

Thirty-three Latin American and Caribbean Countries Sign Havana “Zone of Peace” Declaration

By [Global Research News](#)

Global Research, January 31, 2014

[Morning Star \(UK\)](#)

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

Latin American and Caribbean heads of state adopted a landmark agreement pledging to make the region a “zone of peace.”

Leaders from the 33-nation Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (Celac) signed the Havana Declaration, promising not to intervene in other countries’ internal affairs and resolve disputes peacefully.

The agreement followed the two-day Celac summit and recognised “the inalienable right of every state to choose its political, economic, social and cultural system.”

It put in writing the need to resolve differences “through dialogue and negotiation or other forms of peaceful settlement established in international law.”

The declaration also reiterated the need for total global nuclear disarmament and highlighted the ongoing importance of the 1967 Tlatelolco Treaty, which established the region as a nuclear-free zone.

And it emphasised the need to work for food security, literacy, education, the development of agriculture and the achievement of universal public health services.

The brainchild of late Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez, Celac was set up in 2011 to counter the US-dominated Organisation of American States, which expelled Cuba in 1962 in retaliation for its rejection of imperialism.

On Wednesday morning current Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro opened a museum in the Cabana Fortress, Havana, to honour his predecessor’s tireless work for Latin American integration.

The region’s left turn was in full evidence as president after president railed against US imperialism and capitalism.

It meant Colombia’s Juan Manuel Santos struck a lonely figure as he tried to promote free trade as a spur for economic growth.

Famously casual Uruguayan President Jose Mujica added the imposition of the business suit to imperialism’s crimes.

“We have to dress like English gentlemen,” he complained. “Even the Japanese had to abandon their kimonos to have prestige in the world.”

“We all had to dress up like monkeys with ties.”

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