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EIGHTH CONFERENCE
OF HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT
OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES
Harare, August-September 1986
ADDRESS BY
H.E. FIDEL CASTRO RUZ
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCILS OF STATE
AND MINISTERS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF CUBA
AT THE SOLEMN CEREMONY IN COMMEMORATION OF THE
'25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE
MOVEMENT OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES
Harare, International Conference Centre,
1 September 1986
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Esteemed Prime Minister Robert Mugabe;
Distinguished Heads of State or Government;
Delegates;
Distinguished Guests:

In gathering today in this militant Africa and under the Chairmanship of one of its authentic guides to celebrate the founding of the Movement of Non-Aligned countries in Belgrade, twenty-five years on it should be noted that the objectives which compelled a small group of Third World countries to rally in defence of the principles upon which their very existence depended and which were essential to their future have endured almost unaltered against all odds during this quarter of a century. Their founding countries condemned the threat of nuclear war and called for negotiation as the only solution. This threat now looms ever more ominous. Nuclear warheads are larger and more lethal and their multiple vehicles more precise. In addition, there is the intention of staging this irrational controversy in outer space. The galloping arms race has gathered pace. Moreover, the theatre of military confrontation is now to be in outer space. Regional hotbeds of tension have mushroomed and the imperialists have become involved in intervention more directly and on a larger scale.

The inequality in international economic relations - which in Belgrade gave rise to the Programme of Action put
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forward by developing nations gathered there - far from diminishing, has become ever more bitter, unbearable for our weak and backward economies. The external debt constitutes an intolerable burden and thwarts efforts and sacrifices to promote development. The purchasing power of our products and raw materials is now lower than it was then. Our peoples are more hard hit by poverty. Disease and ignorance, the monstrous by-products of economic backwardness, have taken root in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Although hardships and perils are increasing, our capacity to withstand, our strength and our struggle have grown. This lends our Commemoration even greater significance. In 1961, we were twenty-five nations; on the eve of the Eighth Summit we number 101. Many of those gathered here today, still willing to fight on, struggled for their independence twenty-five years ago. Robert Mugabe, our experienced and wise Chairman, and other distinguished Heads of State present today, attended the Summit Conferences as representatives of an as yet unfulfilled aspiration to freedom which has today become an encouraging reality. We have not only gained strength and constitute an absolute majority, both in the United Nations and in the international community, but history has furthermore borne out the validity of our programme, the justness of our aspirations and the need to attain our goals, if the world is to march towards a more secure and prosperous future.

In 1961, we emerged from the national liberation process of many peoples against colonialism. The indestructible link between that historic battle against colonialism and for peoples' peaceful aspirations, was established as the first tenet of the Belgrade Conference. It was stated there that to secure a lasting peace to emerge from the confrontation between the old structure and the new nationalist forces, the following was essential:

"A world where the domination of colonialism and imperialism in all their manifestations is. radically eliminated."

The first Summit also clearly established that:

"To basically eradicate the source of conflict is to eradicate colonialism."

Likewise the Movement postulated:

"The immediate unconditional, total and definitive abolition of colonialism and a concerted effort to put an end to neocolonialism, and imperialist domination in all its forms and manifestations."

Where paragraph 21 of the Belgrade Declaration read that:

"to remove economic imbalance inherited from colonialism and imperialism" it was laying the foundation for a programme that the Movement was to complete years later by pinpointing the

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need for the New International Economic Order and by endorsing the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States.

There could be ' no better proof of the keen and far-reaching vision of Tito, Nehru, Nasser, Nkrumah and the other founding fathers than the restatement of these goals, as currently developed, updated and enshrined in the Draft Declaration of Harare that we are about to consider. There could be no better tribute to their memories as we meet here in Harare - then a colony and today a symbol of an Africa still threatened by imperialism .and its nefarious instrument. racist and facist South Africa - than the undeniable might, prestige and influence of this powerful group of countries; with different systems, varying points of view, but rallied to the essential principles of the Movement: peace, independence, development, the struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, racism and,. in particular racism in its most abhorrent expression apartheid.

The fact that after these twenty-five years, despite pur victories over colonialism, we are still in the early stages of implementing that just and inspiring programme confirms what the Movement found a few years after Belgrade, at the 2nd Summit in Cairo, namely:

"The forces of imperialism are still powerful and they do not hesitate to resort to the use of force to defend their interests and maintain their privileges."

Twenty-five years on, we are threatened by an arms build-up and war in outer space, Namibia is still occupied by the South African racists who are also attacking all the Front-Line States. The Palestinians are still deprived of their rightful State. Nicaragua faces aggression that United States imperialism will not call-off, in spite of the efforts of the Contadora and the Support Groups.

In Harare, the main issues of the Belgrade programme are yet to be implemented. However, our quarter of a century of struggle has produced concrete results.

As President Tito said in 1964:

"Through its progressive action in the common struggle with the socialist countries and other forces, the Movement has become one of the most important factors in today's balance of power,"

If we stand united, no decision Can be taken by the United Nations nor by the international community without our being considered. The combination of our strength, together with the forces of those who in Europe, Japan and even in the United States oppose any decision leading to war, will enable us to stop those who intend to unleash it. The military pacts dividing the most powerful nations into conflicting blocs are, as is acknowledged, an anachronism that must go.

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The Eighth Summit has gathered us here for that purpose. Honoured to speak here from this rostrum on behalf of our sister nations of Latin America and the Caribbean, I can safely say that the countries of our region share this lofty purpose. The unity of our lands, invoked by Simon Bolivar at the dawn of their independence, dreamed by Jose Marti again at the end of the century, now has new reasons to be fully realized.

The Malvinas War reminded Latin Americans that their peoples' liberty cannot depend on a powerful neighbour that threatens them, and that they must positively rely on their fighting unity. Cuba was the only Latin American country to subscribe the Belgrade Declaration, while Bolivia, Brazil and Ecuador attended as observers. There are now 17 Latin American and Caribbean countries members of the Movement and, with nine observers from our region, it is true to say that the Non-Aligned Movement enjoys growing sympathy and support from the countries of our region.

In reiterating that support, we are firmly convinced that nuclear catastrophe will be contained, that means will be found to definitively ban nuclear tests, since one of the parties is already willing to enter into serious and meaningful negotiation to put an end to the arms race, to reduce conventional weapons to a minimum so that man can remove nuclear weapons from the face of the earth before they annihilate him. We are also convinced that the scourge of

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backwardness and poverty caused by economic inequalities will be overcome by joint action.

Twenty-five years pm, that unforgettable event spurs us on towards this goal. We properly pay tribute to this Commemoration by remaining loyal to the principles that have brought us together at this historic Harare meeting.

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