

[Speech delivered by Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro Ruz at the ceremony in which he was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize at the Chaplin Theater on March 19, 1962 \[1\]](#)

Date:

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Distinguished members of the International Lenin Peace Prize Committee (APPLAUSE);

Distinguished Ambassadors (APPLAUSE);

Comrades (APPLAUSE):

Great and deep is the emotion for all of us at this moment, but, overcoming that feeling, let us reason a little about the idea that brings us together tonight, about peace, that word that means so much, that millenary aspiration of humanity.

For that aspiration has arisen in humanity since wars arose, and these arose since exploitation arose.

That is the origin of war: the exploitation of man by man. Therefore, the nearer mankind approaches the era in which the exploitation of man by man is to disappear, the more well-founded is mankind's hope for peace, and the greater are mankind's yearnings for peace.

It is also true that peace has never been so necessary in no other minute of human history as it is now. In no other minute of human history does war mean so much destruction and so much death. In no other minute of human history is the idea of war so terrible as it is at this moment.

Who are those who promote wars? Who are those who at this moment threaten humanity with the danger of war? They are the exploiters, the capitalists, the colonialists, the imperialists.

Who are those who fight for peace? The socialists (APPLAUSE).

And it is logical, because capitalism means plunder, and socialism means work; the capitalists want to live from plunder, they want to live from the exploitation of human labor, they want to live from the exploitation of the work of the peoples; and we socialists aspire to live from work, from our own work.

Socialism means the abolition of the exploitation of man by man; that is why socialism means peace.

No socialist system is nourished by the exploitation of the labor of other peoples nor by the exploitation of the natural resources of other peoples. In a socialist system there is no exploitation of man by man.

Capitalism, and imperialism, its most developed phase, is nourished, in the first place, by the exploitation of the labor of other peoples, by the exploitation of the natural resources of other peoples and by the exploitation of the labor of the workers and the humble classes of the imperialist peoples themselves.

To maintain this plunder, to maintain this exploitation - both of their own people and of the labor of

other peoples - the imperialists need force; the imperialists need armies, the imperialists need the most destructive weapons; to maintain this exploitation, to maintain this plunder, they need war, and, at the very least, they need to keep mankind under the danger of war.

No citizen of any socialist country possesses property or wealth in the territory of other countries; no socialist state possesses such property or wealth in another territory. On the other hand, the monopolies of the imperialist countries are possessors of vast resources, of infinite wealth in the territory of other peoples, which serve to exploit the labor of the subjugated peoples, of the colonized peoples, which serve to plunder the other peoples. To maintain this plunder, to maintain this colonization, to maintain this domination, the imperialists need weapons, armies, force, wars, or the threat of war.

That explains why socialism means peace and the struggle for peace (APPLAUSE).

Socialism does not need armies, it does not need weapons, it does not need force, it does not need war, it does not need the danger of war, because socialism does not mean exploitation, socialism does not mean domination over other peoples, socialism does not mean plunder of other peoples.

That is why our people, our socialist people, our revolutionary people (APPLAUSE), are on the side of peace (APPLAUSE).

And we well know from hard experience that armies and weapons are something that the imperialists, those who exploited us before and want to exploit us again, those who oppressed us before and want to oppress us again, those who plundered us before and want to plunder us again, impose on us this necessity of spending on weapons and spending on armies, as they have imposed on all the other socialist countries this hard necessity, that of diverting enormous resources and energies from creative work, from peaceful development, diverting resources and energies from the plans of industrialization, from the plans of education, from the plans of raising the level of the peoples, to dedicate them to the need to defend themselves from the threats and aggressions of the imperialists.

The imperialists need war. "Capitalism," Marx said, "has come dripping blood from head to toe, from its very origins." Capitalism has meant for humanity bloody and barbarous wars, colonial wars, world wars, local wars, wars to divide up the world, wars to enslave the peoples, wars to divide up the world again, wars ever more bloody, ever more destructive wars, wars that bring ever more victims, ever more blood, ever more destruction, and destruction ever more towards the rear, ever further away from the battle fronts, ever more upon the defenseless populations; more and more terrible wars, more and more inhuman wars.

Imperialism today means the danger of war, the threat of war, of a war that would make previous wars pale in comparison, a war that would mean the destruction of hundreds of millions of lives, if anyone can calculate the destruction that would be caused by an atomic war.

That is why the struggle for peace means to struggle to save mankind from apocalyptic destruction. It means to struggle to save hundreds of millions of lives of men, women, youth, old people and children; to save mankind from hundreds of millions of crippled, maimed, injured by an atomic war; to save mankind from incalculable destruction.

That is what the struggle for peace means, and that it is why is important (APPLAUSE).

But the struggle for peace also means the struggle for the independence of the peoples, it means the struggle for the freedom of the colonies, it means the struggle for the economic development of the poorest countries, it means the struggle to free the peoples from imperialist exploitation and domination. The struggle for peace, that is, the struggle against war, the struggle for disarmament, means not a passive attitude, but an active attitude in favor of the independence and liberation of the peoples.

Imperialism needs the danger of war, among other things, to impose on the masses of its own countries enormous burdens in taxes, in order to maintain the high and extraordinary profits of the monopolies; the imperialists need the danger of war to maintain their war economy. The war economy means that the workers, the workers of the imperialist countries themselves, have to pay tens of billions, hundreds of billions of dollars every year to maintain the profits of the monopolies, to maintain the profits of the exploiters.

The imperialists need the danger of war to maintain the oppression of their own workers, to maintain the repression of their own working classes; the imperialists need the danger of war to arm themselves, to justify their arms race. And they need to arm themselves to the teeth to maintain their privileges, to maintain their function of modern filibusters, of modern pirates; they need to arm themselves to the teeth to threaten the peoples who fight for their freedom, they need to arm themselves to the teeth to threaten and to repress the struggle of the peoples in Latin America, in Africa and in Asia, to prevent the liberation of the workers themselves in the countries where the imperialist monopolies rule.

Therefore, the struggle against the arms race, the struggle for disarmament, is the struggle against this threat, the struggle against this blackmail, the struggle against this interventionist policy of the imperialists in the political life of the exploited and oppressed peoples of America, Africa, Asia, and the very peoples where the capitalist system reigns.

We must understand these ideas well: the struggle for peace means that, the struggle for disarmament means that, and the socialist peoples can fight sincerely for disarmament, because they do not need weapons at all, but to defend themselves.

And that is why the imperialist countries resist disarmament, because they need arms to blackmail, to oppress, to intervene and to plunder.

Therefore, it is the socialist countries that are fighting consistently for disarmament and peace; it is the socialist countries that can convince humanity, that every day convince humanity more and more that they are fighting sincerely for disarmament and peace, while every day it becomes more evident that those who resist disarmament and peace are the exploiters, the plunderers, the colonialists and the imperialists (APPLAUSE).

Therefore, this is a battle of all the peoples of the world, of the peoples of the socialist countries, of the peoples of the colonized countries, of the subjugated countries, of the countries dominated by imperialism and of the workers themselves, of the peoples of the imperialist metropolises.

Therefore, we see how in the United States the movement for peace is growing, how in the United States the popular demonstrations in favor of peace against the war policy of the imperialists, against the arms race, are more and more numerous, because it is in the interest of all humanity. And that is why all humanity, in different ways, in whatever ways are necessary, must contribute to the struggle for peace.

The American mothers parading before the White House contribute (APPLAUSE), the peace committees all over the world contribute, the acts contribute, the appeals contribute, the writings contribute, the efforts made in the capitalist countries as well as in the socialist countries contribute, the South Vietnamese fighting against the imperialists and against the US interventionists contribute (APPLAUSE), the heroic fighters of the Guatemalan people fighting against the puppet Ydígoras contribute (APPLAUSE), the Angolans fighting against Portuguese imperialism contribute (APPLAUSE), the Argentines voting against the reactionary Frondizi regime contribute (APPLAUSE), the Algerians heroically conquering their independence contribute (APPLAUSE), the Soviet Union exploding a sixty megaton bomb contribute (APPLAUSE).

And there is in this, there is in this no contradiction, there is in this no paradox; there is a great difference between the bombs exploded by the imperialists and those exploded by the Soviets. It is the

difference between the bomb that is exploded to warn the imperialists of what will happen to them if they unleash a war (APPLAUSE) and the bombs that the imperialists explode to blackmail, to threaten, to intimidate the peoples, to try to sow terror and fear among the peoples who are fighting for their independence, for their sovereignty, for their freedom.

Thus, each one fights with what they can, each one contributes to the struggle for peace what they can. And our people also contributed what they could; our people also contributed to peace when they defeated the mercenaries within seventy-two hours (APPLAUSE).

By freeing themselves from imperialist domination and by showing by their example the way to the other brotherly peoples of Latin America, our people have made a great contribution to peace. By proclaiming the First and Second Declaration of Havana (APPLAUSE), and by setting forth in that Declaration our experience, by setting forth the methods of struggle which led the Cuban Revolution to triumph, our people have made a contribution to peace (APPLAUSE).

And so, the oppressed peoples fight for peace by fighting for their independence; the oppressed peoples, when all roads are closed to them, fight for peace by overthrowing the reactionary regimes (APPLAUSE). The workers of the imperialist countries themselves can and do fight for peace by opposing extortionate taxes, by opposing the rise in the cost of living, by opposing the arms race. And the Soviet scientists fight for peace by strengthening the technical and military might of the Soviet Union (APPLAUSE).

Each one must fight for peace in his own way, each one must fight for peace with what they can and how they can.

Thus, Latin America, confronting more and more the imperialists, fights for peace. The more peoples fight for their freedom, the more possibilities for peace in the world, the more the imperialists will be tied down, the weaker the imperialists will be to unleash war.

Therefore, the oppressed peoples can make a great contribution to peace, fighting against imperialism, fighting against reactionary and tyrannical regimes. See how the puppets of imperialism are already trembling, see how the treacherous regimes in Latin America are already trembling, see how the enemies of the peoples of Latin America are already trembling, and the trembling is running down the spine of the continent, from Patagonia to Washington! (APPLAUSE.)

While the Cuban revolutionary regime is getting firmer, and will be firmer to the same extent that we know how to overcome the obstacles placed by the enemy and the obstacles we sometimes place in our way, the other regimes -the regimes that have been accomplices of imperialism against Cuba- are tottering. And so, the puppet Ydígoras in Guatemala is tottering (SHOUTS); and in his desperation, he can think of nothing else but to accuse Cuba and blame Cuba. Yes, Cuba is to blame: the blame for its example! (APPLAUSE.) But the other blame, the blame that engenders revolutions, the blame that engenders the rebellion of the peoples, that blame belongs to imperialism and to the exploiters.

What is Cuba's fault for that exploitation? What is Cuba's fault for that enslaving domination of imperialism? What is Cuba's fault for those causes that give rise to the rebellion of the peoples, because it is the peoples who make the revolutions, and so it is the Guatemalan people themselves, young Guatemalans, young people of military origins, coming from the military academies, many of whom studied in the United States itself, are the ones who are leading the rebellion of the Guatemalan people. They did not study in Havana, they did not receive classes in our country, but many of them studied in the US military academies. And that is eloquent enough. If those young people are leading the rebellion today, it means that imperialism is not saved by anything! (APPLAUSE), that against imperialism, that is, that for the liberation of their peoples even their own students from their military schools are fighting (APPLAUSE). And that means that it could very well happen that many of those officers who are training to repress the guerrilla struggle, those officers who in their hundreds are training in Panama, some of them, and perhaps even quite a few of them, could be tomorrow guerrilla fighters against imperialism

(APPLAUSE).

Because the peoples of America are finding their methods of struggle, the peoples of America are finding the road to liberation, the peoples of America are rising more and more, and we rejoice. It does not matter that they blame us for their faults, that is to say, for the faults of imperialism! We already know this by heart, that all the blame for their exploitative acts they will want to place on our homeland; that is why the threat of imperialist aggression will always hang over our homeland. But it does not matter, we are not afraid of this danger, we do not tremble before this danger, while the reactionaries tremble all over America; while the imperialists tremble all over America before the revolutionary upsurge of the peoples!

The imperialists want to make it appear that we are the ones promoting the revolutions; we have already said it in the Havana Declaration: Revolutions are not imported, revolutions are made by the peoples; revolutions are not invented, revolutions are made by the peoples when the conditions exist which engender revolutions! And the imperialists have created those conditions in Latin America.

What happened to them in Argentina, what happened to them, in spite of their vaunted Alliance for Progress, what happened to them, in spite of their measures of blackmail, of military pressure to break with Cuba, to obtain there the domination of the economy, what happened to them, the political defeat at the hands of the popular forces, the most unexpected political defeat for them and the most discouraging! The necessity of new repressive measures, of new abuses against the Argentine people, of new contradictions, of new military interventions and of more aggravation of the struggle of the Argentine people! The perspective of having to repress millions of workers, who are preparing to resist, who are preparing to go on strike! The necessity of using force and terror which only serves to bring the peoples closer to the Revolution!

And when that terror against the popular forces, when that terror against the working classes, against millions of workers, leads the Argentine people to struggle, leads the Argentine people to rebellion, and even leads the Argentine people to armed struggle, then, do not blame Cuba! (APPLAUSE.) How can they blame Cuba, if they are the ones who lead the peoples to that situation, to that need to rebel, to that need to struggle?

And when the people of Venezuela launch themselves into struggle; tired of slaughter, tired of crimes and tortures, tired of hundreds of deaths, tired of thousands of innocent people imprisoned, tired of exploitation, tired of monopolies, tired of imperialist plunder, tired of a regime of betrayal and surrender! What is Cuba's fault, what is Cuba's fault for the students that the puppets of imperialism murder, for the workers that the lackeys of imperialism kill there, what is Cuba's fault for the exploitation of the monopolies, what is Cuba's fault that the peoples are launching themselves into struggle, that every day more and more peoples are determined to fight and are determined to use whatever means are necessary, when all the options have proved fruitless?

What is Cuba's fault if not the fault of having liberated ourselves from tyranny, from slaughter, from crime, from torture, from plunder! (APPLAUSE.) What is Cuba's fault if not the fault of being free? What is Cuba's fault if not the fault of having thrown the Yankee monopolies out of its own territory? What is Cuba's fault if not the fault of having liquidated terror and tyranny, of having defeated the forces of tyranny, trained and armed by that same imperialism? What is Cuba's fault but the fault of its own freedom and the fault of its example, the fault of its dignity, the fault of its integrity, the fault of its heroism, the fault of its decision to win or die! (APPLAUSE PROLONGED.) The fault of having defeated the imperialists at Playa Girón (APPLAUSE), the fault of being ready to defeat them as many times as they attack us and of resisting, of resisting to the last drop of our blood!

What is Cuba's fault in history, what is Cuba's fault that by the law of that history the brotherly peoples of America are called to be free? What is Cuba's fault that the imperialists cannot prevent it, because the imperialists will not be able to prevent the victory of the peoples?

America is too big and its peoples are too numerous and too heroic for them to be able to prevent it, no matter how many schools they organize, no matter how many plans they make. And just today the cables carried the news that six officers from Fort Brack had left for Guatemala, without a doubt of any kind, to advise the repressive forces against the Guatemalan patriots. But what illusionsa delusion! As if the freedom of the peoples, the march of history, could be contained by six or six million US officers, or six million anti-guerrilla schools! (APPLAUSE).

As if the struggle of the peoples, the march of history, could be cut off by the exploiters, by the will of a decadent capitalism, of an imperialism that already smells like a carrion in history! (APPLAUSE.)

These are the realities, our realities, the realities of America, of Asia, of Africa, the realities of the world. This points to the arduous task, the difficult task, the hard task that the peoples have to eradicate the danger of war, to eradicate wars from the history of mankind, because it is precisely the minute when mankind has the greatest opportunity and the greatest possibility of achieving this aspiration, it is also the minute with the greatest danger, with the greatest destructive and horrible character of wars. It is the minute of humanity's greatest hopes and also the minute of humanity's greatest risks.

It is these ideas and these thoughts that cross our minds and fill our spirits in this ceremony today, in this ceremony charged with emotion, charged with feeling; charged, on the one hand, with concern, and on the other hand, with satisfaction, with pride; This deeply human, fraternal act, where everything is an expression of friendship among peoples, of fraternity among peoples, of satisfaction for what has been done and of conscious concern for what we must do; of pride for what has been done, because who among us did not feel a deep and profound pride when the worthy academician of the Soviet Union pronounced those words "Cuba, free territory of America"? (APPLAUSE.)

How much legitimate satisfaction for all of us! But how much legitimate concern for the tasks ahead of us, for the duties we have before us; the duty to fight, the duty to work, the duty to strive, the duty to improve ourselves.

Our Revolution marches along firm paths; our Revolution marches with firm steps. Our people are educating themselves more and more; our people have to study and educate themselves even more; our people have traced their path; our people have unfurled their flags; those flags are none other than the flags of the Revolution, of the Socialist Revolution, of the proletarian Revolution, of the Marxist-Leninist Revolution! (APPLAUSE.)

Let us study, let us study Marxism-Leninism better and better (APPLAUSE); let us devote ourselves with a feverish spirit to study, to work; let us strive to understand more and more, and not only more, but also better; let us drink from this science and apply it correctly, because when it is applied correctly the revolutions are more and more firm, they are stronger and stronger!

And, above all, let us remember a fundamental principle of Marxism: that it is the masses who make history! Let us never detach ourselves from the masses, let us always go, more and more, to the masses, let us have more and more contact with the masses (APPLAUSE), let us perfect more and more our gear with the masses! And that strong and perfect gear is achieved to the same extent that we know how to recruit the best exponents of the spirit of the working class, the best exponents of the spirit of the workers, to the same extent that we know how to recruit the best workers, the exemplary workers, in the United Party of the Socialist Revolution (APPLAUSE).

And who are those who have the most authority among the masses, in any workplace? The most hardworking, those who are models in everything!; models in work, in the first place, models in comradeship, models in class spirit, models in the fulfillment of duty; the first in work, the first in the defense of the fatherland, the first in voluntary work, the first in effort, the first in sacrifice (APPLAUSE).

Those workers of clean life, clean of taint in the past, who are models of their class, who are the pride of their revolutionary class. Let us recruit all those workers, all those men and women, and we will have

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the best gear, of contacts with the masses, we will have recruited the most prestigious men and women among the masses! (APPLAUSE).

And along this road, never divorced from the masses, never behind the backs of the masses, but ever more identified with the masses, comrades, our Revolution will be ever stronger, our Revolution will be ever more invincible, our Revolution will be ever more an example of America, our Revolution will be ever more useful and ever more fruitful in the aspirations of humanity, in the struggle of humanity for progress, in the struggle of humanity for peace (APPLAUSE). And our people will be more and more worthy of the honors they receive.

We have been honored tonight. Not I, I wear this medal on my breast in the name of the people! (APPLAUSE.) Not I, it is the people who have received this medal, it is our Revolution, it is our revolutionary, Marxist fatherland, which has received this medal which bears the name of "Lenin Peace Prize"! (APPLAUSE.)

I receive it, fellow members of the International Lenin Prize Committee, I receive it with deep and legitimate pride, in the name of the people, in the name of the dead, in the name of those who fell throughout our history to make this Revolution possible!

Fatherland or Death!

We shall overcome!

(OVATION)

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