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# **Fidel Castro, 1985: The Third World debt is unpayable**

Saturday 3 December 2016, by [CASTRO Fidel](#), [TOUSSAINT Éric](#) (Date first published: 3 August 1985).

**This is the transcription of a speech by President Fidel Castro, at the Continental Dialogue on the Foreign Debt held at Havana's Palace of Conventions on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1985.**

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### Introduction to Fidel Castro's Speech, by Eric Toussaint

In 1985, Fidel Castro launched an international campaign to build a front of countries who faced unsustainable debts. In the speech, given in August 1985 after an international meeting on debt, Fidel said: *iWe realized (...) that in the final analysis the watchword of debt cancellation was valid for all countries of the Third World.*

His efforts to promote unity among peoples for cancellation of Third World debt gained wide acclaim in Latin America among the social and intellectual movements of the radical Left. In Africa, Thomas Sankara, president of Burkina Faso, took up the watchword and endeavoured to launch a vast movement [in Africa] for non-payment of debt (see [www.cadtm.org/Eric-Toussaint-parle-de-Thomas](http://www.cadtm.org/Eric-Toussaint-parle-de-Thomas) ñ in French). In Europe, the CADTM came into being out of the international campaign that began in Latin America (see <http://www.cadtm.org/The-history-of-the-CADTM-and-its>).

We are publishing the speech, given more than 30 years ago, at a time when a new crisis involving the debt of so-called (developing) countries is looming as a result of the collapse in the revenues those countries earn from exportation of their raw materials, the lack of economic growth in the most industrialised countries, and the anticipated bursting of new speculative bubbles, in particular on the stock exchanges.

Fidel's speech was given at the end of the Continental Dialogue on the Foreign Debt of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Havana on 3 August 1985.

Fidel Castro shows his sense of humour when he says: *iThey blame me for saying the debt cannot be paid. They should blame Pythagoras, Euclid, Archimedes, Pascal or Lovacheski, or any ancient, present, or modern mathematician you prefer. Mathematics and mathematicians' theories are the ones which demonstrate that the debt cannot be paid.*

Fidel felt that abolition of the debt of the Third World needed to be granted by the industrialised capitalist countries as well as by so-called socialist countries.

*iWhen we speak of abolishing the debt we mean all the debts the Third World has with the industrialized world, and I am not excluding the socialist countries (applause). When I speak of the new international economic order and fair prices I am not excluding the socialist countries. I am sure that the socialist countries will understand and support this. It will represent a sacrifice for them, but they will support these views.*

He was challenging the policies imposed by the IMF.

Fidel says that the necessary abolition of debts is an indispensable condition, but not a sufficient one. Other radical changes need to be set in motion: *iThese are basic principles. It is not just a single idea, just the idea of abolishing the debt. It is associated with the idea of the new order. In Latin America we have to associate it to the idea of integration because even if we are able to abolish the idea of the debt, achieve a new economic order, without integration we would continue to be dependent countries.*

Fidel asserts that repayment of debt is unsustainable for economic reasons and that debt must be abolished also for moral reasons: *it is now clear that the collection of this debt, that the unjust system of economic relations is the most flagrant and brutal violation of human rights that one could ever imagine (...) iA small portion was invested in useful projects, but we all know that most of it was invested in weapons, was wasted, was misapplied, and misused. We know that a large portion got away; it did not even reach Latin America.*

Fidel issues a call for unity among indebted countries in order to resist the governments of the industrialised countries. He says that the ideal thing would be to arrive at a consensus between the governments of the debtor countries of Latin America, but that he does not believe it can happen: *iThe ideal thing is a preliminary consensus. [But] will Latin American debtor countries reach a preliminary consensus before a crisis erupts? The ideal thing is a preliminary consensus, a discussion with creditors. Will this happen? The most likely development of the events leading to a crisis would be for them to demonstrate an interest to negotiate because of this grave crisis. This is most likely. No one can predict this exactly, but I have never really believed that this preliminary consensus would occur, although I don't think it is impossible. That is to say as the situation gets worse, it is possible that this preliminary consensus among debtors will occur. It is not impossible, but I don't think it very likely.*

*If this struggle continues, if the masses become aware, if each citizen of our countries understands the problem and the possibility of attaining a favorable solution ó because a single government cannot wage a struggle ó then they could be influenced in their decision to meet and adopt a policy and a preliminary consensus.*

Fidel called for all energies to be mobilized to organize a broad grassroots movement for cancellation of Third World debt; that struggle is just as important for us today.

Source: <http://www.fidelcastro.cu/fr/discursos/cloture-de-la-rencontre-sur-la-dette-exterieure-de-lamerique-latine-et-des-caraibes-palais> (in French; in Spanish: <http://www.fidelcastro.cu/en/node/1644>)

Translated by Snake Arbusto in collaboration with Christine Pagnouille

## Speech at the Continental Dialogue on the Foreign Debt held at Havana's Palace of Conventions

Please do not be frightened by the amount of papers and pamphlets I have brought. I will merely use them for consultation purposes. Comrade Tencha [Allende's widow], thank you very much for your kind and generous remarks.

On the first day I called you distinguished guests and esteemed guests; allow me to call you dear guests today after nearly 5 days of intense and friendly work.

Carlos Rafael [Rodriguez] this afternoon said he was going to make the closing remarks, but I immediately protested the word closing. I feel that only a Gabriel Garcia Marquez could make closing remarks in a long novel because of the numerous ideas, expressions, and events that have taken place in the past few days. I will try to voice some personal views and, at the same time, stress some ideas, express my ideas regarding the topic that was the subject of our meeting.

I can understand that I have been granted a privilege by Tencha, that is to talk without limit, but that is too much, because everything has a limit — your patience and my endurance — and common sense advises me not to make a long speech. That privilege was not granted many of the brilliant, capable, intelligent persons who spoke in the past few days. I can understand how much it meant to them to be limited on a subject as complex as this one that is 12 minutes, 15 minutes, or 20 minutes in some cases. But I have also had that experience. I have attended many events and have been forced to limit myself to 8, 10, or 20 minutes, and have not done as well as you have done here.

I see that I have to respond to some of the charges leveled against Cuba's activities in connection with this dramatic problem. One of the charges against Cuba is that it has adopted an opportunistic position. That is a remark enjoyed by our neighbors to the North. Also that we are trying to improve relations, that we are trying to improve Cuba's image, and a number of very peculiar theories.

I believe that the effort we have been making is not justified by any attempt to improve the image, and that is far removed from our thoughts. I believe all that has been said about image or propaganda is natural to the system they represent and they imagine because of that, that everybody that does anything on earth is doing it for propaganda or image purposes. As I told the workers in the previous meeting and also recently said at the 26 July mass rally, not even a little bird can be fed with images.

However, this is a very serious matter and we cannot allow anyone to confuse or deceive us. We should not let such traps be successful. That is why I tried to look for a record showing when we first started talking about this problem. I found by chance a record dating back 14 years, when we visited Chile immediately after the triumph of the Popular Unity.

At the time, among the many events I participated in, I was invited to pay a brief visit to the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America located in Santiago. While there, I engaged in a dialogue. All those speeches were recorded and, from them, I copied some of my remarks made 14 years ago. No one knows if the debt amounted to 30 or 40 billion [currency not specified] in those days.

I said: We have read in recent days that Chile owes more than 3.5 billion [currency not specified]; it is known that Uruguay owes more than 800 million [currency not specified] and that it has to pay 80 million [currency not specified] annually. I do not know if it exports 190 or 200 million [currency not specified], but it has to import at least the same amount just to maintain the level, a difficult thing to do when its basic products are themselves running into problems of markets. It has been said that the Republic of Argentina owes some 5 billion [currency not specified]. I do not know how much each of them owes, but I ask myself: How are they going to pay back? How are they going to pay the United States? How are they going to satisfy the foreign debt with that powerful country? How they are going to satisfy the dividends? How are they going to maintain a minimum level of subsistence? How are they going to develop themselves? In reality, this is a very serious problem, today, tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, a problem that awakens us to the reality of our countries, a problem that leads us to notice that famous difference, and that increases as the distance between an automobile moving at 10 km per hour and another moving at more than 150 km per hour.

On 20 November of this year, 14 years will have elapsed since I made those remarks. I believe that the results of what we have said after that have been a reason for concern and a question that had no response.

We can ask ourselves if there is response now and if the present situation looks like the 1972 situation. Through these years, Cuba has been calling these problems to the attention of international organizations.

I am forced to use other material I already used at the labor union conference, and I ask the almost 100 labor union leaders who are still here to excuse me for having to hear the same thing again. This was in 1979 at the United Nations, after the sixth nonaligned summit which was held in this room on September of 1979. We went to the United Nations as it is customary for countries which have hosted the summit to address that organization after the summit. We said then: The developing countries' foreign debt has already reached \$335 billion. It is estimated that the total payment for

foreign debt services amounts to over \$40 billion a year. This represents over 20 per cent of its annual exports. The average per capita income of developed countries is now 14 times higher than that of underdeveloped countries. This situation is already untenable. This was in 1979. After this part, we said: Summarizing, Mr President and representatives: Unequal trade is ruining our people and should disappear. Inflation, which is being exported to us, is ruining our people and should end. Protectionism ruins our people and should end. The imbalance on the exploitation of marine resources is excessive and should be abolished. Afterward, agreements were made on the Law of the sea, which the United States precisely refused to sign together with a small group of allies. The financial resources developing countries receive are insufficient and should be increased. Arms spending is irrational and should end, and the funds should be used to finance development. The present International Monetary Fund is bankrupt and should be replaced. The debts of the countries with less relative development in a disadvantaged situation are unbearable and do not have a solution, and they should be canceled. The indebtedness is financially overwhelming the rest of the developing countries and that burden should be eased. The economic gap between developed countries and those countries which want to develop, instead of becoming smaller, is increasing and should be eliminated. These are the demands of underdeveloped countries.

Then, the debt was 335,000 [335 billion], around that figure. I began to talk about it when it amounted to 35,000 [35 billion] and possibly that of the entire Third World did not reach 100,000. I continued to speak up when it reached 335,000 [335 billion] and I talked again on this subject at the sixth summit meeting in New Delhi in March, 1983. Also a report was made, distributed to all delegations, and sent to all the countries' heads of state the same day this UN speech was sent to all the countries in the world, all the developing countries, rather, to all the underdeveloped countries and to all industrialized countries. In that meeting, I talked again about this subject. In addition, I spoke of the problem of unfair trade, what it was, how it affected us, and gave some examples.

In 1960 we said, with the sale of one ton of coffee, 37.3 tons of fertilizer could be bought. In 1982, with the same amount of coffee, only 15.8 tons of fertilizer could be obtained. We, the Third World countries, usually export coffee, cocoa, and other goods and import fertilizers, from the developed world's chemical industry. Fertilizers are needed to produce coffee, corn, or wheat. However, each time we have to hand in more coffee to obtain less fertilizer. And they do not want hunger to exist.

In 1959, with the profits from 6 tons of jute fiber one could buy a 7- to 8-ton truck. Toward the end of 1982, 26 tons of jute were needed to obtain the same truck. In 1959, with the profits obtained from the sale of one ton of copper wire, 39 X-ray tubes for medical purposes could be bought. At the end of 1982, with that same ton, only 3 X-ray tubes could be obtained. We are jute and copper wire exporters. This is what Peru, Chile, and other countries export, or they export aluminum. The same thing happens when we compare all the products we export. We import sophisticated medical equipment, X-rays, various electronic components of every kind which the industrialized world produces, paying very high salaries. What kind of salaries do we pay? We have spoken here of minimum salaries of \$30 in Peru, \$40 in Bolivia, Brazil, and Chile as minimum salaries.

On that occasion, I gave other examples. I do not believe anything more is needed to give an idea of the tragedy we are suffering, subjected to this pitiless plundering. Among our suggestions in March 1983 were: to struggle unceasingly for peace; to improve international relations; to stop the arms race; to drastically reduce military expenditures; to demand that a part of those large amounts be spent on the development of the Third World, which is what we had suggested in 1979 at the United Nations; to struggle without letup for an end to unfair trade that depresses real income from exports, which burdens our economies with the costs of the inflation caused by the developed capitalistic countries and bankrupts our countries; to struggle against protectionism, which multiplies trade and nontrade barriers and impedes the access of our exports of basic and manufactured products to world markets; to struggle for the cancellation of the foreign debt of the

great number of countries that have no real possibility of paying it, and for a drastic reduction in debt servicing costs for the sake of those who could meet their obligations under new conditions. When this problem was presented at the United Nations, at the nonaligned meeting, it was the subject most applauded by the majority of the nations there, including even the industrialized countries, some of which understand that this cannot go on.

These are the same ideas. The problem was seen coming. In 1983, the foreign debt was already reaching \$600 billion. It was multiplying by tens, from \$30 or \$30-odd billion to \$300-odd billion, then to double that figure and then to three times that figure. It has exactly tripled now, and the problem has assumed crisis proportions. Now, Latin America alone owes as much as the entire Third World owed and it owes more than the entire Third World owed in the year 1979 [sentence as heard]. That is, the crisis has matured, worsened terribly, and become unbearable, and this is the reason for these same ideas, better adapted to present circumstances. The tone is changing.

At first it was said that the debts of the relatively least developed and disadvantaged countries were unbearable and could not be paid. Then the tone changed to a struggle for the cancellation of the foreign debt of the great number of countries that have no real possibility of paying it — the talk in 1983 was of a great number of countries — and for the drastic limiting of debt service charges for those countries that could meet their obligations under new conditions. It was getting worse and worse, and the moment came when it became clear to us that almost no country could pay its debt. There are very few exceptions.

At that time, we thought Venezuela or Mexico would be among the countries that could reduce their debts. But later we realized that the situation of such petroleum producing countries as Nigeria, Venezuela, and Mexico was such that those countries could not be excluded from the campaign to cancel the debt of all the countries of the Third World.

It is not my intention to offend anyone when I propose that the foreign debt of the entire Third World be canceled. I believe we are struggling for something that is just and reasonable. It is not my intention to offend anyone but rather to include all in the solution we had been requesting for some of the countries for many years, when the situation was not as serious as it is today. Today, prices, including oil prices, are depressed.

It is true that the price of oil had an impact on the crisis. It did not cause the crisis, and the proof is that oil-exporting countries are also in crisis. The price of oil worsened the crisis, but who was responsible for the oil crisis? The industrialized capitalist countries who abandoned their coal mines and dedicated them selves to squandering cheap fuel. The transnational companies made enormous profits and maintained the supply of cheap fuel that competed with coal, that competed with everything, but at what cost? Approximately every 5 years the consumption of fuel doubled worldwide. What nature had taken hundreds of millions of years to produce the consumer societies were liquidating in 100 years. We were running out of fuel. They squandered it with enormous automobiles. They wasted it. This became apparent after the crisis started, when they started to conserve a little fuel, and when they reopened a few coal mines and started extracting oil from certain wells that had been abandoned. But they also caused the fuel crisis with their waste, with their senseless, irrational squandering of the human and natural resources of the world. We are not ignorant of the fact that the price of oil had an impact and worsened the crisis, but the industrialized capitalistic countries were responsible.

The only change we made from 1979 to 1983 was to reach the logical conclusion, when the Third World owed almost \$1 trillion, that no Third World country could be excluded. I ask whether any of the countries that are challenging the fact that Cuba is concerned over these matters and has brought it up so often when it should be brought up, whether even one of the countries that is

impugning the fact that Cuba is hosting a conference to discuss these problems or the fact that anyone speaks of a problem. [changes thought] As if ideas were private property, as a capitalistic industry is! It is my understanding that ideas are not the private property of anyone. [applause] We have to ask those who are saying that Cuba is not a proper place, and that Cuba has no right, whether any one of them spoke of the problem 15, 10, 6, 5, 3 years ago, or 3 months ago! Because here, Capriles showed that he spoke of the problems 3 years ago. He showed it here with an editorial he wrote in January 1983. And he presented the problem in very similar terms. [applause]

Capriles said here that he was a businessman and a capitalist. I hope that no one suspects him of being a communist, or that he said this for demagogic purposes, or improve his image, as possibly many have even laughed at the editorial at that moment; but I feel respect, and in this case, for a man who was not our friend. He has been a strong adversary and strong critic of our revolution, but I bow my head to and feel respect for a man who 3 years ago stated the problem in his terms. Because he had vision, was conscious of the problem sooner, he came. He had no objection to coming, participating, and speaking here.

Those who refused or did not want to attend because they did not want to play Castro's game have not said one word about the problem. But in the past few days, some have spoken hurriedly about the problem, perhaps because of an old, established concern? No, they were scared because Castro is speaking about the problem. [applause]

They even say that those speaking about the problem are communists. Well, no, Capriles is not a communist. And (Cardinal Lance) is not a communist. [applause] And it makes me happy that if speaking about the problem has at least served to make those who had never even thought about the problem now aware of it. It makes me happy because now what is needed is for everyone to discuss the problem. [applause]

I want to make clear that we are not against any government, or I can say that we do not oppose any democratic government. Fortunately, the number of countries governed by a constitution, in a democratic process, or democratic opening, is a majority. This, in part, is a result of the struggle of the Argentine, Uruguayan, and Brazilian peoples, [applause] three very important countries which have changed the correlation of democratic forces.

That process has resulted from the struggle of their peoples, and of the crisis; these two combined, because those who were in charge and governed repressively became aware that the countries were becoming unmanageable. That helped, I mean the crisis helped the process and, at the same time, the democratic processes can now help the struggle against the crisis. Because many of the statements we have made, we could not make when that situation existed in those three countries, because they were a frank majority. Today we can say that the majority is constitutional, that there is an electoral, democratic process. Each one has its own idea of a real or formal democracy but we are not disputing this. No one disputes the positive influence this democratic opening has had.

We all long for the moment when we can say: Now in Chile there is a democratic opening. [applause] And it will happen; we do not doubt it. Pinochet is the only crazy one still left from that plague [applause] who believes that country can be made manageable, no matter how much imperialism helps him and tries to alleviate the situation at the cost of an increasingly greater debt for the country.

We are not against any democratic government nor any democratic process; on the contrary, we are concerned over this economic crisis. If it does not have a proper solution, the survival of those democratic processes will be impossible. We are not absolutely against the Cartagena group. The only objection we have to the Cartagena group is that it does not apply to all Latin American and

Caribbean countries as this Havana meeting has done [applause] so that they all can be here.

The argument used is that it is only for principal debtors, but this world does not consist of principal and nonprincipal countries because in the United Nations all countries, small and large, have a vote. It is possible that this battle will have to be taken to the United Nations, the OAS, to 20 places, and those votes are needed. It is good that this group leads, this Cartagena group, that it is a directing, coordinating group, for the founders of the group and the rest can join. It cannot be explained or rightly justified.

Why is there no Central American country in the Cartagena group? Why is there no Caribbean country in the Cartagena group? There is one; Santo Domingo is one but Jamaica is not. Trinidad and Tobago is not one; many other countries are not members.

Those of us at our meeting were very concerned that each country had an opportunity to speak. It did not matter if it has 250,000 or 100,000 residents. It is a country that has its anthem, its flag, its sovereignty, its rights, and has to be respected. On the contrary, it is the objection that we have publicly stated, and we understand that our struggle helps the Cartagena group's battle. We do not have anything and we are willing to support it in its struggle for a proper solution to this problem.

We are certainly not against SELA, since Cuba was one of the first countries participating in the foundation of SELA on the initiative from Mexican President Luis Echeverria, who created that Latin American economic organization. The first country to speak about it and to give its support was Cuba. We are in SELA; we support it. We agree that SELA play a role since it is a Latin American and Caribbean organization in the search for a proper solution to the problem.

We are in agreement and support the idea of a heads of state meeting which was first suggested by Argentine President Alfonsín during his Mexico visit and later President Febres Cordero also suggested it and proposed the Galapagos Islands, humankind patrimony, as the site of the meeting. President Alan Garcia, who has just assumed power of Peru's Government, also proposed it. Three presidents have suggested it. You supported it, we supported the idea of a heads of state meeting enthusiastically. You know we are not fond of the OAS but if the OAS meets, as it is said that in September they are going to invite finance and economy ministers to a meeting in Washington, great! Let them meet there, to have the United States on the carpet, so that they can discuss, can present the realities, and demand solutions. [applause] If the OAS could be of use in its lifetime and could be used for this, all it has cost and the shame it has meant for this hemisphere would be worth it. [applause] We are not against anyone and with every step we have taken we are aware that this struggle helps other countries. And it is not that our positions are radical for the sake of being radical. I do not think our positions are radical or maximalist, as some say. Some say it is maximalist. No, it is realistic. Others say it is illusory. Those who believe this has a different solution are the ones who are illusory.

They blame me for saying the debt cannot be paid. They should blame Pythagoras, Euclid, Archimedes, Pascal [laughter, applause] or (Lovacheski) or any ancient, present, or modern mathematician you prefer. When I said Pascal, I did not refer to Pascal Allende but to the 18<sup>th</sup> century mathematician. [laughter] Mathematics and mathematicians' theories are the ones which demonstrate that the debt cannot be paid.

Well, I have to talk about that and I want to substantiate it because I believe it can not be paid and how none of the formulas which have been suggested solve the situation. But before I continue, I wanted to tell you that today there was a false alarm in this room upon learning the news that the United States had declared a blockade or had taken economic measures, punitive actions against Peru.

A cable was released which attempts to explain this and reads: The Peruvian Foreign Minister Allan Wagner did not give much importance to the announced suspension of U.S. Economic and military aid to Peru and stressed it is a minor incident which has been exaggerated by the international press. Talking to the press, after a meeting with U.S. ambassador in Lima David Jordan, the foreign minister underscored it was a news agency mistake which released the information and related it to matters which have nothing to do with this. He added that the explanation lies in the Brook-Alexander Amendment which is a legal measure the United States puts into effect automatically when payments fall behind. He indicated that, indeed, Peru owes Washington \$100,000, part of the late payments, which will be paid immediately and said this debt has no major consequences and is a result of an administrative mistake of the previous government which should have made the payment.

Wagner insisted that this is a minor problem which has no political implications and should not be considered important. If we had known this earlier we could have saved some of the anxieties expressed here today. The Peruvian foreign minister added that Allan Garcia's government's decision to use only 10 percent of its exports for payment of the foreign debt is a matter known by all and has not had or does not have negative effects on U.S. relations.

The U.S. ambassador said this was a small interpretation error about the information international news agencies released. These agencies are so alarmist. [laughter] Jordan added that Peru owes the United States around \$100,000 and has promised to pay. This is a simple matter to be solved and has nothing to do with the economic policies assumed by the Peruvian Government, he said. He reiterated it had been a misunderstanding because the news was misinterpreted and it was related with other things which have nothing to do with the matter. The news is false and relations between the two countries are good, Jordan said. [laughter]

These Americans are sincere people. This government is a model government. It was all a misunderstanding, a mistake.

What I think happened, and this is why I was waiting when some comrades were anxious to hear Peru's representatives' reaction, I think this was a provocation, a trap, a banana peel, [laughter] because the Brook-Alexander [Amendment] is applied when they want to, when they see fit. And in this case, they hurried to apply it. They are nervous because this meeting is being held here. The new government just took over a few days ago and they immediately apply it. They did not do it to the previous government but to the new government when it announced it will not talk with the IMF and that it is going to reduce the debt payment to 10 percent.

What a coincidence; it was an immediate measure. All military and economic aid is suspended. I believe the new Peruvian Government was calm and did not let this provoke it. But the intentions were clear. Who is going to know them better than we? [laughter]

I wanted to explain this before continuing because I will also have to talk about the 10 percent formula. I said that mathematics showed the debt cannot be paid as a rule.

I believe the rule has no exceptions. Believe me, I listened with great respect, and will continue listening with great respect, to the arguments of all those who believe it is possible to pay, but this is not my opinion. The inability to pay of certain countries cannot even be argued. But the few countries that seem to have a possibility of paying, I say it is impossible for them to pay.

What do these numbers mean? They have to be translated into something meaningful. One day it occurred to me to figure out how many years it would take to count up the Latin American foreign debt if one were to count the debt at a rate of \$1 per second. Do you know how many years? Eleven



thousand five hundred seventy four years. [laughter, applause] Then I asked myself how long it would take to count up the amount to be paid in interest in the next 10 years. Do you know how long a person would take, counting \$1 per second 24 hours a day? It would take him 12,864 years. [laughter] If they say we are taking an extreme posture by having only one person count \$1 per second, we can tell them to use 100 persons. [laughter] How long would it take then? It would take 128 years. [laughter] How can this be paid in 10 years [laughs] when 100 persons counting at a rate of \$1 per second would take more than a century to count it? [laughter] Even more, if every person here counted the debt at this rate, it would take them nearly 3 years to count it. [laughter, applause]

On another occasion, it occurred to me to calculate the debt on the basis of hectares. [laughter] Latin America owes \$175.30 per hectare. This is almost what a hectare of land costs. [laughter] And in 10 years, Latin America has to pay in interest — not the capital but only the interest — it has to pay \$194.80 per hectare.

It also occurred to me to calculate how much Latin America owes per square kilometer. And the figure turned out to be \$17,530 per square kilometer, and Latin America has more than 20 million square kilometers. How much would Latin American have to pay per square kilometer in the coming 10 years? Nineteen thousand four hundred seventy eight dollars per square kilometer in interest alone! We have heard of exploitative large landholders. But I know of none who charge this much to rent land. [laughter]

How much does each inhabitant owe? Some owe more than others, as you know. [laughter] Each inhabitant owes \$923, with 390 million inhabitants. How much do they have to pay in interest? Only \$1,025 per inhabitant in the coming 10 years. The cost of living is becoming really unbearable, as you can see, when each one of us has to pay, on the average, \$1,025 just to breathe.

There are countries such as Costa Rica that are not very large that owe \$100 million per square kilometer. How will they pay? They would need a small gold mine, or perhaps a large gold mine on each square kilometer to earn foreign exchange. Because they do not owe Costa Rican pesos or sucres or bolivars, but dollars that must be acquired on the international market by exporting products if they can produce them, if they can be sold, and if they are paid what the products are worth. Nothing of this exists. Under developed countries do not have much to export, are not paid what their exports are worth, and cannot manage to sell their products anyway. So I say that if someone proves to me that Costa Rica can find a gold mine on each square kilometer and finds 50,000 gold mines, then I will say maybe, perhaps. [laughter] If the mines yield pure g nuggets, then they might be able to pay. Nuggets like this, like river rocks, but made of gold! [laughs]

I made other calculations regarding the continent where such hunger exists that many persons consume 1,200 calories and less than 2,200 calories [as heard], where there are so many undernourished persons, where there are 110,000 unemployed and underemployed, where there is starvation, as you have pointed out, where 70 percent of the population lived on or below the poverty line. I have calculated how it would be possible to feed the population of Latin America with what must be paid out in interest payments. My calculations show that each of the 390 million inhabitants — I calculated on the basis of 400 million, adding 10 million, in case the mice ate up a little of the food — and, with the present price of wheat, each of the 390 million can be provided with 3,500 calories daily and 125 grams of protein for each person every day, for 17 years!

They ask a continent burdened with unemployment and poverty to pay in interest alone in a period of 10 years the equivalent of 3,500 calories daily and 125 grams daily, which is much more than is required, for 17 years! In interest alone! Is this logical, is this sensible, is it rational? Well, this is the truth that the figures give us. The fact is that it is not easy to pay such amounts, as I have said.

Markets are required, and where are these markets? The IMF tells everyone to export, but what are they going to export? More coffee, more cacao, more sugar, more meat, but not if they are going to get paid less and less. And to whom will they export if protectionism increases daily with trade and nontrade measures affecting an additional country every day? Today Mexico, yesterday another country. Mexico's exports were affected to the tune of about \$3 billion this year by the cancellation of certain of the preferential tariff rates. It was done with the stroke of a pen.

One of the representatives of Colombia spoke today of the coal mines, and in fact a great open pit mine is an important source of wealth. But I also know that if the price of coal drops from \$50 to \$39, protectionist measures of \$10 or \$9 per ton are proposed in the United States so Colombian coal will not reach the coal-burning powerhouses of the eastern United States, of which there are 79 that could buy that coal. But the U.S. coal producers demand a tax and it could easily happen that a country could make an enormous effort at great expense and, when it begins to export coal, find itself faced with a \$9 tariff on its coal, because those gentlemen are much more important in the U.S. Congress; they have a lot more weight.

In the United States, they make war not only against us, but even against their competitors; there are more than 80 protectionist measures against Japan proposed in the U.S. Congress because they are desperate. In their insanity they cannot determine how to solve this mess so they invent protectionism once again. They are applying strict protectionist measures against us, the producers of sugar.

The Martiniquais said here that the sugar mill had closed. The Panamanians know that the Vayano sugar mill for which they made a dam for a large electric plant, a modern sugar mill, has been closed for 4 years.

But of course, if in 1981 the United States was buying 5 million tons of sugar, in 1984 it purchased 2.7 million tons, this year it is buying 2.6 million tons, and in 1987 it will purchase 1.7 million tons. How can the economy of sugar-producing countries have the market reduced from 5 million tons to 1.7 million tons in 6 years? It was the same market that was taken away from us. It was divided — like candy, everywhere, our quota in exchange for the isolation of Cuba. Why forget such things? We do not want to remember it, but it happened. Now the quota is taken away from them. Is it that they've made a socialist revolution? No, unless I have been wrongly informed by these press agencies. [laughter and applause] They adopt those measures, and then increase exports to get dollars when the market closes. Everyone should export and they close the market. Where will they export?

Yes, we know that there are millions of necessities but those that have them do not have the money to pay. They require Latin American countries to make debt interest payments in dollars. No one disputes the capital. They are not concerned because they know that every 8 or 9 years they recover the capital and recover it again. In 30 years they recover it 3 and one half times. They can forget the capital because the interest alone is enough. The problem — where will they export? The IMF comes around and it wants imports reduced.

How can they increase exports? Everyone knows they need supplies, equipment, spare parts to increase production and to increase exports. If they were able to accomplish that miracle, as some countries have been able to for a year — it cannot be done for much more than a year because the stock of raw material, parts, and equipment is depleted. I am not speaking of development. That lasts a year like a bolt of lightning. They say, yes, import less. Where will they get the resources to increase exports and, if they do increase exports, where are the markets? If they increase the exports and there are markets, what price will they receive?

We know that in 1984 the Latin American countries exported \$95 billion worth of goods. What an effort to increase production from \$75 billion to \$95 billion and with reduced prices! That same money they would have obtained, that same purchasing power they would have obtained in 1980 with \$65 billion with 22 percent less merchandise. They worked; they killed themselves producing more. They exported it and received the same amount previously received for 22 percent fewer goods, the purchasing power of that merchandise 4 years previously.

What country and what economy can adapt to all those catastrophes and all its effects? Then the monetary fund intervenes and says remove the tariff barriers. It counsel everyone and the prescription comes from Chicago. The IMF was always a member of the Chicago system from what can be seen. Remove the barriers; compete. The competition (Tommy) spoke about yesterday between the lion and the lamb.

When I passed by him I asked: (Tommy), did you say between the lamb and the seal? He said: No, no, do not change my words. I said: Between the lion and the lamb and between the shark and the seal. Correct. Two excellent examples were given yesterday by our friend (Tommy) in his brilliant speech.

Well, compete. Compete with the robot machines in Japan and with automated production. That is what happened in Uruguay. Even the factories that make hair ornaments were forced to compete with a transnational factory from South Korea, and in a few days it went bankrupt. The factory closed and they were importing hair ornaments from South Korea. That's the prescription. They say: Remove the tariff barriers while they, the industrialized countries, raise them in relation to our products.

All these are realities that we should not forget. If we forget unequal exchange, if we forget the excessive interest rates, if we forget all the tricks and all the piracy acts they are perpetrating, then one could begin to dream one day, only one day, that the debt can be paid. However, there are many other qualities, and when we depart from those realities, I'm speaking of economic realities, it is impossible. The technical formulas do not resolve anything. In that interview, I am explaining, trying to explain distinct hypotheses. I referred to four hypotheses. Our friend Juan Bosch, based on those four hypotheses, explained the problem in Santo Domingo, what was happening with the Dominican debt.

Now the formula has been set forth. I had examined the "B" formula, to pay with 20 percent demonstrated that it could not resolve the problem. Now the formula of the new Peruvian Government of 10 percent has emerged. It is indisputable that it is a step forward to present that formula in relation to what is going on.

To say that there will be no discussions with the IMF, that only 10 percent of the revenue from exports will be used to pay the debt, is a step forward. Do you know how much Peru exports? Exactly? \$3.1 billion. It imports approximately \$2.9 billion. The debt? We already know that: approximately \$14 billion. In interest alone Peru has to pay \$1 billion every year. This is their decision, their right.

Neither the IMF nor imperialism like the idea one bit of someone saying that he will pay only 10 percent [of the revenue from exports]. However, would the 10 percent formula solve the problem? I am speaking in economic, in mathematical terms. It will not resolve the problem. This can be clearly demonstrated. I asked some companeros to use the computer and make some estimates. As you know, I did not have time to do it because I have been meeting here with you. I have listened to the hypotheses. The Peruvian Government says that it will be paying with 10 percent [of the exports] for 1 year. I say fine, let Latin America implement the formula of paying 10 percent not for 1 year but

for 20 years. What would happen? Supposing there is a 20-year grace period, no capital sum, only 10 percent of the revenue from exports is used and even if exports grow above the 100 billion figure — and we do not export 100 billion yet — the payment on the interest would not be higher than \$10 billion annually. Suppose the interest rate would be approximately what it is now and that no new loan is secured: what would happen? What would be the situation at the end of 20 years? In 20 years we would have paid \$200 billion. Latin America would have paid this amount if all the countries were to implement this formula.

At the end of 20 years, the Latin American debt — once the principal, the interest, and the interest that became principal are added up — would be five times what it is now, supposing that no more than \$10 billion is paid. The debt would be \$2,075,140 million... wait, let me explain. There is a million, a billion, and a trillion. There is a million, a billion and millions of millions. So the debt would be \$2,075,140,000,000, more than five times what is owed today. This would be our brilliant future in 20 years, after having paid \$200 billion. Imagine all the things that can be done with \$200 billion. I am talking about resources not taken out of the country.

A second possibility: This proposal calls for a miracle. It calls for a 20-year grace period, and the payment of the debt with revenue from 10 percent of the exports, without limits — even if the exports go beyond the 100 billion mark, to 200 billion. The interest rate would have to stay at the current level, and exports would have to increase to the fabulous rate of 10 percent annually for 20 years.

It would be good to ask the Dominicans, or any country, if exports can increase - without security new loans — at an annual rate of 10 percent for 20 years. This would be the average annual rate. What would happen at the end of 20 years? At the end of 20 years, with exports increasing 10 percent annually, we would have paid \$572,752,000,000. Do you know how much we would still owe, in this hypothetical and fabulous case? We would owe \$1,198,715,000,000. Approximately four times what we owe today. Also a brilliant future. This is what mathematics, Pythagoras, and the others I have mentioned, state.

Another miracle-calling proposal: The interest should be reduced to 6 percent and no more than \$10 billion would be paid annually, of course. As in proposal one, we would pay \$200 billion in 20 years. At the end, and supposing that the interest charged is only half of what it is today, we would still owe \$885,732,000,000. Another brilliant future. We would be completely independent. We would have to find somebody to count this money, and he would take a long time to count it.

With this hypothesis, the debt would be perfect. Without a cent we could perform the miracle of securing markets and prices, everything, increase exports at an annual rate of 10 percent for 20 years with an interest rate of 6 percent and we would pay with the revenue from 10 percent of the exports every year. There it is. What would happen at the end of 20 years, at 6 percent? We would have paid \$427,292,000,000 and we would still owe \$444,681,000,000. A fabulous amount! This is 100 billion more than what we owe now. A brilliant future after performing all sorts of miracles.

This is not a whimsical statement. If instead of 10 percent say we pay 5 percent, the same thing would happen. We must understand that the debt is like a cancer that multiplies itself, that destroys the organism. It is a cancer that requires surgery. I assure you that if there is no surgery, the problem will not be solved. No single malignant cell can be left. [applause] If a malignant cell is left, there will be a metastasis, the tumor reproduces, and it quickly brings destruction. We must understand this: The debt is a disease.

Some have spoken here about diseases, of virus, and other things. Msgr Mendez Arceo spoke about the virus of anticommunist campaigns.. Other have also used figurative language. There is nothing

more like a cancer than the foreign debt. There is the malignant tumor. If you leave half of the tumor, one-fifth, or even 1 percent of the malignant tumor, the tumor will reproduce itself. What we want is to resolve the problem that imperialism has created. Imperialism has created this disease, this cancer. This has to be totally extirpated by surgery.

This is the issue. Whatever strays from this idea, is simply straying from reality. There is no technical formula for this true situation that is not going to improve, but will get worse. Unequal trade is more unequal today. I think this can be understood even by a first-grader who knows how to count and is given an idea of what 1 million means.

This is what any analysis of the situation makes evident. How to resolve this situation? We can see it is a cancer, that the problem has to be resolved, and one wonders from where the resources will come. This is the first thing we ask. Thinking about this I have wondered: Where are the resources?

It is clear that in the world there are resources to resolve this disease affecting the life of billions of people and killing more people, I am sure, than cancer. We can conclude that when we analyze the number of Third World children who die before they are 1 year old and when we analyze the number of children who die before they are 5, and those who die between the ages of 5 and 15, we can see that. When we estimate the life expectancy in many countries, as a result of malnutrition, when we consider the number of people who are physically and mentally handicapped — we have spoken here of tens, and hundreds of millions of children who grow up with limited mental capabilities — we can see that.

Cancer causes much damage. Doctors recommend surgery whenever there is a cancer. This situation kills more, many more people than cancer. Are there resources? Yes, there are. What are they being used for? To plan the death of people, in war, in the arms race, in military expenditures. In 1 year alone, \$1 trillion are wasted in war preparations, in military expenditures. This is more money than the entire debt.

This is not logical. This can be understood by any human being, by any citizen, regardless of ideology: It is worth liquidating the debt with a small portion of the military expenditures. We are not speaking of the Latin American debt. We are speaking of the Third World debt. It would take as a maximum, depending on interest, 12 percent of the military expenditures. This would be enough.

In the military expenditures are the resources necessary also for a new international economic order, for establishing a fair price system for Third World products.

This could amount to approximately \$300 billion. This would increase the purchasing power of the Third World countries, which are not going to put the money away.

They are too hungry to put the money away. They are going to invest the money in industries, they are going to spend it in some way. There would still be \$800 billion for military spending. This would be enough to destroy the world several times, with this madness, because this is a huge madness.

But well, these cases exist in the world. We must develop an awareness that these problems exist in order to solve them. How many tens of millions of people are being threatened by this, how many people are harmed every year! Millions of persons are made miserable. However, we are now linking the two things. But the problem is not solved by canceling the debt, by abolishing the debt. We would be in the same position, because the factors that caused this situation are still present.

We have brought up those two factors, which are associated. We have brought up other ideas, but first of all, we must develop an awareness among ourselves. We must develop this awareness not only among ourselves, but among all the countries of the Third World. That is what gives us

strength. Third World. That is what gives us strength.

We must develop an awareness among the industrialized countries. We must send a message to the public opinion of the industrialized countries, to show them that it is all a great madness. We must send a message to the workers, students, women, the middle classes. They have other problems. Perhaps the solution to our problems can help solve the problems of others. That is why we have brought this up, and it is very important to tell the public of the industrialized countries that these solutions that are proposed will not affect them. They will not increase their contributions, their taxes; this is not necessary. These resources can be subtracted from military expenses.

We must send a message to bank depositors and we must tell them that these formulas will not ruin the world's financing system. If the resources to solve the problems of the debt and of the new economic order are taken out of military expenses, then no depositor will ever lose his money. There are millions of persons, including workers, middle class people and professionals, who are being told that these formulas we are now referring to will result in the bankruptcy of the banking system and those who have money deposited in the banks will lose their money.

We must send a message to the workers, whose main concern is unemployment — the source of Europe, of the United States. We must tell them that this formula would increase the purchasing power of the Third World countries. Industries would be used more efficiently. There would be more sources of employment in those countries. Some would be affected more than others. By the way, I just read an article entitled Castro: [Words indistinct] I am going to tell you the truth. I even forgot that [word indistinct] existed when I started to think over these facts. But there must be a certain coincidence. I pointed out, of course, that once the huge masses of the needy people of the Third World increase their purchasing power, then this means trade would also be increased, and exports would be increased, and employment would be increased. Capitalism will not be saved. Capitalism has no possible salvation. The problem is that we might die before capitalism dies. That is the problem. [applause]

They are going to starve us to death if they continue investing money in weapons. He who wants to live must be willing to give his life for the land. It is possible that mankind might be over before capitalism is over. It would be a good idea to put a small straitjacket - on them and tell them: Do not spend 1 billion, do not spend 1 trillion, spend only 700,000 or 600,000. This still leaves you enough money to spend on the many follies you are spending money on. I think the underdeveloped world, the Third World, should push this idea.

Are we going to give up the idea of struggling? Are we going to be pessimistic? Are we going to believe that nothing is worth anything anymore, our minds, our wills? If we win the public's minds in the industrialized countries, they have two big problems and two big fears. The Third World man never has time to worry about war, because he is dying every day. Those of the rich world have many things, beautiful and magnificent things, excellent cities. They are well-fed, more or less. They have two main concerns: war and unemployment.

I think it is absolutely correct, it is a good tactic for us to link our problems - which are underdevelopment, poverty, all of these social calamities — with the worries of the public of the industrialized world. They worry about war, because they have time to think about war, and what a war entails. They clearly see that all of this madness of accumulating more and more nuclear weapons will lead to a great disaster, unless this comes to a halt. We can associate our worries over peace with unemployment in the industrialized world. We must be capable of transmitting this message.

Many people think in these countries. Not all of them are owners of transnational companies. Not all

of them are warmongering individuals. I think this struggle might intimidate the warmongering individuals. Naturally, imperialism needs [words indistinct].

Somebody said here, I cannot recall if it was Lopez Michelsen, what disarmament means. He was proposing disarmament, a halt to the arms race for the Western world, and not for the socialist countries. Ecuadoran President Febres Cordero was visiting here when I was analyzing these problems. He asked me a question about disarmament of the Western world. I told him, no, look, if the Western world were to unilaterally disarm itself while the socialist world continues arming itself, then what I am saying would not be just. What I am proposing would not be worthy of any respect. [applause]

I know how the socialist countries think. The socialist countries know very well what war is, much more so than the U.S. public. The USSR lost 20 million people, Poland lost 6 million, Yugoslavia lost 1.5 million people.

The war was not felt in the United States. The United States did not have the slightest idea what was going on, while the experience is still fresh in the minds of the people in socialist countries. The United States was never interested in being part of the war. U.S. territory was surrounded by nuclear bases [as heard], armoured vessels, submarines, bombers, and all kinds of weapons. Now they want to know why others arm themselves, which is equivalent to asking us why we arm ourselves having, as we have, a neighbor that threatens us every day. In reality, I must say to you, what else can a country like ours do, except be ready to pay a high price for its life? Not only that, but be ready to foil an attack against our country. [applause].

Unfortunately, as part of our backwardness, the uniform was also seen with much mistrust, reserve, and in general with fear and hatred. Today every man and woman in this country wears a uniform. I recall what a Bolivian priest said — showing an extraordinary and impressive honesty — about his impressions of the ideas that previously prevailed in this respect. Of course, this reminded me of the venom mentioned by Mendez Arceo, because they are experts in producing venom using this bacteriological weapon, which is a good description of imperialist propaganda: to sow venom everywhere, in great quantities. However, today our people respect, and not only respect, but love the uniform. Every man and woman wears a uniform, because the military duties are no longer entrusted to a group of citizens, they are the responsibility of all the people, of all the men and women apt to fight in this country. The weapons are in the people's hands, in the factories, and the working centers. [applause]. There is no reason to be afraid of uniforms or weapons, because this necessity has been imposed on us. I must also say that the military duty has been discredited, although the duties of a fighter, of a soldier, can be very honorable, particularly when, and as long as the soldier's and the people's cause are the same. [applause]

We know what could be done with the funds invested in weapons, if we did not have to build trenches, fortresses, [words indistinct] and employ dozens and dozens of young men, experts, equipment, resources, and so forth. We know how many houses could be built with the resources we must use on weapons. We know how many schools we could build; we have built thousands of schools, all the children in this country have a school. However, we also want to have art schools, one in each province, as well as vocational and professional schools, and we are implementing our program little by little. Our needs are never satisfied, because they are unlimited. When we have solved the problem of schools, hospitals, medicines, we realize that we need houses, and when we build the houses we find out that other things are missing, such as recreational areas, and funds must be invested in this. When people reach the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level, as our people have, they must develop their cultural background.

We must build art schools in all our provinces, as well as theater groups. Wouldn't our funds be

better invested in these things? All the funds we have had to spend during these 20 years... why would we want weapons? Why would a socialist country want weapons? Why would it need an arms race? Why would it need any wars? Socialism, as I interpret it, and as all socialists and true revolutionaries interpret it, has nothing to do with weapons. Who, except for a mad person, would believe in today's world that the contradiction between socialism and capitalism could be solved through weapons? Imperialism needs weapons because it is an orphan from ideas. [applause]. It needs weapons in order to sustain its opprobrious system; it needs weapons in order to maintain situations such as the one we have discussed here; they must be maintained by force. However, there are ideas that can be used successfully against other ideas. Ideas do not need weapons if they can convince the great masses. The contradiction today is between socialism and capitalism, and no one should think about solving it by force. Anyone who thinks so is crazy, and the imperialists are the ones who think so, the ones who maintain military bases all over the world, who threaten everyone, who intervene everywhere.

Where are the military bases of the socialist countries? The United States has hundreds of bases, it has squadrons in all the oceans in the world. Someone here mentioned the Diego Garcia base, and also the Malvinas Islands, where the United States has established a base. It also wants another island in that sector for its crazy "star wars" project: Easter Island, which is located 4,000-miles from Chile. Everyday the United States is obsessed with finding an island, which may be a small island, or a piece of land, something to maintain its dominating system by force, its system to continue sacking the world. There is philosophy that says that the world must be sacked, and since this can only be done by force, it explains their philosophy and blind faith weapons.

If socialism, does not seek to take away anything from anyone, not even a piece of land, or to exploit the work or sweat of anyone, why should it need weapons, really?

I base my thoughts on this concept. I am sure that all the socialist countries know what can be done with the resources that are spent on weapons. When I say this with total conviction, it is not because I have written a letter to the leaders in socialist countries asking them if I can propose this, or if they agree or not. I am guided by the most elemental logic, and I am sure that it is the socialist concept. I am sure that the socialist countries that do not have the problems that the Third World countries have — although there are some socialist countries in the Third World — are greatly concerned over war. I do not have the slightest doubt, and I know this through statements they have made and because I know how they think, that the socialist countries would support the Third World in this struggle to solve the economic crisis and the problem of the debt and the new international economic order [applause].

When we speak of abolishing the debt we mean all the debts the Third World has with the industrialized world, and I am not excluding the socialist countries. When I speak of the new international economic order and fair prices I am not excluding the socialist countries. I am sure that the socialist countries will understand and support this. It will represent a sacrifice for them, but they will support these views.

Earlier I mentioned the issue of the rights to the sea. I remember when this struggle began in Peru, Ecuador, Chile, and Mexico, back when the socialist countries had big fishing fleets in the oceans, on the high seas. We had already developed an important fleet. Historically, we fished off the coast of Mexico. The limits were 12 miles off the coast of the United States, Canada, any country. The 200-mile limit affected us. However, we did not hesitate, and we supported the Latin American countries, the Third World countries, in their demands to speak to the socialist countries. We spoke to the socialist countries and asked them to support the issue and they did support the demand for the 200-mile limit. The Peruvians are aware of this; Mercado Jarrin [General Edgardo Mercado Jarrin, former Peruvian prime minister] is aware of this; and those who worked with that government are also



aware of this.

The socialist countries were being greatly affected by this because they had thousands of millions [monetary denomination not further identified] invested in big fishing vessels, but we were also affected. We were one of the most affected but one of the ones who most defended this 12-mile issue.

An agreement was reached and now the United States wants to be master of all the sea beds beyond the 200-mile limit for its transnationals, using and abusing its technologies, to exploit these resources to get chromium, minerals at lower costs and to further ruin the Third World that does not have this type of technology to go out into the Pacific and the Atlantic to search for minerals. What kind of future awaits us? The Law of the Sea states that the United States could continue its investments, which would benefit all the countries, but the United States and some of its allies will not accept this. Therefore, I have no doubt that the socialist countries will support this cause.

However, it is very important that we be aware that this is not only a Latin American struggle, it must be a struggle for all the Third World. This is what gives us the strength. They face the same problems we are facing, and some of them have even greater problems. However, Latin America can be the leader in this struggle. Latin America has more social and political development; it has a social structure: it has millions of intellectuals, professionals, tens of millions of workers, peasants; a level of political preparation; and it speaks the same language.

The Africans face a more desperate situation. There are approximately 200 billion [as heard] of them, but their situation is even worse. They have to depend on food being sent to them. Their situation is even worse than Latin American's. However, the countries of the Third World that struggle at the United Nations, the Group of those that struggled for a new international economic order, are aware of these problems.

Here in Latin America we speak the same language. It is true that there are some French, English, and Portuguese-speaking people. Those who speak Portuguese can understand Spanish perfectly, and we can understand them when they speak. Some English-speaking countries like Belize and Curacao — I think they speak Papiamentu, I believe that is what they call it — spoke in Spanish to us. Therefore, the communication existing in this region of the Third World does not exist in any other region of the Third World. We do not see this in Asia, Africa, or any other place. Indisputably, the area, the part of the world that has the best conditions for leading and waging this struggle, is Latin America. It would be very difficult to hold a meeting like this one in Africa, or in any other part of the Third World, like Asia. We have a greater level of political development, of social structure. Latin America has more economic, as well as political potential. These are basic principles. It is not just a single idea, just the idea of abolishing the debt. It is associated with the idea of the new order. In Latin America we have to associate it to the idea of integration because even if we are able to abolish the idea of the debt, achieve a new economic order, without integration we would continue to be dependent countries. If Europe does not feel it can survive without integration then how can these countries — countries of various sizes, some countries are bigger than others; of course, Brazil has greater possibilities, but even Brazil needs this integration — live without integration. Brazil needs the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean, and Latin America and the Caribbean need Brazil. All the countries of this hemisphere need integration. This economic integration is what we have been talking about. It is essential, it is basic. The idea is basic, but the problem is when and how to implement this.

I believe that as these ideas are heard within the ivory towers; as these ideas become the ideas of the masses, of the public opinion, of the people, of the middle class; as these ideas become the ideas of the workers, peasants, students, of Latin America; these ideas will sooner or later triumph.

[applause] Everyone knows that in a historic phase if the leaders do not advance the masses will advance and carry out the historic objectives. [applause]

Another essential idea is that of unity. We have been speaking about this from the very beginning. Unity within the countries and unity among the countries. The basic conditions for unity are born within the countries and luckily, we see this in most countries today. However, I have explained that this unity has not been achieved by all countries. No one can hope for unity under tyrannies like Pinochet or Stroessner; there are also other situations. However, these cases are not a majority. The idea of unity from within is necessary. This creates strength from within the countries to wage this struggle; and unity among the Latin American countries creates strength; and the unity among all the countries of the Third World creates strength. I am sure that this struggle would even have the support of many industrialized countries; countries that are not world power centers and that have also been affected by the monetary and adventurous policies of the U.S. Government's administration.

Furthermore, I feel that if this struggle is waged properly, the United States will be isolated. All they will have left is a few partners, those that support the sanctions and apartheid in South Africa, the same countries that refuse to sign the agreements on the seas. I am sure that if this struggle is waged to the end, they will be isolated. This is why they are going to try to use every means to divide, frighten, and intimidate the countries. We would not be at all surprised if because of their nervousness they may have dropped a banana peel on Peru or launched their provocation against Peru.

An important issue brought up at this meeting, the reason why I found it necessary to explain at length and which Rangel [not further identified] brought up, this is the second time he has set this trap for me; at the meeting of the unions he did the same thing, he asked a question while speaking, regarding the dialogue. He set a trap in the good sense of the word. He asked whether there should or should not be a dialogue. I went back to review what I had said about this, and thought it over very well. In an interview with EXCELSIOR, you must have that interview because you have been given much of this material; many plans are based on this and you had access to these plans but I doubt you had enough time to review them. I feel that not even Rangel has had time to review all the material because if he had had the time, I am sure that he would not have asked the question. [laughter] He asked about the possibility of economically blocking the Third World and intervening us because of the debt as was done earlier this century in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and other countries; and then distribute the world among them selves to ensure a supply of raw materials and markets as happened in the past.

Today it is absolutely impossible. The struggle for such a rational demand as the solution of the problem of the foreign debt and fair economic relations between the Third World countries and the industrialized world is so essential for the survival and the future of the Latin American peoples that it would undoubtedly have the support of all the social groups and would create a great internal unity in all countries. Most certainly, a great unity among all the Latin American countries would have, without any hesitation, the enthusiastic and decided support of all the developing countries in Asia and Africa. I have no doubts that even many industrialized countries will support these demands. I have no doubts that the best and the most constructive way to resolve these problems is political dialogue and negotiations. It would be the only way to carry out essential solutions in an orderly manner. If it is not done in this manner, there is no doubt that a group of countries — and this idea is very important — carried away by a desperate situation, will be forced to adopt unilateral measures. This is not the best solution, but should this happen, I have no doubt that all the Latin American and Third World countries will join them. [applause]

This idea is once again reiterated during an interview with a U.S. congressman and academician who will be publishing a book based on these economic views. I told them this moment the industrialized countries have no rational and effective formula to confront the crisis. They do not have it.

I believe that the main problem is based on the fact that the nature and seriousness of the problem is not understood. Understanding the nature and seriousness of the problem would even help the companies that trade with those countries; those companies that produce merchandise with those countries. And the creditor states would not experience economic problems, on the contrary, they would increase their levels of employment and the use of its industrial capacity. The banks would experience no losses; the clients of those banks would not be faced with the payment of additional interest. If this can be understood, if they can become aware of this, I feel that the path toward a solution would be much easier through dialogue and agreements among the industrialized countries and the Third World countries. As I said before, the only area that would be affected is the demented arms race, the crazy idea of weapons and war. Unfortunately, it would only be slightly affected. It is a healthy measure because we would begin to defeat the most harmful and shameful disease of our days. If the new world economic order proclaimed and agreed on by the United Nations is applied as an indispensable complement to the cancellation of the debt, this would represent a greater reduction of the military expenditures.

If this is not successful, what will happen? Instead of reaching a negotiated agreement among the parties involved, the Third World countries will impose it. Have no doubts about this. The fact of the matter is this: materially, it is impossible to pay the debt and its interest. For this very basic, as well as understandable, reason it will not be possible to pay the debt. The cost that these sacrifices would impose on the peoples would create rivers of blood. And all in exchange for nothing. No government would have enough power to achieve it. This matter is well worth analyzing, discussing and resolving in a common agreement between the creditors and the debtors. And we cannot forget, for a single minute, that today, the initiative is in the hands of the countries which are being asked to make such a monstrous sacrifice.

If the Third World debtor countries are forced to declare a unilateral suspension of payment, the industrialized countries would be left without a single alternative for action. An economic blockade, an invasion of the Third World, a new distribution of the globe as happened in the past centuries to ensure the raw materials and markets or demand payment of the debt — any person with any sense can understand that this is simply impossible. They would not even be able to blockade a single country or group of countries should these countries decide to stop payment of the debt. This would immediately bring about the solidarity of other countries. We are a big family and times have changed. Some of the madness has been left behind and others, some as the ones we have analyzed at this meeting, will follow soon.

That is, we have not made a declaration of war against the industrialized countries.

We are reporting on what is happening and what will happen. It would be best if they become aware of this and all of us sit down and talk, but not to talk in order to pay the debt, mind you, but to talk about the new international economic order. [applause] In order to force them to cancel the debt, it is not necessary to talk. It is necessary to talk about the new economic order. If the fundamentals are clear enough, the two topics can be discussed, the manner of canceling the debt. We have offered a solution to them and their banks. They should be grateful to us because we have warned them about what will happen and we have proposed solutions. Well, I still think the ideal thing would be for them to become aware. Do I believe they will become aware? Of course, they are now worried more than ever. They have really begun to worry. It is good, very good, for them to worry. The sad thing would be for them to go on completely unconcerned in the midst of this tragedy. Then, if they

are aware, if they understand this well, that the debt cannot be paid, then we can sit down and try to find a way to elegantly and mercifully cancel the debt.

If they do not become aware, if the situation goes on along the present path, what we have been discussing will happen. Some desperate countries — and we have already seen some indications of this — will make unilateral decisions and will then ask for the solidarity of Latin America and the Third World. I am sure, I do not entertain the slightest doubt that the memory of the Malvinas war is still fresh. Despite the terrible political situation in this country [Argentina], Latin American, and Third World peoples did not hesitate. In those days of war, the nonaligned countries met here in Havana and all the foreign ministers talked and talked. The Argentine foreign minister came here. We talked here with Third World representatives and they supported the Argentine people almost unanimously during the Malvinas war. In that war, no nation had anything to win or lose, economically speaking. It was a sentimental matter, a question of principle, of repudiating colonialism. But if in this problem — that has to do with the life and death of all Latin American and Third World peoples — a subgroup of desperate countries, even a small group of countries with some economic common sense initiates this struggle, I do not have the slightest doubt that they will be supported by the rest of Latin America and the Third World 10 times more than they supported Argentina during the Malvinas war. [applause]

As part of this struggle, we have gotten in touch with African and Third World countries, and all of these materials with which you have been burdened have been sent to the United Nations. Many of these materials have been sent to heads of state of industrial and Third World countries. We have been working and struggling in an effort to awaken an awareness to guarantee solidarity. Some indications of this were observed today. Solidarity with Peru nearly occurred. Let not anyone have the slightest doubt that if imperialism takes economic measures against Peru or any other country that is forced to take the same measures that Peru had to — even though they are not radical — that country will be supported by our country and, I am sure, by all of you, Latin America, and the Third World. [applause] I do not doubt this.

We have no cards hidden up our sleeves. This is an open, clear strategy. Part of this strategy has been to create an awareness. This has been the fundamental objective of the dissemination of this material, to create these conditions. I am sure, completely sure, that this strategy will not fail. Perhaps imperialism will play with banana peels, but it will slip on its own banana peel. [applause]

There is another essential idea. Capriles showed that he grasped the core of the problem when he said: If we force them to accept a suspension of payment or a moratorium, they will have to sit down and talk. He expressed the core of the idea. Then, how will this be accomplished? How will this evolve? Formulas began to appear. It was even mentioned here that if a theoretician of imperialism proposed a Marshall Plan [changes subject]. When I read this, I laughed, because the problem is so big that at least 20 Marshall Plans are required, not only one. They don't even have money, unless they relinquish their war foolishness. Formulas of all kinds have begun to appear. Of course, a basic idea is that if they are not willing to discuss the problem, they must be forced to. This means that the initiative rests with the Third World countries. When I went to the United Nations — and I remember that \$335 billion were owed — we had planned, within the UN formula, resources equivalent to \$300 billion for the eighties. At the time, we had pleaded: Please, look, the situation is serious, resources are scarce, this problem must be solved. But they turned a deaf ear, until the situation became untenable.

Now, as we explained for some time, we are not pleading, but giving. It is not too difficult to leave the arms alone, not to put the hand in the pocket, and not let others rob you. However, it is not necessary to use weapons for this. They have these weapons, yet they cannot use them against the

Third World countries. Not even the space war will help them to collect the debt. They will not be able to collect the debt with space weapons, nuclear weapons, or anything. As we said in the United Nations, it is possible to kill the hungry and uncultured with bombs, but hunger, ignorance, and poverty cannot be killed. [applause]

This again becomes a struggle of the spirit, of the conscience against technology. With all their technology — considering there are more than 100 countries in this situation that are entitled to all their rights — they have nothing to counter a joint action by Latin American and Third World countries. This is what we are discussing. Of course, this will be solved. The ideal thing is a preliminary consensus. Will Latin American debtor countries reach a preliminary consensus before a crisis erupts? The ideal thing is a preliminary consensus, a discussion with creditors. Will this happen? The most likely development of the events leading to a crisis would be for them to demonstrate an interest to negotiate because of this grave crisis. This is most likely.

No one can predict this exactly, but I have never really believed that this preliminary consensus would occur, although I don't think it is impossible. That is to say as the situation gets worse, it is possible that this preliminary consensus among debtors will occur. It is not impossible, but I don't think it very likely. If this struggle continues, if the masses become aware, if each citizen of our countries understands the problem and the possibility of attaining a favorable solution — because a single government cannot wage a struggle — then they could be influenced in their decision to meet and adopt a policy and a preliminary consensus.

I have explained all this so that you know how we think and realize that this is not a war we have declared beforehand. However, we know how egotistic the exploiters and the sackers are, and we have envisaged how the future could possibly be, although no one can state with certainty how it will be. However, we must be prepared for everything. We must be prepared.

I have spoken, basically, about the economic aspect of the matters to extend myself much more, although there remain three most important aspects. We say that the debt is unpayable for mathematical and economic reasons, but this does not represent a moral judgment of the situation, or a legal, or political appraisal of the problem.

We say that the payment of the debt is a political impossibility. No Latin American government is in any condition to implement the IMF measures. None of them. Not even with bullets and blood can they. Pinochet has tried that. He is in the midst of a growing crisis. We know it now. There was the report on the resignation of three of the Carabineros commanders because of the brutal assassination of three Chilean citizens who were kidnapped and beheaded.

Some 3 days ago I received a letter from the family of one of the victims. He left four children. One is 12, the other is 6, the third is 4, and the fourth is 2 years old. The letter has made a tremendous impact. It concluded a picture the victim had taken of himself and a poem written by him. The poem, it seems, was written about him also.

These are the facts. Yes. There are three victims. However, Pinochet is shaking. The regime is shaking because of the people's protest and that of international public opinion, in the face of the people's anger and irritation. [applause] He won't be able to stay in power much longer.

The governments of the democratic openings, how can they implement these policies when the standard of living has been reduced to half of what it was? We have seen reports that in the past 18 months the purchasing power of the people has been reduced by 33 percent and that in the past 30 months, the purchasing power of the people has been reduced by 50 percent. This is terrible.

We have seen the heroic efforts that the Mexican Government is making to pull out, to try to pull out, of the crisis. Exports, however, continue to decrease. In 1984, the trade surplus of the three most important exporting countries — Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina — was almost \$30 billion. This year, in 1985, this trade surplus will amount, if things go well, to \$20 billion. However, they have to continue paying interest mounting up to 12 billion. One country has to pay 12 billion in interest. The others have to pay 4 and 5 billion in interest. It is very difficult to manage this. It is very difficult for democratic governments to implement these policies indefinitely. The measures will be getting increasingly worse.

There would be a political crisis in any country trying to implement these policies. Pinochet cannot implement this policy, not even with the killings. It is a political impossibility to demand payment of the debt. As simple as that. It is a political impossibility to demand that the people pay the debt. We have said that this is a moral impossibility. It is also unnecessary to go into this issue that was presented here with so much strength by everybody, especially by the Christians. This is one element we have standing out.

There can be cases, we admit that, of credits that were invested in useful projects. A small portion was invested in useful projects, but we all know that most of it was invested in weapons, was wasted, was misapplied, and misused. We know that a large portion got away; it did not even reach Latin America.

I think it was Liber Seregni who pointed out that the Latin Americans had deposited \$160 billion abroad. That is a conservative estimate, it is probably a higher amount. Under those economic conditions, there is a flight of capital. There is constant inflation, weakened currency, an overvalued dollar, high interest in the United States, [Unreadable text] is not a penny left. There is nothing left.

The flight of capital continues, at a rate of approximately \$10 billion per year. In one country, I believe it was Venezuela, the World Bank reported that for each dollar that was loaned, \$1.23 left the country. There, not only did that \$1 never reach the people, but \$1.23 was taken out of Venezuelan exports or reserves. Will that money return? What are the possibilities? Will it return under the present circumstances? Who can dream of creating those ideal conditions, perfect conditions, so attractive that the generous money will return? Will the money return by itself, to the countries, walking, swimming [laughter] swimming against the current of the Gulf? [laughter]

Nobody believes that. Can you imagine that? That is utopic. All these things are idealistic, utopic, but not what we are proposing. Well then, what became of that money? From whom are they collecting this money? I could give you some examples that are heartbreaking. For example, when Edgardo Enriquez [not further identified] said at this podium that why should he have to pay the money that was given to Pinochet to murder his children, his grandchildren, and to make other relatives disappear? An Indian companera from Ecuador said here that her community had received, perhaps, just one school, and now they had to pay.

Many persons explained all of these aspects. Somebody said, I think it was a delegate from Belize, that the British established that gambling debts are not paid. [laughter] There you have a legal argument.

I have cited the example of someone borrowing \$1,000, he then goes to a casino, gambles it and then the casino wants to collect the \$1,000 from his 5-year-old son. This is It cannot be allowed. It is very important, and it is not a matter that it cannot be paid. The fact that it cannot be paid is a very strong argument, but that it should not be paid is an even stronger argument. [applause]

Someone here also said, and it was repeated, that it violates the most basic human rights. In the

Western Hemisphere people talk so much about human rights, but it turns out to be using their own methods, they are murdering thousands of people every day. I have pointed this out to the Americans. Who is to be blamed for the millions of children less than 1 year old who die in Latin America? Before they turn 1 year old, these children die. In this same room, during the Pediatricians' Conference, the UNICEF director said that the rest of Latin America should have the levels of public health that Cuba has, with an infant mortality rate not higher than 15 — which was last year's figure here in Cuba. Out of 1,000 children born, only 15 die before they reach their first birthday. We have reduced the infant mortality rate for children between the ages of 1 through 5 to 15. We have extended the levels of living so that it will be equal to the United States. We are competing with them in public health rates, in spite of the fact that we are a Third World country. We are doing this through the efforts of our doctors, our nurses [applause] because the revolution has cared for the health sector, because we have no undernourished, barefoot, or begging children. We have no drugs, no prostitution, no gambling in this country. [applause]

That is why during a recent conversation with Freddy (Beto) I told him if the church were to establish a society, it would make a society more or less similar to the one we have. I do not think the church would accept prostitution, gambling, or drugs. [applause] What can have more moral strength than the human work done by a revolution? It keeps women from the tragedy of prostitution, because you know that is a terrible scourge in our countries, as are drugs and gambling. Then, there are the problems of unemployment, poor public health, and illiteracy.

As the UNICEF director said, if the Latin American countries had the levels of public health of Cuba, 800,000 children would be saved every year. And if the director UNICEF, an organization of the United Nations, says that, I wonder? Who is killing those 800,000 children less than 1 year old every year? [applause]

Who is killing another 1 million children between the ages of 1 and 15 years? Who is reducing the life spans to 40, 45, 50 years in so many places, and for centuries? That it has been and continues to occur casts shame on all of us. That is the exploitation and colonialism of yesterday and the imperialism of today. Don't these lives count? And the millions that grow up with mental retardation or physical defects? Who is causing all of this? Who is to be blamed, who is responsible? If we are going to analyze these problems with logic and principles, we must say it is imperialism. That is why we said they are going to starve us to death. Whose fault is it that there are 110 million unemployed and underemployed? Who is to be blamed for that? We must begin by finding the guilty party.

It is not enough to point out figures and statistics, but we must ask why and how much longer can this situation last. It is now clear that the collection of this debt, that the unjust system of economic relations is the most flagrant and brutal violation of human rights that one could ever imagine. It has been said here that the debt has already been paid, and paid several times with what they steal from us! Last year alone, they stole from us \$20 billion as a result of that unequal exchange, \$10,000 in flight of capital, \$37.3 billion in interest, from \$4,000 to \$5,000 in the over valuation of the dollar, and this is not including — [changes thought] It is 70 billion in just one year. [all figures as heard] Seventy billion have been sacked, 10 billion entered in investments, in some loans, and 70 billion left. They can be accounted for, and we have not accounted for the damage done with the protectionist measures, with the dumping [preceding word in English] and all those practices they carry out against our budgets.

Can a hemisphere have a future under these conditions? Can such a system be justified? But, then there is also the moral point of view. It was the Third World, and particularly Latin America which financed for centuries the development of Europe and the United States.

For example, Guayasamin spoke here of those silver and gold mines, the Potosi and so many other gold mines, and it was not 4 million who died, as he said. In Mexico, there were 6 million people when the Conquistadores arrived, and a few years later, there were only 2 million people. In Mexico alone, 4 million were killed in the years following their arrival, due to the ill treatment, exploitation, slavery, and even the diseases the Europeans brought with them. It is not just 4 million persons, it is thousands of millions who have died in slavery. This is not only from Latin America, but from Africa. As in the United States, where slavery lasted 1 century after the famous declaration that says all men are born equal and [Castro hesitates] the Creator granted them all certain rights to life and liberty. Rights, yes, but for the European whites. No rights for the slaves, the enslaved men they brought from Africa. No rights for the Indians who were exterminated even after the famous Declaration of Independence, and after their self-evident rights.

Who financed the development of United States? The slaves.

We have indirectly contributed to financing Europe. We have done this. We, the countries of the Third World, have historically financed the developed capitalist world. Then why cannot the debt be voided right now? Now we have to pay them.

I remember now that the companero from Haiti said the slaves had to pay an indemnity to the slave owners for their freedom. The slaves were brought from Africa. They were separated from their families. They were killed in a thousand ways. They were treated in the worst way a human being can be treated. They were exploited, and then they had to spend 100 years paying the settlers an indemnity for their freedom.

I believe that we must conquer our freedom and not pay any indemnity to any of our oppressors.  
[lengthy applause]

Here we have spoken about legal arguments. Lopez Michelsen spoke about the impossibility to pay. Somebody else spoke about reasons of a more important nature. To all these moral, political, and economic reasons, we can add many legal reasons: Who signed the contracts? Who is sovereign?

On the basis of what concept can it be said that the people committed themselves to paying and that they signed for the credits and received the credits? Most of those credits were secured by repressive military dictatorships that did not consult the people.

Do the debts and the commitments of the peoples' oppressors have to be paid by the oppressed? This is the moral and philosophical basis of this idea.

The parliaments were not consulted. The principle of sovereignty was violated. What parliament participated in this debt-signing process and knew about it? Who knew about the discussions? Where did they vote?

They have mortgaged Latin America to such an extent that it owes more than \$15,000 per sq km. And one has to ask: Who mortgaged Latin America? Was it the people? Who exercises sovereignty? Who has sovereignty? How can there be a commitment behind the back of the people's sovereignty.  
[applause]

Here we have talked about continuity. There will be continuity, but not because we create an organization here. No. We have strictly abided by the rules. Not a single declaration has been issued. The countries have made many statements but we have strictly abided by the convoking document. But this is a movement. Soon there will be a meeting of parliamentary people in Uruguay, from 10 to 13 October, to discuss the foreign debt.



This will be a wonderful integrationist and unitary opportunity. The parliaments will be going there to discuss a debt that they did not approve, and they will analyze the problem. I believe we can give that parliamentary meeting much support since we understand the huge importance of that event.

I think this will be the next very important event to create awareness about this problem. So any way you look at this matter, the reasons are very solid, very strong, indisputable.

This problem affects the entire world more than any other problem. The women, those of you who are here, the workers, the peasants, and the middle class have pointed out how this situation affects everybody.

We have not been presenting subversive positions. We have not been calling for a social revolution. We have said, on the contrary, that we cannot wait for socialism to come first to solve this problem. This is an urgent problem right now, a problem that we have to resolve. In order to resolve it, we have to unite all the sectors, except that insignificant minority that has sold itself out to the international financial capital, that has sold itself to imperialism.

We have room for everybody, not only for the industrialists who have spoken here. There is room for [word indistinct], businessmen, farmers. There is room for all. This is the good point of this struggle. This can, and must, be a very broad struggle in order to solve these problems, that cannot wait until our people have socialist awareness and there are the necessary subjective factors, which are now running behind the objective factors. Even if we were to advance rapidly, it would not be, in my opinion, wise at a moment when we will be waging a decisive battle for the independence people. What can be said of a government that every month has to check with the IMF about what it has to do in its own country? Such independence is fiction.

We view this as a national liberation struggle that can, for the first time in history, join together all social sectors in a struggle for independence.

We cannot say that socialism has to be a requirement. We are not recommending socialism. Of course, we are not advising against it. [laughter] What I don't think is right is to make this the main issue.

This situation will create awareness in the people. I think that as the people gain awareness, we will be getting closer to socialism. I think that in the future there can be a socialist society, but it would be a mistake to present socialism as an objective now.

There is an urgent problem that must be resolved. I believe that if the workers, the peasants, students, intellectuals, and businessmen clearly understand the problem, then the traitors and those who are at the service of imperialism can be isolated.

I think that what is coming are measures that allow not a single penny to get away. I can say that in this country, in 26 years of revolution, not one single penny has gotten away. Here, there is no billing for overcharges. Nothing like that. And this is not what we are proposing.

Under current conditions we will have to adopt measures aimed at avoiding waste, the flight of capital, and so forth.

[Unreadable text] a rule, we have avoided discussing the internal affairs of the countries while analyzing this problem. We have suggested the general principle of unity, unity among countries, unity among the Third World countries, but we have avoided this other issue. It would be senseless, and it would not be prudent to make recommendations regarding this matter.

This does not mean that we are going to renounce our revolutionary ideals or our socialist ideas. I repeat, in essence, we view this as a great struggle for national liberation against powerful forces and the fact that we can generate enough force to carry out this struggle. In the next few months we will be able to see what happens. The evolution of the crisis; what is going to happen. I think that we must create awareness.

Admirable words have been spoken here; very encouraging messages have been heard. For those who may say that our ideas are radical, here you have the letter written by Cardinal Arns, the archbishop of Sao Paulo. You heard it read, you saw the letter. With your permission I will once again mention its contents. After all that has been said, it gains more worth:

1. There is no real way in which the Latin American and Caribbean peoples can assume the responsibility for the burden of the payment of the huge debts contracted by our governments. It is not even feasible to continue to pay the high interest rates at the cost of our development and welfare. The problem of the debt, before being a financial one, is basically a political problem and that is the way it must be dealt with. The accounts of the international creditors are not the ones at stake. However, what is at stake are the lives of the millions of people who cannot continue to experience the constant threats of recessive measures and unemployment that only bring misery and death.

Human rights demand that all men of goodwill of the continent and the Caribbean, all the responsible sectors, join in the urgent search for a real solution to the problem of the foreign debt. They should join as a way to preserve the sovereignty of our nations and protect the principle of our governments' main duty, which is with the people they represent and not with the creditors.

The intransigent defense of the principle of peoples' self-determination demands an end to the interference of the international organizations in the financial administration of our nations. Considering that a government is a public organization, all agreements signed with international organizations must be brought to the knowledge of the public immediately. We could ask for something more, that all discussions of the IMF and the World Bank be carried on the radio and television just as we have carried our dialogue of these past few days. [applause]

5. [number as heard] It is urgent to establish the concrete bases for a new international economic order that will eliminate the unequal relations between rich and poor countries and ensure the Third World its alienable right to choose its own destiny, free of imperialist intervention and of exfoliative measures in the relations of international trade.

They say that the ideas I am defending are radical ideals; fine, I support, 100 percent, these five points presented by this illustrious cardinal, son of Brazil, cardinal of Sao Paulo. [applause] I support them 100 percent. I hope that they will no longer continue to say that these are extremist ideas. I would even add a sixth point to them, and this would be economic integration of Latin America, and a seventh point, [Unreadable text] intentions of which are obvious. This is a struggle of the Latin American and Third World peoples for the lives of 4 billion people who suffer the consequences of this unjust order throughout the world.

We have not issued a document and there is no need for this. The objective of the meeting was not to issue a document but rather to create awareness. This was the main objective of this dialogue, and I truly believe that we have created awareness, a strong awareness. Even those of us who have been working on this for some time feel stronger, more convinced, and more sure, after hearing tens upon tens of brilliant speeches by persons who have demonstrated their great capacity. It has truly been a prize, a rewarding gift for our people who have closely followed, day after day, hour after hour,

minute after minute, this dialogue. We are truly grateful.

What we needed was this awareness. No church was born from a document; independence of the peoples of Latin America was not born from a document; at a certain time and moment the churches, the great spiritual and political moments were born from a crisis and an awareness. We are facing such a crisis now, and we have created an awareness. I am sure, as you are sure, that our movement, our struggle, will march forward and that we shall attain victory.

**Fidel Castro**

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**P.S.**

\* <http://www.cadtm.org/Fidel-Castro-The-debt-is-unpayable>