

CUBA AND THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT: 60 YEARS BEING PART OF THE THIRD WORLD

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Abstract: Cuba's participation and leading role in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) are analysed in the context of international politics from the time of its foundation in the twentieth century to the present. This work is a tribute to the sixtieth anniversary of the Organization. Likewise, the relevance of the Third World, particularly Africa, Asia and Latin America, in the foreign policy of the Cuban Revolution is elucidated.

Key words: Cuba, Cuban Revolution, Non-Aligned Movement, Third World, Cold War, international system.

Introduction

Traditional studies of Cuban foreign policy have been focused more intensely on the history of Cuba's relations with the former Soviet Union, the abnormal state of diplomatic relations with the United States, as well as those with Latin America and the Caribbean, without paying much attention to the Non-Alignment. The island's membership in the Non-Aligned Movement has been seen as part of a comprehensive strategy pointed at increasing the influence of Cuban diplomacy, aiming at the ultimate goal of

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breaking the isolation imposed by the U.S. governments in power by strengthening its bonds with Africa and Asia.³ It should be recalled that when Cuba joined the Movement in 1961, its foreign policy was at a stage of strategic definition. It would be difficult to associate such an entry to an already existing and developed Third World; rather, the Cuban Revolution witnessed and contributed to forging a higher development of the Non-Alignment with an anti-imperialist and third-world front in international politics. Cuba's commitment to the Third World was a pillar of its internationalist behaviour, whether through the Movement or the Tricontinental Conference and the subsequent Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL). In the case of the latter region, different Latin American states began a decade later to participate in the Non-Aligned Movement, becoming in itself a new Third World paradigm whose roots had an impact on Latin American political thought and emancipatory culture. These influences also confirmed that the essential objective of the Cuban Revolution's foreign policy would be to contribute to the cause of socialism. It was categorically affirmed the decision to subordinate, in its development, the interests of Cuba to the general interests of the struggle for socialism and communism, national liberation, the defeat of imperialism and the elimination of colonialism, neocolonialism and all forms of exploitation and discrimination of peoples and men. This commitment required a simultaneous struggle for peace and was inserted with another of the strategic premises of the foreign policy of the Cuban Revolution: internationalism (Rodriguez, 1983:374-375). This article is a tribute to the sixtieth anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement, and its content is a visible sign of the relevance of the Third World, particularly the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, in the foreign policy of the Cuban Revolution. We address Cuba's participation and leading role in the context of the international politics of the 20th century, characterized by the Cold War; as well as the current global situation, no less convulsive, turbulent and violent due to the existence of a broken, unequal and unjust international order.

³ Some authors, such as Dominguez, have shown concrete evidence of the positive results that such a strategy has brought to Cuba, mentioning, for example, Cuba's entry into Group 77 in 1971, thanks to Peru's initiative and the support of non-aligned countries.

Historical background

The rise of revolutionary and nationalist movements in Latin America was one of the consequences of World War II. This awakening of consciousness and democratic forces would also spread throughout other areas which would later become the Third World. Since at that stage there was no equality in social development between the regions of Latin America, Asia and Africa, the process of decolonisation and national liberation started with different characteristics and peculiarities in each place, which the U.S. foreign policy and its allies in the Western bloc of countries would oppose. In this regard, Cuban scholar Reinaldo Sánchez Porro, in his book "Africa: Lights, Myths and Shadows of Decolonisation", outlined that "After World War II, an acute contradiction arose between the two opposing blocs, that of the capitalist and socialist powers (...) involved in what was called the Cold War between the two leading powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, and their allied blocs (...)." In the midst of it, decolonisation developed fundamentally from the questioning of colonial relations of dependence at all levels by nationalist liberation movements. The anti-colonial struggles, such as that of Algeria, translated into hot wars behind which they tried to find the hand of Moscow. The liberation of the African continent took place in these conditions, and Africa was also "used as a stage for the confrontation of the two blocs" (Sanchez, 2016: XI). Thus, a large part of the countries of Asia and Africa, which had been colonies of the main European powers and accompanied them in the conflicts of World War II, at the end of the war began attempts to achieve autonomy or independent status. This was possible, among other factors, due to the economic, demographic and educational changes that had taken place in the colonial territories, which led to the emergence of homegrown organizations with independence aspirations, as well as the transformations generated by the conflict in the international scenario, especially the weakening of the metropolises (Díaz, 2007: 281). Important changes took place in the international system in the century that was par excellence revolutionary in international relations. First of all, sovereign states multiplied and thus large masses of the population of different third-world regions, largely impoverished and under capital control, merged into independent life, posing a challenge to the North American hegemonic project. Since the rupture of colonial ties opened new market opportunities for its products and capital, the country could not abandon the demands of its strategic alliance with the European metropolises, though. The incorporation of new actors on the international setting within the framework of the United Nations Organization (UNO)

was a noticeable fact that favoured the defence of the third-world political interests while diminishing the North American preponderance in the General Assembly due, to a great extent, to the votes of the Latin American countries and their Western allies. 59 independent countries made up the world political map in 1945, but the number rose to 113 by 1960, 64 of which belonged to the Afro-Asian region (Perez, 1998: 4-15). Within the framework of the decolonisation process and the North-South confrontation on the international political scene, the regions of Africa and Asia became theatres of the Cold War. In the face of this offensive, the USSR in order to gain sympathy and allies supported the decolonisation movement and the newly liberated countries, whilst the United States and its allies always argued the well-known fight against communism and strove to contain the radicalization of those processes. To do so, they submitted them to their control under the new label of neocolonialism, whose favourite instruments were conditional economic aid, blackmail and pressures of all kinds, and even the use of force and military intervention as happened in 1958 in the cases of Lebanon and Jordan, where British and American troops landed to support the internal reaction. From the socio-economic and political point of view, the newly liberated countries were not associated either with the western capitalist and industrialized countries or with those of the socialist area of Eastern Europe. Therefore, they initiated a Third World policy of their own⁴, which became an orientation of neutrality with respect to the confrontation between the two great ideological blocs of the period. The first practical manifestation of this approach was the First Afro-Asian Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955, which, with the participation of 24 independent nations from both regions, constituted the most direct precedent of what, six years later, would become the Non-Aligned Movement. It is important to emphasize that this exercise of collective independence was essentially a reflection of the use of the single state sovereignty of the participating countries, the emergence of a new pro-independence thinking

⁴ The term Third World was first used in 1952 in the article "Three Worlds, One Planet", published by Alfred Sauvy, French economist and sociologist, in the French newspaper *L'Observateur*. Originally the term was inspired by the conception of the three concurrent States during the French Revolution, of which the third would begin the same. Later it would refer to those countries that were not part of the world of developed capitalism, nor of the world of European socialism, therefore, the concept would regroup all underdeveloped or developing countries, regardless of their political structure, economic system or the participation in international communities.

and progressive currents of ideas that already precluded the anti-imperialist conceptions. All of which would guide the first decades of action of what would later become the Non-Aligned Movement. Among the countries of Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia would play an important role in this conference since it was the only one in that region that did not accept the imposition and uniformity of the terms of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and advocated its socialism in the face of the aggressive policies of the imperialist powers. The Bandung Conference brought about the necessity to unite the countries of Asia and Africa recently liberated from the European colonialism in a movement whose central policy was Non-Alignment to any of the power blocs and that had sufficient strength to deploy a high militant profile that would allow them to defend their rights and national interests. Under the leadership of the President of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, of the United Arab Republic, Gamal Abdel Nasser and of Indonesia, Ahmed Sukarno, who were joined by the leaders of India, Jawaharlal Nehru and of Afghanistan, Mohammed Daoud Khan, the Non-Aligned Movement had its formal presentation at the I NAM Conference held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, from September 1 to 6, 1961.

Cuba in the NAM

Cuba has the political-diplomatic and historical merit of having been the only country in Latin America and the Caribbean to participate in the foundation of the movement. The Cuban delegation to that founding act was led by Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado, President of the Republic of Cuba. At a moment when the historical conflict with the United States increased due to its economic, political and military threats and aggressions, the Cuban Revolution reaffirmed its anti-imperialist character with profound economic and social changes. The presence of Chou en Lai, Nasser, Nehru, Pham Van Dong and other third-world leaders, who had made the struggle for national independence and against colonialism, the centre of the foreign policies of their nations conditioned the main political conceptions of the movement and the approval of the "Ten Principles of Bandung", which would become in their own right what would for many years be called the quintessence of Non-Alignment or the role of the Non-Aligned Movement, still in full force and effect in the 21st century. In the context of an international system in transition from unipolarity to multipolarity, but maintaining exacerbated power relations, U.S. hegemonism and unilateral Cold War-style actions of the great powers, these historical principles, in our view, remain relevant:

- Respect for human rights and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,
- Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations,
- Recognition of the equality of all races and the equality of all nations, large or small;
- Refrain from intervening or interfering in the internal affairs of other countries;
- Respect for the right of every nation to defend itself, individually and collectively, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;
- Refrain from the use of collective defence arrangements to serve the particular interests of any of the great powers. All countries should refrain from exerting pressure on other countries.
- Not to make threats or acts of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any nation;
- Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration or legal settlement, as well as through other peaceful means chosen by the parties, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;
- The promotion of mutual interests and co-operation; and
- Respect for justice and international obligations.

The triumph of the 1959 Cuban Revolution and the NAM

It is necessary to point out that in hindsight, the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 set up a challenge for Latin America and the Caribbean and, in particular, for their relations with the United States, since the U.S. government decided not to recognize the revolutionary process and, by 1961, the island and its main leaders had already received numerous aggressions, sabotage, assassination attempts and was the target of a policy of war and isolation on the part of its powerful neighbour.⁵ The guiding ideas pronounced in numerous speeches by Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, where he clarified the character and aims of the Cuban

⁵ In 1961, mercenary troops, trained by the CIA, landed in Playa Giron, in the province of Matanzas. This invasion was preceded by the attack on the San Antonio air base. At the burial of the victims of this attack, on April 16, 1961, Fidel Castro declared the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution.

Revolution had an enormous influence on the progressive and national liberation forces at the regional and international level because for the first time in human history a guerrilla movement had carried out a political revolution and confronted U.S. imperialism directly through far-reaching transformations in its socio-economic structure, totally opposing its interests of neocolonial domination. The result would be a logical comprehensive change in the dynamics of inter-American relations and the greater expression of popular struggles in the Western hemisphere in solidarity with the first socialist state in the Americas. In response to the hostile actions undertaken since 1959 by the U.S. government, which endangered the security and very survival of the Cuban Revolution, there were broad popular mobilizations in support of the process led by Fidel Castro Ruz and a group of charismatic guerrilla fighters, including Commandant Ernesto Che Guevara, also a standard-bearer of Third World and national liberation revolutions in the most exploited, backward and poorest countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In this context of regional isolation, the search for new political and economic alliances was essential. The historical coincidence between the process of Cuba's total liberation and independence, the intensification of the aggressive actions of the United States and the rise of the world decolonisation movement allowed the Cuban revolutionary government to turn its attention to the countries of the Third World, in line with its historical anti-colonial and emancipatory struggles. To initiate the necessary contacts, the revolutionary government sent the commander and minister Ernesto Che Guevara on a tour to Egypt, Morocco, India, Indonesia, Yugoslavia, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Burma, Japan and Sudan, which began on June 12, 1959. These primary meetings gave a strategic orientation to Cuban diplomacy, in the sense of achieving unity of common interests in bilateral relations with most of the marginalized nations. The argumentation of the Cuban discourse corresponded to the principle of the revolutionary foreign policy of national interest's subordination to the general interests of the struggle for socialism, communism, national liberation, the defeat of imperialism and the elimination of colonialism, neocolonialism and all forms of exploitation and discrimination. The same year, the revolutionary government agreed to establish diplomatic relations with Morocco and to elevate the Legation of the United Arab Republic (Egypt, Syria and Yemen) to the rank of the Embassy, in addition to initiating relations with other African countries such as Tunisia and Ghana. Likewise, it was recommended to the Minister of State, Raúl Roa García, to also establish diplomatic relations with Libya, Sudan, Ethiopia, the Republic of Guinea and Liberia. The following year,

the President of Indonesia, Ahmed Sukarno, visited Cuba, while Raúl Castro travelled to Egypt to participate in the July 26 celebration in Alexandria, where he held meetings with the leader Gamal Abdel Nasser. A transcendental event in the foreign policy of the Cuban Revolution was the trip of Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro to New York to participate in the XV Session of the United Nations General Assembly, which began on September 18, 1960. The multilateral background was the propitious framework chosen by Fidel to meet with the most influential Afro-Asian leaders of the time: Ahmed Sukarno of Indonesia, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Ahmed Sékou Touré of the Republic of Guinea. Thus began a very favourable political and diplomatic link so that in 1961 Cuba became the only Latin American country invited to the first Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement. From the historical point of view, Cuba has a close community of political interests with the Non-Aligned countries in terms of origin, heritage, adversaries and aspirations. The evolution and development of the Cuban nation are conditioned by colonialism, neocolonialism, military interventions and the illegal occupation of part of its territory by a military base in the eastern province of Guantanamo. Being a member of the Non-Aligned Movement symbolizes the Third World vocation of Cuba's foreign policy, which also includes the socialist character of its revolution, its feeling of belonging to the Caribbean with a deep integrationist sentiment that explains Cuba's policy designs regarding the countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa, in general, and within the organization, in particular. Cuba's international performance was clearly in line with the criteria for the issuance of invitations to the Belgrade Summit Conference, which had been established at the Preparatory Meeting of the Conference of Heads of State or Governments of the Non-Aligned Countries, held in Cairo in June 1961, where the procedure for inviting a country was established. The prospective country must have adopted an independent policy based on the coexistence of states with different political and social systems and non-alignment, or demonstrate a disposition in favour of this policy. In addition, such a country had to practise consistent support for liberation movements fighting for national independence (Report, 1961). Although by 1961, there was already a systematic communication and ideological, political and economic link between Cuba and the USSR, the fact of not being part of the Warsaw Pact and having well defined the principles that would govern Cuban foreign policy, allowed it to comply with this requirement and integrate the movement. This possible dichotomy between Cuba's link with the USSR and its natural aspiration to

belong to the organization of the Non-Aligned countries was explained in the speech of Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticós at the Belgrade Summit, where he clarified Cuba's total independence in terms of non-membership and commitments of any kind with military blocs or pacts and that the military agreements with the USSR were limited to technical assistance. But he also stated that "this does not mean that we are not committed countries. We are committed to our own principles. And those of us who hold the honourable delegation of our peoples, who are peace-loving peoples, who struggle to affirm their sovereignty and to achieve the fullness of national development, are, in short, committed to respond to these transcendent aspirations and not to betray those principles (...)" (Dorticós. 1961). This is one point of major importance because it also outlined Cuba's legitimate right to be a socialist country at a time when critics of the revolution at the international level wielded Cuba's "alignment" to the USSR to discredit its early activism and membership in the Movement. Cuba also found at the Belgrade Summit fervent support and solidarity for its anti-imperialist and anti-colonial cause, in contrast to the policy of isolation exercised by Latin American governments dependent and subordinate to the United States. In this sense, Cuban diplomacy proposed several objectives, among them that the conference should condemn imperialism and that the fundamental weight of this measure should fall on US policy; to obtain solidarity support for the National Liberation Movements of Vietnam, Angola, Portuguese Guinea; to condemn the imperialist regimes and request the independence of Angola, South West Africa, Portuguese Guinea, British Guiana and Puerto Rico; to obtain a statement against military bases in foreign territories and to sanction the sitting of new bases; to proclaim the right of each nation to give itself the form of government it deems most appropriate; to condemn discrimination and aggression in the economic field, as well as subversive and harassment activities, directly or indirectly, through the use of mercenary elements, as it had been already deployed by the United States against Cuba. An important part of these proposals was included in the Final Declaration of the Summit, item 12 that explicitly stated: "The participating countries recognize that the U.S. military base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, to whose continuance the Government and people of Cuba have expressed their opposition, undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country."; and in item 13, paragraph b: "The participating countries believe that the right of Cuba and of all peoples to freely choose the political and social system that best suits their particular conditions, needs and possibilities should be respected." (Declaration, 1961). Thus, the main issues related to Cuba were included in a separate item in the Final Declaration. In

the regional framework, between the Belgrade and Cairo Summits, important events took place, such as the expulsion of Cuba from the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1962, the independence of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, the coup d'état against Juan Bosch in the Dominican Republic and the Missile Crisis or October Crisis, which brought the world to the brink of a nuclear holocaust. The year 1964 started with the coup d'état against Goulart in Brazil, a wave of governments and military dictatorships that would initiate a process of fascistization in the Southern Cone. On the other hand, the president of Chile, Eduardo Frei, with the intention of giving impetus to the failed Alliance for Progress inaugurated by U.S. President John F. Kennedy in 1961, tried out the first Christian Democrat experience in Latin America in an unsuccessful attempt to present an alternative to the Cuban Revolution. This context meant that the Latin American issue was among the objectives that the Cuban delegation had to include in the agenda of the II Summit of the Movement. Among the guidelines received by the Cuban delegation for the preparatory meeting, held in Colombo, Ceylon, from March 23 to 28, 1964, was to encourage the invitation of Latin American countries which maintained relations with Cuba. As well as, to oppose with nuances to the invitation of countries that did not have relations with the island, particularly Venezuela. On the understanding that the countries that broke off relations with Cuba had alienated themselves with imperialism, followed its dictates and lent themselves to the development of Cold War policy in the region. The question of Panama should also be mentioned, and its right to the revision of the Treaty with the United States regarding the Canal Zone should be defended, as well as the support of the island for the struggle of the Panamanian people in favour of their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity (Declaration, 1961). At the Cairo Conference in 1964, chaired by the President of the Republic of Cuba, Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado, the largest of the Antilles would also be the only Latin American country to participate as a member of the Movement. Nevertheless, nine out of ten observer countries attending the Conference were Latin American: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Jamaica, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela. Unlike Ecuador, which had attended the previous conference as a spectator and was absent on this occasion. Similarly, the Movement for the Independence of Puerto Rico, later the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, was invited and present at the Cairo meeting. The Conference condemned the manifestations of colonialism and neocolonialism in Latin America and called for the application of the people's right to self-determination and independence. The conference

noted with regret that Guadeloupe, Martinique and other islands of the Antilles had not yet achieved their autonomy. In this regard, it drew the attention of the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonisation to the case of Puerto Rico, with the request to examine the situation of these territories in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Resolution 1514, which demonstrated the Movement's greater interest in the Latin American and Caribbean problem. With respect to Cuba, as in Belgrade, the conference condemned the pressures and interference in the internal affairs of the island with the aim of imposing a change in the political, economic and social system chosen by its people. Without mentioning the Missile Crisis, a politically complex episode that put humanity in tension over the nuclear armament of the leading powers of the military blocs in the bipolar international system, hegemonized by the United States and the Soviet Union, the conference also requested the United States government to suspend the commercial and financial blockade imposed since 1961 and demanded the return of the territory illegally occupied by the United States in Guantanamo. This paradox can be explained by the fact that the installation of nuclear rockets in Cuba was an act of self-defence in the face of the real possibility of a military invasion of the island by the United States. However, the bilateral diplomatic channel between great powers used by John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev allowed an agreement between them without taking into account the Cuban position. For that reason, the Cuban government understood the place it occupied in the global power game of the time. On October 28, 1962, the agreement establishing the withdrawal of the rockets from Cuba was made public and Prime Minister Fidel Castro Ruz, as well as the general public, learned about it from the international press. Relations between Cuba and the USSR would never be the same again, but they eventually improved and became excellent in different historical stages, practically until its disintegration, despite the fact that the last government of that country, led by Mikhail Gorbachev, detached from its allies, abandoning responsibilities and commitments and renouncing its internationalist interests with the socialist countries. However, the events of October 1962 contributed to the fact that the circumstances of the Cuba-United States conflict transcended the regional framework to become a world problem. In this regard, Raúl Roa García, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, in an interview with his counterpart from the United Arab Republic, held at the Cuban Embassy in Cairo, stated: "We did not aspire for the Cuba case to be the central point of the Conference, but we did aspire for it to be mentioned in some way in the final communiqué since this would strengthen our role within the United

Nations General Assembly. We stated that the case of Cuba was not local, not even regional, but of a global nature, as had been demonstrated on the occasion of the Caribbean Crisis. The Cuban problem is of equal interest to all, and we can say that the Western powers that maintain commercial relations with Cuba, of which there are many, are deeply concerned about the situation created by the policy of the United States in relation to our country since they themselves are being subjected to pressures of all kinds to prevent them from trading with our country (...)” (Declaration, 1961). On the one hand, after the October Crisis, the Cuban position in the Non-Aligned Movement was more difficult to defend, on the other hand, the policy towards Africa in the biennium 1963-1964, which would assume the risks of military support to Algeria against the Moroccan aggression, to the Lumumbists in current Zaire, and to the revolutionaries of the Portuguese colonies, helped the island win new sympathies, maintain and strengthen its prestige and influence the internationalist struggle, together with other peoples, against imperialism and in favour of their national independence.

This also happened with the support and cooperation to the guerrilla movements. Inspired by the Cuban Revolution, they began to take shape in Latin America against colonialism and neocolonialism as a mechanism of domination established in this region. Cuba became the liaison between the most revolutionary Latin American sector and the Non-Aligned Movement, initiating a kind of link or integration that we believe contributed to the strengthening of Cuba’s recognition within the Non-Aligned Movement. A process whose antecedents can be identified from the II Summit held in Cairo from October 5 to 10, 1964. There, the anti-imperialist calling of the Movement was demonstrated at an early stage. Three of the chapters of the final document agreed upon by the Heads of State expressed the willingness to develop concerted actions for the liberation of dependent countries, the elimination of colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism; respect for the right of peoples to self-determination and condemnation of the use of force against the exercise of that right; the sovereignty of States and their territorial integrity. The struggle, during the first years of the Movement, focused on consolidating anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism as the basic philosophy and the essential cornerstone of non-alignment.

The above criteria achieved practical realization and worldwide visibility with the holding of the First Tricontinental Conference in Havana, held from January 3 to 15, 1966. It was attended by more than five hundred representatives of political, trade union, student and women’s movements, international organizations and socialist countries, including Amilcar Cabral

of Cape Verde, Salvador Allende of Chile, Pedro Medina Silva of Venezuela, Luis Augusto Turcios Lima of Guatemala, Rodney Arismendi of Uruguay, Cheddi Jagan of Guyana, Nguyen Van Tien of South Vietnam, among others. At this important meeting, Cuba consolidated its undisputed political leadership in the internationalist alliance of Third World countries. This Conference set out to constitute a project of common struggle, since, as Said Bouamama, author of the book *“La Tricontinental: Los pueblos del Tercer Mundo al asalto del cielo”*, said in an interview to the *Diario de Nuestra América*, “(...) it is no longer a question of each dominated people confronting one and only colonial power, on the contrary, they must now face the imperialism, that is to say, a whole system of domination at world level; secondly, it is no longer only a question of fighting for the independence of a political type, but of fighting to achieve real economic independence; all these transformations of political consciousness allow the understanding of the struggles that are taking place in Latin America, where the peoples have been confronting for decades the new face of imperialist domination, so-called neocolonialism. All these battles are taking place at the same time on the three continents and, as a consequence of this; the project of a common Tricontinental struggle is constituted.” (Anfrus and Morgantini, 2017). With a transcendental political impact, the I Tricontinental Conference gave rise to the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL), whose objective was to promote and coordinate a common front of struggle against colonialism, neocolonialism, North American imperialism and to support the national liberation movements, coinciding with those of the Non-Alignment. It was unique because, for the first time, leftist organizations from the three continents were meeting to discuss how best to make that struggle a reality. One of the OSPAAAL’s greatest achievements was the official publication of the Tricontinental magazine (*Revista Tricontinental*), its official voice. Published in several languages, it became a link between the militants of the three continents and a means of denouncing imperialism and standing up for national liberation movements. In its pages, many intellectuals, politicians and researchers reflected, through their works of art, published articles, analyses, visions, and diverse theoretical perspectives, the situation of the Third World and its most crucial problems. From the beginning, the United States and its allies saw in this movement a threat to their interests and dominant positions at the global level. Despite the counteroffensive unleashed by the imperialist forces, the policy developed by Cuba in this period facilitated the rapprochement and political agreement among the three continents involved in struggles for national liberation, in

defence of the free self-determination of peoples and against imperialism, which inevitably had repercussions on the increasingly active role that Cuba would assume in the Non-Aligned Movement. Despite the political forces within and outside the Movement that tried to simplify its objectives and circumscribe them to the identification of policies that could keep its members out of the Cold War or the rising Soviet-American bipolar confrontation, leaving aside the more radical principles identified in Bandung, the historical reality showed that the Non-Aligned Movement not only emerged with a strong anti-imperialist component, with a calling to fight colonialism, neocolonialism and apartheid, and as a vehicle for defending and promoting the guiding principles of international law. Besides, it also had a unique role in safeguarding the rights of sovereignty and independence, rejecting the use of force in international relations, condemning interference in the internal affairs of States and supporting the economic development of poor countries. The guiding force of the progressive movements and political parties admitted the transformation of the arguments and intentions of those who advocated "neutrality" in the face of the acute world problems of the time, but they also joined the vanguard principles when the Movement basically needed its members not to be part of the military alliances that U.S. imperialism began to foster in the Third World. This was the moment when the United States began its efforts to turn OTASO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization), CENTO (Central Treaty Organization, originally known as the Baghdad Pact or the Middle East Treaty Organization) and ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand and the United States), just to mention a few military groupings, into the pillar of a policy of containment that would prevent the spread of revolutionary, progressive and socialist ideas. When the Third Non-Aligned Conference of Lusaka was held in 1970, after a long period of preparation and decision as to where it would be held, Cuba already had an approximate idea of its international projection in the Movement. In addition to its declared desire to placate isolation, to place Latin American problems in the forum of the organization, to encourage the participation of the countries of the region, to influence the discussion of principles, to accumulate prestige, it has now added its activism as a strategic ally of the USSR within the organization. For example, taking into account the possibility that intervention in Czechoslovakia could have been mentioned in Lusaka, it was essential for Cuba to categorically reject any attempt to use the Conference as an anti-Soviet platform or against the socialist countries that were increasingly developing their political, economic and commercial links with Cuba, in the face of the criminal and unjust blockade imposed on the

island by The United States. It became clear that the Cubans had to assume a greater leading role if they really expected the Movement to advance in the desired direction. And it was in that African scenario of Lusaka where Cuban diplomacy deployed an intense activity and a positioning that was decisive for the coordination of the action of a group of more than twenty countries that played a decisive role in the final formulation of the different documents and resolutions approved by the Conference. The results of Lusaka were propitious to insufflate greater anti-imperialist content to the Movement, in the sense of the conception of Cuba as a whole with other countries, impacting international politics, since the members of the movement contributed to the expansion of the international system by constituting half of the UN membership. Therefore, this reflected a change not only quantitative but also qualitative in international relations in the sixties of the twentieth century, when there was a change in the correlation of forces favourable to the socialist countries and the progressive and revolutionary political forces. The IV Summit Conference of the Movement, held in Algiers from September 5 to 9, 1973, was a significant milestone and a new turning point for the movement. In the first place and despite strong disagreements, it definitively put an end to the ideas of “neutrality” that had continued to permeate the debates of some of the previous conferences by discussing and reaching agreements on the need to strengthen the natural alliance between the Non-Aligned Countries and the socialist community of the time. But it also took decisions that were transcendental for a new dimension in the actions of the Non-Aligned Countries in sovereignty matters. The Movement identified and took decisions on the permanent sovereignty of underdeveloped countries over their natural resources and the threat of transnational corporations to the exercise of that sovereignty. Undoubtedly, seen now in the 21st century, at a time when these global problems are becoming more acute, it reflects the advanced positions of the Non-Aligned policy. From Algiers emerged the ferment of what the following year would be the Declaration and Program of Action for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, a theme introduced with great force in Cuba’s foreign policy discourse, and two years later the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, documents that guided multilateral discussion on the problems inherent in international economic relations for more than a decade and which, in addition to advocating a new type of system of international and economic relations, were based on the exercise of sovereignty by the countries of the South. Supported by the demand that such sovereignty should be respected, they focused not only on their natural resources but also on their economic activities. These new

dimensions would be consolidated six years later at the Sixth Summit in Havana, with the most complete and comprehensive document conceived by the Movement in terms of solidarity, anti-imperialism, cohesion and unity of all the progressive political forces of the world for the fulfilment of the principles of International Law, and with the request for global negotiations on Development and International Economic Cooperation. Even the Western press of the time could not avoid acknowledging Cuba's leading role from the very beginning of this meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement. The Sixth Summit was a milestone too, just as the Algiers meeting in 1973 had been for the movement (Basterra, 1979). It was reported that the objective of Cuban leader Fidel Castro Ruz was to radicalize the Non-Aligned Movement, but that he was well aware of its heterogeneous character, and that in the movement there coexisted countries strongly "aligned" in pro-Western positions, for example, Morocco, Egypt, Zaire, among others. Cuba's initial position consisted of denouncing the Western manoeuvres supported by China while multiplying actions to strengthen the Non-Alignment with respect to all the existing tendencies in it. At the same time, the historical Cuban leader tried to reach an agreement with the Yugoslav President, Tito, the surviving founder of the Non-Aligned at that time, to persuade him of the need to convert the organization into a more active and militant factor without breaking its essential principles (Basterra, 1979). By 1979, the Cubans could feel more than satisfied with their foreign policy within the Non-Aligned Movement, since once they had obtained the presidency of the forum, they acquired an unprecedented power of influence. They had managed to bring together their multiple identities; indeed, their qualities as non-aligned, socialist, underdeveloped and Latin American countries were mutually reinforcing. All the dimensions of Cuba's foreign policy had been agglutinated around principled positions, with its anti-imperialism standing out as a common denominator that appealed to its socialist, non-aligned and Latin American peers with a similar persuasive force (Alburquerque, 2007). Cuba, a small island in the insular Caribbean, now had a foreign policy of power by combining all these dimensions and a revolutionary process that in the internal order was steadily increasing the concrete achievements of its population in social welfare, highlighting its indicators of health, education, sports and scientific achievements. The reinsertion of the Island in the Latin American diplomatic context, the presence of thousands of Cuban soldiers in African lands, the presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement and the intensification of the Cuba-United States conflict during the Republican administration of Ronald Reagan, are some of the elements that allow us to classify this decade as one of the most

activistic in Cuban foreign policy, having repercussions, with all its magnitude and possibilities, on the political content and projections contained in the next summits and their final declarations. The Seventh Summit Conference, held in New Delhi in 1983, defined that the “common dedication” of the Movement was the struggle for peace, justice and international cooperation, the elimination of imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism, the eradication of apartheid, racism, including Zionism, and all forms of domination, aggression, intervention, occupation and foreign pressures, the acceleration of the process of self-determination of peoples under colonial and foreign domination and the consolidation of national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the social and economic development of their peoples. The Eighth Summit, held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1986, outlined how the role of Non-Alignment had been fulfilled over the years, including its principles and objectives, and also made it clear that in the Movement’s view non-intervention and non-interference in the internal and external affairs of States were fundamental principles to be strictly observed because violation of those principles was unjustifiable and unacceptable under any circumstances, affirming the right of all States to pursue their own political, social and economic development without intimidation, obstruction or pressure. However, at the end of the 1980s, the international situation began to change and the environment in which the Non-Aligned Movement had to act became more complex and contradictory. The imperialist and counterrevolutionary offensive of the United States in the last stage of the Cold War had taken its toll on the progressive, revolutionary and nationalist forces around the world.

The end of the bipolar world and the future of the NAM

Between 1989 and 1991, due to the self-destructive processes unleashed by the political leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, First Secretary of the Communist Party and one of the main ideologues of reforms that contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the once-powerful bloc was in agony and the world geopolitical catastrophe that changed the international correlation of forces began. It turned in favour of the Western bloc of countries and the transition from bipolarity to a unipolar international system in the political and military order, characterized by the emergence of the hegemonic power of the United States and its militaristic oversizing in different regions and countries. The international situation inevitably affected the effectiveness and strength that we had observed in the Non-Aligned Movement. The Presidency of Yugoslavia, after the Ninth Summit of 1989 and its

commitments with the European Union conditioned by a future insertion in that grouping, the disappearance of the European socialist community and, above all, the dismemberment of the Soviet Union, introduced variables of universal impact, with disastrous consequences for the Movement. The progressive forces that survived had to act quickly to try to prevent the Non-Aligned Movement from being a booming, thriving grouping, always on the offensive, to a grouping permeated by defeatism and indifference, and even to avert its disappearance (Moreno, 2006). An interesting and fallacious thesis began to emerge about the irrelevance of the Non-Aligned Movement in a world in which the Cold War and the discrepancy between the great powers had disappeared. Ideas were introduced about the creation of a large grouping of the countries of the South of the planet dedicated exclusively to economic cooperation. The quintessence of the Movement was questioned, its guiding principles were ignored, and it was weakened, almost rendered useless as a vehicle for defending the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of its members. The catalytic role that the Non-Aligned Movement had necessarily assumed for almost three decades was reduced to its minimum expression (Moreno, 2006). Although the Summits of Jakarta in 1992, Cartagena de Indias in 1995, Durban in 1998 and Kuala Lumpur in 2003 reaffirmed the guiding objectives of the Movement, the reality shows that, unlike in the past, these concepts were not reflected in bold and principled practical actions in the Non-Aligned Movement operational fields, despite the fact that the United States and its Western allies did not abandon their imperialist nature and that the motives that gave rise to the international political struggle of the Movement continued to exist.

For example, the principle of solidarity among its members, which played an important role in previous decades, became a dead letter. The Movement found it almost impossible to reach agreements involving confrontation with the great powers, and most particularly, with the United States. This was the case with the impossibility of reaching common positions on the war against Iraq, neither in the framework of the United Nations General Assembly nor in the Commission on Human Rights, among many other international conflicts that followed. Nevertheless, it is only fair to acknowledge the efforts of a group of countries, especially Asian countries and Cuba, to prevent the disappearance of the Non-Aligned Movement. Already in 2006, the performance of the Movement bore no resemblance to that of one or two decades earlier, but the XIV Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement would take place in September in Havana. The election of the island to chair the organization was a genuine

recognition of its trajectory and defence of the principles of International Law. It was also a tribute to the resistance of the Cuban people in their struggle against the economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States and to the hundreds of thousands of Cuban doctors who have fulfilled honourable internationalist missions, saving lives in the Third World countries (Rodriguez, 2013). Cuba and other progressive forces faced a great challenge. The movement analysed the consequences of the bloody military occupation of the United States and its allies in Iraq, Afghanistan and the threats of new “preventive wars” against other countries of the South. It recognized the need to contribute to world peace by broadening the profile of its diplomatic initiatives in order to fully demand the immediate cessation of the imperialist war in the Middle East and to prevent, as far as possible, the United States from continuing with its belligerent strategy, which aimed at destroying the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of a significant group of the Non-Aligned countries. Consequently, the Movement made a critical and exhaustive analysis of North-South relations during the last decades of euphoric neo-liberal globalization promoted by the main hegemonic centres of capitalism, whose most notable results have been the increase of economic and commercial differences between rich and poor countries and the weakening of the capacity of the States that accelerated the opening of their economies to competition and depredation of natural resources by transnational and multinationals at the service of the capitalist powers. The immediate consequence was that the Third World, as a whole, has been affected by protectionist policies that hinder the entry of its products into the markets of the industrialized countries, remaining on the margins of the main financial, commercial and investment flows. Today, the largest volume of world trade takes place between countries located in the North. In short, together with the serious economic and social crisis of the underdeveloped world, migratory flows constitute another essential aspect of the tendency to marginalize the peoples of the South, and of the persistent discriminatory, xenophobic conceptions in the North, where walls are built to face the migratory avalanche without the political will to solve the causes that motivate this complex phenomenon. During Cuba’s second chairmanship in the Movement, its foreign policy took up the challenge of denouncing global problems and had the most active position on the evolution of international relations. As well, Cuba felt obliged to demand the design of a new international financial architecture accompanied by a New World Order, since believing that an economic and social order that has proven to be unsustainable can be maintained by force, is simply an absurd idea. The

Cuban presidency recalled that, as President Fidel Castro Ruz said in October 1979 before the United Nations General Assembly: "The sound of weapons, of threatening words and prepotency in the international arena must cease. Enough of the illusion that the world's problems can be solved with nuclear weapons. Bombs might kill the hungry, the sick and the ignorant, but they cannot kill hunger, disease, ignorance and the people's just rebellion." (Castro, 2006). But those hopes would only be achieved if the Movement undertook, at the same time, the resolution of its internal conflicts and divergences that conspired against the cohesion and consensus among its members; conflicts that in many cases have their origins in the centuries of colonial and neocolonial subjugation of imperialism. The Cuban presidency took place at a time of the rise of new revolutionary processes in Venezuela and Bolivia, with the possibility of extending to other countries, which together with the island represented the concerted advance of the South American pole towards the construction of several blocks of plural power and ideals that enable a change in the correlation of international forces within the interests of the Third World, represented in that tribune of the Non-Aligned countries which, for the second time in history, and the first in the 21st century, met in Havana led by the Cuban political leadership which, from Fidel to Raúl Castro Ruz, had the double privilege of doing so. Since then, four other summits have been held in Egypt (2009), Iran (2012), Venezuela (2016) and Azerbaijan (2019), all with the need to establish a coherent and reliable policy for the Non-Aligned Movement; and the challenge of leading its members to a higher sense of belonging to the grouping, and to the realization of political and diplomatic actions that not only lead to the defence of sovereignty, self-determination and territorial integrity of its members, but also to their economic and social development.

The challenge also lies in leading the Movement, in a united and coherent manner, to become involved once again in the search for solutions to the main global problems and to take an active part in the struggle between unilateralism and multilateralism for the defence at all costs of the principles of International Law and of the leading and democratic role that the United Nations must play, in the face of the treacherous attempts, to bond it more and more to the foreign policies of the great powers through reform processes tainted with partiality and conservatism. At the virtual Summit convened by Azerbaijan, in April 2020, to exchange on the urgent and necessary efforts to face the COVID-19 pandemic, the President of Cuba, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez recalled that at the XVIII Summit in Baku, in October 2019, Cuba called for strengthening the Movement in the face of international challenges, in conditions of unity to save it and lead the actions

for the elimination of the unpayable external debt burdened by underdeveloped countries and for the lifting of the unilateral coercive measures to which some of its members are subjected, which together with the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 threaten the sustainable development of the peoples. Cuba reiterated that it was urgent to confront selfishness and be aware that aid from the industrialized North would be scarce; therefore, the Non-Aligned Countries should complement each other, share what they have, support each other and learn from successful experiences. A useful option could be to resume in the future the annual meetings of Ministers of Health of the Non-Aligned Movement, within the framework of the World Health Assembly (Díaz-Canel, 2020). The Non-Aligned Movement requires the implementation of a program of concrete and systematic actions by the member countries; it also consists of re-creating accurate mechanisms for the coordination of positions; and of knowing how to collectively resist the pressures, threats, blackmail and corruption to which imperialism subjects many of its members. The fact that in the 21st century there are forces within the Movement committed to its existence and revitalization is a source of hope. But that is not enough because it requires a new maturing of the political consciousness of the global south in the face of the problems that threaten the survival of our species and international peace and security to the point of collective self-destruction. Cuba remains committed to the principles and relevance of the Movement, in the search for and promotion of global unity, solidarity and international cooperation; in the elimination of unilateral coercive measures that violate International Law and the United Nations Charter and limit the capacity of States to effectively confront the Covid-19 pandemic. The proof of this affirmation is found in the Cuban government's congratulations to Uganda, which will assume the presidency of the Movement as of 2022, assuring it of the island's full support and wishes for success in its management (Díaz-Canel, 2020).

Conclusions

The factors that led to Cuba's rapprochement and its active membership in the Non-Aligned Movement are related to its condition as a sovereign actor founded by a group of countries, mostly from Asia and Africa, with the main objective of defending the independence of the countries that were part of it and contributing to other nations and territories subjected to colonial and foreign domination to become sovereign states. The period from 1961 to 1966 saw the first steps towards rapprochement between Latin America and

the Caribbean and the countries of Asia and Africa, in a context marked by the beginning and development of the Cold War, the readjustment of the international system impacted by the decolonization movement that emerged on the African and Asian continents after the end of World War II, and by the rise of decolonisation movements on the African and Asian continents after the end of World War II; and by the rise of revolutionary movements in Latin America, following the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in January 1959, which endangered the system of imperial domination imposed by the United States on the region. This inter-regional link was fostered through the Non-Aligned Movement, and within this, the work carried out by Cuba was of vital importance. Thus, since the I NAM Summit held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1961, the Cuban delegation supported the defence of national liberation movements, in general, and those of Latin America, in particular, with the initiative that this objective be reflected in the final document, as a way of contributing to the legitimization of these movements and condemning U.S. imperialism. This position taken by Cuba was in line with the principles of the revolutionary foreign policy, which define it as socialist, anti-imperialist, Latin Americanist and Non-Aligned. The principles of Non-Alignment were at the forefront of international relations for decades and are still relevant to Cuba's foreign policy in its relationship with the most progressive forces in the Third World. Non-Aligned thought, from 1973 on, definitively abandoned the ideas of "neutrality" that had permeated it since its foundation and expanded its sphere of action to international economic relations with much more force than in its previous period, in defence of a New International Economic Order, with Cuba, since the Havana Summit of 1979 and the influence of the leadership of Fidel Castro Ruz, having significant weight in the radicalization of its political conceptions in world diplomacy and the most progressive forums of the time. Although Cuba reiterated in multiple scenarios the validity of the principles of Non-Alignment, the Movement, after the disappearance of the socialist community and the hegemonic role of the United States, was not able to adapt to the new realities and to realize that its autonomous and principled action was even more necessary in a unipolar international system, in which unilateralism and disrespect for International Law that still prevails today were already beginning to take shape. Since then, unlike in the past when it was a global player, it has not been a major force in international relations; its scope of action has been reduced, silenced and its capacity to work in concert has diminished notably, despite the efforts of a group of Asian and Latin American countries, including Cuba, to revitalize and redirect it towards its strengthening, in recognition of the glories of the

struggle for the end of colonialism and Apartheid, and of a quintessence that galvanized the Third World and allowed it to act on the international stage in defence of its just causes and collective potential. Although it requires effort and struggle, there are reserves of dignity in the Non-Aligned Movement, which, even if they do not lead it to return to what it was in past decades in the immediate future, coordinated and concerted action would allow it to play a more influential role in today's international relations, in defence of the sovereignty and independence of its members, for which there are official statements by the Cuban government that express its commitment and internationalist disposition.

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