
**SPEECH BY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FIDEL CASTRO AT THE
CLOSING OF THE INTERNATIONAL MEETING ECONOMIA'98.
International Conference Center, Havana. 3 July 1998 [1]**

Date:

03/07/1998

Don't be afraid. (Laughter.) I had to come by and I wanted to say good-bye, bid you farewell, and express our appreciation for the presence of all of you here in our country. I am referring mainly to those who had to travel many kilometers to come to Cuba, in many cases, having to undergo personal hardships to participate in this meeting, since they do not belong to those sectors which have a lot of resources.

That is the way thousands of Latin American teachers have often met in our country. Some of them have sometimes spent their salaries of many months or even of a whole year. The same occurs with doctors, pedagogues and other professionals.

We have had many international meetings. Recently, more than 10,000, between 10,000 and 15,000 thousand youths from all over the world participated in a festival held in our country.

We know what a sacrifice it often is to travel to Cuba; also, what a courageous act it is, since there are some who don't like it when people travel to Cuba.

We have heard magnificent contributions, we have learned a lot, both from those who presented their papers and those who expressed their ideas about the topics which were discussed here. I consider this has been a really useful meeting.

We have all listened with acknowledgement, respect and gratitude to the Permanent Secretary of SELA, our illustrious friend Moneta. We can't but admire the clarity and courage with which he spoke.

When that Bolivian friend asked him a question, I was alarmed, because if we all started asking questions... I myself would have liked to ask some; but no, that will be when we meet and can talk discreetly. However, he explained, he very honestly said clear things, and he said it artfully, as an expert in international relations, not because that is the way he was introduced among the titles mentioned when they honored him with a diploma, but because he proved it in the way he expressed himself and said what he had to say, with the tact and care that must be used by one who leads an organization that has to work with the governments of our region.

Although I can speak with a lot more liberty from a political tribune, I also should be discrete, abide as much as possible by the principles and regulations of diplomacy and, especially, by the principles of political strategy and tactics. No one will ever hear me, for example, saying a lie, or saying something I don't really feel; but one cannot say the whole truth everyday, at all times. If one did, one would not be eligible for certain responsibilities.

Sometimes, when some journalists ask me certain questions, I answer, "Frankly, don't you realize that I'm not totally at liberty to say all I would like to say?" We have responsibilities, and sometimes we have to keep back things that we would like to say. It is a duty.

In my case, even if I were sent home and were free as far as time is concerned, I would not be free to say what I would want to say, or what I would like to say, or what might be said, because, even then, because of having participated along with our people for many years in such a long struggle, such a hard struggle, which has not yet ceased, there are things we do not have the right to tell yet as if the story of what we have done among many were the personal property of any of us.

Some journalists who always used to catch me here when I went by—so that yesterday when you all went to lunch and while I was talking to them time passed without my knowing it, so that a comrade comes up and tells me that we had to go because the session was about to begin again, unknowingly I had been speaking to them an hour and a half or two hours—provoked me with some topics. They asked me about Che, and I started telling them some things about Che. I even told them that sometimes I feel like writing about Che, a sort of biography of Che, or at least my impressions from the time I met him until today. Because I continue to know him, yesterday as a combatant, with his rifle on his shoulder, walking through the mountains, accomplishing very difficult missions; today as a combatant who is present, with his ideas, with his example, as the symbol he is: a symbol of our America, a son of our America, a symbol of our aspirations, a symbol of our Revolution, a beloved brother who I really got to know very well.

I expressed these feelings with a phrase when they asked me about the books that had been written about him, especially abroad, sometimes by people who don't know the least bit, by people who, of course, would not dare to talk foul of him and his ideas—except for one vile creature or another—would not even dare to try to diminish his image. And sometimes they even try to use him against the Revolution, against Cuba, and even against those of us who were his beloved brothers and comrades in arms. My answer to that question about the books was, "Che is much more than all that has been written about him".

Today, in their new ambush, they were asking me to give them a few minutes, and they were asking me for an interview to talk about some of these things. I said, "Yes, and I recommend you read this and this"—some of the things written by him so that they could be better prepared, they were from the television—"and I can very gladly speak to you, although I won't be able to say it all, or tell you the whole story", because not even today, not even after some odd thirty years after his death, can all the details, all the ideas, all the tactics be revealed, because we are still engaged in the same battle, against the same adversary, and there are things which cannot be revealed yet. A lot, however, can be told now, and the more time passes, the more will be able to be told.

If there is no time to write memoirs, at least the greatest possible amount of testimonies, of tales, or things that would allow someone else to do it must be left. Perhaps we won't even be able to give ourselves that luxury.

I told you throughout the sessions, with a little more liberty, what I think, what I feel, my deepest convictions; I told you broadly, very briefly: some essential ideas, the way we see what is going on in the world right now and what we think is going to happen in the future, not based on utopias or magic, nor trying to be soothsayers, but simply consulting our experience, analyzing and meditating about the facts and about the events.

I have deep convictions about the course the world is taking, about that globalization we have talked about and which we have baptized; just to give an idea and to synthesize in one phrase what we designate as neoliberal globalization, which does not deny the globalization process, which is inevitable, which is inexorable, and which has to be deeply studied.

I exhorted you to meditate on this topic, to research, delve deep into it; to help, advise, disseminate, as an essential thing, truthfully, without any dogmas; I repeat, without any kind of dogmas, and with broadmindedness, listening to every one, without thinking that we are the owners of the absolute truth. On the contrary, if we believe something, we're interested in enriching and substantiating what we

believe. If we have a conviction, we are interested in delving deeper into that conviction, and even in rectifying any idea, in correcting it, perfecting it, and that can only be really done with great broadmindedness, gathering and synthesizing ideas, knowledge and information.

If something we believe in or think about is shared by others; that is, if this were true, only the effort and the intelligence of many would be able to corroborate it, to draw conclusions that no one would be able to refute and determine the role that man can play in historic events.

There will no longer be one single thinker. Hundreds of thousands, millions of thinkers can make up the thinker our times need. Names do not matter. There were times in which humankind was limited to one tenth of what it is today, and men who wrote for a few millions who knew how to read and write, of which only a part was able to get to know their work.

Humankind today reaches the figure of 6 billion people, and, as I was saying this morning, many millions know how to read and write, and there are a lot of media to disseminate ideas. Given the struggle of ideas at a world level, oftentimes there is no access to the mass media controlled by the big transnationals, or there is no access to the large television or information chains. But there is always a way to make the message reach the world, there is always a possibility, and the more communications develop, the more this will be possible.

Well, a device with such a small volume and so relatively inexpensive—when I say relatively I'm thinking of someone with very little resources—a computer connected to Internet is now a possibility to make a message, a thought, reach millions of people in the world.

As they say, and it's true, and they are calculating how many people have it now, I understand that around 100 million people are signing up or can connect with Internet, and this process will continue. We have to speak to the peoples, we have to speak to everyone, we have to speak mainly to those who can influence others, and if instead of one there are 100 transmitting this way, and if instead of 100 there are 1,000, and if instead of 1,000 there are one million, then, if the ideas are just and they're solid, there will always be the possibility, even for the most modest economists or scientists, to transmit their message, that message that has to be the fruit of the intelligence of so many. If we want to win over people's opinion, this is indispensable.

As a result of one of the exchanges, Christ was mentioned in this meeting. I said that he sought out 12 fishermen who did not know how to read and write and he instilled in them his ideas so that they could disseminate them throughout the world; afterwards these ideas appeared written, in a very coherent way. I sometimes wondered: If those fishermen did not know how to read and write, how was it possible to write what appears in the Gospels? It is that others came afterwards and wrote it, others who became imbued with these ideas. Due to their human content, and within a dominant empire with its oppressive and exploited classes, those ideas soon became the religion of the slaves, the oppressed and poor people of that society. Christ himself had driven the rich merchants of the time out of the temple with a whip.

Of course, Christianity is not the only religion that has spread throughout the world where man tries to find explanations for his existence and consolation to the sufferings he has been subjected to more by the social systems existing to date than by nature.

There are the Jews, the Moslems, the Hindus, the Buddhists, the Animists and other religions. I was calling this to mind in my speech on the occasion of the Pope's visit, when I was praising the ecumenical spirit of his preaching which stemmed from the famous Vatican Council II, summoned by John XXIII, which really introduced changes even in the liturgy, a new way of thinking and the concern for the problems of the poor, of the exploited who had been forgotten by the high hierarchy for centuries throughout history.

I feel a great respect for all religions. The Christian religion was the one I best knew, for I spent 12 years

—as some of you probably did too—as a boarding student in religious Catholic schools, in a sort of apartheid, as I call the separation we were subject to, since coeducation did not exist. We were over there, secluded, we couldn't even go out in the street, and the girls were also secluded in other similar schools for our privileged class, they couldn't even go out in the street.

Actually, those schools were more like a convent than a school, because that was the type of life we led, for which I'm even glad today, because it taught me discipline, stoicism, spirit of sacrifice, many positive things that later helped me throughout my life.

In our culture, as part of the so-called western world, there are undoubtedly components of Christian values. I think that among those values there are ethical and humane principles that are applicable to any epoch.

If instead of being born and elaborating his ideas when he did, Christ had been born in these times, you can be sure—or at least I am—that his preaching would not have differed much from the ideas or the preaching that we revolutionaries of today try to bring the world. With the communication possibilities that science gives us, more than three centuries would not have to elapse before even the emperors would be able to understand the falsehood of their untenable conceptions. Actually, it won't be through persuasion that the emperors of these times will welcome with open arms our demands and our aspiration for justice and equity in this world, neither can the world wait 300 years. It will have to wait a lot less for the changes that must take place to do so.

As I told you, new ideas to prepare the peoples for the future are needed, but we must start struggling right now. Beginning today, we must start building awareness, a new awareness, I would say. It is not that the world lacks awareness today; but such a new and complex epoch as this one requires principles more than ever and requires a lot more awareness, and that awareness will be built, by adding together, we might say, the awareness of what is happening and the awareness of what is going to happen. It has to be built by adding together more than just one revolutionary thought and the best ethical and humane ideas of more than one religion, of all authentic religions, I would say—I am not thinking of sects, which of course exist, created for political ends and for the purpose of creating confusion and division by those who do not hesitate to even use religion for definite political objectives—; the sum total of the preaching of many political thinkers, of many schools and of many religions.

We have even spoken here of some of the eminent theoreticians of this century who have played a role and whose ideas may have certain validity; but we must bring together the ethical and humane sense of many ideas, some of which emerged in very remote times of man's history: Christ's ideas with the scientifically founded socialist ideas, so just and profoundly humane, of Karl Marx, the ideas of Engels (Applause.), the ideas of Lenin, the ideas of Martí, the ideas of the European Encyclopedists who preceded the French Revolution and those of the forefathers of the independence of this hemisphere, whose most outstanding symbol was Simón Bolívar, who was capable, two centuries ago, to even dream of a united Latin America, when the horse was the fastest existing means of land transportation, on which a messenger might very well take three months to get from Caracas to Lima, or to Ayacucho, or to Bolivia. What primitive means they used in their struggle! There were no telephones, or communications, or radio, and they had the impetus and energy to travel all over a continent and dream of a united Latin America. Yes, those sentiments, that projection, those ideas must also be taken up in our ideas of today.

When Bolívar spoke about the unity of the continent, what today is the United States was a nation located near the Atlantic coast, very far east from the Mississippi River, a nation which later would extend west at the expense of the Indians' lands and the lands of the Spanish and Indian descendants that inhabited them—that story is well known—and that is why he spoke about the hemisphere. He did not exclude the United States, of course; but the United States then was not the United States that we know today, it was the 13 colonies that had recently freed themselves from British colonialism.

An important part of the territory of that America that Bolivar knew is missing today. Hardly anybody lived in Canada, and if it has so many millions—I don't remember exactly how many, they're twenty and some odds—half of them are immigrants from other countries.

He thought about the union of that America, just see how much time in advance. But others after him also thought of a united world, and we ourselves will have to think of a united world, because humankind is inexorably moving in that direction. Globalization is creating the conditions for that united world.

That was a great idea, a great premonition on Bolivar's part; but, really, when one analyzes the conditions, one can see that the united America he dreamed of was impossible in those times. The minimum cultural and material conditions did not exist for bringing about that union he partly achieved and of which he was only able to see the fragments of that Great Colombia at the time of his death. But he thought of that, he was a visionary, the same way Miranda was a visionary of independence.

I was saying that this world marches toward unity today. This can be conceived today but not as a dream, but as an objective reality which gradually begins to take place and begins to take shape as a need for human survival.

I went further this morning—and very conscious of it—I was audacious enough to say something bolder concerning this planet's natural resources, which some powers selfishly want to preserve for the sustainment of their so-called welfare societies.

In a globalized world, those resources must be at the service of humankind. Many countries of the Third World were forced to build their economies based on resources that are becoming exhausted for the exclusive benefit of the developed societies. What will be left for them later?

In fact, when one sees that, for example, just in perfecting and developing nuclear weapons, the United States spends five billion dollars every year; when one reads that it spends twenty-seven billion dollars in espionage and intelligence work every year, and in manufacturing new, modern weapons—known as intelligent weapons—and planes invisible to radars, has millions of men ready for war, hundreds of the most modern warships, lots of aircraft carriers and submarines and bases all over the world, one wonders why and what for. There has to be elaborate forethought for that, a culture of domination and an instinct for appropriation.

That is why it is not very concerned with the environment and other things, like issuing less gases than what their industries do. It always opposes every international agreement aimed at preserving nature with a universal sense as a common heritage of humanity. It raises objections of all kinds, because it does not want to commit itself to anything that may limit its lust for domination and enjoyment of the world's natural resources.

We could also ask ourselves another question: What good will all those weapons do them, when the peoples, a lot more cultivated and aware, learn the truths? What good will those weapons do them, when they have to suffer a deep economic crisis? That crisis will inevitably come when that gigantic balloon of the stock markets which have absurdly multiplied their real values deflates. They are imaginary values, without any material sustainment, artificially created thanks to the privileged conditions of a State that due to peculiar historical circumstances has become the issuer of the main reserve currency accepted and circulated in the world, turning paper into gold, something which alchemists dreamed of accomplishing as far back as the Middle Ages.

They buy everything they can in the world, the main industries and services, and even promising, fertile lands; because there are countries, we know that, like Argentina, where everything has been privatized, even important highways and streets—because there are privatized streets, not only electricity, oil, gas, airports airlines, railroads—there is advertisements abroad in order that big transnationals from the United States and Europe buy immense tracts of land in the fertile Argentine plains.

There are some foreign investors there who own 200,000, 300,000 or 400,000 hectares of land. Not only industries and services are handed over to foreign capital, also resources like land, the lands of our peoples that will have to produce for the peoples, in exchange for a plate of lentils; papers that are issued and securities that are inflated. That is why we maintain, based on mathematical facts, that such a neoliberal globalization is not sustainable; that the crisis is inevitable. And these crises, due to the increasingly globalized character of the world economy, will also be global, will be universal.

For a moment, I try to imagine what would happen in the United States itself with the tens of million of owners of stocks with inflated value, with those families which deposited their savings in those stocks, if all of a sudden the stock markets collapse and with them those absurdly multiplied values.

They cannot avoid that, it is congenital; it is in the genes of the system that begot it, in the laws that govern its development. There is no way they can avoid it, unless they do what they will never do: renounce that system. No matter how much they preach and how much they propagate their ideology, their lies and their deceits, they cannot avoid it. That is what we base ourselves on to affirm what we were affirming, about which we haven't the slightest doubt. The change factors are objective factors and will present themselves as such; the factors that must be prepared are the subjective ones. That was precisely what I invited you to do the first day of our meeting.

I didn't come here, really, to draw up a plan and assign tasks to anybody. I came here as a guest the same as you did, among the many national and international congresses and activities I'm invited to, so that I can only attend a few congresses, definite acts or meetings; I can't be everywhere and, at the same time, carry out the other tasks that we must carry out, and above all meditate and study. When I don't have days such as these, of such intense activity, I devote many hours to becoming informed and to studying. That is a must for all of us, under circumstances such as these, to study till the last day, till the last minute, till the last second, and that is only possible thanks to sharing the work with many comrades.

The imperialists, in their propaganda against Cuba, can't stop talking about Castro: "Castro did or undid this and that." They individualize policies, they individualize processes: "Castro's Revolution, Castro's communism." Everything is Castro's work, Castro's action, what really corresponds to millions of citizens in this country, first of all, to those who are carrying out the most arduous tasks.

While we are here speaking, at night already, there are hospitals attending patients, doctors on duty, and there are the family doctors a few steps away from whoever might need them as our system of family medicine has made possible. And at this time, there might even be many compatriots working, preparing the land for planting cane, or getting ready for the work that they will begin at 2:00 or 3:00 a.m., and after sunrise, under the tropical sun, a sun that is felt more and more, in an ever changing climate.

We don't work with air-conditioning the way they work in the privileged temperate climates, over there where very often they don't even have mosquitoes. We, the vast majority of this planet's inhabitants, work in that band of the world where there are more fungi, more bacteria, more vectors, more insects, more mosquitoes, more humidity, more natural disasters, cyclones, floods or prolonged droughts, phenomena that we have seen worsen day by day. These are the conditions under which our peoples work and under which the Cuban people works today.

If we are here before this microphone and the lights are on, it is because through the length and breadth of the country, at this very hour, there are thousands of men attending the power lines, the boilers of the thermoelectric plants producing electricity to give us this light. And in this same way, there are others working on the railroads, others in transports that cannot stop, others loading and unloading at the docks, others even building, others on merchant ships. They are millions of people working or resting to go back to work tomorrow, although, on this occasion, being a Saturday, many will have the day off, but not all of them, because in order for part of them to have a free day, there are

hundreds of thousands working and attending to the services that the rest need, the families, the children and the rest of the workers.

Yes, this is not Castro's Revolution, it is the revolution of a people, it is the revolution of millions of workers. It is not a revolution of bourgeois, nor of oligarchs, nor of transnationals; it is a revolution of workers, and of a working people that has managed to keep united, to confront the giant, to confront the colossus. And when a Cuban says this, he must never say it out of vanity, and our revolutionary comrades will never say it out of vanity, or out of chauvinism, or out of pride.

When we say it, we do say it with satisfaction, of course; but that satisfaction which stems from a sense of responsibility and of duty, the idea that by resisting here we are helping the fraternal peoples in this hemisphere and elsewhere. Demonstrating that it is possible to resist, and to resist even under the most incredible circumstances, we are proving what man is capable of, what values are capable of and what ideas are capable of.

Our enemies try to strike at our truths, and they slander that work of a whole people by every means possible, they plot and try to subvert it, they try to kill hope, to sow pessimism, if not, what is it they want with that indecent blockade? To break the morale of our people, who, almost exclusively in the world, is suffering the harassment, the economic war and also the non-economic war, the political war and the ideological war of the greatest power that has ever existed in history; and, for the first time a hegemonic world power.

The United States is today the basis of globalized imperialism and the fight against that form of dominion has to be globalized too.

That empire has its theoreticians and its ideologues formed in universities. Although it is fair to say that they also have intelligent, sensible men there, they don't all think exactly alike; men who do not agree with the methods of the empire, nor the policies of the empire nor the murderous procedure of blockading a small country, of trying to vanquish it by hunger and by disease. It has its theories, its theoreticians and the media to disseminate them. And the peoples dominated by that global empire must also have their theoreticians that must come out of the ranks of the intellectuals; first of all, of the economists. Of the economists with a political sense, not economists to serve the transnationals, or economists to play the simple role of advisors. Of course, they have to advise as much as they can, economists that develop ideas and convey them to their people based on profoundly scientific foundations, based on science and human experience gathered for so long.

Economists of the people, and today to be economists of the people—I repeat—they must be political economists (Applause.); and politicians must be politicians with a minimum of economic knowledge and if it is possible with a maximum of knowledge in that field, that today is really the basis on which the fate of humanity depends, the basis on which our struggles are being carried out. And the politicians who do not understand, or do not want to understand, or who do not strive to know economics, are not worthy of exercising the duty they exercise as such politicians.

It is not a matter of saying nice things because the elections are near, or because you want your party to win a few more votes, distributing a multitude of voters divided into a thousand pieces. It is not a matter of expressing things to obtain support with a multitude of reporters behind you. If two hours go by without a press conference to transmit their words and disseminate their presence, it is as if they spent 10 days without drinking water. It is a whole political style, even.

We have closely followed the so-called Summit of the Americas summoned by the United States.

I don't want to offend anyone—I repeat that I don't want to hurt anyone—but I observe the politicians in those summits, under the domineering presence and the pressure of the heads of the empire. In those hemispheric summits there are usually two types of meetings, some are public and others are private. The politicians are one thing in the public meetings and another in the private ones, when the press is

no longer there, and then they can express some of their concerns, and they do.

As a rule, there is a lot of play acting in those meetings, I won't say that by everyone. There are serious politicians, even under those conditions; some who are even courageous, I must admit it. But one can see how demagoguery prevails, that submission that sometimes borders on slimy flattery and weakness in many Latin American politicians. It prevails less, or practically the style is different in the case of the Caribbean leaders, from the group of countries that were colonies until after the Cuban Revolution's triumph. I have pointed out more than once, the seriousness with which they express themselves, the way they do it, and they tell the truth in pure English to the very president of the United States. We feel great respect for all of them and we have stood by them, who are already an inseparable part of the political life of our America.

As you know, Cuba is banned from participating in those so-called summit meetings. Actually, they can't imagine the great honor they're doing us, because that's where the demagogic masters go to set down the guidelines for the demagogic servants, or for those who, without being demagogues or servants or accepting guidelines, have no other choice but to bear the humiliation.

In relation to the western habit which is a creature of the individualistic conception of imperialism and of many of its intellectuals, based on the alleged role of the individual in history, to whom they attribute and give credit for everything, we consider that the individual can play a given role; but the main role—if they want to attribute it to any of those of us who began this Revolution and they want to attribute it to one of us—was to have elaborated and conveyed ideas. Without this, there would have been no Revolution, no victory of our people against an army which had around 80,000 troops, supplied with tanks, aircraft, communications, uniforms, ammunition and all the advising by the United States, and, fortunately, together with all this, a great underestimation of the Cuban people.

They thought there would never be a revolution here, that there could never be organizations or parties or men that would not sell out, that would not give in, that would not be corrupted. That underestimation did us a lot of good, because by the time they realized it, we had beaten their army, we had disarmed their 80,000 men and had given the weapons to the people.

Arbenz could not do that in Guatemala, neither could other progressive, revolutionary men, like Allende, who also arrived in power wishing to transform his country. How long did his noble effort, achieved through the purest electoral means, last? Did it perhaps help to keep the CIA from conspiring with the most reactionary and conservative elements to overthrow him? All this has been written, it is there for all to see, a lot has been published, and it is already a confessed crime of those who can give themselves the luxury of breaking the law everywhere and even publishing, after a few years, the crimes they have committed.

They underestimated Cuba. They considered it its most faithful colony, its most secure domain, and they got careless. When they got around to realizing it, the people were already in power, and there were revolutionary laws, a people with ideas, a people with fighting traditions, who for the first time enjoyed justice, true freedom and equality, who for the first time knew the respect for their dignity and their human condition. And when man comes to realize, or to imbue his mind of, or to live with those values, he is capable of anything. He is able, as I mentioned, to send 500,000 sons within a few years to many parts of the world, to shed their blood even. More than all the Peace Corps which the great empire organized and, in fact, after the Revolution's triumph, don't forget that, after the Cuban Revolution's triumph!

Before there were no Peace Corps; but they created them when they beheld the triumphant Revolution, after their defeat at Girón [Bay of Pigs], when they once again underestimated our people. They thought that in a matter of hours they would defeat it with a mercenary invasion and the American squadron behind them, three miles away from our coasts to encourage them and give them support if necessary, with aircraft carriers, combat planes, forces and other means ready to disembark. They didn't even have time to use them, because their plan was to occupy a piece of the territory and create a provisional

government which would appeal to the very famous OAS, to reestablish in Cuba "the rights" of the people.

They spoke to the mercenaries and made them all think that the people would rebel, and maybe some of them even believed it. Their planes came to bomb us treacherously two days before the invasion, with the paint, emblems and flag of our Cuban Air Force, all the symbols of the few aircraft we had left. But with those few aircraft we had left and a few determined, courageous pilots, who decisively contributed to the defeat of the invasion, in a few hours all of the mercenaries' ships were sunk or retreating, and there were thousands of determined men moving in that direction and hundreds of thousands mobilized in the rest of the country. Had they sent ten expeditions such as that one to different parts of the island, they would have been simultaneously defeated, because the whole people was already armed and ready for combat. Two years and a few months had elapsed since the triumph of the Revolution.

The defeat at Girón Beach, or let us say, the Cuban victory at Girón Beach was what fathered the Alliance for Progress.

During the first year of the Revolution, we had been in Argentina, in an OAS meeting—in the first months, we had not been expelled yet—and we stated that Latin America—at the time it didn't owe a single penny—had to develop. Its population was a lot less than it is now, and we stated that 20 billion dollars were needed to further that development.

Who would have thought then that a little later, right after Girón, afraid that the fire might spread throughout the hemisphere, they would work out the Alliance for Progress, offer 20 billion and press for agrarian and other types of reforms. Just look at how times change! Before that, any Latin American government would have been overthrown for that, on the basis that that was a communist measure; and, after that, they themselves were praising the agrarian reform, tax reforms, abundant money, as an aid to all those economic and social programs, Peace Corps, etc.

Our sugar quota, most of it, was divided among Latin American countries. It was a quota of more than four million tons.

So the very existence of the Revolution forced them to concern themselves with the situation in Latin America and to propose reforms to buffer, to alleviate the conditions it found itself in. All this comes about after the Cuban Revolution.

Hardly a year and a half after that mercenary invasion, even a nuclear war almost took place, due to their efforts to try to destroy the Revolution and their plans to invade Cuba, not with mercenaries now, but with their own forces.

They wouldn't have defeated the people, I can assure you that. For certain, it is absolutely for certain that they would not have defeated the country if one bears in mind the means it already had, the experience, and above all, the people's determination; but it would have cost us many lives.

Such an aggression cost Vietnam 4 million lives, millions of mutilated people and tremendous destruction. What for? So that the United States can now thank the Vietnamese when they nobly, humanely and very justly help to find the remains of some American soldier and deliver them to the government of that country, so that they can be buried in a cemetery close to the place where the relatives who lost a son or a brother live.

But, in this case, it would not have been Vietnam that was invaded, it would have been Cuba. In a situation such as that one, after such an acute crisis when they made certain verbal commitments of not invading our country, they had no other choice but to resign themselves. What did they do then? Pirate attacks, sabotage plans that lasted many years, sabotages to the economy, to industry, to agriculture, using even biological means, numerous plans to assassinate the leaders of the Revolution,

which were corroborated and confessed by them in the report of that famous commission created in the Senate.

That is why Cuba is here. You needn't look for many explanations, because this Revolution put its trust in man, in the people.

We can, of course, speak of satisfaction: it satisfies us that our people not only was able to help other peoples one way or another, but that it can, through its struggle, continue to be example and continue to cooperate with the cause of humanity.

We are not nationalistic, nationalism is not our basic idea, although we deeply love our country. We consider ourselves internationalists and internationalism is not at odds with the love for one's homeland, for the land where a human being is born or where millions of human beings are born.

That's why I spoke about identity. Neither is the love for the land where one was born incompatible with a united world and with a globalization of another character which I called socialist. The culture and the identity of a country is not incompatible with a united, completely globalized world.

More dangerous than that world for the culture of each of our countries is the ideological poison that they spread everyday; the ideological poison that they disseminate through their powerful communication resources, their television chains, their cinema chains. They are the owners, they control them all. The films are made there; the canned culture which they try to feed our spirits with everyday. Not bread, but canned culture, yes. Food for the soul, in the form of cultural poison.

What they invest only in espionage or what they invest in the resources they use to poison the minds of the peoples would be enough for the health standards of the Third World to be similar to those of the developed countries; the infant mortality, the mortality of women during childbirth, of people who die from infectious diseases that could be saved. It would suffice with a vaccine, that can cost pennies. These are the realities.

That's where the danger lies: against our cultures, our identities and our aspirations that each of our brothers can live a decent life and have all that is necessary for a proper life, and, as we said, be immensely rich spiritually.

A just globalized world, globalized under another conception, would not only save the physical space we must live in, but would create millions, hundreds of millions, thousands of millions of millionaires. Not the type of millionaires as are vulgarly conceived today, in material goods that should be distributed in an equitable and just manner. They would be millionaires in their human spirits, that only under another system and under other conceptions could ever be infinitely enriched.

Why must there be unemployment? Why must there be surplus production crises? Why don't machines and technology work to serve man so that everyone has the opportunity to work?, and not 70 or 80 hours as when the Industrial Revolution began in England, and not 60 or 70, as many still work today with two or three jobs to be able to live, but working perhaps 20 hours a week, perhaps 15, using that productivity, so that the citizens of this planet have the necessary material goods: housing, food, health care, recreation, culture; true culture that uplifts man instead of debasing him; culture that does not turn children into murderers, and that culture can only be reached by other roads.

There are many comrades—some are here among us today—working and spending countless hours of the day and the night not only working as much as necessary, but also studying and upgrading themselves. On my part, I enjoy the privilege of having a little more time than what I had 20 or 30 years ago, due to the need that we all have to delve deep into and know the complex problems of today. Our Revolution is the work of a people and of thousands of cadres and leaders. It is not and could never be the work of a single man.

The best fruit of this meeting, in my opinion, is the idea of holding an international meeting to analyze the problems of neoliberal globalization, as we are wont to call it; that is, to concentrate on that issue.

This actually came up the first day of the meeting. I came here as a guest; I asked for the program. What is the program like? Where are the commissions meeting? I had thought of going to Number 1, where these problems were to be discussed, and I said: "Well, this meeting is going to end up discussing this problem and many others. Correct, that's very good; to discuss the training of professionals, that's excellent. All the topics are important." But I thought: "Now"—as I said—"the topic of topics is globalization."

I realized it then, I really did not realize it before, only when I looked at the program, and, due to all the concerns that we are having in relation to the current world situation, I decided to talk to you in a familiar way. I wasn't delivering a speech, or anything like it, but conversing with you, reflecting with you.

I said that and I exhorted you to study; you have to delve deep, to spread the information. After that session was over—I was standing over there near the place of ambush—comrade Roberto came over—he had already met with a few leaders of the Latin American economists here, whose association he chairs—and he told me: "We're thinking—those were his words—"of holding an international meeting."

I had spoken of institutionalizing these meetings, holding them with the necessary frequency and going deep into the analysis of the globalization that was speedily developing in the world, its character and its consequences. They proposed the idea of calling a meeting devoted to analyzing that topic. Of course, I thought it a great idea, I was absolutely in agreement and willing to give it my support.

From that moment on, the idea has continued to develop: how to do it, how to organize it, when. They wanted it to be for next year, and I said: "Look, the problems that are arising can't wait that long, you have to hold it earlier. Why don't you set it for November?" I was later told: "November is a bad month for those who have been here, because of their obligations, tasks; it's not the best moment." I said: "January then." Yes, next year, but in January. There is a little more time to organize it, to prepare it well. The ideas gradually developed as we debated.

It would be great if some of those who defend the neoliberal theory, honestly, or any way they defend it, who believe in the other conceptions, would present their points of view, if they could be asked questions, if we could discuss with them.

That way we came to the idea of having the widest participation possible. We have even talked about how to do it: the participation of the delegates from abroad that are here in this meeting would have priority; analysis of the number—because if 1,000 want to come, it would be impossible—of Latin American economists who are not here and would like to participate that could be invited; last, direct invitations to capable, renowned economists of any other country, including the United States, of course, and also Europe or any other region. Although we have had the privilege of having here a small Spanish representation, and from other countries, like Italy, for example, even from Russia, that participated in this one.

Apart from those who express their wish to come, those who we invite expressly, based on their prestige, their authority as economists, as researchers; and those who we invite belonging to trends opposing the criteria and viewpoints we maintain, even from the developed countries of Europe so they can talk to us about their ideas, we then thought that some of the most important analysts of economic issues and of the world economy that write in acknowledged, prestigious magazines should also be invited, those who think one way and those who think another.

It wouldn't be a bad idea—although it's about time we check our ambitions—to have some political leaders attend that meeting; not any political leader, but some political leaders.

I'm thinking about Europe, about those who have expressed their opinions on the development model; and about those who do not agree with the integration based on the Maastricht Treaty, because many contradictions may come up concerning this item. They do not agree, based on the concrete situation in their countries, because they feel obliged to defend the people's interests. We, based on the interests of the countries that are not developed and the criterion that the emergence of a powerful economic force and a new currency is convenient for our country, just like if other currencies emerge that can confront the privileges and the power of the hegemonic currency as a probable and perhaps as the only desirable course of events.

There might be a certain contradiction between them when they present their points of view if they oppose European integration and us when we expound ours. They can enlighten us on what they don't like about a neoliberal integration in their developed countries and about those matters about which they rightfully complain. We don't want that type of integration for the world either. But irrespective of whether that integration is considered negative or positive, it would be preferable for the rest of the world at this stage of globalization than the total and absolute dominion of the dollar in the world economy.

Other ideas will undoubtedly come up, but I think no more than 500 people should participate, 600 at the most, in order to preserve an atmosphere of direct and frank exchange and in accordance with the number of seats available in the room where the National Assembly meets, an ideal place for the meeting due to its technical facilities. There are lateral seats, there can be guests, there can be journalists, there can be everything, and transparency above all, total transparency and simultaneous interpreting of whatever is said to the necessary amount of languages—as they do in the UN— and discuss, search for the method, how should the work be organized, if all of it in the plenary or by parts in commissions.

Actually I like debates in the plenary, but a certain order would have to be established, and take into account the number of presentations that are proposed. In some of the large meetings, I've seen more than 150 speakers take the podium, making the meeting interminable and sometimes chaotic and scarcely productive. We have to see how we manage to have a rational number of papers with the proper time to substantiate them, and debate them with brief questions and contributions. So that the main theses can be properly presented and at the same time the largest possible number of participants can make contributions.

The number of presentations will have to be limited. It will depend on the number of days, the endurance of those attending and we have to be ready to work in three sessions, morning, afternoon and evening. Well it's what we're doing now more or less. It would be three, four or five days. If we are going to make the effort, we must do it well and organize it so that many can express their ideas, and not so much by excessively limiting the time of a person that has to present a theory, because I know that in five or ten minutes all you can present is a telegram. I have had to prepare quite a few telegrams in international meetings.

The method of speaking in telegraphic style is not all bad, but to present very summarized facts and arguments in that style is not easy. It constrains you to making simple affirmations: "Father arrived, good health, we need money" (Laughter.), and that's all, no kisses, no embraces, no dearest friend.

No, the participant who comes to make a presentation of the thesis he or she defends should have at least half an hour to do it. What would we have done if we had told the secretary of SELA yesterday to limit his magnificent presentation to 10 minutes? Then, yes, everybody speaks, but no one says anything. Time does not have to be rigidly controlled. They can write, use outlines, however they wish to do it; answer questions, that's important, and opinions should be given. If the participants want to give their opinion on the point that is being discussed they should do so. These are forms of presentation and debate that we must conceive and organize well to get the best results. The greatest amount of people should participate, the ideas should be debated as thoroughly as possible, and we

must then compile all this into a book and send it to many other people, economists, politicians and scholars of these topics.

If any of the geniuses can come, we must be willing to give them up to 10 more minutes and then some time for debate. But, especially as regards the main theses, really ask, answer, give opinions, debate. To record this and film it on video is a way of listening to and disseminating things, really. In this very same meeting we have heard many interesting things about globalization, although many of you came prepared for many different topics. With time to get ready, the future meeting is going to give us very good results concerning the main issue of our time.

That's why I said that, in my opinion, it was the best fruit we were going to get out of this meeting.

We already saw the example showing us that they can come from Europe. We were glad to listen to Fernando here and what he told us about Spain having very few economists until relatively recently and that now it has tens of thousands, many of them members of his organization. I don't know to what extent, as chairman of the Spanish economists, he has to be careful when he expresses his opinions. The president of SELA himself has to speak with certain caution, we might say. But I think that in a meeting such as the one conceived even the European economists—those of international bodies would have to be a little more careful—will be able to speak freely.

Fernando, bearing the time in mind, was brief, tried to ease our tension and anxiety due to the late hour with friendly, agreeable words, of an excellent humor. And if we are going to have lengthy meetings, humor must not be absent. We thank him for it and we are very glad that the Economists Association of Spain has been represented here.

I have already told him: Start thinking about who you'll propose to come to the meeting." And since he happened to speak on July 3, date on which, as he reminded us, the centennial of the sinking of Cervera's squadron is commemorated, I take the liberty to correct him concerning a detail.

He spoke to us about the battle of the Spanish squadron against the American gunboats that blockaded the Santiago de Cuba bay. A gunboat is a relatively small warship with small caliber cannons. These were battleships with armor three times thicker and cannons of much longer range than those of Cervera's ships, more speed, more fuel, fully supplied, against a squadron that some stupid ruler whose name I don't even remember sent here. But I do remember, because I have read and meditated about it enough, the stupidity of sending that squadron, that didn't come to fight against the Cubans, it came to fight against the United States, because war had already been declared.

Some of their ships were undergoing maintenance, some units lacked pieces that had not yet been assembled, and they were sent without those pieces. They were also given the order to sail without a single ancillary boat to supply them with coal. There is no doubt that the person who issued the order had never been aboard a warship, did not have the slightest idea about politics or war.

That squadron arrives, has to go almost next to Venezuela to be supplied with coal, and then makes its entrance into the Santiago de Cuba bay when a very powerful American squadron was approaching. They reached Santiago de Cuba and the enemy squadron was blockaded. That Spanish squadron could have been useful from the military point of view. It could have helped the Spanish garrison in their combats against the American troops that were attacking the city. I'm analyzing this strictly from a military point of view.

I must bear in mind that our compatriots, deceived by that Joint Resolution of the United States Congress which stated that Cuba by right was and should be independent—the noblest, the most generous declaration to enter a war—received the American participation in the fight as a friendly act. Only the reality that followed taught the Cubans the sad truth.

The commander of those patriotic troops that helped the American soldiers in the battles against the

Spaniards was not allowed to enter the city of Santiago de Cuba. The Cuban patriots, that so determinedly cooperated to liberate it, were not allowed to enter.

Therefore, looking at this particular situation and analyzing the event from a strictly military standpoint, the Spanish squadron could have helped the defenders of the city with its cannons and its sailors in a real effective way.

Those who had given them the order to sail to Cuba in those conditions, gave them another order: "Take out the squadron!" Those sailors, in a disciplined manner, heroically, from Admiral Cervera at their head to the most modest crewman, followed the order and went out. A small bay, a very narrow entrance through which the squadron had to exit now ship by ship, one by one, and that was the way they did it: one by one, against that powerful squadron firing with all its cannons against every Spanish warship that exited. They were in no conditions to inflict even one casualty on the crew members of those American battleships. Nevertheless, they went out one by one. Not a single one of those ships surrendered, they had to sink them, or mortally wounded, the sailors themselves sailed them onto the coast—the remains of some of those ship are still around.

I recently said it publicly, that it is one of the greatest feats, one of the most heroic deeds known in the history of sea battles. The Americans should be ashamed to talk about such a victory. That type of victory is not a glory, because it was achieved under very unequal conditions, with total superiority and against each isolated Spanish ship. It was not a combat of a squadron against another squadron, a combat which the Spanish squadron could not have won. Even if the ships had been spread out they would have been irremediably sunk. In this case, the squadron is sunk ship by ship, one by one, and all against one.

I think it was a real moral victory of those Spanish sailors, a heroic deed to which a people like ours, which admires heroism, has been able to pay tribute.

Tribute was also paid on the 100th anniversary to the American sailors who died aboard the "Maine", which exploded in the Havana harbor, where it had arrived practically without permission—relations were relatively tense—it just so happened that it explodes and a large number of its crew members die. That was the pretext for the war.

It was afterwards completely proved that the explosion did not come from outside, that the explosion occurred within the ship. How did it happen? Was it accidental? If it is considered accidental, one can't but be suspicious of the fact that it exploded at the moment it did. It might have been intentional, that someone did it because he individually decided to do it, a person who might have been alienated, crazy; or a racist fanatic wanting to exterminate a crew that was black in its vast majority, or because someone prepared the perpetrator giving the necessary instructions in order to do it for a political purpose. But the Spaniards were not really guilty of the sinking of the "Maine", a war pretext that brought about the intervention when the Spaniards were actually already defeated. They could not resist that war, so far from their country, with so many casualties, as a result of the battles and the diseases, and due to the exhaustion of their economic and human resources, they couldn't. That is when the Americans intervene, occupy the country. They occupied it for four years. They took possession of the territory of the Guantánamo base. They're still there after 100 years. They're there by force.

We have learned to be patient, calm. It is a piece of Cuba. We are much more interested in a liberated world. And if they decide to stay there indefinitely because they feel like it and based on their military might, when the empire no longer exists and in its stead a united, globalized and just world emerges, that territory will be part of this world, together with the rest of the island that today is the territory of our dear homeland. That's what we think.

The intervention cost us four years of occupation, of humiliation. The Liberating Army was disarmed. It is as if our Rebel Army had been disarmed after the victory on January the 1st [1959]. They dissolved the Partido Revolucionario (Revolutionary Party) created by José Martí, of which all the patriots were

members, a truly united party from which stem the roots of our current Party.

The country was left at their mercy, they took possession of everything: the mines, the best lands, the forests of mahogany and other precious woods were burnt, they used the wood as fuel for the sugar mill boilers; the deforestation of the country was carried out in a terrible manner. When the Revolution triumphed, there were practically no forests.

When in 1902 they grant our people a merely symbolic and formal independence, they accompany it with an amendment, known as the Platt Amendment, which gave the United States the constitutional right to intervene in our country. That's what the participation of the United States in the Cuban independence war meant.

The Spanish economist recalled those sailors, and I take the opportunity on this date to express our homage to those heroic Spanish sailors.

The only other thing I have left to do now is ask you to forgive me for the times I took up your attention, for the times I spoke, and even for taking a little more time than what I had calculated, when I meant to say good-bye as I came by. (Laughter and applause.)

And allow me to bid you farewell with a very well known phrase by one of the most illustrious sons of this hemisphere and a symbol that spreads throughout the world because of his heroic example of solidarity, his revolutionary ideas and extraordinary human qualities:

Ever onward till victory!

(Ovation.)

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