

# *Cuban President Addresses 17th Non-Aligned Movement Summit, Demands Lifting of U.S. Blockade*

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Margarita Island, September 17 (RHC)-- Cuban President Raúl Castro blasted Washington's persistent policy of blockade against Cuba.

Addressing the 17th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement on Margarita island, Venezuela, President Raúl acknowledged that since the historic announcement in December 2014, there have been some advances in U.S.-Cuba relations, particularly the diplomatic field and cooperation in areas of mutual interest. He insisted though that the measures adopted so far by the U.S. government in the economic and trade fields have been positive, but very limited.

“Cuba will continue to demand the lifting of the blockade that has inflicted so much damage on our country's economy and hardships on our people, and which due to its extraterritorial nature affects other countries as well.

“We will continue to demand as well the return to Cuba of the portion of our territory in Guantánamo illegally occupied by the U.S. navel base.”

The Cuban head of state ratified Cuba's willingness to coexist in a civilized way with the United States, but stressed that the Caribbean state will neither renounce any of its principles nor grant concessions that entail undermining its national sovereignty and independence.

“Cuba will never stop promoting and defending its revolutionary and anti-imperialist ideas. Likewise, Cuba will never withdraw its support for the right of all peoples to their self-determination.”

In another part of his speech, the Cuban president said the strength of the Non-aligned Movement should not be underestimated. He recalled that during the bloc's summit in 2006, the NAM member states strongly rejected all attempts by powerful countries to impose regime change in Third World nations and urged all countries of the world regardless of their might to refuse from resorting to the use of force to advance their national interests.

He reiterated Cuba's unconditional support for the Venezuelan people and their constitutional President Nicolás Maduro against continued attempts by foreign-backed right-wing sectors to undermine the South American country's national sovereignty and independence.

President Raúl also expressed Cuba's strong rejection of the parliamentary-judicial coup perpetrated against Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, saying it runs contrary to the will of the vast majority of the Brazilian people, who re-elected her.

He also reaffirmed Cuba's unwavering support for the Colombia peace process, and for the Syrian government and people in their fight against terrorist and extremist groups, and the attempts of powerful countries to impose regime change in the Arab country.

President Raúl also criticized Israel for its continued occupation of Palestinian lands, and expressed Cuba's solidarity with the Saharawi people, the independence cause of the Puerto Rican people, and Argentina's sovereignty claim over the Malvinas Islands.

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