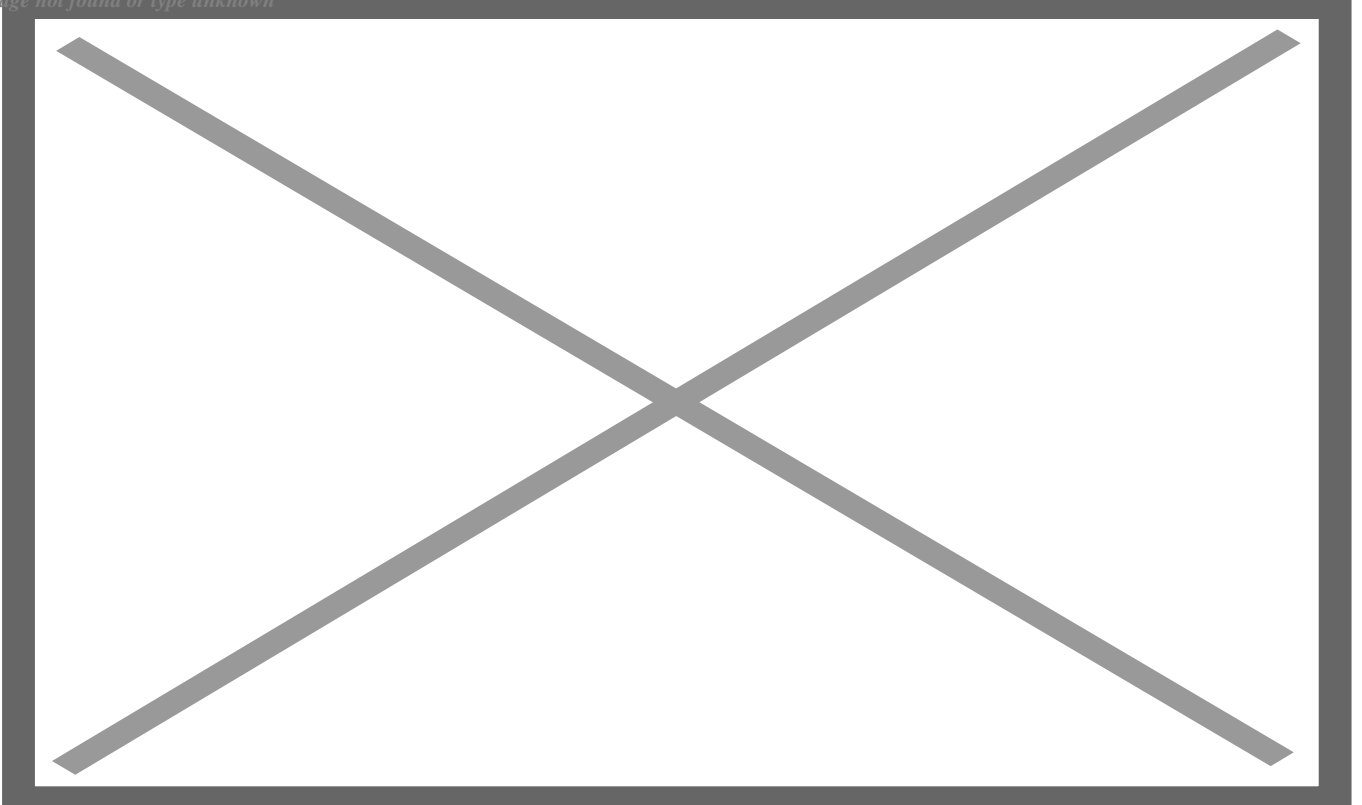


Fidel's imprint on the Non-Aligned Movement

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IV Summit, held in Algiers in 1973

By María Josefina Arce

The NAM, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, of which Cuba is a founding member, is meeting in Uganda and in which the historic leader of the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro, undoubtedly left a deep imprint. For many, he maintained the unity of the bloc under a new leadership.

Cuba was the only Latin American and Caribbean country to be present at the First Summit of the mechanism, held in September 1961 in Belgrade, the capital of the then Yugoslavia, and attended by nearly 30 nations.

Because of Cuba's strong defense, under Fidel's guidance, of the rights of the poorest, of the dispossessed of the world, our country headed the NAM on two occasions, from 1979 to 1983 and from 2006 to 2009.

Fidel always emphasized that the struggle for peace, for a fairer and more equitable international economic order and for a solution to the problems of the South should be one of the fundamental issues of the bloc.

Under his leadership, Havana would host the Sixth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1979. In his speeches he insisted on the role that the bloc should assume at the international level.

He highlighted the broad participation in the meeting, which showed, he stressed, the vigor, strength and prestige of the NAM.

Twenty-seven years later, the Cuban capital would once again host the member countries of that consultation mechanism at its Fourteenth Summit, another sign of recognition to Cuba for its commitment to peace and the well-being of the peoples.

Although Fidel was recovering from health problems, he was attentive to the preparations and discussions at the meeting. He met with several world leaders, as well as with the then UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan. The leader of the Cuban revolution left a broad legacy to the Non-Aligned Movement. His words at the Fourth Summit, in 1973, in Algeria, traced the path of the necessary unity to confront imperialism, colonialism and racism and successfully fight for the aspirations of justice and peace of the peoples. A tireless fighter in favor of just causes, he imbued that spirit, his humanism and solidarity with the Non-Aligned Movement, which had in Fidel Castro a faithful defender of the oppressed.

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