

REMARKS BY DR.FIDEL CASTRO RUZ, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF CUBA, AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMISTS CONFERENCE. NATIONAL
CONVENTION CENTER, HAVANA. JANUARY 22, 1999 [1]

Date:

22/01/1999

Esteemed delegates, observers and guests,

You have honored me by asking but I will not make a speech. I will limit myself to presenting a paper. (APPLAUSE) I will do it in the style of a cablegram and it will mostly be a dialogue with myself.

Month of July. Latin American and Caribbean Economists Meeting. Subject: Serious world economic crisis in sight. Need to convene an international conference. Focal point: Economic crisis and neoliberal globalization.

Extensive debate.

Every school represented.

Exchange of arguments.

Work done along these lines.

Maximum possible reduction of expenses for everyone.

Morning, afternoon and evening sessions.

Exceptional seriousness and discipline have prevailed during these five days.

We have all expressed ourselves in absolute freedom. We have made it. We are grateful.

We have learned a lot from listening to you.

A great variety and diversity of ideas. An extraordinary show of scholarly spirit and talent clearly and beautifully expressed.

We all have our convictions.

We can all influence each other.

In the long run, we shall all reach similar conclusions.

My deepest convictions: the incredible and unprecedented globalization under discussion is a product of historical evolution, a fruit of human civilization achieved in a very short period of time, in no more than

Remarks at the closing session of the international economists conference

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3,000 years of the long presence of our ancestors on the planet. They were already a completely developed specie. The man of today is not more intelligent than Pericle, Plato or Aristotle, and we do not know as yet if he is intelligent enough to solve today's extremely complex problems. We are betting on his doing it. That is what we have dealt with at our meeting.

A question: Is it a reversible process? My answer, the one I give to myself, is No.

What kind of globalization have we today? A neoliberal globalization, that is what many of us call it. Is it sustainable? No. Will it be able to subsist for long? Absolutely, no. Is it a matter of centuries? Categorically, no. Will it last only decades? Yes, only decades. But rather sooner than later it will cease to exist.

Do I believe myself to be a sort of prophet or fortune teller? No. Do I know much about economics? No. Hardly anything. To make this statement it is enough to know how to add up, subtract, multiply and divide, something children learn in grammar school.

How will such transition take place? We do not know. Will it be through violent revolutions or devastating wars? That seems unlikely, irrational and suicidal. Will it be through deep and catastrophic crises? Unfortunately, this is most likely, almost inevitable and it will happen through many different ways and forms of struggle.

What kind of globalization will it be? It can not but be supportive, socialist, communist or whatever you want to call it.

Does nature, and the human specie with it, have much time left to survive in the absence of such change? Very little time. Who will be the builders of that new world? The men and women who inhabit our planet.

Which will be their basic weapons? Ideas will be, and consciousness. Who will sow them, cultivate them and make them invincible? You will. Is it a utopia, just one more dream among so many others? No, because it is objectively inevitable and there is no alternative to it. It has been dreamed of before, only perhaps too early. As the most visionary of the sons of this island, Jose Marti, said: "Today's dreams will be tomorrow's realities".

I have concluded my presentation. Now, if you wish to raise any questions I am ready to answer.

Thank you.

(OVATION)

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