

At the closing of the Congress of Women of the Americas
Speech by Fidel Castro Ruz
16 January 1963

Women of America, fraternal delegates of the countries of Europe, Asia and Africa who are visiting us:

In the first place, I want to make clear—as I have already told some of the lady comrades of the congress—that if this function began a little late it was not my fault. [Laughter] Because this year is the year of organisation [laughter], I was in the theatre at 20:57 [laughter], and we intend during this year of organisation to be punctual. What happened was that the comrades, the comrades of the congress talked a lot. I think they were speaking till eight or nine, more or less—until eight, and then some [laughter], and that is why this function began a little late. I only want to make it clear that it was not my fault. [Laughter]

It has been a very great honour for us, for our country, that Cuba is the site of this congress. We understand that it has been a very positive event, a serious event. We have tried to keep ourselves informed, to read the material of the various reports presented to the congress, and our impression is really that all of them have great value because of their seriousness, the correct focusing of the problems, the enormous amount of data they contribute about the realities of our continent.

Naturally, the topics of the congress were restricted to those sections that relate to the interests of women; but what, really, does not interest woman in modern society? What does not interest the Latin American woman, the American woman, regarding our social problems? When discussions are held about the rights of women, of their aspirations, we see that there cannot be rights of women in our America or rights of children, mothers or wives if there is no revolution. [Applause] The fact is that in the world in which the American woman lives, the woman must necessarily be revolutionary. [Applause]

Why must she be revolutionary? Because woman, who constitutes an essential part of every people, is, in the first place, exploited as a worker and discriminated against as a woman.

And who are the revolutionaries in the society of man? Who were they throughout history? In simple terms, the exploited and the discriminated. Because woman is not only exploited as a worker when she works for an exploiting monopoly, for a society of exploiting classes, but even as a worker she is the most exploited

worker, with the lowest salaries, the worst conditions, with a series of contradictions among her social functions—her condition as a woman and the exploitation to which she is subjected.

Thus, logically, women are revolutionary, and on a continent like this they must be revolutionary. That is why in our country women are revolutionary. [Applause] In our country many women were exploited. They were exploited as workers who worked to enrich a class, and were also discriminated against as workers. Many women did not even have access to work, to the opportunity to work.

In Comrade Vilma's report there appears a report on the activities of the Cuban woman within the Revolution and the benefits the Cuban woman has received through the Revolution. The report was long, but even so it is possible that the report has some omissions, because the Revolution has done even more for woman. It does not believe it has done it all—not in the least; but it intends to continue to work for the woman. And in our country the woman, like the Negro, is no longer discriminated against.

In reality, the Revolution has meant much to the Cuban woman. Within the Revolution the revolutionary leadership makes efforts to make available more and more opportunities to the woman. As an example we can cite the fact that when the medium and large shoe, clothing and hardware sales were instructed to select women as administrators of those firms [applause], some four thousand administrators—that is, administrators for some four thousand centres—90 per cent or more are at present administered by women.

There is another statistic, for example, that did not appear in the report of the comrade president of the federation—and it is very illustrative—about the increase in the participation of the woman in activities that were practically closed to her. It is the fact that, for example, in some professions, such as the medical profession, the number of women who entered that university school was, possibly, less than 10 per cent. At this time, in the Institute of Basic Medical Sciences—that is to say, the first year of medical schools—about 50 per cent are women. [Applause]

Those facts are evidence of how, in four years of revolution, the woman has been incorporated into social life, the life of her country, the life of the circle in which she lives and develops. For example, women also paraded along with our soldiers on the second of January in contingents of women's military battalions. In our army there are a series of functions in which women work and perform services. The bourgeois concept of womanhood is disappearing in our country. The concepts of stigma,

concepts of discrimination, have really been disappearing in our country, and the masses of women have realised this.

Prejudice is being replaced by a new concept in which the qualities of the woman are valued for a series of social activities, in some of which they demonstrate exceptional virtues. A broad field of action has been opened to them. If you compare the report of the Cuban delegation with the reports of the delegations of Latin America, you will be able to see the great differences. The problems here now are, for example, how to free the woman from domestic slavery, how to create conditions that would permit her to participate as much as possible in production, from which the woman and the Revolution both profit.

Within a society like the capitalist society—one of unemployment, millions of men without work—it is logical that women are many times relegated to restricted economic activities. Within a society like ours, in which, because of the complete development of all the resources of the nation and our planned economy, more and more labour is needed for production, it is logical that the Revolution concern itself with creating those conditions. And so today the Revolution is concerned with the establishment of the largest possible number of children's centres, student dining halls, and with the creation of those circumstances that will enable the women not to be a slave of the kitchen, and with the establishment of laundries.

It is clear that the increase of certain of those institutions, such as children's centres, is restricted by the resources we may have under certain circumstances. This year emphasis is being placed on the establishment of workers' dining halls in the principal factories of the country, and next year the accent will be placed on the establishment of students' dining halls. The development of those institutions will enable the woman to participate more in work, production, and the life of her country—not only economic activities but political and social activities as well. [Applause]

Today those are our concerns, because the women in our country are able to be concerned with these solutions. The Cuban delegation has also spoken of the gigantic effort made by the Revolution on the education front. There is hardly any need to speak: it is sufficient to see it. This movement can be seen. It is a movement that is forging a great future for this country; it is a movement that demonstrates the objectives of the Revolution projected, above all, towards the future. It has permitted the doubling of the number of children in the schools, the doubling of the number of pupils in secondary and superior schools, the eradication of illiteracy, and it can enable this country to march forward in forging a magnificent youth destined to

inherit the conditions the Revolution is creating for that youth.

Our problem now is not how to win the right to do that but how to do it as perfectly as possible. There is a difference between the situation of the women of America represented in this congress and the representation of the Cuban women. Cuban women have the opportunity to do all that, and the American women need that opportunity. Our problems are different in the sense that now it is how we will do it and how best we can do it. For us it is no longer a matter of the chance to have, let us say, nearly a hundred thousand youths studying under state scholarships but rather how to organise them, how to see to it that the schools where they study are more efficient, how to train cadres of teachers, and how to do that task well.

That does not mean that we do not have much work. On the contrary, there is more and more work all the time in the Revolution. But the Revolution is creating resources and more resources along the march. An example of how those resources are created is the fact that it recently was necessary to receive in our capital nearly ten thousand young peasant girls from Oriente Province. [Applause] Whom to give that task to? The Federation of Women had been in charge of that work, but the Federation of Women had the work of attending to all the boarding houses of the scholarship students. It did not have enough cadres, but there was a teachers' school that was organised by a group of brigadist girls who participated in 1961 in the great literacy campaign, a school of 1,100 young girls who were studying to be teachers. It is a good school.

The comrade who is in charge of that school, and who is a great pedagogue, because she knows how to teach, Comrade Elena Gil, had begun with a group of three hundred revolutionary instructors—that is, three hundred female teachers formed from groups of youths who volunteered to teach in the mountains. She began by training three hundred revolutionary instructors for the night schools for girls who work in domestic service. This was the first school. First there were three hundred. With those three hundred girls, the night schools were organised.

Then there were another three hundred, and their number reached six hundred. With the help of these girls the Macarensé Pedagogical Institute was organised, which trained 1,100, of whom three hundred were selected for special courses. With those three hundred the rest of the girls, the schools for the ten thousand peasant girls who arrived, were organised. [Applause]

We already had cadres—girls from the literacy campaign, girls who had already studied one year, girls who already have discipline, a sense of responsibility. It is

really impressive to cross one of these avenues where millionaires once lived and find groups of girls in uniform, peasant girls going from one place to another—possibly to eat or to class. With them, in her scholarship student uniform, a girl who was in some cases younger than the peasant girls themselves, but they were the leaders. They were in charge of the group: they were in charge of the house in which they live and were, in addition, their teachers. They work and study.

Consider how those girls are being trained, already receiving that responsibility, already getting serious tasks, fulfilling them. They have a system, and they combine study with work. This indicates that the number of persons trained will be greater all the time.

Now we must organise another teachers' school. The Revolution changed the method of selecting teachers, because teachers used to be selected exclusively from persons from the city. The Revolution changed that procedure. It established a system of selection and opportunity for all girls and boys who want to become teachers, and the system begins in the mountains. [Applause]

That is why we now have five thousand youths in the mountains who are entering their first year of studies for the teaching profession. Later they will go to school for two more years. Then they will go to a higher institute, where they will stay for another two years. Many of those female teachers will be of peasant extraction, girls familiar with the mountains, with the rural areas.

At the same time we are organising pre-university courses for peasant girls who are in the fourth and fifth grades and want to begin studying to be teachers. From those same ten thousand peasant girls we will select those with the greatest vocational aptitude and prepare them to enter those schools. Within a period of time we will have our higher institute for teachers with six thousand students, whom we can mobilise so that they in turn can teach, combining studies with work. This is being carried out with the great effort of a certain number of persons who work on that front.

Are there many persons who are perfectly competent for that task? No, unfortunately, there are not many. But when there is a competent person in charge of any of those activities, he creates what we can call a school—that is, a system of work. We do not have many *Elesas* now, but in the future we will have hundreds of *Elesas*, because they will be the girls she trained. Every day there will be more schools, superior schools, and we need many cadres in education to organise and take charge of those schools. Thus advances the Revolution with its youth. It can do it. We have

won the opportunity to begin to do all that.

The comrades of Latin America present a realistic picture of the situation of the continent. It is really frightening. We believe that all those reports should be published in a pamphlet to be distributed here and outside [applause] in Latin America. Those figures are really depressing—the statistics about the number of children without schools or teachers; undernourished; the shameful figures of the percentage of children who reach the sixth grade, the percentage of those who can undertake secondary studies, and the percentage of those who can undertake university studies; the figures on infant mortality, the consequence of the unhealthy conditions in which they live, the undernourishment, the lack of medical programmes.

Today, this is not our situation. Today, we can say that not a single child is crippled by poliomyelitis; we can say that tens of thousands of children are saved as a result of medical assistance. More and more national public health programmes continue to develop. The number of beds in our hospitals has practically tripled. The resources assigned to public health have been quintupled. Today, those are not our problems, but they are the problem of an entire continent.

Our problem is how to create everything we need to satisfy so many needs, to overcome the poverty that imperialist exploitation left us. That is our problem. Our job is big, hard, difficult. And it is not easy to have to carry out that task with the threatening claws of imperialism hanging over us, with the ceaseless hostility of the most powerful and aggressive imperialist nation of the world. How to carry out that work is our problem. How to defend the Revolution and the sovereignty of this country while at the same time advancing—that is our problem.

But that, American women, is not your problem. Your problem, and that of the peoples you represent, is how to win the opportunity to do this which we are doing. [Applause] We are certain we will advance—in some years more, in some years less.

We are certain that we will overcome our difficulties, at times with more sacrifices than at others. We are certain that imperialism will not be able to defeat us [applause], because there will never be any conquered in this country. [Applause] There may be fallen, dead, but no defeated. [Applause and chanting]

If the Yankee imperialists one day, using all their might and resources, were to decide to destroy this country, the most they could ever say would be “We have destroyed it,” not “We have defeated it.” [Applause] And we know that that danger hangs over us, but we also know that there remains an entire continent and an entire

world. We are not just Cubans: we are Latin Americans. [Applause and cheering] We are even more because we are not only Latin Americans, we are human beings who live on the planet Earth. [Applause]

The important thing is the victory of mankind. We know that in resisting the imperialists, being firm against the Yankee imperialists, we are defending the rights of mankind. That is how we Cubans think.

I repeat, the problem for us today is to work and fight. Your problem is to fight in order to work later. The figures are there—those cold, terrible figures that, when UNESCO or FAO or any other UN organisation compiles statistics, say so many millions of so much, and so many millions of so much more, so many millions of deaths from hunger or curable disease, or so many millions of children without schools, or so many millions without homes, or so many millions undernourished; life expectancy is so much, which is half the average life span in the highly industrialised and exploiting countries.

The figures are there, including the figures of the dead, which are higher than those of any revolution. The number of deaths per year in Latin America, those who die of hunger and illness without assistance, is greater than those who would die in the liberation of the peoples of Latin America. [Applause] Here, the struggle cost twenty thousand lives; but many times twenty thousand lives have already been saved. We can wait, and the figures will continue to pile up, as will the millions of unfortunates, exploited, dying. The figures are there, the results of the feudal, imperialist exploitation.

The problem of the figures must not be restricted to writing them down in a graph or a pamphlet. We must think about how to change that situation. [Applause] There are persons who are experts on figures, but what is needed are experts on changing the situation, experts on leading peoples on revolutions. That is the art of the revolutionaries, the art that must be learnt and developed: how to bring the masses to the struggle.

It is the masses who make history; but for them to make history the masses must be taken to the battle. That is the duty of the leaders and the revolutionary organisations: to make the masses march, to launch the masses into battle. [Applause] That is what they did in Algeria. [Applause] And that is what the patriots are doing in South Viet Nam. [Applause] They have sent the masses into battle with correct methods, correct tactics, and they have brought the greatest amount of the masses into the battle.

That is what we did. The four, five, six or seven of us who one day were separated did not conquer power. It was the movement of the masses that the struggle against the tyranny unleashed that culminated in the victory of the people.

With regard to this there is something we want to clear up, because there have been some hare-brained theoreticians who have declared that in Cuba there was a peaceful change from capitalism to socialism. That is like denying that thousands and thousands of militants fell in this country. It is like denying that an army from the bosom of the people in this country defeated a modern army, armed and instructed by Yankee imperialism. [Applause] That is like denying that explosive, incendiary bombs have fallen on our peasants, cities and towns bearing the legend *Made in USA*. That is like denying the formidable struggle of our people. It is like denying Playa Girón and those who fell there. It was not a peaceful transition: it was a combat transition, without which there would not have been any transition in our country. Without that heroic battle, that armed battle of the Cuban people, we would perhaps still have Señor Batista here, made in USA.

Those are the historical truths. And we believe that we at least have the right to speak about our historical truths without some long-distance theoreticians telling us what happened here without having ever come here. One does not have to whisper about these things, nor must one say them in low tones. They must be said in a loud voice so that they will be heard, really heard. [Applause]

And let the peoples hear them, because those false interpretations of history tend to create that conformism that also suits imperialism; it tends to create that resignation and reformism and that policy of waiting for the Greek kalends to make revolutions. Those false interpretations of history do not conform to the situation of the majority of the Latin American countries, where objective conditions exist—and the imperialists have clearly seen that objective conditions do exist—but where subjective conditions are missing. Those subjective conditions must be created, and they are created by historical truth, not by falsification of history. [Applause]

Those subjective conditions are not created by saying that there was a peaceful transition in Cuba. [One of the delegates shouts something about cowards.] It is not a matter of cowards but of confused, of mistaken views. We do not deny the possibility of peaceful transition, but we are still awaiting the first case. But we do not deny it, because we are not dogmatists, and we understand the ceaseless change of historical conditions and circumstances.

We do not deny it, but we do say that there was no peaceful transition; and we do

protest against an attempt to use the case of Cuba to confuse the revolutionaries of other countries where the objective conditions for the revolution exist and where they can do the same thing Cuba did. It is logical that imperialist theoreticians try to prevent revolutions. The imperialists slander the Cuban Revolution, sow lies, say the worst horrors, create fear of revolutions among the people. But let no-one from a revolutionary position attempt to create conformism or fear of revolutions. That is absurd. Let the imperialist theoreticians preach conformism. Let the revolutionary theoreticians preach revolution without fear. [Applause]

That is what we think. That was what we said in the Declaration of Havana, which in some fraternal countries received from some revolutionary organisations the honours of a desk drawer when it should have received the just publicity it deserved. It would be like locking up everything you have discussed here. Of course, if we do not want the masses to learn about it we must put it in a drawer. But if we tell the masses what the situation is, they must also be told what the road is. We must bring them to the struggle, because that road is much easier in many Latin American countries than it was in Cuba.

I want to make it clear, so that the theoreticians will not get angry, that we are not making an irresponsible generalisation. I want to make it clear that we know that each country has its specific conditions, and that is why we do not generalise. But we say the majority. We know there are exceptions. We know there are countries in which those objective conditions do not exist. But they exist in the majority of the Latin American countries. That is our opinion. To say it here is a duty, because we hope that in forty years we will not meet as today—the granddaughters of our federated women with your granddaughters—to discuss the same problems. [Applause]

Our country is facing difficult circumstances, great risks. There is no reason to stick our heads into a hole, like the ostrich. Things must be seen realistically. Our country is experiencing a period of risks, of great dangers.

On one side we have Yankee imperialism, imperialism's most aggressive and most powerful nation, which has set as its basic aim the destruction of this Revolution; and on the other, we have circumstances that are adverse to the world revolutionary movement.

First, I want to say that for us the crisis of the Caribbean is not resolved. [Applause] I want to say that in our opinion, in the opinion of the revolutionary leadership of our country, a war was avoided but peace was not won. That is not the

same thing. Do all the circumstances that forced us to take the measures we took, the steps we took, not still exist? Does the declared policy of hostility and aggression against our country of the Yankee imperialists not still persist? We do not believe in the words of Kennedy; but, moreover, Kennedy has not given any word. And if he gave it, he has already retracted it. That is why we said that for us there was no satisfactory guarantee without the five points we proposed as a result of that crisis. [Applause]

We must be very clear on these controversial and subtle questions. We must be clear on them. If it is said that we are here, that is, that we have not been destroyed, because of the solidarity of the socialist camp. It is the truth. But if it is said that we are here because of Kennedy's word, that is not the truth. We have resisted for four years thanks to that solidarity.

Very well, what is peace to us? What peace is there for us? Since Kennedy spoke in the Orange Bowl, the agents of imperialism have committed four murders. They killed a peasant scholarship student on holiday in Trinidad. They killed, by burning him alive, a worker in Las Villas province, a worker who worked in the reforestation service. They murdered an eleven-year-old in San Antonio de las Vegas. They murdered two CDR comrades in the province of Matanzas.

Yankee agents, with Yankee weapons, following Yankee orders!—the policy of subversion declared by the imperialists. What did we say? How could there be a solution if the imperialists assumed the right of trying to strangle our country with hunger, of trying to isolate our country and pressure all shipping lines and airlines in order to deprive us of essential raw materials and create hunger in this country?—if the imperialists assumed the right to maintain that blockade policy against us and to create every imaginable obstacle outside international law, outside the principles that regulate the United Nations; if the imperialists assumed the right to subvert social order, introduce weapons, saboteurs, train them, organise mercenaries; if the imperialists assumed the right to violate our sea and air space; if the imperialists assumed the right to organise pirate bands; if the imperialists assumed the right to retain a piece of our territory, which points at the heart of our country? What right can the imperialists have to demand the withdrawal of friendly weapons while they maintain enemy weapons on Cuban territory?

What right have the imperialists to do that? In three statements, in the one Mr Kennedy made after the crisis, he used threatening language, maintaining his policy of using economic, political and other kinds of pressure and guaranteeing that he

would not invade if we did not promote subversion. But for Kennedy, this is subversion. You can't win! This is a congress of women, who speak of hunger, the frightening poverty of Latin America; that is subversion. When he spoke to the mercenaries at the Orange Bowl he said that he would deliver the mercenary flag in Havana.

Recently Mr Rusk, the Yankee Secretary of State, said that the United States was not committed to refraining from invading Cuba, and that if it had committed itself it had done so with regard to the immediate situation, independent of its commitments with the other Latin American countries. That is what they have said. Where is the commitment not to invade Cuba? It is insolent for the Yankee Secretary of State to say that they have not committed themselves not to invade Cuba, as if international law, the UN Charter and all the norms that regulate relations between nations did not commit them to not invade our country, since, of course, they have no right to invade Cuba. By speaking in that way, instead of promising not to invade, they shirk the obligation they have under international law not to invade Cuba. Moreover, they show that the Yankee leaders have the souls of gangsters and pirates. [Applause]

I believe that many arguments are not necessary. The words and the deeds are there. That is why we say that a war has been avoided—good; but peace has not been won. This is bad. That is the situation.

The imperialists are somewhat optimistic. This is reflected in their words. I do not think that optimism has any reason to exist other than the underestimation of the realities of the world and the underestimation of the strength of the peoples. It is clear that they do not want a finger moved in Latin America. They do not want the peoples to fight. For instance, the example of the heroic Venezuelan people [applause] is, for them, a horrible nightmare. They want to be calmly permitted to establish the bases of a long-lasting empire, based on even more inhuman exploitation.

All those programmes are always based on an alleged austerity, which means more privation for the workers, more sacrifice for the masses.

Let no-one doubt it: the “Alliance for Progress” will not prosper, because it is simply a policy of domination, exploitation, and retreat. The partners of that alliance are puppets like Stroessner, Guido, Romulo Betancourt, the Somozas, the Peruvian gorilla junta. Those are the progressivists. The alliance is with those progressivists—the most reactionary, backward and prehistoric people in Latin America. It will not advance. It is doomed to failure. It is a desperate imperialist attempt to deceive and

confuse.

In one of those speeches Mr Kennedy said that we will compare Cuba with the Alliance for Progress. If we make this comparison, Mr Kennedy is lost, because here, despite all the imperialist propaganda, there is the reality that every child is guaranteed a quart of milk daily. We have had to ration, because employment increased extraordinarily. Some half million people began to work, to have an income. The peasants no longer had to pay rent. Rents were reduced 50 per cent. All education became free. Hospital service was quintupled. The people had incomparably more resources.

It was logical that under these circumstances we should have had to take measures that would guarantee all families the articles they needed at a just price, because there still remained here a sufficient number of wealthy people to establish all kinds of speculation, if there were any question of prices, as is the situation in the capitalist countries where they set prices. A litre of milk goes up to two pesos, and there is enough for those who have the two pesos. A pound of rice goes up to three pesos, and then it suffices for those who have five pesos. There is no rationing; there is something much worse: he who has gets everything and he who has less gets nothing.

But they try to cause confusion with all these things. Let it be admitted that our country faces a difficult situation, resulting from the circumstances that it is, first of all, the basic, immediate target of Yankee imperialism, and secondly because of the divisions, or disagreement, or however one may wish to call them, more or less optimistically, within the socialist camp.

We have stated our position. We are not going to throw fuel on the fire of these disagreements. I believe that anyone who throws fuel on the fire of these disagreements is harming the interests of the world revolutionary movement. [Applause] Against imperialism this reality is bitter, harsh. We have stated our position, what—as we understand it—is our duty. It is not to throw fuel on the fire of this disagreement, within its principles—unity within its principles—and to fight for this with Marxist-Leninist methods. [Applause]

Marxism-Leninism is sufficiently rich in ideological resources and in experience to find adequate ways to overcome this difficulty, to overcome this obstacle. It is a matter of resolving to do so, and I believe we must fight for this. We must fight for this unity, and this we propose to do, with our own criterion. Chauvinism—no; rather Marxism-Leninism.

Because imperialism, imperialism exists and is there, dangerous and aggressive. The underdeveloped world exists and is there. The liberating movement of the peoples subject to colonialism and imperialism is there, fighting, in Angola, in Viet Nam, in Latin America, in every part of the world, and this fight demands the united efforts of the socialist camp.

It is deplorable, most deplorable, that these differences should have arisen, and we must fight against them, because the first thing is to unite, and what Marx said was, "Proletarians of all nations, unite!" [Applause] Marx and Engels fought tirelessly, indefatigably, for this unity throughout their lives, and this is what we say, our political leadership, our party, and our people: "Proletarians of all nations, let us unite!" Let us be united against our class enemies, against the imperialist enemies, against the aggressors, against the warmongers.

This is the position of our party and our people. This is the judgement of our national directorate and our people, who have gone forward united in difficult times, in difficult circumstances, because our people endured difficult tests in recent days, tests of courage in the face of Kennedy's threat, in the face of his threat to turn us into an atomic target, with the certainty that the nerves of this people were less affected than the nerves of the generals of the Yankee Pentagon.

There were some isolated voices of criticism. As was logical, there were some who, confused in good faith or confused in bad faith, criticised the national directorate of the Integrated Revolutionary Organisations on the matter of Cuba's attitude, immediately after the crisis, on the matter of inspection and the pirate flights. For them, apparently, we should allow ourselves to be inspected [shouts of "No"], as if to hallow the right of the imperialists to say what arms we may or may not have and to bring this country back to the times of the Platt Amendment, when the US government decided for us.

To accept inspection would have been to accept, to agree to having to give an account to the Yankee imperialists of what arms we might have or not have within our territory. This implied for us a matter of principle. It would amount to a renunciation of our sovereignty. It would amount to consenting to having our country made inferior among all the other states of the world. We did not consent to this, nor shall we consent to this. [Applause] Those who think that this is acceptable would also consider acceptable a landing without the firing of a shot [thunderous applause], because this is what this would lead to.

It was not by this road that the Revolution rose to power. It was not in this way

that the Revolution was defended at Playa Girón. It was by taking other ways, of firmness and determination, to fight against the imperialists.

Apparently these individuals thought that we should allow ourselves to be blown up, that we should allow Yankee planes to dive down over our anti-aircraft batteries without giving orders to fire. This can never be expected of us either, because the enemy always must expect, every time he attacks us, that there will be a fight and no backing down. [Loud, prolonged applause]

There will be some who may say, who may try to insinuate that we were against a policy of peace. The answer is the same: we want peace with right, with sovereignty, and with dignity. [Applause] We want peace without giving up being revolutionaries, without giving up the Revolution.

When we fought the invaders at Playa Girón, when we fought those who bombed us, who attacked us, no-one will doubt that we were defending peace. When this people organised and decided to fight to the last man or woman against the imperialists if they attacked us, no-one can deny that we are defending peace, because to resist aggressors is to fight for peace; to surrender to the aggressors is the way to war or the enslavement of peoples. By defending our sovereignty and our rights we are defending peace.

When we speak to the Latin Americans and tell them that the objective conditions exist for revolution, we are defending peace, because the weaker imperialism is, the less dangerous it will be. The weaker imperialism is, the less aggressive it will be, and the liberation, the liberation movement of the peoples, weakens the imperialists and makes them less aggressive, less dangerous. The fight of the peoples for their sovereignty and their independence is the fight for peace.

We indeed consider peace the fundamental objective of humanity. Let us fight for it, following the paths of national sovereignty, of liberation from the exploiters and the imperialists. By fighting against imperialist exploitation we are fighting for peace.

We are enemies of war; it is the imperialists who impose wars on humanity, and the stronger they feel, the more dangerous they will be. Therefore each nation that fights for its sovereignty and its independence is defending peace. This is what we believe—we closely united Cuban revolutionaries.

Those who believe that they are going to fish in troubled waters are mistaken. Those who believe that in the face of this desire for unity, of the firmness and dignity of our people, they can opportunistically try to create confusion, to cast doubt on the rectitude of the Cuban revolutionary directorate, they are lamentably mistaken. It

would show that they do not know this people, that they do not know the virtues of our people. Those who, taking advantage of the difficult circumstances that our country has had to face and must continue to face, foment division, are committing a deplorable offence of treason against the Revolution, and the masses will oppose them. They will oppose the intriguers, the divisionists, and they will follow the line of our party and the line outlined for them by the revolutionary directorate, because they will say, “This is our line; this is the line of our leaders, and we have faith in it.” [Applause]

This will be the conduct of our people, the conduct of our revolutionary militants, who do not become discouraged, who do not fear to fight, who do not fear difficult circumstances, whatever they may be. Here there will be no division. Here there will be unity, because we need it, because we have the imperialist enemy in front of us who wants to destroy us, and we need unity to resist. We need unity to win. We need unity more than ever to go forward, and with our unity, our firmness and our line we shall continue to go forward facing the difficulties, facing the inconveniences, whatever they may be.

We shall exercise our right to think for ourselves, and we shall be consistent with our revolutionary belief, and this belief has one motto above all: To resist the imperialist enemy, to fight the imperialist enemy, to go forward, without a single backward step in the history of our country, without any vacillation in the revolutionary ranks [applause], to continue forward against the imperialists. These are and will always be our enemies. They are and will continue to be the enemies of America.

We shall continue to go forward on the road of the Revolution, on the road of socialism, on the road of Marxism-Leninism. Homeland or death! We shall win! [Applause]