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# Fidel Castro

TELEVISION SPEECH  
DELIVERED  
ON NOVEMBER 1, 1962

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**FIDEL CASTRO**

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THE talks with U Thant, Secretary General of the United Nations, lasted for two days. It seems to me that the best way to tell the people about these matters is to read out the verbatim record of the talks.

Of course, we have to keep in mind that, on the first day, the conversation was of a general character during which the position of our country was defined and, on the next day, Mr. Thant expressed the wish to make some confidential statements. So I asked him if he would have any objection if the stenographic record of the first day's talks was published, during which the Cuban Revolutionary Government put forward its line with regard to his efforts in connection with Cuba. He agreed, and we in turn promised not to publish, for the time being, the points and questions which he was going to put forward, which he, not we, had defined as confidential. Nevertheless here is a record of all that was discussed.

I shall now read out the stenographic record of the talks held at the Presidential Palace on October 30, 1962, which began at 3:10 p.m. I shall announce the name of each speaker:

STENOGRAPHIC RECORD OF THE FIRST TALK

*Presidential Palace, October 30, 1962 (3:10 p.m.)*

"U THANT: There is one point I should like to mention. General Rikhye was always present at the discussions I held in New York with the representatives of the Soviet Union and with the representatives of the United States and, in my opinion, it would be useful if he were present at this meeting with the Prime Minister.

"DR. CASTRO: We have no objection.



*(Gen. Rikhye was called in to take part in the conference.)*

"U THANT: First, Mr. Prime Minister, I should like to thank you and your Government for the invitation extended to me to come to Cuba, not only on this occasion, but for the previous invitation too.

"As I said in accepting your invitation, I have come as early as possible. I am sure that today and tomorrow we shall have very fruitful talks towards arriving at a solution, with due respect for the sovereignty and independence of Cuba.

"DR. CASTRO: We are at your disposal to discuss for as long as is necessary, we place our time freely at your disposal.

"U THANT: As you know, the Cuban problem was put forward at the Security Council last week, while forty-five neutralist countries — composed largely of those which participated in the Bandung and Belgrade conferences — were also meeting. Two meetings took place, and they sent some representatives to confer with me (since I also come from a neutralist country and had participated in both meetings) and to request that I take the initiative to help bring about a peaceful solution to the problem.

"On October 24, I decided to take this initiative.

"After listening to the statements made by the three delegations in the Security Council, I came to the conclusion that the immediate problem was to make an appeal to the three powers. I appealed to Premier Khrushchov to voluntarily suspend arms shipments to Cuba for two or three weeks; to President Kennedy to voluntarily suspend the quarantine; and I called on Your Excellency to voluntarily suspend the construction of missile bases, to give us an opportunity to discuss the problem calmly.

"Immediately after my request, the Security Council suspended its meetings to give me the opportunity to carry out my intentions.

"Next day, I was informed that some Soviet ships were heading towards the quarantine zone. I sent a second appeal to Premier Khrushchov and to President Kennedy, asking both to avoid a direct confrontation on this occasion in order to allow me the few days necessary to deal with this matter. On that same day I sent you a letter, which you very kindly answered, inviting me to Cuba. The subject of that letter was the suspending of construction of missile bases in Cuba.

"Since then, there have been messages between Premier Khrushchov and President Kennedy, between Premier Khrushchov and myself, between President Kennedy and myself and, of course, Your Excellency answered my letter of October 27. The content of this letter is known, as it has been published.

"As I see the problem, Your Excellency, it has two aspects: one immediate and another long-term. For the time being, the Security Council would like to concern itself with the solution of the immediate problem.

"The purpose of my negotiations with the three powers mentioned applies, of course, only to the immediate problem. However, the United Nations will have to become involved in one way or another in the solution of the long-term problem.

"In connection with the immediate problem there are several factors. The first of these is that Premier Khrushchov has replied to my request by instructing the captains of Soviet ships to keep away from the quarantine zone for a few days.

"President Kennedy answered that he was ready to avoid direct confrontation with Soviet ships if they did not carry weapons, and Premier Khrushchov very explicitly told me that at the present time Soviet ships were not carrying any. If the two powers agree, no weapons will be sent to Cuba during the next two or three weeks, and if no weapons are being transported, the United States will suspend the quarantine during this period.



"What the United States wants is to make sure that Soviet ships will not carry weapons. The United States wants some mechanism, some device by means of which the United Nations can assure her that no weapons will enter Cuba during this two- or three-week period.

"The Soviet Union does not agree to this proposal.

"Yesterday the Soviet Government suggested a new solution that Soviet ships allow the Red Cross to inspect them and verify that they are not carrying arms. The Soviet Government's reply was communicated last night to the U.S. Government.

"The Red Cross, which we contacted yesterday by phone, in Geneva, answered that it would agree—in the name of world peace and international co-operation—to undertake this task either on the high seas or in disembarkation ports, provided the Cuban Government agreed.

"My attitude can in no way be one of participation. I have no competence to associate myself with any of the proposals. I have simply told the Red Cross, the Soviet Union and the United States that, with due consideration to the sovereignty of Cuba and always subject to the consent of the Cuban Government, I would ask this of the Red Cross.

"This has been told to the three parties, and it was learned that it would be conveyed to the Cuban Government.

"The first point, therefore, Your Excellency, — which would greatly aid my task — would be to know the attitude of the Cuban Government towards the idea that the Red Cross should verify the transportation of weapons by Soviet ships during the next two or three weeks.

"The question is: What would be Cuba's attitude on this point?

"PRESIDENT DORTICOS: Are you referring to verification on the high seas or in Cuba?

"U THANT: I have of course informed the governments of both the Soviet Union and the United States about this proposal of the Red Cross. The Soviet Government replied

that this matter concerned Cuban sovereignty. I have had no reply from the U.S. Government on this matter. Does Your Excellency wish to discuss these points one by one, or all together?

"DR. CASTRO: I would prefer that you continue with your exposition.

"U THANT: The United States has told me, and has also stated during the negotiations and at meetings of the Security Council, that it is more concerned about the launching ramps than about the other weapons. Its main concern is the missile launching ramps.

"As is well known, Premier Khrushchov instructed Soviet technicians last Sunday to dismantle the missile ramps and to return with the missiles to the Soviet Union. He also said that he would ask the United Nations to send a team to verify if this has actually been done.

"I answered the Soviet representatives that, before sending an inspection team, it was most important to obtain the Cuban Government's consent. This could not be done without the knowledge and consent of the Cuban Government, and no action could be taken which trampled upon Cuban sovereignty. I also told the Soviet representatives as well as the U.S. Government that I would come to Cuba to put forward this point of view to Prime Minister Castro and his colleagues. On this point, of course, both the Soviet and U.S. Governments agree that if the missile ramps are withdrawn tension will be reduced.

"What the United States wants, through me, is a temporary agreement before the ramps are completely dismantled.

"I have asked the Soviet representatives how long it would take to dismantle the ramps; they were asking Moscow, but until this morning no reply had yet been received.

"What the United States seeks is a temporary agreement with the United Nations, subject, of course, to the approval and consent of the Cuban Government.



"Of course, nobody knows how long this will take: one or two weeks, perhaps more.

"The first U.S. proposal is then, if the Cuban Government will accept, the creation of a team of United Nations representatives, composed of persons whose nationality is acceptable to Cuba. The second proposal is for a U.N. reconnaissance plane manned by persons acceptable to the Cuban, Russian and U.S. Governments. It has also been suggested that there be an aeroplane carrying one Cuban, one Russian and one U.S. representative during the one or two weeks that this may last.

"I have told the United States that this suggestion would also be conveyed to Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

"The United States has told me that, as soon as this series of measures is put into practice, it will make a public declaration, in the Security Council if necessary, to the effect that it will not entertain aggressive intentions against the Cuban Government and will guarantee the territorial integrity of the nation. I have been asked to tell you this.

"The most important thing, as I have told the United States and everyone, is that none of these agreements can be reached without the Cuban Government's consent. The United States has replied that if agreement were reached with the participation of the Cuban Government and the United Nations, it will not only make that declaration in the Security Council but also lift the blockade.

"Yesterday I told the United States that while I was in Cuba consulting with Prime Minister Fidel Castro and the Cuban leaders, it would look very bad if the blockade were maintained, and I asked them to suspend it. This morning it was announced that the blockade would be suspended for forty-eight hours, during my stay in the Republic of Cuba.

"As Your Excellency knows, I told the Security Council that a blockade of this sort was an extremely unusual thing, very unusual, save in times of war. That is what I told the Security Council. This point of view is shared by the forty-

five countries which met and asked me to take this initiative. Two of these countries which also have seats in the Security Council at present, the U.A.R. and Ghana, made statements to this effect at a meeting of the Council.

"Others of the forty-five neutralist countries, especially those which participated in the Belgrade Conference, will make similar statements if the occasion arises. This is with reference to the immediate problem.

"Your Excellency, the Security Council has not authorized me to deal with long-term problems, although they will have to be dealt with by the Security Council later.

"That is all I have to say in this first meeting, Your Excellency.

"DR. CASTRO: There is one point about which I am rather confused. It is the one to do with the inspection proposals. Two points have been mentioned here: a team and an aeroplane. I would like you to explain this further. Would you kindly repeat the part referring to the inspection proposals, please?

"U THANT: Both would be U.N. proposals and would be for two teams; one on land and the other in an aeroplane, during the period when the ramps are being dismantled, that is, for about two weeks.

"DR. CASTRO: I do not understand why they ask such things of us. Could you explain a little further, please?

"U THANT: The explanation given by the United States with regard to the reason it asks for this is that it would like to make sure the ramps are really being dismantled and the missiles sent back to the Soviet Union.

"DR. CASTRO: What right has the United States to demand such a thing? I mean, is its demand based on a real right, is it based on force, or on a position of strength?

"U THANT: In my opinion, it is not a right. A thing like this can only be done with the consent and the approval of the Cuban Government.



"DR. CASTRO: We do not understand at all why this is asked of us, since we have not violated any right, we have not committed aggression against anyone. All our acts have been based on international law, we have done absolutely nothing outside the norms of international law. On the contrary, we have been victims, in the first place, of a blockade, which is an illegal act; in the second place, of the presumption to determine from another country what we can or cannot rightfully do within our own borders.

"We understand Cuba is neither more nor less of a sovereign state than any other member state of the United Nations, enjoying all the attributes inherent in any of those states.

"Besides, the United States has repeatedly violated our air space without any right, committing an intolerable act of aggression against our country. It has tried to justify this by an agreement of the Organization of the American States (O.A.S.) but that agreement has no validity for us. We have, moreover, been expelled from the O.A.S.

"We can accept anything which is according to law, anything which does not infringe upon our condition as a sovereign state. The rights that were violated by the United States have not been re-established, and we do not accept any imposition of force.

"I understand that this question of inspection is a further attempt to humiliate our country. Therefore, we do not accept it.

"The demand for inspection is intended to confirm its presumption to violate our right to act with complete freedom within our own frontiers, our right to decide what we can or cannot do within our own borders. And our present line is not one made up for the occasion; it is a point of view which we have always and invariably maintained.

"In the Revolutionary Government's reply to the Joint Resolution of the U.S. Congress we stated:

It is absurd to threaten a direct armed attack, in the event of Cuba's strengthening itself militarily to a degree which the United States takes on itself to specify. We have not the least intention of informing or consulting the U.S. Senate or House as to the weapons we see fit to acquire and the measures to be taken to defend our country properly. Are we not supported in this by the rights which international norms, laws and principles recognize for every sovereign state throughout the world?

We have not granted the U.S. Congress any sovereign prerogative nor do we intend to do so.

"This point of view was reaffirmed in the United Nations by the President of the Republic of Cuba and also has been repeatedly proclaimed by me in numerous public statements, as Prime Minister of the Government. And it is a firm stand of the Cuban Government.

"All these steps have been taken to ensure the security of our country, in the face of a systematic policy of hostility and aggression; they have been taken in full accordance with the law, and we have not renounced our decision to defend our rights.

"We can negotiate with all sincerity and honesty. We should not be honest if we agreed to negotiate a sovereign right of our country. For these rights we are ready to pay whatever price is necessary, and this is not a mere verbal formula but the very deeply felt attitude of our people.

"U THANT: I understand Your Excellency's feelings perfectly. That is why I said clearly to the United States and others, 'Any action of the United Nations in Cuban territory can be undertaken only with the consent of the Cuban people and Government.' In the name of peace, which all the world and the people everywhere so ardently desire, I told the representatives of the forty-five countries that I was willing to come to Cuba without any commitment with one or the other side.



"Before I set out, some reports in the press stated last night and this morning that I was coming to Cuba in order to arrange the details of U.N. representation in Cuba. That is completely a mistake. That would be a violation of the sovereignty of the Republic of Cuba. I have come only to present the views of the other side and to explore the possibilities for a peaceful solution. The forty-five countries which asked me to come know what is the legal position and what is not.

"But, in the name of world peace, they have requested me to try and find a possible solution, within a period of only one or two, perhaps three, weeks.

"Your Excellency, my conscience is clear in this respect: the United Nations can undertake an action of this sort only if it has the consent of the government in question. It is not the first time this has happened. In Laos, when a situation arose there which threatened world peace, the United Nations established itself in that country only after the Laotian Government gave its consent. In 1956, in Egypt, in the U.A.R., a situation arose and the United Nations established itself in Egypt—and it is still there—with the consent of its government. In the same way, in 1958, another situation arose in Lebanon which threatened world peace. Again, the United Nations went there only after the Lebanese Government gave its consent.

"One condition is absolutely necessary, and that is: in order to take such a step, the consent of the government concerned must be obtained. . . .

"DR. CASTRO: In the case of the Congo also. . . .

"U THANT: And in the case of Somalia.

"DR. CASTRO: I understand that in the case of the Congo they requested the United Nations to take such an action.

"U THANT: In the Congo, the Congolese Government made the request.

"DR. CASTRO: In the Congo, the government which made the request is now buried . . . !

"First of all, our Government has not the least doubt about the great intentions, disinterestedness and honesty with which the present Secretary General of the United Nations is working. We do not doubt your intentions, good faith and extraordinary interest in finding a solution to the problem. We all have a very high concept of your mission and of you personally. I say this in all sincerity.

"I understand the interest that we must all take in peace. But the road to peace is not that of sacrificing, or infringing upon, the people's rights, because that is precisely the road leading to war. The road to peace is that which guarantees the rights of the peoples and the decision of the peoples to resist in defence of these rights.

"In all cases mentioned by the Secretary General: Laos, Egypt, Lebanon, and the Congo, which I mentioned, in all these cases one can see a chain of aggression against the rights of the peoples. It has all originated in the same thing.

"The road to the last world war was that which brought about the annexation of Austria and the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, things which German imperialism was allowed to do and which led to that war. We have taken good notice of those dangers and know the road that aggressors like to follow. We have anticipated the road that the United States would like to take in our case.

"That is why it is difficult to understand how one can talk about immediate solutions independently from future solutions, when the most important thing is not to pay whatever price for peace now, but to guarantee peace definitively and not to be obliged to pay a price every day for an ephemeral peace.

"And, of course, Cuba is not Austria, or the Sudeten area of Czechoslovakia, nor is it the Congo. We have the firmest intention to defend our rights in the face of all difficulties and risks, and it is necessary that Mr. Secretary of the United



Nations should know our determination in order that you may prove successful in your mission or, at least, may be able to work with complete knowledge of the circumstances.

"U THANT: I fully understand the feelings and points of view Your Excellency has expressed.

"About the question of immediate and long-term solutions, I must say that the Security Council has authorized me to seek the means which can bring peace to this zone.

"I realize that immediate and long-term solutions are closely linked, and that we should explore the possibilities of long-term solutions in the light of the present situation. I have been authorized by the Security Council to do this. In practice, it is very difficult to separate the two aspects.

"I believe that if we find an immediate solution to this problem, we shall then be able to find a permanent solution not only for the United Nations but for all parties concerned.

"In talking about Laos and other places where the United Nations has established itself, I agree with you, but I would like to add that in those places the United Nations has managed to remove or avert aggression from outside.

"Please consider this: the presence of the United Nations in Cuba for a period of perhaps just over three weeks, may also remove or eliminate the danger of aggression.

"I believe that at present and in times to come, the presence of the United Nations in some countries will serve to remove and prevent aggression.

"PRESIDENT DORTICOS: I would like to say something. I adhere to the words of our Prime Minister as regards our full understanding of the high mission that the Secretary General is so nobly carrying out. That mission is none other, of course, than to seek the means which may guarantee peace during this present critical situation.

"It seems to me that there is a question to be defined: where does the danger of war lie, in the weapons of one sort or another that Cuba has, or in the aggressive purposes of the United States against Cuba?

"We believe it is aggression which gives rise to war. The weapons which are in Cuba, whatever they may be, will never start an aggression. So we wonder: why is inspection and the acceptance of inspection a condition for the guarantee of peace? It would be enough to guarantee peace if the United States promised, with all necessary guarantees through the United Nations, that it will not attack Cuba.

"That is why we have stated — and our Prime Minister has repeated it here quite clearly — that long-term solutions of the questions, if we may call them so, are intimately bound up with an immediate solution of the crisis. The immediate solution of the crisis would occur as soon as the United States gave assurance that it would not attack Cuba, minimal assurances such as are contained in the statement made on October 28th by our Prime Minister, and of which Mr. Secretary General is certainly aware.

"The presence of the United Nations in Cuba for purposes of inspection — which the Revolutionary Government does not accept for reasons that the Prime Minister has already mentioned — would, at the most, guarantee peace for two or three weeks; that is, peace would be 'ephemeral' as he has rightly stated. Immediately after this the danger of war would be renewed, because the conditions that facilitate U.S. aggression against Cuba would remain.

"Let the United States give the assurances which we consider minimal and that will be the beginning of the solution of the immediate problem. I would say that, in the last instance, for the purpose of achieving peace now, there are no immediate or long-term questions to discuss. We think that the five points contained in our Prime Minister's statement are integral parts of any immediate discussion to guarantee peace.

"We believe these five points are not to be put off as a long-term question, but that circumstances demand that they be discussed immediately, because they are, in our opinion, minimal conditions for the guarantee of peace.



"I repeat: peace is not in danger because of our weapons. Peace is in danger because of the aggressive actions of the United States. It is negotiation and discussion about these five points that will make the danger of war disappear immediately.

"That is our understanding of the problem.

"U THANT: I would like, first, to thank Your Excellencies, Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister, for your expressions about me personally and about the position I occupy. And I fully agree with both of you that any solution found for short-term agreements should also include negotiations for long-term agreements. However, in the terms of the United Nations, I think the best solution—and on this I believe the 110 member nations agree—would be that, through the Security Council, the United Nations should designate persons to act on its behalf to seek and find the long-term solution. But, at the present time, I do not believe that the United Nations, its Security Council, can arrive at a positive and acceptable long-term solution, in the best interest of all and of world peace.

"If a long-term solution is found, it would be in the best interest of everybody and of world peace, but I think it will be difficult to achieve this in the United Nations right now.

"DR. CASTRO: I believe that if the immediate solution of which the Secretary General speaks is not reached it will be simply because the United States does not wish it, because it insists on inspection as a way of humiliating Cuba. For the unilateral security that the United States demands, the Soviet Government's decision to withdraw the strategic weapons which it brought for the defence of the Republic of Cuba would suffice.

"The Cuban Government has put no obstacle in the path of the withdrawal of those weapons. The Soviet Government's decision was made publicly and this in itself has had an effect on world opinion. The United States knows that it was a serious decision on the part of the Soviet Union, and that strategic weapons are already being withdrawn.

"If, in addition to this, the United States intends to humiliate our country, it will not succeed!

"We have not wavered for a single minute in our decision to defend our rights. We cannot accept conditions which could only be imposed on a defeated country. We have not abandoned our decision to defend ourselves, and so firm is our decision that it is impossible for the United States to impose any conditions on us, for it would first have to destroy and annihilate us and, in any case, it would find no one here on whom it could impose humiliating conditions.

"U THANT: About the declaration by the United States. The United States has stated that it would make a public declaration of non-aggression and respect for the territorial integrity of Cuba, once the missiles are dismantled and withdrawn.

"To my thinking, there is no disagreement. I fully agree with the Prime Minister that the actions of the United Nations involve a transgression of the rights of a member state and, in this case, in so far as Cuba is concerned, if the Government is not ready to accept U.N. action, then my duty, which I must do, is to report this to those who made the proposal.

"It is not my intention here to impose anything. My duty is solely to explain the possibilities of finding the means, the ways or forms of a peaceful solution, without advancing concrete proposals. I shall take into account what has been said here this afternoon and return to report to the parties concerned.

"I consider that this meeting has been very useful and, if the Prime Minister agrees, we can meet again tomorrow, before my departure. In the meantime, I will be able to think over carefully what the President and the Prime Minister have said about this matter.

"DR. CASTRO: By way of conclusion I should like to answer you regarding the question of inspection by the Red Cross. We are also opposed to this inspection in our ports, and I wonder why, if the Soviet Union authorizes the inspection of



its ships on the high seas, it should be necessary to inspect them again in Cuban ports.

"Secondly, I see that the Secretary General centres his interest on obtaining a public statement by the United States in the United Nations to the effect that it will not invade Cuba.

"In this connection I should like to say in the first place that the United States has no right to invade Cuba, that one cannot negotiate only with the promise not to commit a crime, and that before the threat of this danger, we trust more in our decision to defend ourselves than in the words of the U.S. Government.

"Furthermore, if the United Nations sets a high value on a public pledge made before it by the United States that it will not invade Cuba, why should it not set equal value on a public pledge made before it by the Soviet Union to withdraw the strategic weapons which it sent to defend the Cuban Republic? These would be two public commitments; and if one of them, that is, the U.S.' pledge not to invade Cuba needs no additional guarantee, why should the Soviet Union's pledge to withdraw its strategic weapons need the additional guarantee of inspecting us?

"We shall be pleased to meet again, as many times as you desire, and whenever you wish.

"U THANT: I thank Your Excellency."

Here ended the first meeting. When the next meeting began, Mr. Thant said: "I should like to thank the Cuban Government and people for the hospitality and facilities they have accorded me in this country."

"The purpose of this second meeting is to exchange views about some confidential matters I have in mind."

That was the second meeting. At the beginning of the meeting he said that these were matters of a confidential nature. We agreed not to publish the subjects and matters he would mention.

During this meeting, we essentially maintained the views expressed throughout the first meeting, and we bring forth some questions, such as the danger involved in the violation of our air space, the danger of an incident, and stated that it was essential for the United States to put an end to these flights.

At the same time, the U.N. Secretary asked us for some information about a plane, which, according to the U.S. press department, had disappeared during one of its flights over Cuba. We gave him the information and at the same time agreed to his request that we return the body of the pilot who died while carrying out an illegal flight over our territory.

For humanitarian reasons we agreed to return the body.

In fact, we deplore that this U.S. pilot should have had to die in our country as a result of the illegal actions and violations of our sovereignty, ordered by the U.S. Government. We hope that the circumstances and cause which gave rise to that death will not occur again.

On the whole our Government's opinion of the U.N. Secretary General is that he is an honest, impartial person, who sincerely desires to strive for solutions to these problems.

We thought him also a competent person, and he really inspired confidence in us.

That is the conclusion that we reached after our meetings with him, by the way he expressed himself, by the respect he always showed for the ideas and rights of our country.

Besides, we believe that the Secretary General is at this moment engaged in a very important mission, that he honours the role he is playing and that if his efforts are successful, they will greatly raise the prestige of the United Nations.

It is possible that this institution may carry out, and develop its work. It is at this very moment doing a most important piece of work.

Undoubtedly, it is in our interest that the United Nations should be an institution which guarantees the rights of the



peoples, above all the rights of small countries, and at this time it seems to us that it is carrying out that role well.

In that sense, we give full support to the United Nations, that is, to its correct attempts and activities in favour of peace and towards finding a solution. This is a different matter from our intransigence in respect to the problem of inspection because we believe we cannot accept any inspection.

We cannot accept inspection for several reasons: First, because we have no desire whatever to sacrifice a sovereign principle of our country.

A series of rights have been violated. The freedom of the seas has been violated by the United States. The United States wants to meddle in what we have the right to do or not to do within our own boundaries. The United States has been openly violating the air space of our country.

How, in the face of all these facts of aggression and violations, these acts of force, can we accept inspection in our country? Inspection precisely to confirm the presumption of the United States that it can decide what type of weapons we have or have not the right to possess.

We have not renounced the right to possess the type of weapons we deem suitable, in accordance with a sovereign attribute of our country. We have not renounced that right. We consider it our right. How can we authorize an inspection to confirm such a presumption by a foreign country? Therefore, we do not accept inspection.

Moreover, it is a demand from a position of strength, a position of strength of the United States. We do not give way before that position of strength, we shall never give way before positions of strength.

In upholding this stand it is no small thing that Cuba defends: it defends a sovereign right of the peoples, and moreover it defends peace. Because our stand in the face of positions of strength, that calls for firmness in respect to the demands of the aggressors and of those who indulge in such policies, is a stand which will not encourage the aggressors.

Aggressors will be aggressors. That is to say, the world unfortunately finds that aggressors do exist. But in our country, aggressors will meet with resistance; they will meet with resistance to any kind of aggression, be it physical or moral aggression — such as they are attempting — or aggression against a right. They will not feel encouraged by the position of Cuba.

We are absolutely within the law and we are absolutely determined to defend our rights. Especially when, as we told the Secretary General of the United Nations, the inspection demanded is, more than anything else, an attempt to humiliate us.

Thus, the position of Cuba was, and is, that we do not accept inspection.

We have pointed out the necessary conditions. And during our second meeting with the Secretary General, we emphasized that Cuba's point of view is that if a true solution is to be found to the tensions and problems in the Caribbean — or rather on the whole continent — and affecting the whole world, it is necessary to comply with the guarantees demanded by Cuba.

These guarantees have the strength of being absolutely just demands; they are based on the indisputable rights of our country:

The ending of the economic blockade and of all forms of pressure, commercial and economic, which the United States is or has been carrying on throughout the world against our country; and of aggressive actions which have been contributed to the aggravating of the situation to its present extreme degree, and which are still being committed.

We are constantly receiving news of Cuba-bound ships the cargoes of which have been left in a port in the Mediterranean or in Europe or in Latin America. Only yesterday news came of one or two ships loaded with jute for our sugar industry which, as a result of United States pressure, had left their cargoes at a Mediterranean port.



Secondly: The ending of all subversive activities — the launching and unloading of arms and explosives by air and sea, the organization of invasion by mercenaries, the infiltration of spies and saboteurs — actions which are all being staged from the territory of the United States and of other countries which are acting as its accomplices.

Hasn't a people the right to demand guarantees against such actions?

Thirdly: The ending of piratical attacks launched from bases in the United States and Puerto Rico.

Fourthly: The ending of all violations of our air space and territorial waters by aircraft and warships of the United States.

That is to say, our country demands that crimes, violations and illegal acts should not be committed against her.

Fifthly and finally: Withdrawal of the Guantanamo Naval Base and the return of the Cuban territory occupied by the United States.

It is absurd to demand the withdrawal of a friend's weapons from our country and let an enemy's base remain here. There is no ground for this, it is completely absurd. No one, in any part of the world, can dispute the right of our people to demand the return of a base and the territory enclosing it, a base where, all throughout the crisis, troops were being reinforced in order to attack our country.

How can they ask us to withdraw our friend's weapons while our enemy's weapons remain in the heart of our country?

The United States says that it possesses this base by virtue of a treaty between the United States and a Cuban Government. A Cuban Government, of course, which came into being during a U.S. intervention in Cuba. It was not by virtue of any treaty, but through a unilateral agreement of the U.S. Congress, through an amendment imposed upon our Constitution after this constitution was imposed upon us by the United States by a decree of its Congress, informing Cuba that it would not leave the country if Cuba did not accept the amendment which contained precisely the question of the naval base.

If they call this a legitimate agreement, far more so are the agreements between the Soviet Government and the absolutely free Government of Cuba, by virtue of which strategic missiles for our defence were placed in Cuba.

If the United States has placed the world on the brink of war in order to demand the withdrawal of those missiles, what right, what moral justification, has it to refuse to leave the territory it now occupies in our country?

We are no obstacle to a peaceful solution, a truly peaceful solution. We are not a warlike or bellicose people, we are a peaceable people, but being peaceable does not mean we are going to let anyone bully us. Far from it. If there is any bullying we can be as warlike as is necessary to defend ourselves. History has shown that!

We shall never be obstacle to a truly peaceful solution. The necessary conditions for such a solution are the guarantees contained in the five points set forth by the Cuban Government.

Let the United States start proving its good faith, not with a promise; with deeds, not words! A truly convincing act would be for the United States to return the territory it occupies in the Naval Base at Guantanamo. That act would be far more convincing than any word, or promise, of the United States.

It does not agree to these guarantees which Cuba demands? Then, there can be no truly peaceful solution, and we shall all have to go on living in the midst of this tension that we have been living in until now. We want a peaceful solution, but a solution with dignity. Without dignity there can be no peace, because a people without dignity are not respected.

And we have a right to peace, to peace of one kind or another; to this kind of peace, which is neither peace nor war, simply because we have resisted, because we have upheld dignity. We have the right to a peace, to a truly peaceful solution which sooner or later we shall obtain, because we



have won that right with the spirit of our people, with their resistance and dignity.

Our cause, our right to peace, will make its way felt throughout the world. For everyone knows who is guilty, who is responsible for all these problems and tensions. The peoples of the world will give more and more support to our five points, which are indispensable conditions for peace.

Our people have won, and will continue to win, the right to a worthy and just peace.

Let us be left to work in peace! We wish to use the implements of toil rather than weapons of war. We wish to create rather than to kill and destroy. Our people are not allowed to create but constantly have to mobilize, to place themselves on a war footing, to be prepared to defend themselves, not because they wish to do so but because they are forced to do so by the aggressors against our country. What our country wants is to work, to develop its resources and its people, to engage in peaceful labour.

There are facts to illustrate this. Scarcely two days before the crisis we had inaugurated the Institute of Basic Science and about a thousand young people had entered it to study medicine. Within three days the Institute of Basic Science had been converted into an anti-aircraft school. That's how it has happened to our life generally.

What a contrast! A project of peace, a desire and an effort for the health and welfare of the people to provide the doctors needed by our peasants, by our population, to extend their average length of life, to improve their health. This very place where eight hundred young men and women enrolled, in three days had to admit eight hundred, a thousand or two thousand young people to teach them to kill, to teach them to handle not surgical instruments but guns.

What we aim at, what our people desire, is not an anti-aircraft school but an Institute of Basic Science. These other bitter tasks have been imposed on us by the aggressors.

In the days before this crisis it could be seen everywhere how the work of the revolution had moved forward: food supplies were improving considerably, both agricultural and industrial production, planning, all the creative work of the revolution was advancing rapidly. The organizations were making preparations for the work of the coming year, with the hope of bringing about a leap forward in the economy, in production.

Then came the crisis, the threat, the need for mobilization, the abandonment of all these tasks in order to fulfil what is under the circumstances a still more sacred task, that of defending our fatherland.

We defend our fatherland because we wish it to be a country of work. Ours is not a land of parasites, but a land of workers, of creators. We wish to have such a land, to work, and to create. That is why before anything else we must defend our country. The ardour with which our people are prepared to fight and to do whatever is necessary shows the great love they have for creative work.

Why? What do the people defend in the trenches? What is being done in the fields and factories, in the universities, and in the schools — that is what our people defend in the trenches. The greater their consciousness and love of what they are doing, the greater their enthusiasm and courage in the trenches.

We pose no obstacle to a truly peaceful solution. We shall continue to exert our utmost efforts towards finding such a solution. Together with the United Nations, with various neutralist countries, we shall continue to strive for true peace, peace with dignity, with no infringement whatsoever on the sovereign rights of our country. For with infringement, things will remain as they are. That we will not accept.

For how long? For as long as is necessary. We must have patience, all the patience necessary to achieve some day, as the culmination of this struggle, a peace with all the attributes



of an absolutely free and sovereign state. That has always been the aspiration of our people. We must be patient.

We shall not accept just any formula, we shall only accept a truly dignified peace formula. I think that, in this way, not only we will gain, but everybody will win: the world, all America, the United States — even those who are to blame for this situation will win with such a solution of peace with dignity for our country.

We are expressing the thoughts of our people when we say that we are ready to fight and we are ready to co-operate for this peace. We have asserted this in all our statements.

Let us see if now, after this crisis, which has shaken the world for days, the conditions and circumstances for the achievement of such a peace have come into being.

There are still some questions I should like to deal with. It has to be said that, in the course of this crisis, during the development of this crisis, some differences arose between the Soviet and Cuban Governments. But I must tell all Cubans that this is not the place to discuss such problems. It would not be useful here, because our enemies would try to take advantage of such a discussion. We have to discuss this with the Soviet people on a Government and Party level; to sit down and discuss with them all that is necessary, in the light of reason and principle, because, above all, we are Marxist-Leninists, and we are friends of the Soviet Union. Between the Soviet Union and Cuba there will be no breaches.

There is something else we want to say: we have confidence in the principled policy of the Soviet Union, and we have confidence in the leadership of the Soviet Union, or in other words, in the Government and the Party leading the Soviet Union.

If my compatriots ask me my opinion at this time, what shall I tell them, what advice shall I give? In the midst of a confusing situation, of things which have not been or are not well understood, what shall we do? I say we must have confidence, we must realize that these international problems are extremely complex and delicate, and that our people, who

have proved to be very mature, extraordinarily mature, will also prove to be so on this question.

That is to say, be careful in analysing events, do not make hasty judgements; and, above all, be disciplined and confident, have full confidence in the Revolutionary Government and its leadership; have full confidence that all problems, all questions will be discussed at an opportune time. Take into account, too, that perhaps some of the factors necessary for an understanding of certain matters are lacking; keep in mind too — and this must not be forgotten — the dramatic and urgent circumstances in which these events took place.

There is now ample time to discuss everything and we shall do so. Above all, we must prevent the enemy from taking any advantage of our impatience and our judgements. An honest revolutionary may express his opinions, he has a right to do so. But if these opinions are expressed at a certain time about certain things which he does not understand well, this can be used by those who are not revolutionary, by those who wish to create mistrust, division and resentment.

Therefore, the advice we must give is: be firm, have confidence and faith — guide yourselves by what we have said here tonight. This is what we must do under the circumstances.

And above all, there are things which I want to say in all sincerity at this moment when there may have been some displeasure because of misunderstandings or differences: it is most necessary to remember all that the Soviet Union has done for us. We should remember what it has done for us in each of the difficult times we have gone through, at each blow of the Yankees: economic aggression, suspension of the sugar quota, and suspension of oil exports to our country. In each case of aggression against us the friendly hand of the Soviet Union has come to our help. We are grateful for this and we must say so loudly and clearly.

Still more moving, which on me, at least, has made the deepest impression, are the Soviet people we have come to



know here, the technicians who have come to work with us in our fields, the teachers, professors, engineers, planners, technicians of all sorts who have come here to help us with their boundless fervour and love. Moreover, the military technicians, who have been ready to die here with us, who have helped us in our training, in preparing our fighting forces, who for months and years have taught our men how to fight and how to organize the formidable army that we now have.

All the basic weapons of our armed forces were sent to us and paid for by the Soviet Union.

I must point out that a few months ago the Soviet Union decided to cancel our whole arms debt.

Some of these questions are of a military nature and must be treated with the utmost caution. All the same I shall explain some things. For example, unlike the tanks and a whole variety of arms which are our own property, the strategic weapons were not our property, not the property of Cuba. In the agreements according to which these were sent to strengthen our defences in the face of the threatened attack, it was agreed that these strategic weapons, which are very complicated and require highly specialized personnel, remain under the direction of Soviet personnel and remain the property of the Soviet Union. That is why when the Soviet Government decided to withdraw these weapons, which belong to the Soviet Union, we respected its decision. I explain this, so that you can understand why the decision for withdrawal was made by the Soviet Government.

That is why as I said before that, though we have some well-founded reason for being discontented about a certain fact, a certain detail, now, more than ever, we must remember how good, generous, noble and friendly the Soviet people have been to us.

I am speaking about the technicians, whom we have seen beside us, ready to die, to sacrifice their lives in defence of our country. They are magnificent people. And because of this too, now more than ever, we must have appreciation, affection

and respect for these people, and be grateful to them. I think this should be the way all of us should conduct ourselves at this time.

This is what has to be made clear so that we can rise to the level of the occasion with higher morale and a more lofty spirit than ever before.

Do not think that the withdrawal of the strategic weapons leaves us unarmed. It does not mean that we are disarmed.

I can assure you that we have formidable means of defence, most powerful and extraordinary resources to defend ourselves. Let the strategic weapons go, but all the other weapons remain here, and they are most powerful means, with which we can cope with any situation.

We must not be confused; confusions will gradually vanish.

There is another question I want to emphasize today, or rather an appreciation I want to express. This refers to the people, to the way the people have behaved during these days. I must say that the attitude of the people, as regards determination, courage and discipline, has surpassed what the greatest optimists could ever have imagined.

We must mention that thousands of men who were not militiamen, and who had not joined the militia during the four years of revolution, became militiamen during this crisis. We must mention that thousands of people who did not belong to any mass organizations, or to a Committee for the Defence of the Revolution, joined during these days. We must say that the enemy could not count on allies from any class within our country and that in these days of acute crisis no arrests whatsoever were necessary. Even those men and women who were critical about the revolution revealed their revolutionary and patriotic spirit at this decisive moment and joined mass organizations. They volunteered for a struggle, which by all indications was a serious one, and which could have been fought with conventional or atomic weapons.

The President of the United States tried to intimidate our people, whom he called "a captive people", by saying that we



would become the target of atomic bombs. The result was more militiamen than ever, more revolutionary fighters than ever.

We must mention the women who went to work, those who had retired took the places of those in the trenches, and we must say that even though this was the greatest mobilization of all, it was the one which least affected production. Never in a time of mobilization did production go ahead as it has gone today! Really impressive were the discipline, the ardour and courage of the people; and really impressive were the organization of our people, and, above all, of our Revolutionary Armed Forces and the efficiency of the commanders. All this shows how the revolution has created discipline and tempered a nation.

Enemy harassment has turned us into a disciplined, organized people, a nation of veterans. Four years of harassment have created a heroic people, more heroic than Spartan, because it is said that Spartan mothers, on bidding farewell to their sons, told them to return "With the shield, or on the shield". Here a whole people, men, women and children, young and old, have said to themselves: "With the shield, or on the shield."

Such a people is invincible! A people which so calmly, so admirably, faces such difficult situations, is a people entitled to gain what it longs for most: peace, respect, dignity and prestige.

We own moral missiles of long range which cannot be dismantled, which shall not be dismantled! These are our most powerful defensive and offensive strategic weapons.

That is why I wish to make clear today, more than ever, our admiration for our people. With this experience, we revolutionaries should feel it our duty more than ever to fight for our people, to work indefatigably for our people. And finally I want to say, from the bottom of my heart, today, more than ever, I am proud of being a son of this people.

**PATRIA O MUERTE!** (Fatherland or Death!)

**VENCEREMOS!** (We Will Win!)



菲德尔·卡斯特罗  
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