

Díaz-Canel: A better world is possible and urgently necessary! Let's struggle for it!



Speech by Miguel M. Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, President of the Republic of Cuba, at the closing of the Anti-Imperialist Solidarity Conference, For Democracy and Against Neoliberalism, at Havana's Convention Center, November 3, 2019

(Transcript - Presidency of the Republic)

(Exclamations of: "Díaz-Canel, for sure, give it to the Yankees!" And "Thank you, Cuba, guarantor of peace!")

Thanks to all of you.

I think we all agree that there is no better speech than that of the poets. (Laughter), but, well, we have to conduct the closing.

Dear compañero Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee;

Compañero, brother, President Nicolás Maduro Moros of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

Dear revolutionary leaders from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean;

Brothers and sisters, friends, colleagues:

A special greeting to all who resist and have come to the Cuban capital, which has always been, and will be, a meeting point for those who defend peace and solidarity among peoples.

With the support, enthusiasm, solidarity that you express, feel, and promise, and with Raúl and Maduro, we are giving it to the Yankees. (Applause)

We have just returned from a long, intense journey through European countries, including a visit to Azerbaijan to attend the 18th Non-Aligned Movement Summit.

The Non-Aligned Movement, which was weakened at the end of the Cold War, has retaken the spirit of Bandung, the group's founding statement. These countries are mobilized by the dramatic course of events and the crisis of multilateralism that today is putting the United Nations system in danger.

There, Cuba strongly condemned this crisis that threatens everyone, but especially the less developed.

We denounced those responsible for this situation and stated: "More lies than ever before are being told, with greater disdain and a more terrible cost to the vast majority of humanity, in the interest of a minority that has taken its luxuries to mind-boggling excesses.

"Well into the 21st century, threats and aggressions of varying degrees are launched against all sovereign governments that refuse to serve the hegemonic power as sites for military bases, hand over resources, or yield to their mandates."

But we were not the only ones to identify the culprit by name. Several leaders expressed alarm given the return of U.S. hegemonism that threatens and takes brutal action against governments that it considers enemies, because they do not share their policies, and fiercely attacks socialism as if it were an unacceptable social system.

On a global level, there is a great concern given setbacks in important areas such as peace, self-determination, and the sovereignty of nations, the environment, a response to climate change, human rights, social justice, and the search for economic equity.

In our geographical area, in particular, concern is no less widespread. Latin America and the Caribbean suffer the return of the Monroe Doctrine and the worst practices of McCarthyism. The uncontrolled series of interventionist actions that the current U.S. administration has unleashed, since coming to power, is based on these two imperialist postulates.

The President of the United States and his court of hawks attack the Cuban Revolution, the Bolivarian Revolution, the Sandinista Revolution, the Sao Paulo Forum, the political leadership of the Brazilian, Bolivian, Argentine left, and social, popular, progressive movements throughout the region, which they consider their backyard.

The inter-American system has reactivated mechanisms of such odious memory for the region as the Reciprocal Assistance Treaty (TIAR) and the demoralized OAS, which has been consolidated as an instrument of political pressure for the United States and oligarchies that defend neoliberalism.

How can I not laugh at the OAS, if it is such an ugly, ugly thing that makes you laugh (Applause) that is how our parents sang in the years when the group expelled Cuba for not submitting to Washington's demands. What do we sing to it now, when it could not force Venezuela to its knees, and wants to get rid

of a thorn, inspecting Bolivia?

They ran over there, worried about election results in a Latin American nation with the greatest growth and improvement in the last decade, after having been the poorest and most backward in the Southern Cone for centuries.

Yes, the OAS is a very ugly thing. And very cynical. Their "worries" do not touch the depths of anger felt by the people rising up against neoliberalism, faced with pellet guns, gases, and lead bullets for protesting peacefully.

Compañeros:

It is very important to note the media component of this war we are being subjected to. At the forefront of imperial policies, the tanks of the cultural and symbolic offensive are always advancing, intent upon legitimizing the injustices of the capitalist system, discrediting the left's political alternatives, and destroying the cultural identity of our nations, as a previous step to their destabilization plans.

Just recently, in Azerbaijan, the falsehoods that Washington has sought to impose as pretexts against the legitimate Venezuelan government were debunked.

When Nicolás Maduro Moros, in his capacity as the previous president pro tempore of the Movement, led the first part of the assembly and then presented the responsibility to Azerbaijan, practically all the delegations participating - some 120 at different levels of representation - recognized and congratulated the performance of the Bolivarian Republic at the head of the Non-Aligned Movement. (Applause)

Where was the supposed rejection of Venezuela by the international community? Why was there not a single expression of condemnation or criticism of the Bolivarian government by the governments that represent the absolute majority of the United Nations? Nonetheless, as part of the war of symbols, the media lynching launched against Maduro, the media have reported ad nauseum, in half the planet, that he has no international support.

Internally, they don't treat any better political leaders who seriously believe a change within the United States is necessary. The discourse is aggressive and dismissive of all those who do not share the approach of the President, who announces decisions that affect millions on Twitter and behaves abhorrently everywhere.

He talks about socialism without the slightest idea of ??what it means. And orders the end of any process or political program that intends to overcome prevailing injustice, as if he held the course of history in his hands.

He is not the first emperor to try this. And surely he will not be the last to fail. Because history can only be changed by peoples. (Applause)

Fidel said many times that the lie was the main adversary to defeat in politics and that telling the truth is the first duty of every revolutionary. This is one of our fundamental missions as practitioners of revolutionary politics. The first enemy to cut down is the lie and even more so, the imperialist lie. (Applause)

Cuba has been held under siege by lies and for years separated from its natural environment. With lies they have invaded nations, torn apart peoples, set back entire regions on their path to development.

With lies they attacked Iraq and Libya and plunged them into instability. With lies they have turned Syria into a weapons-testing facility and a theater for terrorist operations, which they have financed under the false banners of democracy and freedom.

With colossal, ridiculous lies they accuse Cuba, Venezuela, and the Sao Paulo Forum of promoting popular uprisings in all corners of the planet, while covering their eyes, ears, and mouths, to not see, not hear, not recognize what the people in the streets are shouting: neoliberalism is an economic failure and a social disaster. (Applause)

This technique is used perversely in the desperate attempt to overthrow the Bolivarian government of Venezuela and at the same time hurt Cuba. Although these attacks began in the years of brilliant, successful integration in which Chávez and Fidel created ALBA, in recent months the United States has launched a strong campaign against any type of relationship between our two countries.

We are accused of sustaining the Bolivarian Revolution, in an irrational version of the satellite theory that was wielded against the former Soviet Union, in its time. They resort to this pretext to justify the blockade.

Cuban medical cooperation is a target of continuous attack, intent upon discrediting a noble, solidary effort that the whole world recognizes and that, along with the Latin American School of Medicine and the Henry Reeve Brigade, to respond to natural disasters, constitute the most genuine and successful expressions of cooperation between developing countries. (Applause)

These three projects, works of unquestionable human value, emerged from Fidel's ideas to honor international solidarity.

There are already more than 400,000 health professionals in Cuba who have provided services in 164 countries. At this moment, more than 29,000 are serving vulnerable populations in 65 nations.

Nothing says so much about the humanist essence of the Cuban Revolution as this cooperation. That is why the effort to disparage and destroy it is not surprising. Solidarity is alien to capitalism.

It was against them and in spite of them, that colonialism and apartheid were defeated in Africa, where the best children of the Cuban Revolution shared sacrifices and their own blood with fighters in Angola, Namibia, and other nations. We brought home from those lands, where empires always traveled to plunder, only our dead (Applause) and the conviction that we had fulfilled "the most sacred of our duties: fighting imperialism wherever it may be," as Che Guevara taught us.

Defense, education, health, science ... Cuban cooperation, the product of solidarity as a principle, was, is, and will be present in any area of ??noble human activity, where we can contribute. Offering solidarity is re-paying our own debt to humanity. (Applause)

For showing solidarity, and being consistent with our history of struggle and sacrifice, for being a sister and companion of peoples who resist, Cuba is condemned and sanctioned beyond limit.

Our country today suffers a criminal tightening of the blockade, the reinforcement of an immoral, illegal policy that for more than 30 years the United Nations General Assembly has condemned virtually unanimously, without the United States reacting to the worldwide demand.

This is more evidence of disrespect for the norms of international law, which has worsened, especially with an illegal law such as the Helms Burton, which persecutes and sanctions third countries, internationalizing the blockade.

Given that these plots are not enough to defeat a people who have been fighting for independence for 151 years and will never give up, the empire now resorts to harassment, persecution, and sanctions on countries, companies, and ships that participate in transporting fuel to Cuba.

How can someone decree such an action, and then declare that the intention is to isolate the Cuban government and help its people?

Since the time of the famous Mallory Memorandum, Cuba has understood very well, through the words of its very creators, the first and ultimate goal of the blockade.

The U.S. functionary (Lester Mallory) stated: "Most Cubans support Castro... There is no effective political opposition ... The only possible way to make the government lose domestic support is by provoking disappointment and discouragement through economic dissatisfaction and hardships ... Every possible means should be immediately used to weaken the economic life ... denying Cuba funds and supplies to reduce nominal and real salaries with the objective of provoking hunger, desperation and the overthrow of the government." What maliciousness!

We will never tire of reiterating this, so no one is deceived. The United States policy toward Cuba was made very explicit in that document, dated April 6, 1960.

But before the Mallory Memorandum there are other documents and policies that reveal the historical character of imperial designs regarding Cuba and the rest of Our America. From the theory of "ripe fruit" to the Monroe Doctrine, now reactivated.

Martí saw it more clearly than others and left a warning in his political testament, his unfinished letter of May 18, 1895, in which he reveals the ultimate goal of his struggle to change the island's fate.

"... I am in danger every day of giving my life for my country and my duty – as I understand it and I have the courage to do so - to prevent in time - with the independence of Cuba - that the United States spreads across the West Indies and falls, with greater force, upon the lands of our America. All I have done thus far, and will do, is for this..."

Through sacrifice, resistance, and thanks to solidarity, our people have maintained their Revolution over all these years. The strength of the process cannot be explained without this popular will. Nor would this will exist without the high level of participation of the people in their destiny.

Thus, it must be stated clearly, the only thing in the aforementioned Mallory document that has not been accomplished is the overthrow of the Cuban government. The punishment imagined by the empire, in the epitome of cruelty, is being applied right now, as if it were a law.

As for solidarity, we have a great deal for which to thank you all, in articulating material support for us and offering the tenderness of your peoples.

And we said today, when Cuba needs the redoubling and multiplication of support for its cause, which is the cause of sovereignty and freedom for the peoples of Our America and the world:

"Truth and tenderness are not useless," as Martí said. And although sometimes it may appear that things cannot be changed, that policies cannot be defeated, or empires shaken, the history of humanity and the history of the Cuban Revolution are here to prove that it can be done. (Applause)

Cuba is the best demonstration of how much the solidarity of peoples can do. When imperialism pushed us away from Our America, expelling us - for our honor and good fortune - from the discredited OAS, when we were alone in the middle of the hemisphere, upholding the revolutionary banner of a continent in tenacious rebellion, the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples was founded here. (Applause)

It was Fidel's idea. We were not interested in relationship with governments submissive to the empire, in their ministry of colonies. We were interested and are interested, first of all, in the friendship of the peoples. (Applause)

The friendship of the peoples of America and the world pushed governments. Today Cuba has diplomatic relations with more than 160 countries, and our solidarity has also reached more than half of them.

Many of the political and social leaders gathered here will remember the hemispheric meetings of struggle against the FTAA, promoted by the Comandante en jefe, because they participated in them.

Thus was born the Continental Campaign against the FTAA, which mobilized millions and raised awareness about the need to overcome secondary differences to achieve the unity of all forces and confront that imperialist re-colonization project. And what happened? We defeated it. (Applause)

The defeat of the FTAA, like the historical defense of the Cuban Revolution, are examples of successful struggles that leave us with a great lesson: we cannot succeed split or divided. Working on the basis of all that unites us, we can build common projects to confront imperialist aggression and its oligarchic allies.

Against the blockade we will continue fighting in all arenas. Here, first of all, working, creating, and resisting without giving up on development.

Cuba's most valuable resource is its people: imaginative, cheerful, enterprising, brave, and creative.

A people who are, first and foremost, the architects of the revolutionary project, under the most adverse conditions.

If we have together chosen the path of socialism, even after the empire imposed the ridiculous theory of the end of history, it is because only with socialism can we achieve social justice and equal rights for all.

Unity around this anti-imperialist and emancipatory, socialist and solidarity project is the consequence of centuries of struggle for a uniting ideal and confirmation that we owe everything to unity. That's why they insist on breaking it. That is why millions are allocated for political subversion and the financing of cultural re-colonization projects.

They want to sell us, wrapped in sophisticated silk and tinsel paper, a world that is exploding in a thousand pieces a few steps from our borders, in Our America, where resources have been immorally transferred to transnationals in the era of neoliberalism, the consequences of which we now face.

The formula for its implementation includes convincing the masses that it is the fastest and most effective way to reach prosperity. The blind but omnipotent market, they say, will ensure that those below enjoy the benefits that will spontaneously fall from the horns of plenty in the hands of the elites. What a cruel mockery!

This is how grating inequality was produced, making possible that 1% of society owns more than the remaining 99%.

The extremely powerful advertising and entertainment industry, which moves almost as much money as the weapons or drug businesses, has constructed the myth of access for all to a world of dreams, that one day become nightmares and explode in popular anger.

Then the political vacuum appears. Many parties, competing with marketing techniques for the limited power that the market grants them to manage the leftovers of plunder, reveal the fallacy of democracy that they attempt to impose as a model of freedom. The majority takes government office without real programs of economic and social transformation.

And when movements arise to change the status quo, campaigns to discredit, soft coups, politically motivated court harassment are launched.

All Latin American leaders of the last two decades, who, to some degree, overcame the worst effects of neoliberalism through social and inclusive policies, have been or are being subjected to persecution, accusations, and even unjust imprisonment, such as the undisputed leader of Brazil Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva suffered 19 months ago. Freedom for Lula! We demand from this platform (Applause and

exclamations of: "Free Lula!") Freedom for Lula, now! (Applause)

We live in the communications era. Let us build together, emancipatory platforms to oppose the colonizers with our greatest efforts and energy in pursuit of a better, possible world.

The era of confusion has passed. Our people have paid dearly for the price of economic and political experiments that have only brought wellbeing to elites, in the style of the thug in command of the empire, who believes that the world can be bought and sold on the stock market.

Recent victories of the left in Bolivia and Argentina, the heroic resistance of Venezuela and Cuba to total economic siege, the anti-colonial protests that have put a brake on market formulas show that we cannot be demobilized again.

The left must learn and finally assume the hard lessons of these years of struggle in which splits and lack of unity weakened our forces, and the right unleashed a re-conquest to destroy what had been accomplished.

I note the significant representation of young people in this auditorium and in the streets of Our America, where protest against the abuses of neoliberalism have occurred.

Seeing youth rebelling and fighting for their rights, and for a better fate for their countries, is encouraging and challenging at the same time. (Applause) Because, as Fidel taught us, the struggle of this era is expressed above all in the field of ideas.

We will always defend Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, proclaimed in Havana in 2014 during the hopeful days of a complete Celac, (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) in decline today.

The mobilizations and peaceful protests with which our peoples are demanding their rights are exemplary. And these rights are being won.

Friends, brothers, compañeros, compañeras:

In your beautiful Declaration of Solidarity with the Cuban Revolution, you have written: "The peoples of the world need the example of Cuba", and recalled Martí's statement that maintains its relevance: "Whoever rises today with Cuba rises for all time." Thanks for saying it and doing it! (Applause and exclamations of: "Cuba yes, blockade no!")

I express profound gratitude to all those who have come, from near or far, assuming their expenses, to respond to a convocation you yourselves made, to condemn the blockade and articulate efforts that contribute to its definitive defeat.

I especially thank Latin American leaders who have suffered and suffer persecution and punishment for attempting to exchange a history of abuse for the history of our peoples' liberation.

Today we want to reiterate our strongest support and solidarity with the legitimate president of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, (Applause), and the civic-military union of his people, and with Commandante Daniel Ortega Saavedra and the Sandinista National Liberation Front of Nicaragua, also under attack (Applause and exclamations of: Long live Sandino!)

The persistent destabilization attempts that their governments face, are beginning to spread, and we see this today in right-wing efforts to steal the victory of Evo Morales in Bolivia, promoting violence and ignoring the results, in what clearly appears to be the preparation of a coup, which must be denounced (Applause and exclamations of: "They will not pass!")

Thus, we reiterate here our congratulations to Evo for his convincing electoral victory, and to Alberto and Cristina Fernández, who have raised new hope in Argentina. (Applause)

Our solidarity, effective and invariable, with all just causes that are being waged in the region and in the world: with the independence of Puerto Rico (Applause and exclamations of: "Independence for Puerto Rico!"), whose people have managed to keep alive their identity, flag, and hopes for independence, for more than a hundred years of colonialism, an extraordinary symbol of the powerful cultural resistance of Latin America and the Caribbean. Long live free Puerto Rico! (Applause and exclamations of: "Viva!")

We also support Argentina's historical demand to recover sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands. (Applause)

We condemn the imperialist intervention against Syria, and with you demand respect for their sovereignty and territorial integrity. (Applause)

We also reaffirm solidarity with the struggles of the Palestinian and Saharawi peoples for the right to self-determination (Applause); with the process of rapprochement and inter-Korean dialogue and for the end of sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; and with the peace process in Colombia. (Applause)

No just cause is alien to us, and as a nation that owes part of its existence to solidarity, we will never renounce its practice, as a principle. (Applause)

Brothers Sisters:

You have called today for unity among political forces and the social and popular movements of the left, to continue to raise consciousness, generate ideas, and organize for the struggle.

We see this struggle in the battle for the truth. We must defeat the lies on which wars of all kinds against our peoples are launched: informing, persuading, mobilizing, marching with the poor of the earth, who have grown tired of lies and abuse. Proposing and creating programs that respond to the most pressing demands of workers, students, farmers, intellectuals, and artists.

The approved Action Plan confirms that progressive sectors are aware of the urgent need for unity, if we really want to build together an anti-imperialist, emancipatory project, committed to genuine and long delayed integration.

On behalf of Cuba, we would like to reaffirm that the new generation of Cuban leaders, trained and educated by the historical generation of Fidel and Raúl, are revolutionaries, socialists, faithful to Fidel and Martí (Applause), and that we will not yield a millimeter in our positions in favor of independence, sovereignty, and social justice. And joined with the peoples who struggle and resist, we will always uphold solidarity as a fundamental principle, to which we owe so much.

This is why we make our own the words of Fidel, when, more than 50 years ago, referring to the early solidarity that the Revolution found with its cause, he said: "The world has shown solidarity with Cuba and that is why Cuba feels more and more solidarity every day with all the peoples of the world."

In memory of Fidel and Chávez, two of the greats of Our America, whom we were fortunate to meet, listen to, and follow in the most altruistic practice of solidarity, we look to their work as a guide for the new, challenging times that await us.

I believe we all feel that great avenues are opening up, where free men now walk to build a better society. (Applause and exclamations)

A better world is possible, and urgently necessary! Let us struggle for it!

Ever onward to victory!

(Ovation).

(Taken from Granma)

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