



ADDRESS BY THE PEOPLE'S POWER MINISTER FOR FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA, JORGE ARREAZA MONSERRAT, DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 72ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2017

Mister President,

We address this seventy-second session of this magnificent Assembly on behalf of the Constitutional President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro Moros, and therefore, on behalf of a sovereign peace-loving people, committed to the respect among nations and to the compliance with the purest principles of International Law - the Bolivarian People of Venezuela. In the 19th century, the liberation army of Simon Bolivar left the Venezuelan territory not to conquer or dominate but to assist brotherly peoples in achieving their independence, and go back home later with the satisfaction of having been useful to the cause of freedom and equality. That is the spirit, which characterizes our people and the actions of our revolutionary government in times that are so difficult for humanity.

Therefore we always hold on to the Bolivarian Diplomacy of Peace. We are precisely in the house of Peace, at the home of peaceful solutions, in the field of international law and its principles. We are embraced and protected by The United Nations Charter - a lofty multilateral instrument to prevent wars and injustices.

Hence, this rostrum, should be respected, protected and safeguarded by every nation. It is an almost sacred tribune for the peoples who trust in peace and understanding. However, this house, the house of multilateralism and respect for equality among peoples and States, has been desecrated, disrespected and offended over and over again by arrogant powers, which intend to impose their unilateral game rules, the rules of war, of suffering and pain. Back in 2006, from this very rostrum, Commander Hugo Chavez already denounced it with his loud and clear voice and with his unique style as he tried to sound the alarms to create the necessary containment to face the then serious unilateral threats against world peace.

However, one week ago, this plenary assembly heard, and the world witnessed through the media, another serious desecration of the United Nations principles and purposes.

Just as though he were the world emperor, the United States President, Donald Trump, used this tribune, built for peace, to announce wars, to promise the total destruction of member States, the application of coercive, unilateral and illegal measures, threatening and judging at pleasure, as though he had absolute dictatorial powers over the sovereign member States of our organization. Paradoxically, in a display of insolence and political hypocrisy, Donald Trump based his attacks against humanity on the values of peace and prosperity.

In our case, let us remember that, with a different style but aiming at the same target, former President Barack Obama had already defined the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as an unusual and extraordinary threat to US national security through an executive order dated March 9th, 2015.

Today, we have the duty to denounce to the world that last August 11th our people has been directly threatened by the US President with the use of the most powerful military force that has ever existed in the history of humanity. In addition to such anachronism and offense against our sovereignty and against the peace that has characterized our Latin America and Caribbean, the Trump administration imposed illegal economic sanctions on our country last August 25th, with the intention of causing suffering and pain to our people to force non-democratic changes in our system of government.

A week ago, in his address, Donald Trump resorted to the outdated ideological rhetoric of the Cold War in the best inquisitorial style of Richard Nixon and Senator Joseph McCarthy, to reaffirm his threats against our country and against the sisterly Republic of Cuba.

Venezuela shall always seek a dialogue based on mutual respect with the US government. However, as the free people that we actually are, we are ready to defend our sovereignty, our independence and our democracy in any scenario and under any circumstances.

In the face of such attitudes, the United Nations should create effective mechanisms to neutralize the warmongering pretensions and the intentions to replace the multilateralism –which is the result of great endeavours, with the dictatorial unilateralism of those who intend to impose destruction and a single way of thinking in our diverse and heterogeneous humanity with the use of weapons and economic blackmail.

In this connection, last Tuesday, with the unanimous vote of its 120 members, 2 thirds of this magnificent General Assembly, the Non-aligned Movement approved the Political Declaration of New York, an instrument to denounce, condemn and coordinate actions among NAM members to counter the coercive and unilateral measures imposed, by certain international actors, which measures clearly violate the United Nations Charter.

Last Thursday, during our address in the capacity as Chair of the NAM at the plenary meeting of the G-77 + China, we proposed to extend the New York Declaration to this group of countries which focuses on

economic issues, since the ruthless unilateral attacks against the economies of our peoples constitute an essential part of those illegal, unilateral and coercive measures.

We must urgently seek multilateral answers to prevent the imposition of coercive measures and even to ensure that those governments, which have illegally imposed measures, are legally bound to compensate the peoples who have suffered the effects of such measures.

In this regard, we condemn all unilateral actions against brotherly peoples of countries such as Russia and Iran, and especially, the extension of the criminal blockade against our sisterly Republic of Cuba, which has been imposed for over 5 decades, and in this opportunity, reflects the clear demonstration of the new winds of North American unilateralism.

Venezuela emphatically opposes the existence of nuclear weapons in our planet. Having nuclear weapons leads humanity to unjustifiable and unimaginable anguish and risks. That is why we have signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons last Wednesday. We must endeavour so that all nuclear crises de-escalate and disappear (hopefully with their weapons) through dialogue and humanist rationality.

As to Human Rights, Venezuela, a country which in recent years has made an enormous effort to ensure the broadest social investment, with fair redistribution of the national wealth among Venezuelans, precisely to guarantee human and social rights, has also been labelled and accused by the US government. If there is a country that does not deserve to belong to the United Nations Human Rights Council, that country is precisely the United States of America. We are talking about the main violator of human rights, not only in its territory, but throughout the world – Unjustified wars, bombings on civilians, clandestine prisons where torture is used, imposition of unlawful unilateral measures against the economies of several countries, various forms of economic pressures, and unacceptable migration policies.

The United States is the only country that has dared to use nuclear weapons against another country, causing hundreds of thousands of casualties. It is a country that, in violation of the UN's essential institutional framework, led the 2003 invasion of Iraq, allegedly seeking mass destruction weapons which were never found despite over and above one million deaths caused by that bloody military operation.

The United States is building a wall along the border with Mexico and there is a bill to reduce immigrants' remittances by 7%, not for their social security but to fund the construction of this abominable wall.

Based on verifiable data from UN agencies and rapporteurs, we can conclude that the United States has not ratified 62% of the main human rights treaties. There are no independent institutions in the United States to defend and promote human rights. The UN Special Rapporteur denounces the lack of independence of the U.S. judiciary on out-of-court and arbitrary killings. Solitary confinement is an extended practice in his country. The number of homeless people amounts to 3.5 million, 1.5 million of whom are children. Twenty-eight percent of the people living below the poverty line have no health coverage. Maternal mortality rate has skyrocketed in recent years. Ten thousand children are placed in prisons for adults; children can be sentenced to life imprisonment (70% of them are African American). The Special Rapporteur for Education

has denounced the use of electric shocks and physical forms of coercion in educational centres. The United States is one of the 7 countries in the world that has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. In the United States, paid maternity leave is not compulsory. Complaints about police abuse, especially against the African American population, are common. More than 10 million African Americans remain in poverty, half of them in extreme poverty. In a country where slavery is supposedly abolished, the 13th Amendment allows slavery as a form of criminal sanction. One out of three American native women is raped anywhere in her lifetime. The United States is a country where racial discrimination has not been achieved and even has worsened with the supremacist positions of the current administration.

Please, accept my apologies for such thoroughness, but there is data and information that the media conceal and the entire world need to know.

Venezuela rejects terrorism in all its forms, either from violent anarchist groups that today threaten world peace and stability, or from States that claim to have the right to interfere in other countries as they please, seeking to control their strategic natural resources, mercilessly using for such purpose military force against innocent civilians.

We painfully see how the Mediterranean Sea has become a huge cemetery, many times before the blind and inclement eye of States responsible for the crises generated in the countries of origin of migrants by combining both forms of terrorism. Bloody wars like the ones prefabricated against Syria and Libya have just left devastation in their wake. Fortunately, the heroic Syrian people and government, with the support of fair international allies, are increasingly closer to a definitive victory over terrorist groups.

Venezuela wishes success in the works that the Under Secretary-General of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office is carrying out in his capacity as head and general coordinator of the United Nations Global Strategy. Venezuela hopes that these efforts will likewise condemn state terrorism.

Venezuela encourages the resumption of peace talks between Palestine and Israel, a process that should lead to a firm and lasting peace between both States, recognizing the existence of Palestinian borders prior to 1967, in accordance with international law, as well as establishing East Jerusalem as Palestine's capital. We believe that the United Nations must play a much more significant role in resolving this historic and unfair conflict.

We thank the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, for his sincere efforts to facilitate the implementation of the Geneva Accord through the good offices mechanism so as to look for a practical and satisfactory solution for the parties in the territorial dispute with our brothers and neighbours of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

The Bolivarian Venezuela will always be willing to help opening the path to peace. Therefore, we congratulate the implementation of the Peace agreements between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, to which Commander Chavez and President Nicolas Maduro

devoted so much effort and energy. Likewise, we will continue to accompany and facilitate talks between the government of Colombia and the National Liberation Army ELN, which are currently taking place in the Republic of Ecuador.

Venezuela is not a drug producing country. International institutions have certified that. We collaborate in a sovereign way with all neighbouring countries and those which are not our neighbours in the fight against drugs trafficking. We express our concern about the increase of drug production in our neighbour Colombia. However, we have always pointed out that consuming countries are the main responsible for they represent powerful magnets attracting both drugs production and traffic, and they should take on real control of the entry and distribution of drugs in their territory.

For years we have been working with the UNDP, so for Venezuela is rather easy to move forward with compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals because our Homeland Plan and the 2030 Agenda are instruments which not only coincide but also are complementary to such goals.

As to funding, you are surely aware that 76% of Venezuela's income has been allocated to social investment in the last 18 years. Such proportion will continue to increase. No economic or illegal sanction will prevent President Maduro from continuing to develop policies to ensure our fellow countrymen with their social rights. We are concerned, however, of the clear lack of funding sources of other brotherly countries that have expressed their will to comply with the 2030 Agenda even though they do not have the necessary funding to do so. The UN should engage in ensuring to ensure this commendable funding for the comprehensive and sustainable development of all its member States.

Maybe it is not a mere coincidence that just a few days earlier and during this 72nd session, the effects of the so often warned and feared climate change process became apparent through the devastation and death caused by the consecutive passage of hurricanes of magnitudes never seen before. This happened not very far from New York. The unusual fury of these natural phenomena affected our brothers and sisters of several countries of the Caribbean. The Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Gaston Browne, and of Dominica, Roosevelt Skerrit, gave two extraordinary speeches before this General Assembly, expressing with courage and sentiment the most absolute truth and alerted on the necessity of concrete and urgent joint action to avoid greater further damage caused, undoubtedly, by climate change.

Roosevelt Skerrit affirmed that small countries are the victims of a war they did not choose, they did not start but of which they are part. It is the war of the developed countries and the capitalist system against Mother Nature. Today, more than ever before, it becomes necessary to go voice once again the slogan of the environmentalist social movements "let's not change the climate, let's change the system". The reconstruction of infrastructure and the use of building techniques resistant to the attacks of new natural phenomena cannot rest upon the shoulders of the affected people and countries alone, it is a shared and differentiated responsibility, which should be taken on mainly by the countries contributing the most to climate change through pollution.

In this regard, and in view of the evidence of the aftermath we have witnessed, it seems unheard of and

hostile that the Government of the U.S., the main polluting country, attempts to withdraw from the Paris Agreement that, even though it is not a universal panacea, is a collective step forward to mitigate the effects of climate change. How many hurricanes, typhoons, landslides, how many subsidence processes, droughts? How many deaths, how many wounded, how many devastated countries are needed to understand that climate change, as UN experts themselves have said, is a threat to the whole planet and it is the responsibility of all of us to revert it?

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela expresses our condolences to the governments and families affected by successive hurricanes in the Caribbean and the United States, as well as to the victims of the terrible earthquakes in the brotherly country of Mexico. Further to our immediate solidarity response to face the emergencies in our region, President Nicolás Maduro will continue to provide not only the necessary assistance at our disposal but also any other support we can coordinate to help our Latin American and Caribbean brothers and sisters.

As said on the onset of our address today, the Venezuelan people is subject to permanent aggressions by hegemonic powers that attempt to seize our natural resources: the largest oil reserve in the world, one of the most important reserves of gas, gold, diamond, coltan, iron, aluminium, thorium, biodiversity, water resources, fertile lands, among others.

We have endured multiform attacks against our economy, currency, production capacity, including internal political violence induced and generated by political factors that have tried to reach power by non-democratic means since 2002. This year, we suffered four months of political violence aimed, once again, at overthrowing President Nicolas Maduro. After the stress and pain for the loss of innocent lives, the opposition violence was neutralized and appeased by the great popular and democratic demonstration of July 30th, when over 8 million Venezuelans voted for peace and elected a fully sovereign plenipotentiary National Constituent Assembly.

The last acts of violence by the Venezuelan extremist right-wing opposition took place precisely that day, last July 30th, in an attempt to prevent people from exercising their right to vote. Full political peace returned to the country as from July 31, as we witnessed the Constituent Peace.

Our National Constituent Assembly, in coexistence and with respect for the constituted powers, has become not only the people's pacifier and protector but also the instrument par excellence for a national dialogue and to legitimately address the most urgent problems of the country.

Ours is an active and people's democracy. In Venezuela, we have held 22 elections in 18 years. The Revolution has triumphed in 20 of them. We have always developed social dialogue as a method to deepen our democracy. For this reason, we welcomed the fact that the Venezuelan political opposition has decided to return to the democratic and constitutional path by having all of its parties participate in the governors' elections next October 15th.

We likewise welcome that the President of the Dominican Republic, Danilo Medina, former Presidents of

Spain and Dominican Republic, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and Leonel Fernández, have taken and materialized the dialogue initiative that President Maduro announced after the National Constituent Assembly commenced, and have convened the parties to a process to which Nicaragua, Bolivia, Mexico and Chile have also joined. We appreciate the sincere support of these friendly countries and governments to foster the only possible peaceful, constitutional and sovereign solution, in other words, a solution constructed by Venezuelans themselves.

In these turbulent times in the world, we are eager to see a United Nations worthy of its name. Any reform process requires the participation and inclusion of all its members. We all need, as we said a few minutes ago, a genuinely effective UN to neutralize violent, hegemonic and unilateral initiatives. We all need an organization that is capable of working together with all the Member States without hegemonic biases. A United Nations system that identifies and highlights the real causes of the great problems currently endured by humanity, determined to address them without distractions or pressure, abiding at all times by the principles of our Charter.

The time has come to define ourselves, the historical struggle between healthy multilateralism and perverse unilateralism is at its height. Let us make decisions always keeping in mind the humblest, the excluded, those who most need us, and keeping our mother Earth in mind as well.

Let us make it possible for all of us to be able to look into our children and grandchildren's eyes with the satisfaction of having stopped the worst and guaranteed a better future of peace, health and smiles. Let us build, from the United Nations, what the Liberator Simón Bolívar asked for in 1815, a government system that provides us with the greatest sum of happiness possible, the greatest sum of social security and political stability.

From the house of multilateralism, we say long live multilateralism! From the space of international law, we say long live the international law! From the house of peace, we say long live world peace!

From the bottom of Venezuelan heart, we say you can count on the Bolivarian Government headed by President Nicolás Maduro to close ranks around justice, humanism and peace.

Just as the Liberator wrote to the then President of Peru, José de La Riva Agüero, on April 13th, 1823: "I am inclined to believe that, if it is indispensable, LOVE for the HOMELAND shall prevail".

Likewise, we have the indispensable certainty that in any circumstance the love for the sovereign Bolivarian Venezuela, the love for our working people, for our good people, the love for the Homeland shall prevail. We shall always prevail!

Thank you

