

Statement by Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic of Cuba at the summit of heads of state and government of Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil June 28, 1999. [1]

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There is a political matter of major significance that I must certainly address here and that is the Alliance's new Strategic Concept. I will refer to four paragraphs.

First: "In order to enhance peace and stability in Europe and more widely, the European Allies are strengthening their capacity for action, including by increasing their military capabilities."

Second: "The security of the Alliance remains subject to a wide variety of military [...] risks [...] These risks include uncertainty and instability in and around the Euro-Atlantic area and the possibility of regional crises at the periphery of the Alliance..."

Third: "Greater number of force elements will be available at appropriate levels of readiness to sustain prolonged operations, whether within or beyond Alliance territory..."

Fourth: That it is most likely that threats to the security of the Alliance may derive from regional and ethnic conflicts as well as from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery and from other crises beyond the territory of the Alliance.

Now, I would like to make some brief considerations and raise a few questions.

First: If it were possible, I would like to hear a clarification about whether the Latin American and Caribbean countries are considered to be within the Euro-Atlantic periphery as defined by NATO.

Second: After long debates, the European Union has endorsed this Summit's declaration which reads: "...This strategic partnership is based on full compliance with international law and the purposes and principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of non-intervention, respect for sovereignty, equality among states and self-determination".

Does this mean that the United States is also committed to respect the principles contained in this declaration endorsed by its allies? What would the European reaction be if under just any pretext the United States unilaterally decided to unleash an attack with bombs and missiles against any of the Latin American and Caribbean countries meeting here?

Third: Everyone is aware that, for example, Israel has hundreds of nuclear weapons produced with some Western assistance about which a strange and hermetic silence has been kept.

According to the description in point four above, would it mean that not only due to the clandestine proliferation of weapons of mass destruction but also to their massive production NATO could launch thousands of bombs over Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Israelites and Palestinian cities alike? Would it mean

that it could destroy the electric systems, industries, roads and all the essential means of life of those peoples while directly killing tens of thousands of innocent civilians and putting at risk the lives of the rest of the people? Would that be a civilised solution to such problems? Could anyone be sure that such attitude would not lead to a nuclear conflict? Where would the Alliance new and unsustainable doctrine lead us?

Having briefly expressed these ideas about such a sensitive issue I have nothing further to say. Please, excuse me.

Thank you.

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