



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. FELIPE PÉREZ ROQUE, MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA, AT THE 62ND SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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Mr. President:

Never before had the real dangers menacing the human species become so evident; never before had the violations of International Law become so evident, as they increasingly jeopardize international peace and security; never before had inequality and exclusion become so evident, as they impact on over two-thirds of the population on our planet.

A key factor to the survival of humankind is to put an end to wastefulness and to the unbridled consumerism fostered by the large corporations and the power groups of a handful of developed countries, which squander at the expense of impoverishment and the perpetuation of underdevelopment in a sizable number of poor countries where billions of people scramble to make a living. The high-level meeting of this General Assembly, held only two days ago, emphasized the danger posed by the accelerated global warming that is already affecting us and by its effect on climate change. Action must be taken, and quickly, and the developed countries have the moral duty and the historic responsibility to set the example and spearhead the effort.

On the other hand, several of our countries, always from the South, continue to fall prey to unacceptable acts of aggression by the ever-powerful – which are essentially driven by the insatiable hunger for strategic resources. The wars of conquest and the proclamation and implementation of doctrines based on pre-emptive wars, which do not exclude the use of nuclear weapons even against non-nuclear States, and the repeated use of pretexts such as the alleged war on terror, the much-trumpeted promotion of democracy or the so-called regime change in countries that are unilaterally labeled as rogue States, are today the greatest and most serious threat to peace and security in the world.

The aggression and illegal occupation of countries, military interventions against International Law and the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter, the bombing of civilians and tortures continue to be daily practices. Under the false tirade of freedom and democracy, an attempt is made to write in stone the pillaging of the natural resources in the Third World and control areas of increasing geostrategic importance. That and no other is the imperial domination

plan that the mightiest military superpower ever to exist is trying to impose through all means possible.

Far from behaving in international relations according to the principles of solidarity, social and international justice, equality and development for all, there is no prudence at all in employing the practices of certifying countries, of imposing unilateral blockades, of threatening through aggressions, of blackmailing and coercing.

If a small country defends and upholds its right to independence, it is accused of being a rogue State; if a power launches an attack against a country, it is said that it "liberates" them. A fighter against foreign aggression is a terrorist; an attacking soldier is a "freedom fighter." That is the media war, the swindle of truths, the tyranny of a one-track mind in a globalized world.

Instead of moving towards general and complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, which has been an ongoing demand of the Non-Aligned Movement for decades, we bear witness to the promotion of the arms race and to the squandering of wealth on new weapons and arms systems that deplete the resources required by the world in order to mitigate the effects of climate change and address the very serious problems stemming from poverty and marginalization.

An attempt is made to prevent, in a politicized and selective fashion, the implementation of the principle – already contained in the Non-Proliferation Treaty – that nations are entitled to the development of nuclear energy with peaceful purposes. Threats are imposed to launch wars against and wreak havoc on some countries, while allowing the aggressive ally to have hundreds of nuclear devices and helping them modernize such artifacts continuously.

How much more time will it have to elapse and how many new victims will have to die before the hawks of war understand that weapons are useless to resolve the critical problems of humankind?

On a day like today, it is worth recalling the words uttered by President Fidel Castro in this General Assembly in October 1979:

"Let us bid farewell to arms and let us concentrate, in a civilized manner, on the most pressing problems of our time. That is the responsibility and the most sacred duty of all Statesmen in the world. That is also the indispensable tenet of human survival."

Mr. President:

There is no progress today towards fulfilling the Millennium Goals and the decisions of the major United Nations conferences held over the last decade.

Poverty does not decrease. Inequality among and within the countries is on the rise.

Drinking water is not accessible to 1.1 billion people; 2.6 billion lack cleaning services; over 800 million are illiterate and 115 million children do not attend primary school; 850 million starve every day. And 1% of the world's richest people own 40% of the wealth, while 50% of the world's population merely has 10%. All this is happening in a world that spends a trillion dollars on weapons and another one on advertising.

The nearly 1 billion people living in developed countries consume approximately half of all the energy, while 2 billion poor people are still not acquainted with electricity.

Is that the world that they want us to accept? Is that, by any chance, the future that we should settle for? Are we entitled or not to fight in order to change that state of things? Should we or should we not fight so that a better world can be possible?

Why are such colossal resources squandered on the killing industry and not used to save lives? Why are schools not built instead of nuclear submarines, and hospitals instead of "smart" bombs? Why are vaccines not produced instead of armored vehicles and more food instead of more fighter jets? Why is there no momentum given to research to fight off AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis instead of promoting the manufacture of anti-missile shields? Why is there no war waged against poverty instead of against the poor?

Despite the fact that only US\$ 150 billion is needed to meet the Millennium Goals, we hear the hypocritical assertion that there is no source from which to obtain the necessary financial resources. That is a lie! There is money in abundance; what is lacking is the political will, ethics and the real commitment of those who have to make a choice.

If they really want money to appear:

Let the commitment of setting aside 0.7% of GDP as Official Development Assistance be fulfilled once and for all. That would mean an additional US\$ 141 billion to the current amounts. At the height of deceit, the donor countries are now auditing the cancellations of a debt that they know they will not be able to collect in order to artificially inflate their contributions.

Let the foreign debt be cancelled, which our countries have already paid more than once. That would make it possible to set aside for development the over US\$ 400 billion currently employed in servicing a debt that does not cease to grow.

Let the Doha Round for Development come to an end and let the US\$ 300 billion in agricultural subsidies for the developed countries be removed. That would make it possible to earmark that money to fight rural poverty and food insecurity and to ensure fair prices for the export products of the underdeveloped countries.

Let our right to development be recognized. Let our right to have access to markets, patents and technologies be guaranteed, for these are now the exclusive monopoly of the powerful. Let our countries be helped in training professionals and scientists and let the brain drain stop.

The non-aligned countries need no alms; we need and demand justice.

Let our rights to cultural diversity be respected, as well as our right to the preservation of our heritage, our symbols and our idiosyncrasy. That has been the unanimous demand that the non-aligned countries have just proclaimed in Tehran, at our Ministerial Meeting on Human Rights and Cultural Diversity.

Mr. President:

The non-aligned countries want a more democratic and transparent United Nations, in which the General Assembly, its most representative and democratic body, can really implement the powers vested in it.

We need a United Nations with a reformed Security Council, acting in conformity with the mandate granted to it by the Organization's Charter, without infringing upon the functions and prerogatives of other organs of the system. There must be a Security Council with an expanded membership, in line with the current composition of the United Nations, where the underdeveloped countries are the majority. There must be a Security Council with a radical modification to its working methods in order to allow transparency and the access of all Member States to its deliberations.

We uphold the idea of having a United Nations where multilateralism and the solutions agreed upon in full compliance with the Charter are the only way to address and resolve the current problems.

We need a Human Rights Council that prevents the repetition of the serious mistakes made by the former Commission on Human Rights. A Council that enshrines in its practices the principle that human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent. A Council to put an end to selectivity and double standards. The non-aligned countries will firmly oppose those devilish schemes by some mighty quarters which, frustrated as they are for failing to achieve their goals, are now attempting to reopen and call into question the agreement reached in the hard and difficult process of institutional building of the Council.

The non-aligned countries will not give up on our effort to defend the precepts that incepted our Movement, similar to those of this Organization. Among the nations, we will foster relations of friendship based on the respect for the principles of sovereignty, equality of rights and the self-determination of the peoples.

We will continue to defend the right of the grief-stricken and heroic people of Palestine to have their own State with East Jerusalem as its capital. We will continue to condemn the genocide committed against it.

We will continue to proclaim the right of the people of Puerto Rico to sovereignty and to independence.

The non-aligned countries account for nearly two-thirds of the membership of the United Nations. Our demands will not be forgotten, nor our interests ignored. We will remain united and we will find support in the defense of our rights. We will make our voice heard.

Mr. President:

This was supposed to be the end of my statement as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, the shameless and gross behavior of the US President in this hall, yesterday morning, now forces me to utter a few remarks on Cuba's behalf.

With a foul language and an arrogant tone, President Bush insulted and threatened some ten countries; he gave orders, in a firm and authoritarian fashion, to the General Assembly; and with such bossiness never ever seen in this hall, he dished out terms and judgments on a score of countries.

It was an embarrassing show. The *delirium tremens* of the world's policeman. The intoxication of imperial power, sprinkled with the mediocrity and the cynicism of those who threaten to launch wars in which they know their life is not at stake.

The President of the United States has no right at all to pass judgment on any other sovereign nation on this planet. Having powerful nuclear weapons offers no right whatsoever to tread upon the rights of the peoples of the other 191 countries that are represented here.

And the determination and courage of the peoples should not be underestimated when it comes to defending their rights! After all, what prevails is not the power of cannons but the fairness of the ideas that you fight for. The bullish and menacing President should have already learned it by now.

Sovereign equality of States and not "regime change." Respect for sovereignty and not unilateral certifications of good behavior. Respect for International Law and not illegal blockades and wars.

President Bush talked about democracy, but we all know that he is lying. He came into office through fraud and deceit. We would have been spared his presence yesterday and would have listened to President Al Gore talking about climate change and the risks to our species. We also recall how he brazenly supported the coup d'etat against the President and the Constitution of Venezuela.

He talked about peace, but we know that he is lying. We remember very well when he threatened 60 or more countries, which he called "dark corners of the world," saying that he would wipe them off the face of the earth with pre-emptive and surprise attacks. Bush is a strange warrior who, from the rearguard, sends the young people of his country to kill and to die thousands of kilometers away.

He talked about human rights, but we know that he is lying. He is responsible for the death of 600,000 civilians in Iraq; he authorized tortures at the Guantánamo Naval Base and at Abu Ghraib, and he is an accessory to the kidnapping and disappearance of people, as well as to the secret flights and the clandestine prisons.

He talked about the fight against terrorism, but we know that he is lying. He has ensured complete impunity for the most hateful terrorist groups which, from Miami, have perpetrated heinous crimes against the Cuban people.

President Bush attacked the new Human Rights Council. He is bleeding through the wound; he is grunting his helplessness. He is haunted by the shamefulness that, during his term in office, the United States cannot even look forward to being a member because elections are through secret ballot. Cuba, in turn, was elected as a founding member of the Council with more than two-thirds of the votes.

He talked about cooperation, development and prosperity for the rest of the world, but we all know that he is lying. He has been the most selfish and reckless politician we have ever seen. In a world that this year will bear witness to the death of 10 million children under the age of 5 through preventable diseases, his self-seeking and empty proposals of yesterday are but a sick joke.

President Bush has no moral authority or credibility to judge anyone. He should be held accountable to the world for his crimes.

There are boundaries to both arrogance and hypocrisy. There are boundaries to lies and blackmail. Cuba rejects and condemns each of the devious words uttered yesterday by the President of the United States.

Mr. President:

Cuba appreciates the solidarity received from this General Assembly in its struggle against the blockade and the aggressions that it has been forced to endure for nearly five decades.

Cuba thanks all those who have supported its tenacious fight against terrorism and have raised their voice in favor of the release of five Cuban anti-terrorism fighters unjustly imprisoned in the United States.

Cuba will fight, along with all the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, in order to achieve a more just and democratic international order, in which our peoples can exercise their right to peace and development.

We may be accused of being dreamers, but we are fighting with the conviction that today's dreams will be tomorrow's realities.

We are fighting with the conviction that even when there are men without decorum, there are always others who have in themselves the decorum of many men and carry in them a whole nation, as well as human dignity.

Thank you very much.