

Fidel Castro: “Understanding the Complex World in which we Live. Defending Cooperation and Friendship with all of the World’s Peoples”

For my Federation of University Students classmates. Recalling My University Year.

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The historic leader of the Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro sent a message to the Federation of University Students on the occasion of an event commemorating the 70th anniversary of his admission to the University of Havana.

Dear compañeros,

In 2006, as a result of health issues which were incompatible with the time and effort required to fulfill my duties – which I myself assumed when I entered this University September 4, 1945, 70 years ago – I resigned from my official positions.

I was not the son of a worker, or lacking in material or social resources for a relatively comfortable existence; I could say I miraculously escaped wealth. Many years later, a richer and undoubtedly very capable U.S. citizen, with almost 100 billion dollars, stated – according to a news agency article published this past Thursday, January 22 – that the predominant system of production and distribution of wealth would, from generation to generation, make the poor rich.

Since the times of ancient Greece, during almost 3,000 years, the Greeks, without going very far, were brilliant in almost all activities: physics, mathematics, philosophy, architecture, art, science, politics, astronomy and other branches of human knowledge. Greece, however, was a land in which slaves did the most difficult work in fields and cities, while the oligarchy devoted itself to writing and philosophizing. The first utopia was written precisely for them.

Observe carefully the realities of this well-known, globalized and very poorly shared planet Earth, on which we know every vital resource is distributed in accordance with historical factors: some with much less than they need, others with so much they don’t know what to do with it. Now amidst great threats and dangers of war, chaos reigns in the distribution of financial resources and social production. The world’s population has grown, between 1800 and 2015, from one to seven billion inhabitants. Can this population increment be accommodated, in this way, over the next 100 years, and food, health, water and housing needs met, regardless of whatever scientific advances are made?

Well, setting aside these perplexing problems, it is astonishing to recall that the University

of Havana, during the days when I entered this beloved, prestigious institution almost three fourths of a century ago, was the only one in Cuba.

Of course, fellow students and professors, we must remember that it is not just one now, but rather more than 50 institutions of higher learning distributed across the entire country.

When you invited me to participate in the launch of the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of my admission to the University, which I was surprised to learn of, during days when I was very busy with various issues in which I can perhaps still be relatively useful, I decided to take a break and devote several hours to recalling those years.

I am overwhelmed recalling that 70 years have passed. In reality, compañeros and compañeras, if I were to register again at this age, as some have asked me, I would respond, without hesitation, that it would be to pursue scientific studies. I would say, like Guayasamín: Leave a little light on for me.

In those years, already influenced by Marx, I was able to understand more, and better, the strange, complex world in which it has befallen us to live. I may have harbored some illusions of the bourgeoisie, whose tentacles managed to entangle many students, when they possessed more passion than experience. The topic would be long and interminable.

Another genius of revolutionary action, founder of the Communist Party, was Lenin. Thus I did not hesitate a second when during the Moncada trial, when they allowed me to attend, albeit just one time, I stated before the judges and dozens of high ranking officials of the Batista regime that we were readers of Lenin.

We didn't talk about Mao Zedong, since the socialist revolution in China, inspired by the same principles, had not yet ended.

I insist, nonetheless, that revolutionary ideas must always be on guard as humanity expands its knowledge.

Nature teaches us that tens of billions of light years may have passed, and life in all of its expressions has always been subjected to an incredible combination of matter and radiation.

A personal greeting between the Presidents of Cuba and the United States took place at the funeral of Nelson Mandela, the distinguished, exemplary combatant against apartheid who had become friendly with Obama.

It is enough to indicate that, at that time, several years had passed since Cuban troops had decisively defeated the racist South African army, directed by the wealthy bourgeoisie, which had vast economic resources. This is a story of a conflict which has yet to be written. South Africa, the government with the most financial resources on the continent, had nuclear weapons supplied by the racist state of Israel, as the result of an agreement between this party and President Ronald Reagan, who authorized the delivery of devices for the use of such weapons to attack Cuban and Angolan forces defending the Popular Republic of Angola against racist troops attempting to occupy the country.

Thus peace negotiations were excluded while Angola was attacked by apartheid forces, with the best trained and equipped army on the African continent.

In such a situation, there was no possibility whatsoever for a peaceful solution. Continual efforts to liquidate the Popular Republic of Angola, to bleed the country systematically with the power of that well equipped and trained army, was what led to the Cuban decision to deliver a resounding blow to the racists at Cuito Cuanavale, the former NATO base which South Africa was attempting to occupy at all costs.

That powerful country was obliged to negotiate a peace agreement which put an end to the military occupation of Angola, and an end to apartheid in South Africa.

The African continent was left free of nuclear weapons. Cuba was forced to face, for a second time, the threat of a nuclear attack.

Cuban internationalist troops withdrew from Africa with honor.

Then Cuba survived the Special Period in peace time, which has already lasted for more than 20 years, without raising the white flag, something we have never done, and will never do.

Many friends of Cuba know of the Cuban people's exemplary conduct, and I will explain to them, in a few words, my essential position.

I do not trust the policy of the United States, nor have I exchanged one word with them, though this does not in any way signify a rejection of a peaceful solution to conflicts or threats of war. Defending peace is the duty of all. Any negotiated, peaceful solution to the problems between the United States and peoples, or any people of Latin America, which does not imply force or the use of force, must be addressed in accordance with international principles and norms.

We will always defend cooperation and friendship with all of the world's peoples, and with those of our political adversaries. This is what we are demanding for all.

The President of Cuba has taken pertinent steps in accordance with his prerogatives and faculties conceded by the National Assembly and the Communist Party of Cuba.

The grave dangers that today threaten humanity must yield to norms which are compatible with human dignity. No country can be denied such a right.

In this spirit I have struggled, and will continue to struggle, to my last breath.

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