



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
315 Lexington Avenue ♦ New York ♦ N.Y. 10016 ♦ (212) 689-7215 ♦ FAX (212) 689-9073

DRAFT SPEECH BY ESTEBAN LAZO, HEAD OF THE CUBAN
DELEGATION TO THE 61st SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEW YORK

Mrs. President,

Mr. Secretary General,

Your Excellencies:

A mere four days ago, the 14th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Cuba was concluded. Today, I speak on behalf of the Movement's Chairman, President Fidel Castro, fulfilling our obligation to inform this Assembly of the main decisions agreed on at the Summit Conference held in Havana.

As First Vice-President of the Councils of State and Ministers of the Republic of Cuba Raúl Castro said in his opening speech:

"The current international situation, characterised by the one superpower's irrational attempts to control the world, aided by its allies, shows that we need to be increasingly united in defence of the principles and purposes upon which the Non-Aligned Movement was established, which are those enshrined in the international law and the Charter of the United Nations."

While the founding of the Movement was necessary more than four decades ago, its continued relevance in today's world is beyond doubt.

The NAM Summit held in Cuba was an indisputable success, in spite of the threats and pressures of those who oppose the unity and common efforts of the countries of the South.

The Summit saw high levels of participation, both in terms of the number of countries which attended the conference and that of Heads of State or Government.

Profound and fruitful *debates were* held, in an atmosphere of true understanding, unity and cohesion, which allowed for the adoption of documents of crucial importance to the future of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As the new Chairman, Cuba was given clear mandates and an action program which shall govern its activities as head of the Movement.

As a result of the Summit, the Non-Aligned Movement has been strengthened and, consequently, so has the political unity of the countries of the South. The diverse and heterogeneous nature of the Movement's membership, far from weakening it, constitutes its essential strength. These features have allowed for the creation of solid consensus that are a positive contribution to our efforts to overcome the many and serious challenges humanity faces today.

The commendable work of M. Malaysia as the M. Movement's Chairman over the last three years was acknowledged at the Summit.

There was no cause of or demand by a South country which was not duly considered by or which did not meet with the support of the Movement.

The urgent need to make progress in the defense of multilateralism, to demand respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States and ensure the full realization of our peoples' right to development and peace were ratified at the Summit as the Movement's principles.

The Heads of State or Government decided to work to suppress acts of aggression and other actions contrary to the preservation of peace and to encourage the peaceful settlement of international conflicts.

The Summit called on all nations to abstain from the use of force or from threatening to use force against the territorial integrity or independence of any State. Participating nations promoted the development of relations of friendship based on respect towards the principle of equal rights and the will of all peoples to struggle against foreign occupation.

They urged nations to extend international cooperation with a view to overcoming the serious economic, social, cultural and humanitarian challenges that face the world and to promote respect towards the human rights and fundamental liberties of all and for the benefit of all.

The fundamental and inalienable right of all peoples to self-determination was reaffirmed in Havana.

Non-Aligned countries agreed that world peace and security are today more imperiled than ever as a result, among other factors, of the growing trend of the most powerful States to resort to unilateral measures and to the threat of pre-emptive wars.

The Movement's commitment to general and complete disarmament and nuclear disarmament in particular, under strict and efficient international monitoring, was underscored. The Summit also reaffirmed the basic and inalienable right of all States to research, development, production and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and to be free from any kind of discrimination in this connection, in conformity with their respective international obligations.

In addition to this, the Summit clearly and firmly pronounced itself against terrorism, double standards in international relations, coercive unilateral measures against any nation, "regime change" policies and the failure of developed countries to fulfill their commitments in economic and social areas.

The Heads of State or Government of the Movement reaffirmed their hope to live in a peaceful world in which all nations have the right to a better future and a fair and equitable world order based on the sustainable development of all nations.

They affirmed that, in its current form, globalization perpetuates and even exacerbates the marginalization of the countries of the South, and demanded that it be radically transformed into a positive force for change, for the benefit of all peoples.

Participants reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to have their own State and condemned the government of Israel for the new wave of crimes and massacres in Gaza and other occupied territories. They also vigorously condemned Israel's merciless acts of aggression against Lebanon and the serious violations of this nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The people and government of Bolivia, facing attempts aimed at destabilizing the country instigated by external forces, met with a gesture of support and solidarity from the Summit. The process which is underway in that sister nation, aimed at guaranteeing the real rights of all Bolivians and at securing full national control over the country's natural resources, was offered solid support.

The Movement considered, with great concern, the aggressive policies and the intensification of actions aimed at undermining the stability of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and expressed support for the inalienable right of the Venezuelan people to determine its form of government and choose its economic, political and social system, free from foreign intervention, subversion, coercion or restrictions of any kind.

Non-Aligned countries undertook to promote and participate in a true process of democratization and reform of the United Nations to put behind the anti-democratic impositions and practices of the Security Council and to give the General Assembly its due decisive role, in conformity with the roles and powers described in the UN Charter.

I have mentioned only a few examples of the positions adopted at the Summit held in Havana, with respect to the most diverse issues on the international agenda. The documents adopted shall be officially distributed to all UN member States. A number of the decisions adopted at the Summit shall soon be put into practice in this Session of the General Assembly.

Mrs. President:

Cuba is aware of the immense responsibility inherent to presiding over the Non-Aligned Movement in one of the most difficult times in human history, when we face more inequality and injustice than ever before.

We shall not rest in our efforts to have the Movement occupy the place it can and must occupy in the international arena, in keeping not only with its broad membership of 118 countries, nearly two thirds of the UN membership, but also of its history on behalf of the loftiest causes.

On inaugurating the 6th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement 27 years ago, President Fidel Castro expressed:

"The struggle for peace and for a just economic order, and a workable solution to the pressing problems that weigh on our peoples is, in our opinion, increasingly becoming the main question posed to Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Peace, and the immense risks that threaten it is not something that should be left exclusively in the hands of the big military Powers. Peace is possible, but world peace can only be assured to the extent that all countries are consciously determined to fight for it --peace, not just for a part of the world, but for all peoples".

Days later, in this same hall, on reporting on that Summit, President Fidel Castro expressed:

"The sounds of weapons, of threatening language, and of prepotent behavior on the international arena must cease.

Enough of the illusion that the problems of the world can be solved by nuclear weapons. Bombs may kill the hungry, the sick, and the ignorant, but they cannot kill hunger, disease, and ignorance. Nor can they kill the righteous rebellion of the peoples."

The countries of the South shall work, united, for justice, peace and the development of our nations and the entire World, convinced that a better world is possible if we all struggle for it.

Mrs. President:

I would now like to say a few words on behalf of the people and government of Cuba.

Our people's exercise of its right to self-determination faces new threats. The Bush administration has stepped up its brutally hostile measures against Cuba with new economic sanctions which further intensify the longest blockade human history has known. More severe reprisals are also being taken against those who have business dealings with Cuba from other nations and financial transactions with our country are viciously persecuted. The very government of the United States recognizes that it is spending more, today, in persecuting and punishing those who have business dealings with Cuba than in monitoring the finances of those who attacked the Twin Towers.

This past June, the Bush administration approved the second version of its most recent plan of aggression and domination against our country, aimed not only at overthrowing the Revolution but also at destroying the Cuban nation.

In violation of international norms and laws, an unprecedented build-up in the financial and material support to subversive actions aimed at overthrowing the constitutional order freely chosen by the Cuban people is being promoted.

The abovementioned anti-Cuban plan contains a chapter, which is being held in secret. The antecedents of these decisions are the covert actions undertaken against the Cuban revolution, which include mercenary invasions, terrorists actions, the introduction of plagues and epidemics into the country and over 600 plots to assassinate Fidel. Thousands of Cubans have lost their lives or have been maimed for life as a result of this criminal policy.

At the height of hypocrisy and irresponsibility, the government of the United States tolerates the presence of and protects the terrorists who plan new actions against our people on US soil. While maneuvering to free the murderers responsible for monstrous crimes, such as the notorious international terrorist and CIA agent Luis Posada Carriles, whom they refuse to extradite to Venezuela, it illegally and unjustly keeps five courageous anti-terrorist Cuban activists in prison.

But, in spite of these acts of aggression and the criminal blockade, the Cuban people shall never be defeated. Cuba's internationalist efforts continue unhindered. More than 30 thousand Cuban doctors and other health professionals are saving lives in 68 different countries today; we are participating in the struggle against illiteracy in several continents; we are developing a plan to train 100 thousand doctors for the Third World and we are helping hundreds of thousands of people in many countries regain their sight through Operation Miracle. With these efforts, we are but fulfilling our fundamental duty to aid all of the peoples of the world.

Your Excellencies:

Cuba is making progress and shall continue to face the future with optimism and unity. Its educated and hard-working people, to whom the homeland is humanity, shall struggle hand in hand with the peoples you represent for the right to live in peace, justice and dignity for all.

Thank you, very much.