

Speech given by Miguel Díaz-Canel, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Republic, at the closing of the VI International Conference for the Balance of the World, January 31, 2025.



Photo: Estudios Revolución

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Dear friends, followers of Martí who fight for the balance of the world with the weapons of ideas, the only ones capable of saving and emancipating human beings:

I want to begin by thanking you for your enthusiastic and supportive participation in this event that is being held by a 172-year-old man who, however, is not an old man: José Martí is an eternal man, something that does not need to be explained in Cuba, because we feel it everywhere.

And he needs to explain himself less before an audience like this, because it is precisely about that eternity that makes José Martí a contemporary of ours, but also of the girls and boys who are yet to be born, that you have spoken about most in these days of Martí in Havana.

I always like to begin by thanking the visitors for their audacity in showing their solidarity with Cuba in person, because they do so not only by assuming the costs of travel and accommodation, but they also face threats and punishments, especially designed to condemn us to solitude, since no other weapon has worked in the attempt to subdue the rebellious and worthy people of Fidel and Raúl Castro, leaders of the generation that did not let Martí die in the year of his centenary.

The massive attendance at this conference, with more than a thousand people from 98 countries, including more than 400 Cuban delegates, is also a tremendous encouragement to the people of Cuba, because it is a recognition of their heroic resistance in the context of a world in threatening imbalance for the human species, where even dignity is negotiable.

Cuba knows this very well, having been paying for 66 years the very high price of not having a price. Because, as the eternal man who calls us and brings us together said, “poverty passes: what does not pass is the dishonor that men tend to bring upon themselves under the pretext of poverty.”

Martí was perfectly defined by the Cuban poet José Lezama Lima as “the mystery that accompanies us,” an expression that could be interpreted as the depths of knowledge and love that, so immense, are never fully deciphered.

And it is very true: Martí accompanies us Cubans incessantly. His presence ranges from a simple bust dedicated to him in a school, a workshop, a factory or a hospital, to the dazzlement that continues to assail us as we read his verses or his definitions that seem written for the 21st century. And this discovery occurs as we move through total admiration for the coherence of his thought and his way of acting.

But Martí accompanies not only Cubans, but all citizens of the world who firmly believe in the possibility of improving and balancing this world, and who do so against the current of barbarism visible today in the height of greed and in the infinite pain caused by the greedy due to their absolute contempt for human suffering.

I speak first of the Palestinian holocaust at the hands of the Government of Israel and those who feed that desire to kill, but also of the brutal persecution and humiliating deportation, handcuffed and chained, of thousands of migrants who have broken their backs under the whip of the economic imbalance that forced

them to emigrate. From here we ask for Palestine to be free! (Applause.)

And I am speaking, of course, of Cuba, hundreds of times a victim of terrorism, whose noble name has been included and re-included in an infamous list of supposed sponsors of terrorism, so that obedient international banks close the doors to any commercial or financial management that contributes to solving the basic needs of the Cuban people.

I am speaking of Cuba, from which the United States stole a piece of land in the name of a friendship that it never honored by using that territory, illegally occupied for more than a century, as a military base and prison where people that the empire declares enemies and guilty are tortured and locked up in a legal limbo, most of the time without a single piece of evidence of their crime.

As if this infamy, which has been condemned hundreds of times by international courts, were not enough, now they tell us that 30,000 deportees will be sent to the American Naval Base in Guantanamo. Once again, illegality, ignorance of international treaties, and the unacceptable idea that there are countries and people superior to the rest of humanity.

Despite everything, as we say here, and the presidential orders of the masters of the world, we will not remain silent in the face of infamy nor will we lose confidence and faith in human improvement, future life and utility.

Martí also accompanies us in optimism, because in him we have the hopeful being that Pope Francis calls for, and we have the fighter who came to express that “Human honor is imperishable and irreducible, and nothing disintegrates or diminishes it, and when it is oppressed and made to fade from one side, it leaps out inflamed and powerful from the other.”

Because of statements like that, he becomes a reference for us and someone essential to undertake the daily battle for justice on a planet about to agonize under the empire of greed. We do not give up! We learned with Martí that from pain and the need to put an end to it, the strength and will to face and overcome the greatest challenges are born.

The great poet and devoted Martian Fina García Marruz, tirelessly studying the work of the Apostle, pointed out some keys to understanding the routes of radicalization of his political thought.

Fina, the companion of the teacher and very Martian Cintio Vitier, said the following about Martí: “The revolutionary organizer was born in the prison. There he understood that it was impossible to build a triumphant revolution with hatred. He thought that our battle was for justice, not revenge. With his fiery speeches, he turned the worst of enemies into friends. He lit the flame of love.”

And Martí is the same human being who – perhaps because of his poetic essence, his extreme sensitivity and his capacity for analysis that allowed him to see where others remained blind – became so radicalized that in an unfinished letter to his beloved brother, Manuel Mercado, he wrote a paragraph that was crucial for the destiny of Cuba, which almost all Cubans know by heart.

Martí says: “I am already in danger every day of giving my life for my country and for my duty – since I understand it and have the courage to carry it out – of preventing in time, with the independence of Cuba, the United States from expanding throughout the Antilles and falling, with that added force, on our lands of America. Everything I have done until today, and will do, is for that.”

It seems that he said everything and for all times, as if there were no time barriers. Martí is read and his ideas continue to be of inexhaustible use, even though he was not a witness to the discoveries that humanity has experienced after he fell heroically in combat.

Few like him could foresee, at the very hour of his birth, this danger that now overflows before our eyes, of a modern empire that disrespects rights in the name of a divine mandate, ready to destroy the very balance of civilization.

It seems that he has expressed himself at this time when he predicted that “when empires reach the peak of their prosperity, they are on the edge of the precipice that devours them.”

He defined like no one else the “greedy neighbor, who confessedly desires us” and asked to be alert “against the possible greed of a strong and unequal neighbor”; and in the case of Cuba, he spoke about “the independence of the happy archipelago that nature placed at the center of the world.”

He knew that, for reasons of origin, while those in the North bought, those in the South cried, and it was then that he emphasized the need to understand this essential difference, so that only a bridge of mutual respect between two cultural universes would be viable.

He never promoted animosity against the good and talented children of the continental mass of the North, but his reflection was extremely clear regarding the risks of accepting that the nations recently liberated from the decadent Spanish empire would fall subordinate in an unequal relationship with the new empire in gestation.

This can be verified in his essential essay “Our America,” where he states: “We can no longer be the people of leaves, living in the air, with the crown laden with flowers, crackling or humming, depending on whether the whim of light caresses it, or the storms beat and cut it down; the trees must line up, so that the giant of seven leagues does not pass! It is time for counting and for the united march, and we must walk in a tight square, like silver in the roots of the Andes.”

This warning from Martí is useful today for the entire world and not only for our America, all of us facing, in some way, the desires of the Rome of the 21st century that has shown itself capable of arrogantly passing over human diversity.

Surely there are many of us, even in this Martí audience, who have asked ourselves why Martí emphasized the centrality of Cuba and by extension of the Antilles in the balance of the world.

Dr. Armando Hart Dávalos, father of these events For the Balance of the World, answered the question in more than one text or conference. I quote one of his articles:

“The question we must ask ourselves is why Martí wanted a free Cuba, a free Antilles and a free America. He expressed it in such a clear way that it should not give rise to doubts or confusion. In his article on the occasion of the commemoration of the second anniversary of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, published in 1894, he noted:

In the faithful of America are the Antilles, which would be, if enslaved, a mere pontoon of the war of an imperial republic against the jealous and superior world that is already preparing to deny it power, a mere stronghold of American Rome; –and if free– and worthy of being so by the order of equitable and hard-working freedom– they would be the guarantee of balance on the continent, that of independence for the still threatened Spanish America and that of honor for the great republic of the North, which in the development of its territory– unfortunately, already feudal, and divided into hostile sections – will find more secure greatness than in the ignoble conquest of its smaller neighbors, and in the inhuman fight that with the possession of them it would open against the powers of the world for the predominance of the world.”

Another indispensable follower of Martí when it comes to understanding the fulfilled predictions of the Apostle is Dr. Pedro Pablo Rodríguez, who is here, patient and diligent director of the Critical Edition of the Complete Works of the Master. His substantial essay “José Martí and his concept of the balance of the world” cannot be ignored to get to the bottom of Martí’s anguish about the balance of the world. And

here what I read from the author Pedro Pablo will be longer, because the following fragment seems fundamental to me:

“A thinker of aphoristic and polysemic style, from the beginning of his stay in New York he systematically warned about the expansionist danger represented by the nascent monopolies in the United States, which increasingly controlled the government leadership and dedicated themselves to the exercise of politics through the corruption of democracy, and imposed a foreign policy controlling the Latin American markets that supplied raw materials and food, and consumers of northern industry. For these plutocratic interests, which Martí considered harmful also to the popular majorities of the United States, there were, in his opinion, no commercial or geographical borders to prevent, with the territorial, the consolidation of economic dominance over Latin America.

“Proof that these were not assumptions or poetic dreams, but rather a brilliant analysis of the realities of his time and a lucid look at the immediate future is that between 1898 and 1930 the United States intervened militarily, and even governed directly in some cases, in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Panama, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico and Nicaragua.”

Later, Pedro Pablo explains something that is very present today, in our days, and Pedro Pablo says: “Obviously the foreseeable proximity of the opening of the Panama Canal made Martí coincide with many observers of that time in the perception that with that route the importance of the Antillean and Central American zone would increase for the geopolitics of the hegemonic States of that time. He was so convinced of the importance of a balance between the great powers that in the Manifesto he wrote in the Dominican city of Montecristi to explain why the last Cuban War of Independence had begun in February 1895, he stated: “The Cuban war of independence, the crux of the bundle of islands where, within a few years, the commerce of the continents will be crossed, is an event of great human significance, and a timely service that the judicious heroism of the Antilles provides to the firmness and fair treatment of the American nations, and to the still wavering balance of the world.”

This is the essential fragment of our dear Pedro Pablo’s essay. You will surely find in various moments of what you have read, how much José Martí foresaw, and with how much reason, the serious dangers that are upon us today, when we are not even yet the united America that can face them.

Let us say it with absolute clarity. The aggressive conduct and pretensions of the United States, which are manifested by the recently installed government, threaten the population of that country, especially the most humble and dispossessed segments. They also threaten international peace, including that of our region of Latin America and the Caribbean. It is not possible to ignore this reality.

In the political scene of that country, the political, economic and social forces that have gained the most influence embrace xenophobic, racist, discriminatory and supremacist ideas that humanity struggled to overcome after the end of the Second World War and the defeat of Nazism 80 years ago.

It is a worrying phenomenon that can be observed in several countries in different regions. Reactionary political parties and political figures have been gaining ground. It is even manifested with the frequent and dangerous support of poor, humble and working class sectors, who identify with the politicians and programs that are exponents of these currents. It is a phenomenon that often reflects desperation, helplessness and pessimism in the face of growing injustice.

These currents are inherent and the fruit of capitalism, of its selfish, predatory and exclusive nature. They have gained strength as a consequence of the expansion of neoliberal policies in the last 40 years and of their resounding failure to respond to the interests and needs of the majority, guarantee better standards of living and promote social justice.

These are policies whose most palpable result is the growth of inequalities, social polarization, exclusion, distrust of others and cultural, ethnic and religious frictions. The results are also disorderly emigration, the

growth of illegality, drug trafficking and corruption.

They have largely contributed to the erosion of the sovereign power of several countries, to the loss of true self-determination and to the coming to power of governments clearly subordinated to the will of imperialism and the large transnationals and corporations that feed it.

Unfortunately, even when progressive or leftist forces have governed, they have, on certain occasions, lacked the time, the strength, the will or sufficient independence to confront the neoliberal economic programs that are at the root of many of the political and social problems that developing countries suffer today.

The international order born out of the end of the Second World War, which to a large extent prevails today, is the heir of colonialism, of the history of exploitation, plunder and slavery that enriched a specific set of colonial powers and their societies, at the cost of the suffering, uprooting, destruction, submission and underdevelopment of the former colonized territories.

Imperialism as a system of domination is not a new phenomenon. However, the era of neoliberal globalization has taken more sophisticated and less visible forms. It is no longer just about direct territorial occupation, although this is still a current practice, as our heroic Palestinian brothers suffer firsthand. It also manifests itself in the control of markets, natural resources, supply chains and, above all, technology and information.

The oligarchies that dominate the world today not only accumulate wealth, but also concentrate political, cultural and social power, perpetuating a benefit that favors a few at the expense of many. Large industrial corporations, financial conglomerates and technology giants have woven a network of influence that transcends borders. Their decisions affect the lives of millions of people, from access to medicines to the privacy of our data. These elites not only seek to maximize their profits, but also to consolidate their hegemony, imposing standards and norms that perpetuate the dependence of what is increasingly recognized as the Global South.

Although colonialism was almost completely abolished in the second half of the 20th century, its conditions and shortcomings have prevailed in new forms.

This is the essence of the current international order and explains the unacceptable reality that the gap between developed and underdeveloped countries tends to widen, rather than narrow, with no prospects of this trend changing.

There are plenty of documents, declarations, speeches and resolutions from the United Nations and its agencies that describe this scenario. Proposals on how to respond and what to do have a history that dates back at least to the 1960s of the last century. It is well known that the possibility of change and the prospect of a more just and sustainable international order have met with fierce resistance from the great economic and military powers, largely representing the former colonial powers.

Developing nations, and especially their peoples, have the right to dream that a better world is possible! And they have the right and the duty to fight for it! (Applause.)

This will not be possible if we do not make significant progress towards an international order different from the current one. It must be a truly democratic order, in which all nations have the opportunity to contribute and be truly represented on equal terms. It must be a sustainable order, which promotes peace, security for all, social justice, equitable prosperity, respect for cultural, ethnic and religious plurality; which promotes democratic access to science and technology, and human rights for all, not just for privileged elites; which is based on solidarity, cooperation and respect for the right of each country to choose its political, economic and social system without foreign interference.

In this new order, what is fundamental is its content and the commitment that we are able to mobilize to achieve it.

The challenges to achieve it or even get closer to it are immense. How to do it is a difficult question to answer. But there is no doubt that unity, strategy and a clear vision of what we want to achieve are required. And, as Fidel said: Sow ideas! Sow ideas! Sow ideas! And sow awareness! (Applause.)

After reviewing José Martí and evaluating the current moment, all doubts are cleared. It is he who warns us and is also the antidote against all imbalances, because he helps us understand the only possible language, because it is common: the human one.

His spirit leads us to defend ancestral roots, our identities that the new colonizers dream of dismantling, our dignity, our creative possibility, the much-needed unity, self-esteem for being these natural women and men that we are, courage, stoicism, sensitivity, that powerful force about which Martí said: "Through love one sees. With love one sees. Love is what sees" (Applause).

From this platform that we erect in his memory, I want to share with you the fervent wish that Martí continues to call us, that his optimism, raised like a sword, even in the most adverse scenarios, be our horizon and our teaching, and that, protected by him, we never abandon the certainty that, as he said with all firmness: "Honor can be tarnished. Justice can be sold. Everything can be torn apart. But the notion of good floats above everything, and never sinks" (Applause).

Let us have as a legitimate desire to become, with daily effort and the best dreams, true disciples of José Martí, just as Fidel did and with him the Generation of the Centennial of Martí, as did so many worthy men and women who brought the Apostle to our time.

Along these paths I am sure that we will find, day by day, meaning to his tremendous affirmation that "Happiness exists on earth; and it is conquered with the prudent exercise of reason, the knowledge of the harmony of the universe, and the constant practice of generosity."

From free and sovereign Cuba, which resists and creates tirelessly, carrying in its heart "the doctrines of the Master," as Fidel did before those who judged him in 1953, we confirm to the followers of Martí everywhere who have accompanied us in these days, that we will continue fighting for the balance of the world, as a contribution to the preservation of the human species!

Long live Martí! (Exclamations of: "Long live!")

Long live his ideas! (Exclamations of: "Viva!")

"Hasta la victoria siempre!" "Ever onward to victory!" (Exclamations of: "Venceremos!" "We will win!")

(Cubaminrex-Presidency) / English translation: Ed Newman / Radio Havana Cuba

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