the Non-Aligned Movement in order to go back to its essence. This is part of a speech delivered by Fidel Castro, the historical leader of the Cuban Revolution and one of the bravest and boldest champions of non-alignment. In the VI Summit held in Havana in 1979, Fidel said,

***"The strength of our united countries is very great. Those of us meeting here represent the vast majority of the people of the world. Let us close ranks and unite the growing forces of our vigorous Movement in the United Nations and in all other international forums to demand economic justice for our peoples and an end to foreign control over our resources and the theft of our labour! Let us close ranks in demanding respect for our right to development, to life and to the future!"*** End of quote.

We cannot wait for the bombs to be dropped on Venezuela or Cuba, as they are already being dropped on Syria and were dropped before on Iraq and Libya. We cannot wait to support their reconstruction. Let us stop the aggression. Let us timely stop the unbridled ambition and prepotency of the empire.

Cuba takes pride in having been the setting of the Proclamation of Latin America as a Zone of Peace and having hosted in our motherland the talks to put an end to the long conflict in Colombia. Nowadays Colombia is also at risk because of the constant efforts to destabilize the region, promoted by the US from Colombia itself, where they keep 9 of their 76 military bases in the whole Latin America.

I would also like to remind you of our country's permanent will to establish dialogue with no pre-conditions and on the basis of reciprocal respect. Three years ago, during the previous Summit, just 21 months had elapsed since the reestablishment of relations between the United States and Cuba.

There in Isla Margarita, a Venezuelan territory, our Army General Raúl Castro Ruz reaffirmed "... ***our disposition to engage the United States government in a civilized relationship***", though he also warned that ***"Cuba will neither renounce any of its principles nor compromise on its sovereignty and independence. Cuba will not cease defending its revolutionary and anti-imperialist ideals, or supporting the self-determination of all peoples."***

We confirm our decision to continue cooperating with the peoples that demand it, guided by the principle of sharing what we have, not just giving away our leftovers, because courage is the



only thing we have in excess.

We have come here to reaffirm to the NAM that the new generations of Cuban leaders will continue endorsing the principles that we have upheld for almost 60 years in this comity of nations, and that we have the challenge of rectifying the imbalance that is jeopardizing world peace, as well as the strength to do it.

I echo José Martí's words about Our America, and say to the members of the Non-Aligned Movement,

***"We can no longer be a people of leaves, living in the air, our foliage heavy with blooms and crackling or humming at the whim of the sun's caress, or buffeted and tossed by the storms. The trees must form ranks to keep the giant with seven-league boots from passing! It is the time of mobilization, of marching together..."***

They have the strength given by weapons. We have the strength of our peoples.

There is a whole world historically left behind that is waiting for our agreements and actions.

I propose to align ourselves, but only around our points of consensus.

Not to make war, but peace.

Not to defend hegemonism, but multilateralism.

Not to defend intervention, but sovereignty.

Not to defend exclusion, but inclusion.

Not to defend hatred, but solidarity.

Not to defend the control of the world by the most powerful, but the true freedom and democratization of the United Nations and international relations.

Only unity can save us. We are more. We can do more.

Thank you very much.

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