

[Speech given by Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Councils of State and Ministers, upon receiving the José Bonifacio Medal, Grand Official grade, at the Rio de Janeiro State University, Brazil. June 30, 1999 \[1\]](#)

**Date:**

30/06/1999

State and city authorities;

Rectors;

Professors;

Students;

Workers;

Friends of Cuba,

You have bestowed so many honors upon me, so far beyond those that I could truly deserve that I could only interpret it as an expression of solidarity and generosity.

You were impatient, they say, for me to speak but I was not. (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE)

I have often been on many rostrums but on very few occasions, perhaps never before, have I been faced with such a difficult task. I even promised myself not to speak more than two hours (LAUGHTER) and, honestly, I will try to. (LAUGHTER AND EXCLAMATIONS)

You see, you have reminded me of so many things, you have made me remember so many moments and episodes from these past years, that if I were to let myself get carried away by memories I would end up speaking for who knows how many hours. However, I think it would be best for me to concentrate on just a few topics. I also plan to accept the invitation I received to meet tomorrow with the delegates representing all of Brazil's students.

I will not be able to say to you all that I should say to the two groups because it would take too long; I shall then divide the issues. I also have to decide on the topics and considering that we are here in Rio, and that the conference has just concluded, I think I should give you some of my impressions on it. But, only on a part of the conference, if that is all right with you.

Of course, it was not an easy meeting for me. We are demons; (LAUGHTER) Cuba is hell. (LAUGHTER) This has been said so many times, so many millions of times, by our neighbors in the North... Although it would be incorrect to call them our neighbors in the North, it would be better to call them the adversaries among our neighbors in the North, neighbors who have been fooled for a long time. The American people are not guilty of the many historical crimes committed by that empire, even before it became an empire.

As a matter of principle, we have never blamed the American people. The most that we can say, recalling Lincoln's famous quote is that you can fool all the people some of the time, or some people all of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time. (APPLAUSE) It is that today the world has globalized and the globalization of the world has brought about the globalization of lies. (APPLAUSE) We could say the same thing: you can fool some of the world all the time, or all the world some of the time, but you who are here today are demonstrating that it is not possible to fool all the world all the time. (APPLAUSE) This means the beginning of global truth and the beginning of global victory.

I read the wire services every day, a great many press dispatches, 200, 300; it is an old habit which allows me to know what is being said in the world, and even some of what is happening in the world. You can become practically an expert in identifying the many lies said in the world and the many truths that are hidden as well as the mechanisms to do it.

Quite often, while reading the press dispatches we see a headline then we read the content and it has nothing to do with the headline. These are techniques used to manipulate certain news so that all of the world's newspapers, for example, print the headline, and then add a text.

On the other hand, it is true that many people read only the headlines in the newspaper, nothing else. It is sad but true. The habit of reading has largely been lost in this world while there are other major media for spreading ideas such as radio and television. But radio and television have also globalized. There are major networks that broadcast their message to every corner of the world, audiovisual media that have tremendous influence and, in most cases, these audiovisual media are in the hands of our neighbors in the North. They own the majority of the mass media and the means of communication, almost all the satellites that will one day block out the sun. (LAUGHTER) They are the owners of the most powerful film industry and of the most powerful television and videocassette series production industries.

Some have studied this phenomenon and we must be aware of what is happening. Which of our countries could spend 300 million dollars on a movie, a single movie, recoup its cost on the domestic market, and then, after having earned so much money, circulate the movie around the world at any price?

The statistics are available on the percentage of American movies seen by Latin Americans, the percentage of television series coming from the United States, the percentage of the videocassettes originated in the United States circulating around the world. To a greater or lesser extent, there are countries in this hemisphere where 90% of what is shown in movie theaters and on television is produced in the United States, all of it developed and designed with a commercial intent and aimed at spreading what we could call the worst that society has accumulated, such as violence.

I think I read once that 65% percent of these materials contain violence. No other country in the world

produces movies, television programs, etc, with such a high percentage of violence, sex and extravagance. (APPLAUSE) Then, what they produce with a fundamentally commercial intent they use to poison, confuse and fool a large part of the world. This is perhaps one of the most serious problems we face today.

A 300-million-dollar movie not only makes profits through screenings but is also tied in with commercials, product sales, to such an extent that some of them exceed a billion dollars in earnings. They have mixed everything together, and these large communications syndicates, film studios and other major companies tend to merge.

We are not trying to say that there are not some good productions, and some are really very good but it is very difficult for us to choose the movies we show in the theaters and on television. Every week we have to show two or three movies.

Europe, which produced a lot of good movies 30 or 35 years ago, does not really produce them any more, with few exceptions, and has been practically overwhelmed by U.S. cultural aggression.

There are some countries, like Great Britain, where almost 80% of what is shown is produced in the United States, and in many other cultured European countries there is an average of 70, 65, perhaps 60-odd percent of U.S.-produced material. Perhaps France, as an exception, receives less than 50%, but it is the only one. It is trying to defend its culture against this invasion and it seems to be making a special effort.

Several months ago at a congress of Cuban writers and artists, which we could call a cultural Congress, the point on which all of the hundreds of delegates unanimously agreed was the cultural aggression afflicting Latin America and the world. All of this material serves a particular ideology and a model of consumption that if applied worldwide would accelerate what would truly be the end of history. Not the end of history that some euphorically talked about after the collapse of the socialist bloc; the end of history, in this case, means the point that we would be led to following the road traveled by the world today, that of the consumer society.

Somebody spoke about the number of undernourished people --I think it was the president of the Assembly-- the number of poor people. There is a great deal of figures like these. They do not number in the hundreds of millions but in the billions. Eighty percent of the world's population today is poor, not including the Chinese, who are poor but who eat everyday, and have clothing and shoes, and homes, and medical care and education, although learning Chinese is not at all easy. (APPLAUSE) I have a theory that the Chinese are highly intelligent, and win almost all of the math and physics Olympics everywhere, because they develop their intelligence learning their language. (LAUGHTER)

One of our sister nations, Venezuela, once had the good idea of creating a ministry called the Ministry of Intelligence. Many people laughed at the ministry and the minister. I think I was one of the few people in the world who did not laugh at either. I even had the opportunity to talk with the minister about his theories. He maintained that intelligence is developed in the first years of life, during a certain period. There are researchers working to develop techniques to raise the IQ, because these human beings, meaning us, have considerable mental capacity. At least, the equipment is installed in our heads but they say that humans only use about 10 or 12 percent of their intellectual capacity. And, of course, the tests that have been carried out demonstrate that certain teaching methods help us to use 15%, 16%, or even more. Let's hope the day comes --and woe betide the pretenders, the liars, the exploiters--

when humans come to use 50% of their intellectual capacity! (LAUGHTER)

We know --and it is not sacrilegious to say so-- that we are the product of natural evolution. This was discovered in the middle of last century, approximately 150 years ago, and the theory was very controversial and highly criticized. But I say that it is not sacrilegious because I recently read that Pope John Paul II had declared that the theory of evolution was not incompatible with the doctrine of creation; I believe that everyone accepts this reality, believers and non-believers alike. But humans can no longer continue evolving in the same way they did for hundreds of thousands of years. In the future, the great asset of the human mind will be the enormous intelligence potential that is genetically received but that we are unable to use. That is what we have at our disposal, that is where the future lies, and if the use of only a small part of our potential intelligence has led to the development of such wonderful things as those telephones that show up everywhere... (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE)

Before leaving for Rio, I was trying to write a speech because they told me that I only had five minutes to speak. I almost wrote: "Mr. President, Your Excellencies, good morning, thank you very much." (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE) Actually, I was gathering a great deal of figures and materials; you cannot imagine how many materials you need to put together every time a conference of this kind takes place. It is not a matter of finding a talented comrade to write a speech. If the person giving the speech does not know what it is about, then he would not even be in a position to defend the ideas it contains.

In addition, I do not go around with one of those little telephones, I have never used one simply because you need to have some common sense to care for your nerves and those phones start ringing at any time, at any moment. They say there are some that vibrate. I do not use them, only here, once in a while.... Yesterday, while we were driving along an avenue towards the hotel where our friend, the outstanding Venezuelan leader Hugo Chávez was staying, our Minister called the comrades back in Cuba. I took the phone, and I could hear them much better than when I call them at their offices from Havana. (LAUGHTER) It was incredible!

I was there and suddenly, at top speed, I had to set up a command post because I discovered that quite a few materials were not available, such as, for example, the exact texts of the agreements approved by NATO on April 24, something which greatly interested us. Luckily, we had requested them earlier from our ambassador to the United Nations where he waged a great battle on formulas discussed for reaching a political solution to the conflict in Yugoslavia. He had sent the documents but there were those and another mountain of papers and figures related to this Summit and other work so, we did not have them at hand.

We had to call the Council of State's office and the ministry of Foreign Affairs. We had to call our foreign minister and our ambassador here in Rio de Janeiro and quite a few other places as well. We had to collect the various data, papers and other things, because that was not, of course, the only material we needed and we had barely 48 hours to do it. Thanks to one of those telephones, at the last minute, the director of the Center for World Economic Research, who is here with us, received part of the papers right off. As I did not have time to read them all, I asked him to read them in detail and underline the subjects associated with this and that. There were 60 pages.

There were other materials related to various themes, another 60 pages approximately. At the same time, we had to translate who knows how many materials into English and other languages, previous speeches or draft speeches. We had to check the number of copies we had in each language and how many were still needed. Since we were coming to a ceremony like this at the university, we felt it would help to hand over some of these materials so as not to repeat certain topics and provide the

participants with a written copy of complementary viewpoints.

We usually translate some of these materials into as many as eight languages: the largest number into English because it is the language used most everywhere; and also into German, Italian, Russian and especially on this occasion into Portuguese. I said, "if we are going to Brazil for the Conference, how many copies should we take? It is the host country."

We were concerned not only that they are translated, but also that they be translated well in order to be understood in the language of the country where they are to be read.

Accidentally, I discovered that Brazilian Portuguese is different from the Portuguese spoken in Portugal and that there is a war between the Portuguese and the Brazilians with regard to language. I said, "give me an example." They answered, "well, for example, 'facto': in Portugal they say 'facto', like that, with a 'c' before the 't', and in Brazil they say 'fato', and the same is true with many other words." I did not want to offend the Brazilians with a Portuguese translation; (LAUGHTER) although it would seem to me that you understand, don't you? If you read a Portuguese novel, you understand it perfectly, isn't that right? But you do not like it when they change the words, is that so? Well, we even had to take care of that detail. I called the Portuguese translator who travels with me and I asked him, "Do you understand this well? Which of the two Portuguese has it been translated into?" (LAUGHTER)

We have a translation department, with very good translators, who have their own style and perhaps the revisers there had translated the materials into Portuguese Portuguese, while the translator I bring with me is always careful to translate Portuguese Portuguese into Brazilian Portuguese. I asked him, "are you sure that they will understand this well there and that we are not going to offend the Brazilians?" (LAUGHTER) And he said, "Never mind, they will understand it perfectly well." (APPLAUSE)

I mention this as an example of all the work that must be done. But I can assure you that between 4:00 in the afternoon and midnight on Saturday the 27th, hundreds of pages were revised in order to confirm a great many figures and materials.

On the plane, during the trip from Havana to Rio de Janeiro, which they said would take eight hours, I discovered that it really takes an hour because when we took off I sat with the director of the World Economic Research Center and we spent eight hours working, discussing. As for me, I was like a student at the end of the school year studying many things that had been underlined over the course of several days and I had to review. Meanwhile, he concentrated on understanding the Summit declaration under discussion here in Rio, a document with sixty-odd paragraphs on political, economic and social issues.

We received updates from here, in Cuba or on the plane, that such-and-such a point was stuck on one thing or another. We asked them, "Well, what has been worked out up until now?" And they answered, "As of now, only this and that have been accepted; they have only discussed half of the first document." That was on the Saturday leading up to Sunday. The foreign ministers meeting was coming up and Europe and Latin America had opposing views on quite a few matters. We had to be aware of all the points on which opinions did not coincide.

I asked, "What is the latest news?" Only a quarter of the materials had arrived, and we had to continue working to see what had been agreed upon and what had not. There were square brackets and more square brackets marking the points that had not been agreed upon. And one of the things that

exceptionally concerned me was the fact that the European side did not even want to hear about the Charter of the United Nations, nor did it want to talk about the principle of non-intervention, or self-determination and sovereignty. Such an attitude was a natural source of profound concern, since we know everything that lies behind it.

The discussions went on until the early morning hours. They even discussed a paragraph that explicitly mentioned the Helms-Burton Act, the result of a battle waged by the Cuban delegation and other countries to have it explicitly included.

Many things were left pending; but, of course, we were able to gain all the time we needed, thanks to this means of communication that allowed us to simultaneously coordinate with six or seven different places and multiply our efforts.

I was talking about the cultural invasion, which is a reality. They are trying to impose a pseudoculture on us, or rather, a false and intolerable monoculture. To give you an example of what is happening, I read recently that out of the approximately 6000 languages left in the world, or dialects, which are also languages, 100 are lost every year. One hundred every year! Several thousands have already been lost, but it is especially painful to think that in the next 20 years another 2000 will be lost. At that rate, it is possible that only one language will remain and that is, unfortunately, English; it is my neighbors' fault.

I learned some English in high school and the university but even when I tried to read in English I gradually forgot it; I had to speak a great deal in Spanish. Then, despite efforts to brush up my English with dictionaries, workbooks and notes or reading an instructive and enjoyable biography of Lincoln, since familiar themes are easier to translate, I gave up after a while and tried to improve my Spanish instead. (APPLAUSE)

What is this associated with? A formidable battle of ideas. If the most powerful imperialist force that has ever existed monopolizes the mass media, it is our duty to defend the world's cultures and to spread ideas. Ideas must be spread and sown throughout the world. (APPLAUSE)

This is why I was telling you that I felt encouraged by what I witnessed this afternoon and this morning in Niteroi where we inaugurated a family doctor's office. They have already opened 16 and have plans for a total of 30. It was also our visit to the museum designed by Niemeyer, and the immense honor of having him there with us, younger and more lucid than when I saw him seven or eight years ago. For me, it was an immense honor to put my arm round his shoulder.

I see many interesting things in many places. I was recently in Venezuela. I think they have passed out some booklets with the speech I gave in Venezuela, which was long but dealt with a number of issues there that I do not need to repeat here. Those interested in this kind of material can find a number of things in that speech, ideas promoted by Bolívar, by Martí and a new stage in the life of a country that played an extremely important role in the history of this hemisphere. It was the birthplace of the noble dream of Latin American integration, at a time when today's communications did not exist, and it took three months to get from Caracas to Lima on horseback. Another great man who dreamed of integration was Martí, and there the ideas of Martí and the ideas of Bolívar joined together symbolically. Martí, who greatly admired Bolívar, was always one of his followers.

That was one of the issues addressed, and there was a great deal to say, in addition to international themes, and the privileges taken on by the great superpower of the North, the forms of plunder it applies. Today, it buys everything everywhere with the money it mints, while in the past it had to buy with gold or with gold-pegged currency until it broke with the standards established in Bretton Woods and unilaterally suspended the conversion of paper into gold, thus converting gold into paper. Of the reserves it possessed at the end of World War II, 80% of the gold in the world, only a third was left after the misadventure in Viet Nam.

They had maintained gold at a fixed price of 35 dollars per troy ounce, buying when there was a surplus on the market and selling when there was a shortage. When the United States suspended the gold standard and with it the mechanisms for stabilizing currencies, it led to an enormous explosion in the price of gold. The gold remaining in its reserves went through a tenfold increase in value. The world economy had been swindled with full impunity.

The world currencies had been largely stable until then because the huge business of currency speculation had not yet emerged. As a result of this, speculative operations total a trillion dollars every day, a new and unusual phenomenon that demonstrates the abyss, or the very edge of the abyss, towards which the existing world economic order is heading. It is an unsustainable economic order, yes, unsustainable. We must understand that we are living in a world where events are happening more rapidly than our awareness of just how unsustainable this world order is, and of the imperative and inevitable need to replace it with another, if humanity is to survive. (APPLAUSE)

We must sow ideas, many ideas. What can those of us who do not control huge mass media networks do about it? We use some of their electronic media. There is, for example --and I have not mentioned it-- the Internet, but it is difficult to transmit ideas to the countries of the Third World through the Internet. Why is that? Because only 2% of Latin Americans, for example, have access to the Internet while between 70% and 75% of Americans have access to it.

Well, we cannot depend on the Internet to transmit ideas and messages to you but it serves, at least, to provide those with access to the Internet with messages, ideas, reasoning and arguments on just how insane, fragile and unsustainable their world is. These messages need to reach not only the victims but also the victimizers, (APPLAUSE) that is, the many people who think but who have never come across a viewpoint other than those they see in movies or television or read in their newspapers, all of which are instruments that serve an economic and social system of exploitation and domination. It is with these media that they invade the world carrying the rotten ideology and lies of imperialism.

We have a good deal of proof because many people visit us in Cuba where they learn about our modest country, its sacrifices and limitations, especially in these times of the so-called special period, after the socialist bloc collapsed and we were left subjected to a double blockade. We lost our markets and the guaranteed supplies, which we were not able to acquire in other places because they would not sell them to us. All that was gone and the blockade was opportunistically tightened as it befits the actions of that great empire. It seemed to be saying: Now is the time to squash those insolent people on that little island like bugs; that little island that should be ours, the one we have dreamed about for 200 years, where they have had the nerve to disrespect us and rebel against the dogmas of imperialism and the neocolonial established order.

Forty years have passed and they keep trying but the more time that passes, the more puzzled they are. They undoubtedly think that we are a special kind of bug. But no, we are exactly the same as all the other bugs; it is just that we have become bugs with a consciousness. That is the only evolution that

has taken place in our country. (APPLAUSE) It is with this consciousness that we have defended ourselves throughout all this time, and even more so when we were left completely alone in terms of our economic relations with our basic markets and sources of credits and supplies, and without access to any of the international financial institutions.

Every once in a while we have heard in Cuba about an institution called the International Monetary Fund, but it was a long time ago, so long that we have almost forgotten the abbreviation. We have also heard that there is an Inter-American Development Bank but I do not exactly know what it is called because we have also forgotten. There is another called the World Bank. We ask, what is that? They tell us that there is a World Bank. Yes, there is a World Bank. And we ask where is this bank? Although some of us know very well where it is and what it is, the immense majority of Cubans have not heard very much about the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, fortunately. (APPLAUSE)

It may sound strange to you but we have learned to live without a Monetary Fund, without a World Bank, without an Inter-American Development Bank, without the many credits they talk about, the export credits, etc. We must pay about twice the interest paid by other countries for all our loans, which are always short-term loans, because due to so much blockade and so many Torricelli Acts and Helms-Burton Acts, plus a mountain of amendments that are not even known, many take advantage of the situation to charge higher prices.

Every now and then, after the US Appropriation Act is hurriedly passed --it is a 5000 pages long Act-- by many lawmakers, quite a few who are friendly with Cuba suddenly send us messages expressing their regret for not having realized that there was a paragraph that said such and such and constituted a new measure to tighten the blockade. Many members of Congress do not even read the bills! They do not even read many of the bills approved by the US Congress. It is lobbying that determines in a game of give and take: "Go along this wording for me, I need it for my state, and I will go along with this one that you need."

That is the way it is; an endless exchange and in the end nobody knows what is in these laws. (APPLAUSE) That explains why in such a democratic country the legal profession is so prosperous and there is work for so many lawyers because there is no way to understand that. I imagine that a wise man from ancient Rome would go insane by simply reading a tenth of the laws approved in that country, and just as its laws function, so do its judges and its courts.

In that absolutely perfect and ideal democracy, everyone knows how money is raised on the eve of every campaign. They have gone so far as to rent out Abraham Lincoln's room during election periods because some people dream of acting certain whims. They admire Lincoln, or they have heard about that bearded figure, the lumberjack who first became a lawyer and then a President and whose lot it was to live in that moment of history after a great internal war influenced by agricultural and industrial interests and sectors leading to a change in the form of slavery consisting of its formal abolition. After that, the slave's life remained the same or even worse than before, for when those ruthlessly exploited noble beings discovered one day that they were free, they also discovered that from then on nobody would mind whether they were fed or provided with medical treatment, given that, by ceasing to be the property of slave owners, they were worth less than a horse or a cow. Before, it had meant a loss of capital for the owners when slaves died who had been sold at those infamous auctions or, evens worse, their sons or daughters born into slavery.

That is the cruel and true history. In Cuba, the same thing happened. Slavery was abolished in 1886 and we have historical proof that when the slaves were transformed into supposedly free workers, they

ended up living in even worse conditions, because capitalism is the continuation of the slave system under equally inhuman and merciless forms of exploitation.

There are many things to say and many messages to send, by all means of communication and in all directions. I can assure you that if you have solid arguments and you are morally right, you can wage any battle anywhere. By word of mouth, in every message, in every booklet, in every speech, on every platform, at every forum, we must go on telling the truth but to do so we must be enlightened ourselves. Fortunately, we have been witnessing the world growing awareness as it discovers certain realities. After the stunning blows dealt to the progressive and revolutionary movement, many people are meditating and thinking things over.

The changes are visible, and we are doing everything we can to spread ideas, and if we need to distribute millions and millions of booklets, we will do so. Solidarity groups often take charge of reproducing them; they sell some and use the money raised to print more, and so on. A lot of information is being spread that way and it is like the guided missiles used in Yugoslavia. They are aimed directly at certain individuals, intellectuals, outstanding personalities, media directors, and members of parliament, political and social leaders. We spread these ideas to all those who can have an impact on the destiny of their nations. If these ideas are clear, righteous and objective, then conditions are ideal in the world today for them to spread. We cannot allow ourselves to be crushed by the immense power of the mass media owned by those currently in control of the world. (APPLAUSE)

The importance of this meeting lies in the fact that those in the North want to swallow us up whole, and if we allow ourselves to be swallowed up, they will digest us faster than that whale in the Bible digested the prophet I believe they called Jonah. It appears that the whale delayed a while and the prophet managed to escape from its belly; but if this whale swallows all of us up, it will try to digest us really soon.

They can buy everything, as I was saying, thanks to a mechanism created over the course of this century, which can be traced back to World War I. The dollar began to replace the pound sterling as the world's reserve currency and they invented fixed-interest bonds to finance the war effort but when they least expected it they were hit by an huge crisis that lasted from 1929 until 1940, and there is nothing to guarantee that this will not happen again.

They are constantly inventing things to avoid being hit by another huge crisis, while the value of their stocks keeps climbing sometimes doubling, tripling and quadrupling in barely 10 years, thus creating fabulous artificial fortunes and inflating a balloon that can and must inevitably burst at any given moment. In 1929, only 5% of the people in the United States had their savings invested in the stock market while today 50% of the Americans' savings are invested in stocks, in addition to their pension and retirement funds. Therefore, such an explosion would be truly catastrophic.

In recent months, they were very frightened that this very thing would happen, so they switched from anti-inflation policies to anti-recession policies amidst great confusion. One cannot believe all they say but one needs to know what they are thinking and what they are saying quietly among themselves. The fact is that they have created such privileges for themselves that the country whose people save less of their net income than any other in the world is precisely the one that spends, invests and buys the most.

It is said that the Japanese are the champions of personal savings, that they save more than 30% of

their personal income. In Europe the average is around 20%, thus there exist various different parameters. The Americans have been the ones to save the least for some time now. They sustain the growth that they boast so loudly about on the basis of a domestic market of 270 million people who spend unrestrictedly. If they own a car, they change it for a new one every two years, some of them every year; they buy everything that is produced and preserve employment on this basis.

Of course, the raw materials cost them nothing: whether it be iron, nickel, petroleum, whatever, they pay for it with papers. Those who receive the papers store them away, for the most part, thus creating monetary reserves in the central banks or even the private banks while taking the risk of suffering the same as many so-called emerging countries: losing in a matter of weeks the reserves accumulated over dozens of years.

I am explaining all of this in a simplified manner because they really use different mechanisms. In essence, they print the banknote, buy things, and those who receive the banknote store them away. They give nothing in exchange for this. Or perhaps it would be more correct to say that this is what happens with a significant part of these banknote; another part, as is only natural, are spent by their owners on goods and services.

Actually, at Bretton Woods the United States assigned itself the task of issuing and protecting the international reserve currency but it failed to fulfill its duties and turned the country into a privileged monopoly that has access to all the money it wants through its bonds and banknote. They allow themselves to have a trade deficit of 200 billion, 300 billion dollars, but no one else. Naturally, they import everything they want. They will never lack a gallon or a liter of fuel, and there, where there are more cars than anywhere else, a liter of gasoline is cheaper than in any other country.

Look at all the privileges they have come to accumulate to the extent that personal savings reached a less than zero level last year; that is, on average they spent more than they earned. There may be some that saved part of what they earned and others who spent much more, but the average savings of U.S. citizens were under zero. This is something unprecedented in the history of capitalism; still everything remains so very calm. They talk about a buoyant economy but who is paying for it and how long can they keep paying for it? (APPLAUSE) Also, what will happen when this system and these enormous balloons burst and everything collapses?

This is absolutely true, and we understand that it is our duty to help the masses --the billions of poor people in the world and even the middle class-- understand and know about these realities since the world must be prepared for the moment such disaster hits. I assure you that in recent months they had a close call. All it took was a crisis in Russia, whose Gross Domestic Product accounts for 2% of the world economy, and the suspension of payment of a few short-term obligations. Suddenly, there was panic and the Dow Jones dropped a huge number of points in a matter of days, practically overnight. It seemed that disaster was already on its way, if the crisis extended throughout Latin America.

It was pandemonium when the government, the U.S. Treasury and the Federal Reserve realized that if the Latin American economy burned, the fire would reach the U.S. stock markets. They tried to head off the crisis lowering the interest rates, or rather injecting money into circulation to prevent a serious depression. However, they have merely postponed it and the longer it is put off, the greater the disaster will be. (APPLAUSE) Later then, renewed euphoria, more spending, another increase in stocks value on the market and more speculation of all kinds.

The problems are not all that complex. I would even say they are relatively easy to explain. These are the pillars that sustain the empire. It will collapse and not by work of our good wishes. It will collapse because they are building on unsustainable foundations, and the day could come when disaster strikes and the peoples, and the world, are unprepared to deal with it and draw from it the necessary lessons. This would lead to all kinds of crises, everywhere in the world.

I believe that, rather than weapons the peoples need ideas. (APPLAUSE) They need a change from an inhumane, unsustainable global world that threatens life on the planet, to a just and humanitarian social order that offers humanity an opportunity to survive. The peoples need a world with a bit of drinking water and air to breathe where the necessary food is available and advanced technology can be used to produce housing, schools to educate the children, medicines to preserve human health and medical care indispensable to all, children, adolescents and the elderly. (APPLAUSE)

Why do they talk to us about the 21st century and fill our heads with illusions that last less than the bubbles in the champagne with which the world’s privileged minority will celebrate the arrival of the new century? (APPLAUSE) We already know that billions of people in our world, where there are already six billion of us, will be celebrating with a sparkling drink --let’s hope it is not Coca-Cola. (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE)

I say it because in this globalized world we also see the strange phenomenon of countries with cultures dating back thousands of years, such as India --with all due respect, it is a country we greatly admire-- where the people drink US Coca-Cola and eat hamburgers. Of course, the owners of the fast-food chains of restaurants say that those hamburgers are made with buffalo meat, or lamb but not beef, given that the centuries-old traditions there allow for the consumption of the cow’s milk but not its meat. Anyway, who knows what those gentlemen from the transnational mix in there? They are quite capable of mixing the meat of cows found dead along the roads. (LAUGHTER) We know how scrupulous those gentlemen are when it comes to human health. But even in countries as extraordinary and with as much merit as China, the foreign multinationals are attempting to introduce all of these consumption habits. This is a good example of Yankee cultural globalization.

And if only it were just Coca-Cola and hamburgers! What is really awful is that they are introducing into the human mind, which has so much potential, the idea of living the way people live in Paris, London, New York, California, and other places. It is an idyllic world about which I once heard the U.S. president speaking, very close by, at a WTO meeting in Geneva. Of course, they need to tell the world something, so they say that all they want and everything they are doing is aimed at a future when the whole world is middle class.

I jokingly told some journalists that, after Karl Marx, Clinton was the only one to have conceived of a classless society. For Marx, it would be a society of workers, for Clinton a bourgeois society. The former thinking about the exploited workers; the latter dreaming of the middle class in the elite suburbs of California and other wealthy American cities with contented owners of inflated stocks who have two cars, electric power, one or two telephones, cable and satellite television, the Internet to order anything they want, any movie, even to shop in a supermarket without having to leave the house because the products are exhibited in detail and they buy what they want, paying with a credit card or whatever since they do not even need to bother carrying money around. Good heavens! They have achieved what Karl Marx once dreamed about: the removal of money (EXCLAMATIONS AND APPLAUSE) mostly based on a formula that never occurred to Marx, that of first gaining control over all of the money in the world, (LAUGHTER) then working the alchemist’s miracle of changing paper into gold and becoming the real or potential owners of all of the world’s natural resources.

Do you think that is enough for the empire? No! The Persian Gulf, with a few exceptions, is theirs, all theirs. The Caspian Sea, with its immense reserves of oil and gas, that entire region belongs almost entirely to them or to their transnational. Wherever they go, in Africa or any other part of the world, either on land or in the water, they try to control all of the raw materials in existence. They hope to buy all of the gas in Russia, which has the largest reserves, and all of the oil so that these reserves become the property of their companies; it is never too much for them. They do not want to leave anything for the Europeans.

The Europeans wanted to make some investments in Iran, Libya and a few other countries, then the Yankees passed another law according to which they cannot invest in those countries. That was how we became a sort of exchange currency. They were seeking an "understanding", as I said yesterday, so that if the Senate agreed to moderate one of the titles in the Helms-Burton Act regarding the European investors interests in Cuba, the United States would be tolerant of some of the investments made by the Europeans in Iran, Libya and elsewhere. That definitively internationalized the infamous law and made them all happy in the end.

I had no alternative but to introduce a relatively tough paragraph in a short speech where I said: "Speaking now on behalf of Cuba --a country subjected to a criminal blockade and sacrificed as a bargain chip to unethical 'understandings' on cynical extraterritorial legislation" --I believe these were the two only qualifiers I used during the six or seven minutes I spoke-- "as well as to unfair and unjustifiable 'common positions'" --there is a especial European common position on Cuba, a country blockaded by the United States, no other country is!-- "in an additional attempt at economic suffocation" --I added three more lines-- "I would like to express my hope that the world will not be redistributed again among the big powers and that the unthinkable madness of turning us back into colonies will not be tried." (APPLAUSE)

Europe will be a powerful and wealthy supranational state; it is moving in that direction. This powerful and wealthy supranational state has contradictory interests with those who want to keep everything and be in control of everything. In this token, it is unquestionable that this immense territory made up by the Latin America and Caribbean countries, with a population of almost 500 millions and vast natural resources, must adopt the most intelligent tactics. Likewise, it should recognize the contradictions between two very wealthy and highly developed areas, which have conflicting interests in the economic field and others.

Europe does not want to see its cultures swept away. That same Europe would not be able to survive economically today if it were isolated and divided. Thus, after centuries of warring they have worked the miracle of coming to an agreement, uniting, integrating, agreeing upon a single currency, to defend themselves and their markets from speculation, or to put it simply, to survive.

We, Latin Americans speak the same language, share the same culture and are descendants of more or less the same ethnic groups; here there is no basis for so-called ethnic cleansing. We are a group of peaceful nations who have managed to live in peace for a long time, with few exceptions. We have many more factors that unite us and you can even see how those in the North are attempting to destroy the integrating elements of our culture, such as the language, a major element. We are a combination of Europeans, indigenous peoples and Africans, and according to the laws of biology hybrids tend to be more vigorous, stronger and even more intelligent, more creative. There must be some reason why they seek us out to win championships. (APPLAUSE)

You can see that many of our European friends' teams are made up of Third World people. They have gathered them together, and they win games and even championships, and then they boast, "This is real racial unity; this one came from Algeria, this one came from Nigeria, this one came from here, this one came from there." I do not understand why there are not more pure Aryans in their teams.

Perhaps some believe that to be a good athlete you only need reflexes and muscles. But to be a good soccer player, and you know a lot more about this than I do, or a good baseball player, which we know a bit more about than you do, or a good volleyball player, in which you and we are about evenly matched, although each of us has a certain amount of chauvinism... who wins? (LAUGHTER) ...much more than an ability to jump are needed. You need reflexes and intelligence.

Even in baseball --to use the English word, or "pelota", as Cubans usually call it-- which seems simple, the players not only need to react at the speed of light to catch a ball that could go as fast as a 100 miles an hour, but also to instantly know if they should throw it to first, second, third base, home or wherever, depending on the concrete situation --and there can be many-- and if you are not using your head, you might throw the ball to third base instead of first base. When it comes to soccer and volleyball, it is amazing to see the speed at which they move, fake, shoot; they need to be very intelligent. Even running takes intelligence, knowing what rhythm to start out with, where to place yourself along the track, how to wear out your rivals and how to use your reserve energy at the end. It is the most intelligent runners who win the medals, supposing that all have more or less similar physical capacities.

We believe that our nations have all of the potential talent needed and something more: all the potential for kindness and generosity. You can see it if you have the privilege of taking a short trip --it has happened to me here in Rio de Janeiro and in Niteroi. I have seen it in the streets, speaking with the workers who take care of us, or those in charge of security, services in the conference centers, the hotels and everywhere-- you see nothing but kindness, friendliness, decency, modesty. I have not found a single arrogant Brazilian, (APPLAUSE) no one! Nor have I found a Brazilian who is not friendly and helpful. In other places, in very developed countries, it is hard to find the modesty, the courtesy you see in Brazilians, in Venezuelans.

We recently visited the Latin American Medical School, which was established truly in a matter of weeks, after the hurricanes hit, using an old naval school with great capacity. There are currently around 1800 students there, and its total capacity will be around 3400. It is a truly excellent school which we, a blockaded and poor country, have managed to open in a very short time, not because we have money, since our monetary resources are scarce but because we have a great human capital, a great human capital! (APPLAUSE)

While they were turning paper into gold, we were turning ignorance into science, ignorance into knowledge, selfishness into solidarity. (APPLAUSE) We have lots of evidence on this. I think I should give you a few examples. Over the last 30-odd years, 26,000 Cuban doctors have provided free services to the Third World, (APPLAUSE) far from home and family, in the most remote places, saving lives, many lives, tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of lives. Not a word about this will ever appear in those media monopolized by our neighbors in the North.

Ah! If we arrest a spy, the world comes tumbling down! If a few individuals --who shamelessly operate at the service of the U.S. Interests Section in Cuba paid by that country's Treasury attempt to divide, disjoin and separate the people and support the criminal blockade-- receive a relatively light sentence in a case where those would apply five times stronger sentences, then they raise a formidable uproar.

I want you to know that simply for visiting Cuba, a constitutional right of every U.S. citizen, they can be punished with a fine of up to 300,000 dollars and a ten-year imprisonment sentence. And woe to anyone working for another country as a foreign agent in the United States! Countless years in prison await them. (SOMEONE IN THE AUDIENCE SAYS, THE FIRING SQUAD) If we used that term, they would start firing all kinds of bombs and missiles; (APPLAUSE) they would consider it a massive violation of human rights.

They define everything, from who respects human rights and who does not to who are helping in the fight against drug-traffic and who are not. They are the world's moral judges, not only the material owners, but also the supreme judges. If one day they felt like saying that Brazil is a global threat because of a potential drug cultivation phenomenon, they would say it. It has happened in other places, unfortunately. This they call a global threat and can be subject to a NATO military intervention.

There is absolutely no need to give tougher sentences to the petty traitors who sell out for their gold or their greenbacks. What we must do is demonstrate that we do not fear their masters, that we are not willing to allow impunity for its agents and for those who betray their nation, and that our people will never accept pressure or blackmail from anyone. But there is no need for severe penal sanctions. There will always be a greater sanction, that of history: watching powerlessly as their every plan is thwarted, seeing how this small and heroic country stands firm. (APPLAUSE) That was said here today. Yes, perhaps our country has a small merit: for 40 years, it has been capable of resisting the siege and the aggression by the most powerful imperial forces that history has known. (APPLAUSE)

You have all read about the Roman Empire but Rome is simply insignificant and helpless when compared with the power of this empire. At least, as it is written in the History of the Twelve Caesars, although such historical works must be read carefully because many quotes are attributed to someone or other which were actually invented by someone down the road but have come to be accepted as irrefutable truths. For instance, that Napoleon said that from the tops of the Egyptian pyramids, 40 centuries were contemplating his soldiers. Also that when he was told that there were two million Persians in the famous Thermopylae Pass, and the invaders warned him that their arrows would block out the sun, he said, "better still, that way we can fight in the shade." (APPLAUSE) So many things are said.

Regarding Nero playing the flute --perhaps he was a great artist, one of the era's intellectuals-- the history of the Caesars says he ordered the burning of Rome. Rome was governed by a Senate much less powerful than the Senate in the modern Rome; it also had terrible emperors. But, the fact is that a single gentleman, the President of the United States could unleash on his own account a nuclear world war.

Look at the world's guarantees. What if, by chance, the man who controls the button goes insane? Anyone can go insane. Have you never heard about a neighbor, a friend or a relative who went insane overnight? (LAUGHTER) Well, the world depends on that man's sanity. Look at the many threatening dangers and the powerful empire we must face today.

As I was saying, ideas are the key and they must be stated courageously. I was telling you that the meeting recently held in Rio was important, due to the common interests shared by European, Latin American and Caribbean nations. But, there may also be interests not held in common. In any case, the mere fact that they met is historic. Fortunately, Cuba --the Cinderella-- was not excluded. Some time ago, at a meeting held in Guadalajara, Mexico, we had the honor of being included. It was the first time

that a meeting was held in the absence of the United States.

In the past, Latin Americans would meet every time they were convened by Washington that did not send formal invitations: "Please, join us for this important conference." No, they have another method for convening Latin Americans; it is a signal they use. They would move their index finger [like this] to call them; that would be all. I recall that they only needed to move a finger and everyone, with no exception, would rush to Washington.

Since the inception of the Ibero-American Summits, we are meeting without a notice from Washington. This time Latin American and Caribbean nations --the latter usually neglected-- met with the European Union countries here in Rio de Janeiro. This has been a conference of historic significance. It was not easy to produce documents, far from it, because there are many conflicting interests, and while these countries may have disagreements with the United States they are the US military allies. (APPLAUSE)

I assure you that I did not find a happy atmosphere in that meeting about such an alliance. It was a unique moment. I was planning to deliver this seven-minute speech; it was seven minutes because I read it slowly, you know, to help the interpreters, because if I read it quickly, it was only four minutes long. I used less than my share of time. Such was the case that, when I was finished, even though I had used constructive but critical language, very frank and very candid, one of the chairmen of this conference, German Chancellor Schroeder, congratulated me for strictly complying with the time allocated, something that not everyone did. You cannot imagine how many things can be said in two or three minutes.

I must confess that I had to meditate thoroughly yesterday, the 29th, for I had not planned to take the floor at the afternoon session. Those designated by the different areas were supposed to speak for five minutes, and then, if they so wished, they could take another four minutes to take part in the debate. I was listening carefully to everyone but I heard certain things, statements on some points associated with the genocidal war that has just been waged in the heart of Europe.

No crime or ethnic cleansing can justify genocide against an entire people, the genocide of millions of children, pregnant women, other women, men and elders who will for ever live with the trauma of the terrifying clamor of the bombs, the wailing of the sirens, and the deafening roar of low-flying jet fighters. Those children now three, four, five, six, seven or eight years old forced to rush to the shelters every night will never forget. When exposed to someone afraid of thunderstorms, some children will experience that same fear for a lifetime. Just imagine 80 days of bombing, low-flying jets and wailing sirens. What will be imprinted in the minds of millions? All the wealth of a country was destroyed in a matter of minutes.

Claiming that a country's power grid is a military target is like saying that this theater can be bombed because it has a number of lights on. Depriving millions of people of electricity in the midst of winter --no lighting, heat or energy for cooking-- is definitely an act of genocide. It is an attempt to force a people to surrender to weapons and methods of mass extermination. If every bridge is blasted, if all communications are destroyed, if vital services, including the hospitals' intensive care units, maternity and children's wards are rendered useless, what is that if not genocide?

There is no need to go any further. In our view, to blockade a country forcing it to yield through hunger and disease, particularly when its people are honorable, worthy and patriotic enough not to surrender, that blockade is an act of genocide. (PROLONGED APPLAUSE AND EXCLAMATIONS) Let's call a spade a

spade once and for all!

As I was saying, there was a moment before yesterday afternoon when I was tense. I had to make a decision. I understood the need to fulfill a duty. The issue at hand was extremely serious for it was associated with the sovereignty of all our countries, and the problems and conflicts, social turmoil and upheavals of all kinds that hunger will bring to the world as a result of the order that has been imposed on it. Apparently, they are afraid of this; they understand it and intend to be ready to quell any peoples' attempt to rebel. At least, they try to sow terror but they will not be able to avert the inevitable.

The war in Yugoslavia has been the most cowardly war ever waged, for it has been the only war in history where the aggressors did not lose a single life. It was a technological war, practically conducted on Internet, by using and abusing the technologies they have developed, often using minds from the Third World where laboratories or resources are unavailable, so they hire those minds and take them away.

Coincidentally, while this genocide was being committed, at a time of much frustration, NATO celebrated its 50th anniversary. One month of bombing had already passed and they had initially estimated three days, or five at the very most. But, they had encountered the will of a truly heroic people who had fought against fascism, held back 40 Nazi divisions during World War II and endured a holocaust.

This is a subject I do not want to dwell on further. I addressed it in this speech to a conference of intellectuals. (SHOWS BOOKLET CONTAINING SPEECH) I believe 400 to 500 copies are available, and if more were required, I could send enough copies for each of you to get one. Our ambassador will take care of that. In 24 hours we printed 10,000 copies here in Brazil. We had brought some 2000 copies from Cuba but we have been circulating them at the conference. This speech includes quite a lot of material on the holocaust. Much research on that matter is required, and much writing needs to be done. Hypocrites must be exposed, (APPLAUSE) quite a few lies must be disproved and quite a few facts that have been kept hidden by the West must be brought to light.

On April 24, in the midst of the champagne-splashed celebrations of its 50th anniversary, this military block originally designed as a defensive alliance that, according to its statutes, could only take action within the boundaries of its member countries --in Yugoslavia they went beyond that limit-- proclaimed its new strategic concept for the next 50 years, and there lied the threat. That is what prompted my three-minute intervention. I used four paragraphs out of 16 on the subject that I had underlined and brought with me from Cuba because there was not much time. Thus, I used four paragraphs and three questions.

I do not know what may have been published about it. Today, I have not had time to check. We went to bed at 5:00 a.m. and had to leave early for Niteroi for other engagements. Then I had a 20 minutes sleep on the drive here. I must have fallen fast asleep. I woke up suddenly and for a moment I could not recall where I was or where I was heading. I only know that I was alerted on the proximity of the university. Upon arrival, I asked for a cup of tea and chatted with a nice group of people waiting for us at the entrance.

I was telling you that, for reasons of time I cut the number of paragraphs from 16 down to four and asked three questions. I also said that I do not know if anything has been published on it. I am not aware. (SOMEONE SAYS YES) You say yes. It was broadcast on the radio in Cuba, but here, I do not know...(SOMEONE TELLS HIM SOMETHING) Correct. Where? (SOMEONE IN THE AUDIENCE SAYS

SOMETHING) Ah, it caused controversy! That is good, very good!

All right but to tell you the truth, it was not an easy decision because I was attending a meeting with eleven NATO countries that are also EU members. I must say, in all honesty, that not all the positions are the same. I realized that possibly the majority of them are genuinely ashamed of what happened in Europe, of that war calculated to last for a maximum of five days but which stretched to 79, a war in which they had already been defeated. The country had been destroyed and had nothing else to lose.

Then they exercised all their influence in all directions to impose to the Serbs a political formula that contained virtually all the demands and objectives of the NATO aggressors. The matter was strongly debated at the UN Security Council in early June. Our ambassador took the floor twice, and I think his statements were truly brilliant while the other parties did not have a case.

By then we were extremely worried that for the first time certain theories and doctrines were being launched as if paving the way. A European member of NATO went on record there to declare that the United Nations Charter was anachronistic and all the other rights enshrined in that Charter were subordinate to the Alliance's new and noble humanitarian sentiments.

Those who starve tens of millions of people to death around the world have suddenly found that they hold the deepest and loftiest humanitarian sentiments. (APPLAUSE)

Those who killed four million people and maimed millions more in Vietnam, who poisoned the land and forests, and used chemicals whose eventual consequences are yet unknown, now proclaim the revocation of the countries' right to sovereignty and security, the anachronistic nature of the UN Charter and the right to global intervention.

Here are bizarre and coincidental events: a 50th anniversary and a new doctrine for the military alliance; debates at the UN --if my memory serves me right-- on June 10 and a country that openly proclaims --right there in the United Nations and for the first time ever-- things that were hitherto only rumored or quietly discussed. The announcement did not come from one of the larger countries but from a relatively small European country closely connected with the big boss in that military alliance. They had come to an agreement. Our ambassador figured it all out and prepared some quick notes when he realized that a debate was about to take place.

Curiously enough, another country of this Hemisphere, not precisely the United States but also a NATO member --a country which was never a metropolis and had always treated the Latin American and Caribbean countries with respect and discretion and had never shown any imperialistic or interventionist pretensions-- immediately and unashamedly supported that proclamation of the right to intervene and the subordination of the UN Charter's most sacred principles to NATO's impudent interpretation of the various causes for a military intervention. Let me mention four causes. Firstly, drugs; secondly, terrorism; thirdly, massive human rights abuses. Here is another cause put forward by those who kill so many people and commit massive human rights violations every year, or better said, every day; and fourthly, internal conflicts. Humanitarian interventions, as determined and decided by them.

One may think of a country like Colombia, for example, that has been a victim of the development of the drug industry. The source of its tragedy is in the large U.S. drug market that has made millions of Colombians socially dependent on drugs. There are also internal conflicts in Colombia. These could be

interpreted as two reasons for NATO to decide at any time to launch thousands of bombs and missiles on Colombia.

Admittedly, all throughout this century now coming to an end, our northern neighbors have never needed any Atlantic alliance or any new strategic approach to intervene anywhere they pleased. They gained possession of Puerto Rico, which has heroically defended its culture, quite similar to ours; they occupied the Isthmus of Panama, and before that they had seized more than half of Mexico. They intervened in Central America; they have intervened in Haiti and the Dominican Republic several times and not on account of global threats but rather to collect interests and debt repayments amounting to tens of millions of dollars. They seized the customs, collected their debt from Haiti and left Papa Doc, of the Duvalier clan, in control. They did the same in the Dominican Republic. They occupied the country, collected their debts and left the Trujillo clan in power. Caamaño rebelled with a group of military officers in 1965, and immediately 40,000 troops were dispatched by President Johnson to occupy the country and crush the uprising.

They intervened in Grenada with the pretext that some students from a U.S. school were in danger there, but these students were never safer. We can certify that because we were in Grenada building an airport and know everything that happened there.

One fine day they invaded Panama, without there being any agreement, treaty or doctrine whatsoever. They have done as it has pleased them and the Security Council did not even issue a condemnation.

You are familiar with what they have done to Cuba for many years. Declassified documents attest to that. Another booklet has been issued containing a legal claim filed by the people of Cuba against the U.S. government for human damages and compensation in the amount of US \$181.1 billion, for the death of 3478 Cubans killed at the Bay of Pigs, in the explosion of the La Coubre motor vessel, the bombing of a Cubana airliner off Barbados or the fight against bands organized and supplied by the United States. The case is supported not only by our own evidence but also by secret U.S. documents, which have been declassified.

A few months earlier, they had made a decision to freeze the funds owed to Cuba as payment for telephone services between the two countries. Each country receives a share of the payment for such services. Last December, around 19 million USD in payments to be made by US telephone companies under agreements and contracts executed with the involvement of the US government were blocked to pay a 187-million-dollar compensation claimed by the relatives of three U.S. nationals born in Cuba. For years, these people had been committing violations and taking part in provocation in our territorial waters and air space.

After our many warnings and expressed concern over a potential incident, their acts and provocation went so far that finally, one day, an unfortunate incident happened. The event then became a pretext to pass the Helms-Burton Act, which Clinton himself had qualified as absurd since it would cost Cuba the unbearable and unheard-of sum of 100 billion US dollars.

But this incident did not happen near Washington, Miami or New York. It was an incident in the vicinity of Havana provoked by an organization that was tolerated and encouraged to provoke such incidents. Three people were killed while directly taking part in illegal and provocative actions against our country, and for each of them 62,542,637 USD were claimed. Right after this lawsuit was filed the funds were blocked awaiting a court ruling by a judge, one of the many they have. Never in 40 years has one of

their judges ruled in favor of Cuba. People who have committed brutal murders, hijacked a vessel and taken refuge there are released almost immediately.

There is something else exclusively applicable to Cuba. Ours is the only country in the world whose nationals, if willing to emigrate, only need to set foot on US territory to be entitled to resident status. This was always part of their harassment plans. While consistently displaying their wealth and after dividing families, the privileges granted to those who decided to illegally migrate to the US not only served as propaganda but also served the interests of certain politicians and certain lobbies.

Immediately after the triumph of the revolution, the large landowners and the wealthiest people in the country who carried their money off with them were the ones who left Cuba. Many war criminals also took millions of dollars with them, as well as their managers and technical personnel, which is why these immigrants were among those who prospered the fastest. Since they have a lot of money, they finance political campaigns, even for the presidency and not just for representatives, mayors and senators.

I insist that our claim was filed for the death of 3478 countrymen, including those killed at the Bay of Pigs, as I previously said.

Around 5000 acts of terrorism were committed in just two years following US government plans, and it is not simply our word. Well informed ex-CIA officers have written about such acts either after they were committed or while involved in each of these plans and after 30, 35 or almost 40 years these documents have been declassified. Not everything has been declassified though, since they keep confidential some of the most compromising or embarrassing, and some declassified documents are edited with deletions; but certain institutions are dedicated to chasing down and collecting documents of this nature.

Our lawsuit demands 30 million USD in human losses for each Cuban killed and 10 million USD in damages. In other words, 40 million USD, a lot less than they claimed and for which Cuba were indicted by a US judge.

We have demanded much less. But, do you know how much we would have demanded had we used the same basis for calculation as they did? Let me explain briefly. As the claim was against the Cuban government and its air force, they calculated that the air force had 100 MiG fighters, each worth 45 million USD. We wish we could sell each of those alleged MiGs for 45 million USD in the marketplace! Then, they multiplied the 45 million USD by 100 and the product was 4.5 billion. The judge ruled a payment in damages amounting to 1% of the total value of the air force, and 1% of 4.5 billion is 45 million. That was the basis of their calculation: 45 million USD for each death, and there were three. This figure represented the bulk of the claim, to which further amounts were later added.

Do you know what would have happened had we used the same basis for calculation? We might estimate that the US air force is worth 500 billion USD, including of course its B-2s, worth two billion each, its B-52's, its aircraft carriers and thousands of other sophisticated aircraft. We might work out our calculations based on this figure and not on its actual value, which must be a lot more than twice as much, leaving out the navy and the army, although US battle ships escorted the Bay of Pigs invaders. Also, it was the army that supplied the tanks brought by the invaders and the aircraft that bombed our country disguised with false Cuban markings were the property of the US armed forces. If we had added all of that up and sentenced them to pay 1%, just calculate the resulting figure!

But I will restrict myself to the US Air Force, which I estimate is worth 500 billion USD. Now, 1% of 500 billion is five billion. We could be petitioning close to two trillion dollars, an amount that may sound exaggerated but is rather conservative. And if we had based our calculation on the actual value of all the equipment of the US armed forces, then the resulting figure would be higher than the US Gross Domestic Product in one year, all in full compliance with the law and on the basis of available evidence.

They set a precedent. But our legal claim summarizes in just 30 to 40 pages the outrageous history of US aggressions against Cuba and the repugnant pretexts proposed to the US Chiefs of Staff, which were once endorsed by the American President to justify a direct aggression. These are contained in three shameful pages. All of this was discussed and agreed to by the US administration and led to very serious threats to the world. The measures we adopted in the face of imminent danger gave rise to the famous Missile Crisis in October of 1962 that came close to developing into a thermonuclear world war. That was one of the consequences of their absurd and incredible recklessness.

If you kindly read this legal claim, those of you who may be willing to read it, you will find additional information on our country. I can assure you that those of us who worked on this material in conjunction with counsels, prosecutors and other comrades who researched documents and reviewed them time and again to identify pieces of evidence, found something I was not exactly aware of, that is, the total number of assassination plots against me that were investigated by the Ministry of Interior.

I knew there were many, and one day the US Senate had recognized a certain number of them. Do you know how many, either major or minor, direct or induced, plots there were? They use three methods: one is to make up a direct plan to remove a person; another is to organize groups that bear their own names and are apparently independent but perfectly trained who acquire an international status and the right to go on a hunting spree on their own account. What kind of right is that? The right to kill any of us. And the third is the induced approach: "The demon must be killed, the demon must be killed, the demon must be killed." (LAUGHTER) They repeat it and many heavenly angels hear the call to kill the demon.

In summary, do you know how many assassination plots were investigated and known about in various degrees? A total of 637. They made me a champion, no doubt about it! (APPLAUSE) If they want to give me any award for it, I would receive it more readily than the undeserved honors bestowed upon me this evening.

What am I a champion of? I hold the Olympic record for plots prepared by the United States and its henchmen to put an end to my revolutionary life. I am also a champion of the happiness and pleasure produced by their failure to eliminate me. They might eventually succeed making me laugh myself to death. (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE)

I greatly admire the men who have worked to prevent it from happening. I have been the most carefree of all, I tell you frankly. Inevitably, when I have to travel abroad, I am accompanied by a larger security detail than other visitors. Coordination is always made and close cooperation established with the authorities of the host country whose rules and functions are strictly abided by.

Do you know how many aircraft I must use? Two. Admittedly, they are Soviet-made and the Soviet Union is long gone, but we have some spare parts left. I jokingly tell my colleagues, "I consider myself braver than you because I am the only one who still flies in an old Soviet aircraft with relatively few spare parts." The fact is that our pilots, mechanics and technicians are real champions.

I have to use two aircraft because they always have a plan in the making. They may, for example, use a Stinger that can be placed kilometers away from the airport. The US has spread these weapons around the world while supporting the forces involved in its dirty wars.

At the time of the Ibero-American Summit held in Venezuela, an assassination plot was being hatched. While the perpetrators were traveling from Miami, a US Coast Guard cutter involved in drug-interdiction operations stopped them in the vicinity of Puerto Rico. The Coast Guard seized two 50-caliber automatic rifles with a 1400-meter range that could pierce an armored car 400 meters away or shoot an aircraft during take-off or landing, equipped with a telescopic sight, infrared night vision and the ammunition to shoot semi-automatically as many bullets as required. They were arrested and brought to court in Puerto Rico.

Now, who organized this plan? The chairman and ringleaders of the Cuban-American National Foundation, many of who have proudly and honorably appeared in photographs with the President of the United States. The amount of money they contribute to candidates in both parties is not negligible. On trial are those directly involved but not the chairman of the distinctive Foundation and other chief culprits; we will have to wait for the outcome of that proceeding.

On many occasions they have been close to meeting their goal. In Chile, to give you an example, accredited journalists with Venezuelan passports and documents issued by venal and corrupt officials and agents had a machine gun built into a camera. They were standing a few meters from me but, fortunately, they were not fanatics so they got scared and did not shoot. They have been awfully close more than once. Then again, apparently I have been a bit lucky.

Anyway, I have tried to use my luck as best I can because every year, month, week, day and hour in my life has meant struggle, and not out of revenge, but in loyalty to my convictions. I have forgiven them in advance for their attempts to kill me. After all, they have paid me a tribute by regarding me as much more important than I really am --infinitely much more important-- and they have given me a record. But, their methods are simply repugnant.

While working on the material for the claim, we could look at all their misdeeds together, all their crimes against the Cuban people in 45 years. Believe me, if I felt contempt for the empire before that, if I had an extremely low opinion of its absolute lack of scruples and morality, it is not an exaggeration to say that we felt 30% or 40% more revolutionaries. This was not because we were unaware of such actions, for one day a story was published, the next day a report was submitted and later on some news made reference to such issues. But, it is really shocking, it has an impact to see all these materials put together in a few pages. Personally, I have been through the events of all these years; yet, I was shocked. Not a single word is exaggeration. It is all irrefutable evidence and official US documentation. We know them only too well.

Why the attempt to publicly declare, simultaneously with the Yugoslavian war, the doctrine of the right to global intervention for any reason? That attempt had to be forestalled. That was what made me say what I said. I do not mean that I was not planning to speak and write about those things. Rather, I was worried about the need to do so precisely at that meeting, at the risk of sounding impertinent or impolite to the European personalities taking part in that constructive exchange. But I had no choice. I read my three minutes and I firmly believe their blood ran cold. There was absolute silence. A private meeting was supposed to take up the matter, and as I said, I had underlined 16 paragraphs but read

only four. If you allow me, I will read the four paragraphs and some of the others, not all 16 of them, maybe 10 or 11, to further my point. After all, in law, you can never have too much of anything and they deserve more than a fair share. (APPLAUSE)

I knew I had only four minutes if I asked for the floor. By the time I was through I had at least half a minute left. I made a special effort, I focused and I said what was indispensable. I am sure that if I had returned to Cuba and had not done that, I would have felt ashamed. It was like crossing the Rubicon because those four paragraphs and three questions addressed sensitive issues and interests held by highly powerful forces. Above all, it was a frank and necessary denunciation made public at that important forum about the new NATO strategic approach that has been impossible to conceal, since many wire services have already disclosed it.

A second sensitive issue: The draft document of the Summit adopted by the 15 European Union countries expressly recognized that "this strategic partnership is based on full compliance with international law and the purposes and principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of non-intervention, respect for sovereignty, equality among States and self-determination." Does that mean that the United States, as the chief and main ally of the EU, will agree to such principles? If that were not the case, what would the European reaction be if the United States, at any time and under any pretext, began to launch bombs and missiles against any of the Latin American and Caribbean countries gathered there?

As I said, the US invaded Haiti and the Dominican Republic to collect unpaid debts amounting to tens of millions of dollars. If at some point the United States concluded that a debt such as Latin America's, amounting to more than 700 billion dollars could never be collected because the more it is repaid, the more it grows, thus constituting a global threat, therefore, a sufficient reason for a "humanitarian intervention," then the US might begin to launch bombs left and right and by the tens of thousands over our region or any country in our region.

The third delicate issue: For the first time, it was necessary to make open reference in an international forum to the fact that the West, particularly the United States, has helped the State of Israel to develop hundreds of nuclear weapons, a fact that has always been kept under a strange and hermetic silence. This is closely related to the serious and arbitrary nature of NATO's new strategic approach. I did not raise this fact to even remotely suggest that NATO should inflict bomb and missile strikes on Israel, as it did on Serbia. That Middle-East State is home to Israelis, Palestinians and citizens of various ethnic groups, religions and cultures.

I strongly defend everyone's right to life and peace. Such a case, in which there has been a massive and clandestine proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, one of the causes for military intervention under NATO's new approach demonstrates the absurd, unrealistic and contradictory nature of this doctrine.

That small territory is afflicted by internal conflicts, a proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, ethnic cleansing and the constant danger of war, all them cause for a NATO military intervention. However, no one could ever think that such a complex issue may be solved by launching tens of thousands of missiles against power grids, distribution networks, factories, roads, bridges and vital services without which millions of innocent people would not survive, innocent people who are not in the least to blame for the problems that have built up there. Anyone can understand that these issues cannot be solved using the NATO methods without the risk of causing certain and colossal disaster.

This stupid and criminal doctrine, whom has it been designed for? Solely to be applied to countries that do not have nuclear capability, who are not members of powerful military blocs or cannot give rise to overly serious complications. Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and most of the Asian countries would be included in the risk area. No country of real worth that is ready to fight can be intimidated. We know for a fact that such an aggression can be defeated.

That US-led military alliance has just waged a merciless war and committed genocide against a European people of great historical merits, who are not to blame whatsoever for the mistakes made in the Balkans by the European and Yugoslavian governments over the past ten years. Actually, the government that ruled over the remains of Yugoslavia was not socialist; it had not been so for more than ten years. It had repealed the name of Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia for the simple Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and it complied with all the Western requirements of a free market economy and the kind of bourgeois-capitalist political structure that the United States and Europe are trying to impose as a universal formula. However, socialist Yugoslavia where peace had prevailed for almost half a century was disintegrated and the West is responsible for that disintegration which almost immediately led to all sorts of ethnic, cultural and national conflicts. All the peoples in the former Federation would suffer the consequences.

The conflicts were not always ethnic, since the Croats, Serbs and Bosnians are all ethnically Slavic, except that some are Roman Catholic, others are Orthodox Catholic, and others are Muslim, and the fact was that cultural, religious and national conflicts broke out. In Kosovo, the conflict did have ethnic ingredients as well.

No reference is made to that responsibility. No reference is made to the Serbian holocaust lasting from April 6, 1941 until the final years of the war, when hundreds of thousands of Serbian men, women and children were coldly and systematically executed in concentration camps with the Nazi methods of Auschwitz, Dachau and others, under the doctrine applied by a fascist installed in power by Hitler after his invasion of a Yugoslavian region encompassing Croatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina and a portion of Voivodina.

While I was discussing this issue at a cultural Congress attended by around 600 to 700 foreign delegates, I asked if anyone was familiar with this holocaust. Only a German delegate raised his hand and said that in Germany a book had been published that tells the story of this holocaust and some books in Yugoslavia have dealt with this issue. A true holocaust! The West has kept absolute silence about it and concealed this holocaust. Why? Is it because they were Serbs? Is it because the Serbs were part of a socialist republic after the war? Why, really? Some mysteries need unraveling and it is possible to do it.

Much more data on this issue must be available now as compared with the day I spoke at that cultural Congress on June 11, 1999, less than a month ago. We must not only sow ideas but also expose truths and enlighten the world about the immense hypocrisy of the West.

Some European politicians have spoken up against Cuba's tightened laws and have specially criticized the fact that our Criminal Code provides for capital punishment. Now, what laws have been tightened? The sentences meted out to the rapists of minors have been made more severe and cases of extremely serious and repugnant crimes may carry the capital punishment.

Our country is already being visited by nearly two million tourists. In general, these are respectable people, mostly Canadians and Europeans with exemplary behavior. But there are always visitors, from various places, who travel for sex. Our people, particularly our children and teenagers must be protected, all the more so since the outbreak of diseases such as AIDS has led unscrupulous people seeking safe pleasure to believe that 11, 10, 8 or 7 year-old boys or girls pose a lower threat than an adult. And there is always someone willing to push such services. We have also hardened our sentences against procuring and quite particularly against the corruption of minors. All the gold in the world is worth less than the purity and dignity of a Cuban boy or girl. (APPLAUSE)

We have also toughened our sentences against drug trafficking to include capital punishment. What does that mean? As our country has opened up to millions of visitors, including Cuban nationals and tourists who enter and exit the country quite easily, and in many cases without a visa requirement, some international criminals have attempted to use these facilities to carry in small drug shipments. At the same time, some foreign firms in partnership with Cuban companies have been provided with the facilities needed to import or export raw materials or finished goods. We discovered that one of these companies had made an investment in the country with the idea of shipping significant quantities of drugs between Colombia and Spain.

Fortunately, we detected their plan in time. We could have caught the alleged European businessmen, if certain Colombian authorities acting under effective agreements between our two countries had forwarded the information they already had before going public for the sake of publicity following the murky advice of American officials. Sheltered in their home country, the false businessmen have not been arrested yet.

Cuba cannot tolerate such things. It is an outrage to our country that compromises its prestige and even its national security. For this indisputably valid reason, the National Assembly decided to establish capital punishment for large-scale drug trafficking that uses the Cuban national territory. For less significant cases the applicable prison term was extended.

Our Criminal Code does provide for capital punishment. However, in its latest amendments, the National Assembly adopted the life sentence as an alternative to capital punishment, so that the latter is applied only in exceptional cases. On the other hand, Cuba has a Council of State whose 31 members hold their individual and independent views. Any sentence to capital punishment ratified by the Supreme Court is automatically referred to the Council of State, which carefully reviews the case --and generally the crimes that carry this sentence are horrible and repugnant-- and unless an almost unanimous consensus is reached, the death sentence endorsed by the highest body of justice in the country is not applied.

That is the procedure. It is not like in the North, where capital punishment is administered only to Hispanics, Native Indians, mestizos and Blacks. (APPLAUSE)

Europe, that for a long time has not known the terrible social problems experienced in our countries has introduced a policy aimed at eradicating capital punishment but for 129 countries in the world this is not a viable choice. We dream of the day when we, too, can repeal such a severe sanction.

I said to a European leader who was concerned about this issue: you Europeans are concerned about capital punishment. It is a view and a sentiment that I respect. But there are two causes for capital punishment: one is the penal sentences that may take the lives of several thousand people a year, people whose actions could take the lives of many innocent and destitute people, or cause considerable

damage to society. I do not feel it is ignoble for any country, or any man or woman, including many friends of Cuba and many noble and good people around the world, to oppose the death sentence for religious or philosophical reasons.

In our own National Assembly, three Christian deputies stated their views and objected to the passage of these sentences for the crimes just mentioned. They are honorable people who feel that way and they deserve all respect. But hypocrisy and lies do not deserve it. There is another truly terrible cause of capital punishment: the hunger and poverty that kill tens of millions of people in the world every year.

As I have said to these European leaders, we must not wait until the conditions are created in the world for the court-issued death sentence to be removed. Instead, let us get to work immediately in order to save the lives of thousands of millions of people in the Third World who die every year. (APPLAUSE)

I tell them that we are ready to cooperate. Look, we know that in Latin America alone, more than one million people die every year who could be saved by simply sending doctors where none is available. We have promised our cooperation, and we are ready to send thousands of doctors.

This is the human capital I was telling you about. There would be no point in having the highest number of doctors per capita in the world unless, as a general rule and under sacred principles and established traditions, each of our doctors was not willing to act as a missionary, a crusader, a pastor, a priest, a martyr for health and human life. This is why our doctors set off with determination to places where they trudge through mud for days, and they go to these places alone --and sometimes they are women, for almost half the doctors in our country are women-- places where there is no electrical power, where letters from their families take a long time to arrive, where there are mosquitoes, snakes, and all of the calamities that can be found in jungles and rain forests. That is where our men and women doctors are stationed.

I have mentioned that we offered 2000 doctors to Central America. I do not know, but I wonder if Europe and the United States combined would be able to pool 2000 volunteers to work where our doctors are stationed. (APPLAUSE) To northern sub-Saharan Africa alone, where the infant mortality rate in some countries is as high as 200 per 1000 live births every year, and where hundreds of thousands of lives, mostly children, can be saved at a cost of pennies, we have offered the free services of 3000 doctors. These are the poorest countries and the ones with the highest mortality rates.

We have said to the rich countries, "If you contribute the drugs, we will send in the doctors." And not only that. We have begun sending the initial teams even though no industrialized country has pledged to deliver drugs. The medicines that are coming in are the result of efforts made by the governments involved or by some non-governmental organizations that are truly humanitarian. The fact is that there are already a large number of Cuban doctors saving lives, in the hope that the more affluent countries will make some drug contributions, which represent the lowest cost.

I have talked to quite a few European leaders, and I intend to keep on working along these lines in order to send up to 6000 doctors where they are most needed in various parts of the world. I do not quote a higher figure because 6000 is the number that we can sustain ourselves by covering their wages and other benefits to them and their relatives.

Sustaining a medical school with 3400 medicine students from Latin America costs millions. It also costs

several millions to establish such a school in a matter of weeks after two hurricanes hit the Caribbean and Central America, causing dreadful human and material losses. Despite the blockade and everything else, we did it, and we took pleasure in so doing. This institution will produce not only doctors but also a doctrine of what a doctor should be and the responsibility held by the professionals who look after health, physical well being and human life.

We are pleased by having widely achieved this spirit of solidarity and sacrifice. When we raised this issue in our country, virtually all the health professionals volunteered, including nurses, technicians and other skilled workers. Each doctor can become a mini-school to train nurses and ancillary personnel by working with local youth with a minimum sixth-grade education. With the theoretical and hands-on teaching they receive here, these doctors can train them perfectly well in a short time.

I said 6000, for I have to be cautious. In addition to salaries, we have to cover certain other expenses for each of the doctors we send abroad. In many cases, we have had to cover the airfare or send them in our own airliners, bearing all the costs involved because their host countries could not afford the airfares for these doctors. Often, we have had to cover the cost of bringing the students enrolled in the Latin American Medical School to Cuba, at no cost to them or their relatives.

Each year, we will receive 500 young Central Americans and 750 from the rest of Latin America. A small group of Brazilians from various states in Brazil have arrived. It is not that this large country is in need, but rather because we wish this school to have students from all the Spanish and Portuguese speaking Latin American countries which have many things in common. In addition, around 120 young Haitians have enrolled in the Medical School in Santiago de Cuba. They must first take Spanish lessons. Thus, we will receive between 1350 and 1400 Latin American medical students a year. I am not counting the Caribbean students, who have the right to a scholarship in any field, also for free, in our universities. (APPLAUSE)

We had 21 medical schools and now with the Latin American School we have 22. The latter will provide the first two years of premed and basic science studies, which are the toughest. Later, the students will be distributed throughout the country because starting in their third year all our medical students work in teaching hospitals. Thus, their education is not just theoretical.

Before the Revolution, doctors would graduate as surgeons without ever practicing surgery. Today's Cuban medical students get acquainted with hospital care from quite early. We hope that these young people from distant regions of our America, who are generally of very humble background and are anxious to study this noble profession, come to do better than our own students. What is most important is the willingness to undertake any mission or task anywhere. This is what has given our country its tremendous medical potential.

I am pleased to add that, when it comes to choosing a place to go, our compatriots, acting out of honor will choose the worst and most difficult location. Thanks to the effort and human capital we have built, we can now render such services and we are inviting the countries with large resources and a Gross Domestic Product 20 or even 25 times that of Cuba to contribute medicines that will save who knows how many lives. We know where people are dying, in which slums, in which distant locations where no doctor has ever been.

The only things I must say before I am finished are the points associated with the great concern raised by NATO's new strategic concepts, to which I have referred insistently. I will mention the 11 most

significant points, including the four I read at the Summit meeting:

First: "In order to enhance peace and stability in Europe and more widely, the European Allies are strengthening their capacity for action, including by increasing their military capabilities."

They are not thinking of saving lives, they are thinking of killing people, of taking lives. (APPLAUSE)

Second: "The security of the Alliance remains subject to a wide variety of military and non-military risks which are multi-directional and often difficult to predict. These risks include uncertainty and instability in and around the Euro-Atlantic area --I think that right here we are in a Euro-Atlantic port-- and the possibility of regional crises at the periphery of the Alliance."

Third: "Alliance security must also take account of the global context. Alliance security interest can be affected by other risks of a wider nature."

Fourth: "NATO will seek, in cooperation with other organizations, to prevent conflict, or, should a crisis arise, to contribute to its effective management, consistent with international law, including through the possibility of conducting non-Article 5 crisis response operations." Article 5 is the one that specifically bans actions beyond their borders.

Fifth: "The combined military forces of the Alliance must also be prepared to contribute to conflict prevention and to conduct non-Article 5 crisis response operations. It is mentioned twice."

Sixth: "The Alliance's military forces may also be called upon to contribute to the preservation of international peace and security by conducting operations in support of other international organizations, complementing and reinforcing political actions within a broad approach to security."

Seventh: "The potential participation of Partners and other non-NATO nations in NATO-led operations." In other words, gentlemen, we are inviting anyone who wishes to join a killing spree. "The size, readiness, availability and deployment of the Alliance's military forces will reflect its commitment to collective defense and to conduct crisis response operations, sometimes at short notice, distant from their home stations, including beyond the Allies' territory." Beyond the Allies' territory! I do not know whether here in Brazil we are close or far. I do know that Cuba is extremely close.

Eighth: "Greater numbers of force elements will be available at appropriate levels of readiness to sustain prolonged operations, whether within or beyond Alliance territory."

Ninth: "NATO forces may be called upon to operate beyond NATO's borders." This is obsessively repeated.

Tenth: "Mounting and sustaining operations outside the Allies' territory, where there may be little or no host-nation support, will pose special logistical challenges."

And finally, the eleventh point, included in another document adopted that day, referred to as an "Defense Capabilities Initiative."

"Potential threats to Alliance security are more likely to result from regional conflicts, ethnic strife or other crises beyond Alliance territory, as well as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery." This paragraph relates to my comments on those large arsenals built up with the complicity of the West, a significant amount of weapons, which constitute a case of clandestine and massive proliferation of weapons of mass destruction with their corresponding delivery systems.

Since I have had more time here than at the Summit Meeting, and I have spoken to a much more patient audience, I have tried to review an extremely important issue and recommend certain materials that we will forward to you. We truly hope you will read them when you have a chance. We must send the booklet on the legal claim and the speech to the Venezuelan students as well.

Carlitos, how many copies of the speech in Venezuela did we bring? How many have you got now? (HE REPLIES 1000). Are there any left? Have they all been circulated? But, look, here is a gentleman who can copy 10 000 in one day, that is enough, I think.

How many professors are there in this university? (HE IS TOLD 2000). Will I be allowed to send a copy of my speech in Venezuela to each professor? (APPLAUSE) Carlos, do not pass any of them out now because that would create disorder. Send them to the people in charge. Do those who invited you have the lists? You can send the booklets to them. This speech at the cultural Congress is available in Portuguese and so is the speech in Venezuela. We have the Legal Claim available in Portuguese. Three complimentary books will be distributed to the professors and we sincerely ask them to excuse us for any inconvenience.

We wish we could send these materials to professors in other universities! I have already met with leaders of the University Professors Union. It was very rewarding! I was heading to my room to rest at about 1:00 a.m. when I was caught on the way, taken to a room in the same hotel, and had the privilege to talk to them for a few minutes. At least this experience helped me confirm that by speaking Spanish I could make myself understood. I was told that if I spoke slowly, it was easier, and this is why I have been able to keep talking to Brazilians in Spanish.

We will send these three booklets to you.

The delegates to the student conference in Belo Horizonte already have 5 000 copies of my speech at the culture congress and 5 000 copies of the Caracas speech.

Well, can anyone tell me how long I have talked? (LAUGHTER) (HE IS TOLD THAT MORE THAN THREE HOURS) Sorry! I overdid it a bit and I must really say that I am sorry. Next time I will be briefer. (APPLAUSE)

I leave with you my statements and the three booklets that will be forwarded soon. In the meantime, the batch that was meant for here will be left for you to distribute somehow. No one should worry because we will send enough copies for everyone. If additional copies become available, then they can be distributed to other professors, friends or intellectuals.

## Speech given when receiving the “José Bonifacio” Medal, in the degree of Grand Official, at

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Thank you very much.

(Ovation)

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