

At the United Nations

In addition to being a military leader, President of the National Bank, and Minister of Industries, Guevara layed an important role in Cuban diplomacy. In 1959 he made a tour of Afro-Asian countries; in 1960 he headed an economic delegation to the Soviet-bloc countries, China, and North Korea; in 1961 he represented Cuba at Punta del Este; in 1962 he headed another economic mission to the Soviet Union; in 1968 he attended a conference on economic planning in Algeria; in March, 1 964, he represented Cuba at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva, then went to Algeria again on an official mission, made a third trip to the Soviet Union in November, and represented Cuba in the 19th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York. The following are excerpts from his speech to the UN on December 11, 1964.

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(...) Cuba comes here to state its position on the most important controversial points and will do so with the full sense of responsibility which the use of this rostrum implies, while at the same time responding to the unavoidable duty of speaking out clearly and frankly.

We should like to see this Assembly shake itself out of complacency and move forward. We should like to see the committees begin their work and not stop at the first confrontation. Imperialism wishes to convert this meeting into a pointless oratorical tournament, instead of solving the grave problems of the world. We must prevent their doing so. This Assembly should not be remembered in the future only by the number 19, which identifies it. Our efforts are directed to prevent that.

We feel that we have the right and the obligation to do so, because our country is one of the most constant points of friction. It is one of the places where the principles upholding the rights of small peoples to sovereignty are being tested day by day, minute by minute. And at the same time, our country is one of the entrenchments of freedom in the world, situated a few steps away from United States imperialism, showing by its actions, its daily example, that peoples can liberate themselves, can keep themselves free, in the present conditions of mankind.

Of course, there is now a socialist camp that becomes stronger day by day and has more powerful weapons of struggle. But additional conditions are required for survival: the maintenance of domestic cohesion, faith in one's own destiny and the unrenounceable decision to fight to the death for the defense of one's country and revolution. These conditions exist in Cuba.

Of all the burning problems to be dealt with by this Assembly, one that is of special significance for us and whose solution we feel must be sought so as to leave no doubt in the minds of any, is that of peaceful co-existence among states with different economic and social systems. Much progress has been made in the world in this field. But imperialism, particularly U. S. imperialism, has attempted to have the world believe that peaceful co-existence is the exclusive right of the world's great powers. We say here what our president said in Cairo, and which later took shape in the Declaration of the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries: There cannot be peaceful co-existence only among the powerful if we are to ensure world peace. Peaceful co-existence must be exercised among all states, independently of size, of the previous historic relations that linked them, and of the problems that may arise among some of them at a given moment (....)

We must also say that it is not only in relations in which sovereign states are involved that the concept of peaceful co-existence must be clearly defined. As Marxists we have maintained that peaceful co-existence

among nations does not encompass co-existence between the exploiters and the exploited, the oppressor and the oppressed (....)

We express our solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico and their great leader, Pedro Albizu Campos, who, in another act of hypocrisy, has been set free at the age of 72, after spending a lifetime in jail, now paralytic and almost unable to speak. Albizu Campos is a symbol of the still unredeemed but indomitable America. Years and years of prison, almost unbearable pressures in jail, mental torture, solitude, total isolation from his people and his family, the insolence of the conqueror and lackeys in the land of his birth - nothing broke his will. The delegation of Cuba, on behalf of its people, pays a tribute of admiration and gratitude to a patriot who confers honor upon our America.

The North Americans, for many years, have tried to convert Puerto Rico into a mirror of hybrid culture - the Spanish language with English inflection, the Spanish language with hinges on its backbone, the better to bend before the U. S. soldier. Puerto Rican soldiers have been used as cannon fodder in imperialist wars, as in Korea, and have even been made to fire at their own brothers, as in the massacre perpetrated* by the U. S. army a few months ago against the helpless people of Panama - one of the most recent diabolical acts carried out by Yankee imperialism.

Yet the people of Puerto Rico, despite the terrible attack on their free will and historic destiny, have preserved their culture, their Latin character, their national feelings which, in themselves, give proof of the implacable will for independence that exists among the masses on that Latin American island (....)

One of the essential items before this conference is general and complete disarmament. We express our support of general and complete disarmament. Furthermore, we advocate the complete destruction of thermonuclear devices and the holding of a conference of all the nations of the world toward the fulfillment of this aspiration of all people. In his

statement before this Assembly, our Prime Minister said that arms races have always led to war. There are new atomic powers in the world, and the possibilities of a confrontation are grave.

We feel that that conference is necessary to obtain the total destruction of thermonuclear weapons and, as a first step, the total prohibition of tests. At the same time, there must clearly be established the obligation of all states to respect the present frontiers of other states and to refrain from indulging in any aggression, even with conventional weapons.

In adding our voice to that of all the peoples of the world in their clamor for general and complete disarmament, the destruction of all atomic arsenals, the complete cessation of thermonuclear devices and atomic tests of any kind, we feel it necessary to stress, furthermore, that the territorial integrity of nations must be respected and the armed hand of imperialism held back, for it is just as dangerous with conventional weapons. Those who murdered thousands of defenseless citizens in the Congo did not use the atomic weapon. They used conventional weapons, and it was these conventional weapons, used by imperialists, that caused so many deaths (....)

And Cuba reaffirms once again the right to maintain on its territory the weapons it wishes and its refusal to recognize the right of any power on earth - however powerful - to violate our soil, our territorial waters, or our airspace.

If, in any assembly, Cuba assumes obligations of a collective nature, it will fulfill them to the letter. So long as this does not happen, Cuba maintains all its rights, just as any other nation.

In the face of the demands of imperialism, our Prime Minister posed the five necessary points for the existence of a sound peace in the Caribbean. They are as follows:

- 1) Cessation of the economic blockade and all economic and trade

pressures by the U. S. in all parts of the world against our country.

2) Cessation of all subversive activities, launching and landing of weapons and explosives by air and sea, organization of mercenary invasions, infiltration of spies and saboteurs, all of which acts are carried out from the territory of the U. S. and some accomplice countries.

3) Cessation of piratical attacks carried out from existing bases in the U. S. and Puerto Rico.

4) Cessation of all the violations of our airspace and our territorial waters by aircraft and warships of the U. S.

5) Withdrawal from the Guantanamo naval base and restitution of the Cuban territory occupied by the U. S.

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