

IF THE CLIMATE WERE A BANK, IT WOULD ALREADY HAVE BEEN SAVED



LATIN AMERICA vs IMPERIALISM
AT THE
COPENHAGEN CLIMATE SUMMIT

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INTRODUCTION

'IF THE CLIMATE WERE A BANK, IT WOULD ALREADY HAVE BEEN SAVED' Latin America vs imperialism at the Copenhagen Climate Summit

Each day it becomes clearer that the leaders of the world's richest countries are unwilling to commit to what current science indicates we must do to avoid extremely damaging climate change.

This was starkly evident at the 15th Conference of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (COP15) held in Copenhagen, Denmark, on December 7-20, 2009. The summit was a farcical, undemocratic process whereby a handful of rich countries sought to impose a deal, worked out by them in secret, that not only failed to meet the needs of humanity as dictated by science, but was actually a step backwards from already existing UN climate agreements.

However, the Copenhagen summit was also marked by powerful resistance, both from inside and outside.

Outside, in the streets of Copenhagen, mass demonstrations calling for climate justice were repressed by police using pepper spray and batons. More than 1000 people were arrested. Inside the summit, African delegates chanted "We will not die quietly", while representatives from small island states said the policies being pushed by the rich countries would condemn their nations to disappear.

In the rich nations' underhand efforts to ensure that no serious action to avert climate change — or impact negatively on their wealth and power — was agreed to at Copenhagen, they provoked and inadvertently gave a global platform to those leaders of the Third World who are willing to speak out for their peoples' and the planet's future. Some of the most sig-



nificant interventions came from representatives of the anti-imperialist bloc in Latin America, the Bolivarian Alliance of the Peoples of Our America (ALBA).

Representatives from five ALBA nations — Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador and Nicaragua — acted as a bloc and provided important world leadership at the summit. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Bolivian President Evo Morales captured the world's attention, repeatedly insisting that the most powerful nations lacked the political will to take real action on climate change, explaining how capitalism is incompatible with ecological sustainability and calling for systemic change to save "Mother Earth".

Even the capitalist media were forced to acknowledge the power of the Latin American socialists' message. Writing in the December 17 *Australian* newspaper, Lenore Taylor said: "The Copenhagen climate summit was pretty much summed up in the high-level segment yesterday when [Australian climate minister] Penny Wong's speech was interrupted by whistles and chanting, and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez got a standing ovation". When Chavez said "there was a 'silent and terrible ghost in the room' and that ghost was called capitalism, the applause was deafening", she wrote. When Chavez insisted that "capitalism is the road to hell ... let's fight against capitalism", he "won a standing ovation".

This pamphlet compiles some of the Latin American socialists' speeches, interviews and articles about Copenhagen that so inspired the Third World, and all of us campaigning to save humanity and the planet. It is a huge task before us, but as President Mohamed Nasheed of the Maldives told the summit: "The social movements have the power to save the planet from the effects of climate change. My message to you is to continue the process of movement building after the conference."

1.

THE STRUGGLE NOW IS TO SAVE OUR SPECIES

BY FIDEL CASTRO

“Before, the people fought and are fighting still, with honour, for a better and more just world, but now they are also having to fight, without any alternative whatsoever, for the very survival of our species. If we ignore this, we know absolutely nothing.”

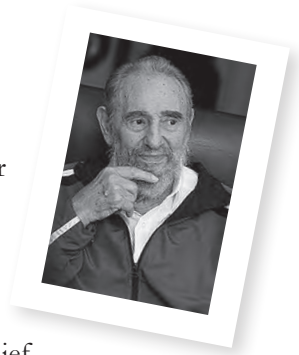
JANUARY 3, 2010

As the Cuban Revolution celebrated its 51st anniversary two days ago, memories of that January 1, 1959, came to mind. The outlandish idea that, after half a century — which flew by — we would remember it as if it were yesterday, never occurred to any of us.

During the meeting at the Oriente sugar mill on December 28, 1958, with the commander-in-chief of the enemy’s forces, whose elite units were surrounded without any way out whatsoever, the commander admitted defeat and appealed to our generosity to find a dignified way out for the rest of his forces. He knew of our humane treatment of prisoners and the injured without any exception. He accepted the agreement that I proposed, although I warned him that operations under way would continue. But he travelled to the capital, and, incited by the United States embassy, instigated a *coup d’état*.

We were preparing for combat on that January 1 when, in the early hours of the morning, the news came in of the dictator’s flight. The Rebel Army was ordered not to permit a ceasefire and to continue battling on all fronts. Radio Rebelde called on workers to launch a revolutionary general strike, immediately followed by the entire nation. The coup attempt was defeated, and that same afternoon, our victorious troops entered Santiago de Cuba.

Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos received instructions to advance rapidly by road in motor vehicles with their battle-hardened forces toward La Cabaña and the Columbia military camp. The enemy army, hit hard on



all fronts, was unable to resist. The people in arms themselves took over the centres of repression and police stations. In the afternoon of January 2 at a stadium in Bayamo, and accompanied by a small escort, I met with more than 2000 soldiers from the tank, artillery and motorised infantry units, against whom we had been fighting until the day before. They were still carrying their weapons. We had won the enemy's respect with our audacious but humanitarian methods of irregular warfare. This was how, in just four days — after 25 months of war that we reinitiated with a few guns — some 100,000 air, sea and ground weapons and the entire power of the state remained in the hands of the Cuban Revolution. In just a few lines, I am recounting everything that happened during those days 51 years ago.

BATTLE TO SAVE OUR SPECIES

Then the main battle began: to preserve Cuba's independence against the most powerful empire that has ever existed, a battle which our people waged with great dignity. I am happy today to observe those who, in the face of incredible obstacles, sacrifices and risks, were able to defend our homeland, and who today, together with their children, parents and loved ones, are enjoying the happiness and glories of each new year.

Today, however, is nothing like yesterday. We experience a new era unlike any other in history. Before, the people fought and are fighting still, with honour, for a better and more just world, but now they are also having to fight, without any alternative whatsoever, for the very survival of our species. If we ignore this, we know absolutely nothing.

Cuba is, without question, one of the most politically educated countries on the planet; it started out from the most shameful illiteracy, and what is worse, our yankee masters and the bourgeoisie associated with the foreign owners of land, sugar mills, production plants for consumer goods, warehouses, businesses, electricity, telephones, banks, mines, insurance, docks, bars, hotels, offices, houses, theatres, printshops, magazines, newspapers, radio, the emerging television, and everything of important value.

After the ardent flames of our battles for freedom had been quenched, the yankees had taken upon themselves the task of thinking for a people that struggled so hard to be the masters of their independence, resources and destiny. Absolutely nothing, not even the task of thinking politically, belonged to us. How many of us knew how to read and write? How many

of us even made it to sixth grade? I recall that especially on a day like today, because that was the country that was supposed to belong to the Cuban people. I will not list anything more, because I would have to include much more, including the best schools, the best hospitals, the best houses, the best doctors, the best lawyers. How many of us had a right to that? Which of us possessed, with some exceptions, the natural and divine right to be administrators and leaders?

Every millionaire and rich individual, without exception, was a political party leader, senator, representative or important official. That was the “representative and pure democracy” that prevailed in our country, except that the yankees imposed, at their whim, merciless and cruel petty dictators whenever it was more convenient for them to better defend their properties against landless campesinos and workers with or without jobs. Given that nobody even talks about that anymore, I am venturing to remember it.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE BATTLE IN COPENHAGEN

Our country is one of more than 150 that constitute the Third World, which would be the first but not the only nations destined to suffer incredible consequences if humanity does not become aware, clearly, certainly and a lot more quickly than we thought, of the reality and consequences of the climate change caused by human beings if it is not prevented in time.

Our mass media has dedicated space to describing the effects of climate change. Increasingly violent hurricanes, droughts and other natural disasters have likewise contributed to the education of our people on this subject. One singular event, the battle over the climate issue that took place at the Copenhagen summit, has contributed to knowledge of the imminent danger. It is not a matter of a distant threat for the 22nd century, but for the 21st; nor is it just for the latter half of this century, but for the coming decades, in which we will begin to suffer its terrible consequences.

It is also not just a question of simple action against the empire and its henchmen, who in this issue, like in everything else, are trying to impose their own stupid and egotistic interests, but a battle of world opinion that cannot be left to spontaneity or the whims of the majority of their mass media. It is a situation with which, fortunately, millions of honourable and brave people in the world are familiar, a battle to wage with the masses and within social organisations and scientific, cultural, humanitarian and other

international institutions, most especially in the heart of the United Nations, where the United States government, its NATO allies and the richest countries tried to effect a fraudulent and anti-democratic coup in Denmark against the rest of the emerging and poor countries of the Third World.

RICH STATES ATTEMPTED TO LOAD CLIMATE BURDEN ON POOR

In Copenhagen, the Cuban delegation, which attended together with others from the ALBA [Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America] and the Third World, was forced into a fight to the finish in the face of the incredible events that began with the speech of the US president, Barack Obama, and of the group of the richest states on the planet, resolved to dismantle the binding commitments of Kyoto — where the thorny problem was discussed more than 12 years ago — and to load the burden of sacrifice onto the emerging and underdeveloped countries, which are the poorest and at the same time the principal suppliers of the planet's raw materials and non-renewable resources to the most developed and opulent countries.

In Copenhagen, Obama appeared on the last day of the conference, which began on December 7, 2009. The worst aspect of his conduct was that, after he had decided to dispatch 30,000 soldiers to the slaughter of Afghanistan — a country with a strong tradition of independence, which not even the English in their better and cruellest times could dominate — he went to Oslo to receive no less than a Nobel Peace Prize. He arrived in the Norwegian capital on December 10 and gave an empty, demagogic and justifying speech. On the 18th, the date of the summit's last session, he appeared in Copenhagen, where he planned to remain for just eight hours. His secretary of state and a select group of his best strategists had arrived the previous day.

The first thing that Obama did was to select a group of guests who were given the honour of accompanying him as he gave a speech at the summit. The complacent and fawning Danish prime minister, who was presiding over the summit, gave the podium over to a group that numbered just 15. The imperial chief deserved special honours. His speech was a combination of sweetened words seasoned with theatrical gestures, already boring for those of us, like me, who assigned themselves the task of listening to him in order to try to be objective in an appreciation of his character-

istics and political intentions. Obama imposed on his docile Danish host, so that only his guests could speak, although as soon as he had made his own comments, he “made himself scarce” through the back door, like an imp escaping from an audience which had done him the honour of listening with interest.

Once the authorised list of speakers was finished, an Indigenous man, Aymara through and through, Evo Morales, president of Bolivia, who had just been re-elected with 65% of the vote, demanded the right to speak, which was granted, to the resounding applause of those present. In just nine minutes, he expressed profound and dignified concepts in response to the words of the absent US president. Immediately afterward, [Venezuelan president] Hugo Chávez got up to ask to speak on behalf of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; the person presiding over the session had no choice but to also give him the right to speak, and he used that to improvise one of the most brilliant speeches that I’ve ever heard. When he finished, a strike of the gavel ended the unusual session.

The extremely busy Obama and his entourage, however, did not have a minute to lose. His group had put together a draft statement, full of vagueness, which was the negation of the Kyoto Protocol. After he dashed out of the plenary session, Obama met with other groups of guests numbering no more than 30, negotiated in private and in groups; insisted; mentioned figures to the tune of millions of green bills without gold backing and which are constantly being devaluated, and even threatened to leave the meeting if his demands were not met. Worst of all, it was a meeting of super-rich countries, to which several of the most important emerging nations were invited and two or three poor ones, to which he submitted the document as if proposing, “take it or leave it!”.

The Danish prime minister tried to present that confusing, ambiguous and contradictory statement — in the discussion of which the UN did not participate in any way — as the summit agreement. The summit sessions had already concluded, almost all of the heads of state and government and foreign ministers had left for their respective countries and, at three in the morning, the distinguished Danish prime minister presented it to the plenary session, where hundreds of long-suffering officials who hadn’t slept for three days received the thorny document, and were given only one hour to discuss and approve it.

POOR COUNTRIES RESIST

That is when the meeting became fiery; the delegates hadn't even had time to read it. A number of them asked to speak. The first was the delegate from Tuvalu, whose islands would be inundated if what was proposed there was approved; those of Bolivia, Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua followed him. The dialectical confrontation at 3am on that December 19 is worthy of going down in history, if history should continue after climate change.

As a large part of what happened is known in Cuba, or is on internet web pages, I will confine myself to partially expounding on the two responses of Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez, worthy of being recorded in order to know the last episodes of the Copenhagen soap opera, and aspects of the final chapter, which are still to be published in our country.

Mr President (Prime Minister of Denmark)... The document that you affirmed on various occasions did not exist has now appeared. We have all seen versions circulating surreptitiously and being discussed in small and secret meetings outside the conference halls in which the international community, via its representatives, is negotiating in a transparent manner.

I add my voice to those of the representatives of Tuvalu, Venezuela and Bolivia. Cuba considers the text of this apocryphal draft as extremely insufficient and inadmissible ...

The document which you are presenting, lamentably, does not contain any commitment whatsoever to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

I am aware of prior versions which, in questionable and clandestine procedures, were also being negotiated behind closed doors and which talked of a reduction of at least 50% by the year 2050 ...

The document that you have presented now, precisely omits the already meager and insufficient key phrases that that version contained. This document does not guarantee, in any way, the adoption of minimal measures that would make it possible to avert an extremely grave disaster for the planet and the human species.

This shameful document that you have brought is likewise omissive and ambiguous in relation to the specific commitment to emission reductions on the part of the developed countries, those responsible for global warming given the historic and current level of their emissions, and on whom it falls to implement substantial reductions immediately. This paper does not contain one single word of commitment on the part of the developed countries.

... Your role, Mr President, is the death certificate of the Kyoto Protocol, which my delegation does not accept.

The Cuban delegation wishes to emphasize the preeminence of the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” as the central concept of the future negotiation process. Your paper does not say one word about that.

The Cuban delegation reiterates its protest at the grave violations of procedure that have been produced in the anti-democratic management of the process of this conference, via the utilization of arbitrary, exclusive and discriminatory forms of debate and negotiation ...

Mr President, I am formally asking for this statement to be placed in the final report on the workings of this lamentable and shameful 15th Conference of the Parties.

What nobody could have imagined is that, after another lengthy recess and when everybody thought that only the formalities remained before the conclusion of the summit, the prime minister of the host country, at the instigation of the yankees, would make another attempt to pass off the document as a consensus of the summit, when not even foreign ministers were left in the plenary. The delegates from Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Cuba, who remained vigilant and unsleeping until the last minute, frustrated the latter maneuver in Copenhagen.

However, the problem was not concluded. The powerful are not accustomed to brooking resistance. On December 30, the Danish Permanent Mission to the United Nations, in New York, courteously informed our mission in that city that it had taken note of the “Copenhagen Agreement” of December 18, 2009, and attached an advance copy of that decision. It affirmed textually:

... the government of Denmark, in its capacity of president of COP15, invites the Parties to the Convention to inform the secretariat of the UNFCCC in writing, and as soon as possible, of your willingness to commit to the Copenhagen Agreement.

This surprise communication motivated a response from the Cuban Permanent Mission to the United Nations, in which it “... flatly rejects the intention to gain indirect approval of a text that was the object of repudiation by various delegations, not only on account of its insufficiency in the face of the grave effects of climate change, but also for exclusively respond-

ing to the interests of a reduced group of states.”

At the same time it prompted a letter from Dr. Fernando González Bermúdez, first deputy minister of the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment of the Republic of Cuba to Mr Yvo de Boer, executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, some of whose paragraphs are transcribed below:

We have received with surprise and concern the note that the government of Denmark is circulating to the Permanent Missions of the member states of the United Nations in New York. Of which you are surely aware, via which the party states of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to inform the executive secretary, in writing, of your wish to be associated with the so-called Copenhagen Agreement.”

We have observed, with additional concern, that the government of Denmark communicates that the executive secretary of the Convention is to include in the report of the Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen, a list of the party states which have stated their willingness to commit to the quoted agreement.

In the judgment of the Republic of Cuba, this form of acting constitutes a crude and reprehensible violation of what was decided in Copenhagen, where the party states, faced with an evident lack of consensus, confined themselves to taking note of the existence of the said document.

Nothing that was agreed in COP15 authorizes the government of Denmark to adopt this action and, far less, the executive secretary to include a list of party states in the final report, for which he has no mandate.

I must inform you that the government of the Republic of Cuba most firmly rejects this new attempt to indirectly legitimate a spurious document and reiterate to you that this way of acting compromises the result of future negotiations, sets a dangerous precedent for the Convention’s work and, in particular, is injurious to the spirit of goodwill in which delegations must continue the negotiation process next year.

Many know, especially the social movements and better informed people in humanitarian, cultural and scientific movements, that the document promoted by the United States constitutes a regression of the positions achieved by those who are making efforts to avert a colossal disaster for our species. There is no point in repeating here facts and figures that are mathematically demonstrated. The data is confirmed on internet web pages

and are within the reach of a growing number of people who are interested in the issue.

The theory defending adherence to the document is feeble and implies a setback. The deceptive idea that the rich countries will contribute the miserable sum of US\$30 billion over three years to the poor countries in order to offset the costs implied by confronting climate change, costs which could rise to \$100 billion by 2020, is in the context of this exceedingly grave problem like waiting for the Greek calends. Specialists know that those figures are ridiculous and unacceptable given the volume of investments required. The origin of such sums is vague and confused, in a way that they do not commit anybody.

What is the value of one dollar? What is the significance of \$30 billion? We all know that, from Bretton Woods in 1944 to Nixon's presidential order in 1971 — imparted in order to offload the cost of the genocidal war on Vietnam onto the world economy — the value of one dollar, measured in gold, has gradually been reduced to the point of today, when it is approximately 32 times less than then; \$30 billion thus signifies less than one billion, and one billion divided by 32 is equivalent to \$3.125 million, which would not even stretch to building one middle-capacity oil refinery at the present time.

If, at some point, the industrialised countries were to meet their promise to contribute 0.7% of their GDP to the developing countries — something that, barring a few exceptions, they never have — the figure would be in excess of \$250 billion every year.

The US government spent \$800 billion on saving the banks. How much would it be prepared to pay to save the 9 billion people who will inhabit the planet in 2050 from large-scale drought and sea flooding provoked by the melting of glaciers and great masses of frozen water from Greenland and Antarctica?

DIVIDE AND RULE

Let us not deceive ourselves. What the United States has attempted with its manoeuvres in Copenhagen is to divide the Third World, to separate more than 150 underdeveloped countries from China, India, Brazil, South Africa and others with which we must fight united to defend — in Bonn, Mexico or any other international conference, along with the social, scien-

tific and humanitarian organisations — genuine agreements that will benefit all countries and preserve humanity from a disaster that could lead to the extinction of our species.

The world is in possession of constantly more information, but politicians have constantly less time for thinking.

The rich nations and their leaders, including the US Congress, would seem to be arguing which will be the last to disappear.

When Obama has completed the 28 parties with which he proposed to celebrate this Christmas, if Epiphany is included among them, perhaps Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar will advise him on what he should do.

Fidel Castro is the former president of Cuba.

2.

ALBA DECLARATION ON COPENHAGEN CLIMATE SUMMIT

ISSUED BY THE BOLIVARIAN ALLIANCE FOR THE PEOPLES OF OUR AMERICA (ALBA) ON DECEMBER 18, 2009, IN RESPONSE TO THE COPENHAGEN CLIMATE SUMMIT.

“It’s clear that we can’t consider the issue of climate change without considering changing the system. The model of capitalist production and consumption is bringing life on the planet to the point of no return and to a crucial moment in human history, and the debate in these situations can’t be reduced to the economic interests of a small group.”

We, the countries that make up ALBA, denounce before the world the threat that the results of the United Nations Conference in Copenhagen pose for the destiny of humanity.

In the first place, the process of negotiations was corrupted by the violation of the essential principles of the multilateral system. This undemocratic process has not recognised the equality of all, was dishonest, not very transparent, and exclusive. It was designed to guarantee the positions of a small group of countries.

Our response to climate change must be in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter. This process has lacked legitimacy; it has violated all the principles of multilateralism and the United Nations Charter, above all those of sovereign equality between all countries.

The main characteristic of this unfortunate failed meeting is that a very small group of countries, coordinated and convoked by Denmark, have been for the last few weeks writing an accord that they have unilaterally named “Interested Parties”, excluding the large majority of the world, establishing first-class and second-class countries as criteria.



While the chair of the Summit sent countries to take up the groups again, in order to continue editing and cleaning up the texts that were approved by the participants as a basis of negotiation, at the same time, the Danish prime minister convoked the presidents of a group of countries to edit a document behind our backs.

Further evidence of the exclusive nature of this event is the call of a group of presidents behind closed doors, without participation of the majority and without explaining the criteria behind the selection.

It's clear that we can't consider the issue of climate change without considering changing the system. The model of capitalist production and consumption is bringing life on the planet to the point of no return and to a crucial moment in human history, and the debate in these situations can't be reduced to the economic interests of a small group.

Until now very little has been achieved, however it is important to preserve the current climate agreements: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. They are important platforms for advancing the defence of life. Here we have an important world political accord, where all of us agree that climate change is a problem that has to be urgently addressed, and where the countries who are historically responsible for the problem have agreed to commit themselves to reducing emissions by amounts that allow the problem to be addressed.

The current scenario is seeing all this take a big step backwards, and requires us to forget the Kyoto Protocol. In this summit we haven't managed to write accords that address the obligations of the developed countries: to establish aims of reducing emissions or to establish a second period of commitments for the Kyoto Protocol.

There are offers on the table, but none of them compare. The United States doesn't want to commit itself on the basis of the efforts of other developed countries. The developed countries came to this meeting with a prior agenda, and they are violating every democratic procedure in their attempt to impose it.

In the Bali Plan of Action, approved in 2007, it was agreed that the developed countries would have obligations of mitigation, to which they would add voluntary actions of mitigation of the developing countries.

Now, the developed countries have dedicated themselves to misunderstanding the Bali Plan over the last two years, in order to try to use this

manifestation of our will to unite our efforts to transfer their obligations to us. The efforts and will to mitigate of the developing countries can't be used as a way to manipulate us and tell us, after they have destroyed the world, that now it's our turn to mitigate so that they can continue contaminating and destroying on the basis of their patterns of exploitation, production and consumption.

There is also the issue of principle here. We, the developing countries, are dignified and sovereign nations and victims of a problem that we didn't cause. This moral principle, based on historic responsibility, is the reason why the developed countries should provide sufficient resources for the complete implementation of the principles of the Convention.

The environmental crisis as a result of the increased temperatures of the atmosphere is a consequence of the capitalist system, of the prolonged and unsustainable pattern of production and consumption of the developed countries, of the application and imposition of an absolutely predatory model of development on the rest of the world, and the lack of political will for the full and effective fulfilment of the commitments and obligations of the Kyoto Protocol.

Developed countries have over-exploited the atmospheric space. This climatic debt in the wider framework of ecological debt includes an emission debt as much as it includes an adaptation debt that should be honoured by developed countries. It's not about charity or a handout, but a judicially bound obligation.

Category 1 countries accumulated a total of \$1123 billion in military expenses in 2008. The United States spent \$711 billion in 2008, according to the budget for the 2009 financial year, which includes \$170 billion for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. So the world knows that they have the capacity, but what they don't have is the political desire to respond to their international commitments and obligations to struggle against climate change. They are trying to use and abuse the needs of the poorest in order to force illegal accords.

Today, through the carbon markets, those who cause climate change continue contaminating, while the weight of emissions reductions transfers to the developing countries. They thought that in Copenhagen they could convince us to buy their right to contaminate, in exchange offering promises of paltry amounts of money.

- 1 We strongly denounce and we request that the documents generated by the chair of the summit without the mandate of the participants be contested and that we can state our position against the groups of friends of the chair openly. The chair has not guaranteed equality of participation at all levels, including the presidential level.
- 2 We reiterate our commitment to the struggle against climate change and to the principles of the Kyoto Protocol, now more valid than ever, whose content we consider capable of improvement with the decisions of the participants and subsequent accords, but something that we shouldn't allow to die. The complexity of the recent negotiations has shown us that the economic interests in conflict won't allow an accord if the developed countries won't accept respect for the principles.
- 3 In this sense, we express our political desire to continue working in the framework of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. The relaunch of these negotiations should be based on respect, inclusion, transparency and legitimacy.
- 4 We recall that while the conference failed in an irreversible way, the voices of the youth who know that the future is theirs grows stronger. They strongly denounce the manoeuvres of the developed countries and they know that the struggle will continue. We join with them and their protests, and we salute and support them. The people must stay on their guard.

Today more than ever, before the lamentable manoeuvring that has been practiced in Copenhagen for petty economic interests, we reiterate that, "Don't change the climate, change the system!"

Translated by Tamara Pearson for Venezuelanalysis.com.

3.

VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ FRIAS' SPEECH TO COPENHAGEN

“It is necessary that, to the ecological principle that is so useful at the time of becoming conscious, ‘think globally and act locally’, we add the principle that the situation imposes: ‘consume less and share better’.”

-HERVE KEMPF

DECEMBER 17, 2009

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, Excellencies, friends, I promise that I will not talk more than most have spoken this afternoon. Allow me an initial comment which I would have liked to make as part of the previous point.

I had hardly arrived and we were just sitting down when we heard the president of the previous session, the minister, saying that a document came about. I've asked for the document, but we still don't have it; I think nobody knows of that top secret document.

Now certainly, as the Bolivian comrade said, that is not democratic, it is not inclusive. Now, ladies and gentlemen, isn't that just the reality of the world? Are we in a democratic world? Is the global system inclusive? Can we hope for something democratic, inclusive from the current global system?

What we are experiencing on this planet is an imperial dictatorship, and from here we continue denouncing it. Down with imperial dictatorship! And long live the people and democracy and equality on this planet!

What we see here is a reflection of this: Exclusion.

There is a group of countries that consider themselves superior to us in the South, to us in the Third World, to us, the underdeveloped countries, or as a great friend Eduardo Galeano says, we, the crushed countries, as if a train ran over us in history.

In light of this, it's no surprise that there is no democracy in the world,



and here we are again faced with powerful evidence of global imperial dictatorship. There are many people outside, you know? Of course, they do not fit in this room, they are too many people. I've read in the news that there were some arrests, some intense protests, there in the streets of Copenhagen, and I salute all those people out there, most of them youth.

Of course young people are concerned, I think rightly much more than we are, for the future of the world. We have — most of us here — the sun on our backs, and they have to face the sun and are very worried.

One could say, Mr President, that a spectre is haunting Copenhagen, to paraphrase Karl Marx, the great Karl Marx; a spectre is haunting the streets of Copenhagen. That spectre walks silently through this room, walking around among us, through the halls, out below it rises. This spectre is a terrible spectre: Capitalism is the spectre, almost nobody wants to mention it.

It's capitalism, the people roar out there. Hear them.

I have been reading some of the slogans painted on the streets, those slogans of these youngsters, some of which I heard when I was young. You can hear, among others, two powerful slogans.

One: "Don't change the climate, change the system". And I take it onboard for us. Let's not change the climate, let's change the system! And consequently we will begin to save the planet. Capitalism is a destructive development model that is putting an end to life; it threatens to put a definitive end to the human species.

And another slogan calls for reflection. It is very in tune with the banking crisis that swept the world and still affects it, and of how the rich northern countries gave aid to bankers and the big banks. The US alone gave, well, I lost the figure, but it is astronomical, to save the banks. They say in the streets the following: "If the climate were a bank it would have been saved already".

And I think that's true. If the climate were one of the biggest capitalist banks, the rich governments would have saved it.

I think Obama has not arrived. He received the Nobel Peace Prize almost the same day that he sent 30,000 soldiers to kill more innocents in Afghanistan, and now he will come to stand here with the Nobel Peace Prize, the president of the United States.

The United States has the machinery to make money, to make dollars, and has saved — well, they believe they have saved — the banks and the capitalist system.

Look, over there I met, I had the pleasure of meeting, this French author Herve Kempf. I recommend [his] book, *How the Rich are Destroying the Planet*. This is what Christ said: it would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

The rich are destroying the planet. Do they think they can go to another when they destroy this one? So far there is none on the horizon of the galaxy.

This book has just reached me. Kempf says: “We cannot reduce global material consumption if we don’t make the powerful go down several levels, and if we don’t combat inequality. It is necessary that to the ecological principle that is so useful at the time of becoming conscious, ‘think globally and act locally,’ we add the principle that the situation imposes: ‘Consume less and share better.’”

I think it is good advice that this French author Herve Kempf gives us.

Climate change is undoubtedly the most devastating environmental problem of this century. Floods, droughts, severe storms, hurricanes, melting ice caps, rise in mean sea levels, ocean acidification and heat waves, all of that sharpens the impact of global crisis besetting us.

Current human activity exceeds the threshold of sustainability, endangering life on the planet, but also in this we are profoundly unequal.

I want to recall: the 500 million richest people, this is 7% of the world’s population. This 7% is responsible for 50% of emissions, while the poorest 50% account for only 7% of emissions.

So it strikes me as a bit strange to put the United States and China at the same level. The United States has just, well, it will soon reach 300 million people. China has nearly five times the US population. The United States consumes more than 20 million barrels of oil a day; China only reaches 5-6 million barrels a day. You can’t ask the same of the United States and China.

Hopefully we, the heads of states and governments, can sit down and discuss the truth about these issues.

So, Mr President, 60% of the planet’s ecosystems are damaged, 20% of the Earth’s crust is degraded, we have been impassive witnesses to deforestation, land conversion, desertification, deterioration of freshwater systems, overexploitation of marine resources, pollution and loss of biodiversity.

The overuse of the land exceeds by 30% the capacity to regenerate it.

The planet is losing what the technicians call the ability to regulate itself. Every day, more waste than can be processed is released.

The survival of our species hammers in the consciousness of humanity. Despite the urgency, it has taken two years of negotiations for a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, and we attend this event without any real and meaningful agreement.

And indeed, on the text that comes from out of the blue, as some have called it, Venezuela says, and the ALBA countries, the Bolivarian Alliance, say that we will not accept any other texts that do not come from working groups under the Kyoto Protocol and the Convention. They are the legitimate texts that we have been discussing so intensely over the years.

The scientifically substantiated objective of reducing the emission of polluting gases and achieving an agreement on long-term cooperation clearly, at this time, has apparently failed, for now.

What is the reason? We have no doubt.

The reason is the irresponsible attitude and lack of political will from the most powerful nations on the planet. No-one should feel offended; I recall the great José Gervasio Artigas when he said: "With the truth, I neither offend nor fear." But it is actually an irresponsible attitude of positions, of reversals, of exclusions, of elitist management of a problem that belongs to everyone and that we can only solve together.

The political conservatism and selfishness of the largest consumers, of the richest countries, shows high insensitivity and lack of solidarity with the poor, the hungry and the most vulnerable to disease, to natural disasters. Mr President, a new and single agreement is essential, applicable to absolutely unequal parties, according to the magnitude of their contributions and economic, financial and technological capabilities, and based on unconditional respect for the principles contained in the Convention.

Developed countries should set binding, clear and concrete commitments for the substantial reduction of their emissions, and assume obligations of financial and technological assistance to poor countries to cope with the destructive dangers of climate change. In this respect, the uniqueness of island states and least developed countries should be fully recognised.

Mr President, climate change is not the only problem facing humanity today. Other scourges and injustices beset us: the gap between rich and poor countries has continued to grow despite all the millennium goals,

the Monterrey financing summit. At all these summits, as the President of Senegal said here, revealing a great truth, there are promises and unfulfilled promises, and the world continues its destructive march.

The total income of the 500 richest individuals in the world is greater than the income of the 416 million poorest people. The 2.8 billion people living in poverty on less than \$2 per day, representing 40% of the global population, receive only 5% of world income.

Today, each year about 9.2 million children die before reaching their fifth year and 99.9% of these deaths occur in poorer countries.

Infant mortality is 47 deaths per 1000 live births, but is only 5 per 1000 in rich countries. Life expectancy on the planet is 67 years; in rich countries it is 79, while in some poor nations it is only 40 years.

Additionally, there are 1.1 billion people without access to drinking water, 2.6 billion without sanitation services, over 800 million illiterate and 1.02 billion hungry people. That's the global scenario.

Now the cause, what is the cause?

Let's not evade responsibilities, and let's not evade the depth of this problem. The cause, undoubtedly, I return to the theme of this whole disastrous panorama, is the destructive metabolic system of capital and its embodied model: Capitalism.

Here's a quote that I want to read briefly, from that great liberation theologian Leonardo Boff, a Brazilian, an American of ours. Leonardo Boff says on this subject:

“What is the cause? Ah, the cause is the dream of seeking happiness through material accumulation and of endless progress, using for this science and technology with which they can exploit without limits all the resources of the earth.” And he cites here Charles Darwin and his “natural selection”, the survival of the fittest. But we know that the strongest survive over the ashes of the weakest.

Jean Jacques Rousseau, we must always remember, said that between the strong and the weak, freedom is oppressed. That's why the Empire speaks of freedom; it's the freedom to oppress, to invade, to kill, to annihilate and to exploit. That is their freedom, and Rousseau adds this saving phrase: “Only the law liberates.”

There are countries that are hoping that no document comes out of here precisely because they do not want a law, do not want a standard, because the absence of these norms allows them to play at their exploitative

freedom, their crushing freedom.

We must make an effort and pressure here and in the streets so that a commitment comes out of here, a document that commits the most powerful countries on Earth.

Well, Mr President, Leonardo Boff asks (we've always read him). "Can a finite earth support an infinite project?" The thesis of capitalism, infinite development, is a destructive pattern, let's face it.

Then Boff asks us, what might we expect from Copenhagen? At least this simple confession: we can not continue like this. And a simple proposition: let's change course. Let's do it, but without cynicism, without lies, without double agendas, no documents out of the blue, with the truth out in the open.

How long, we ask from Venezuela, how long are we going to allow such injustices and inequalities? How long are we going to tolerate the current international economic order and prevailing market mechanisms? How long are we going to allow huge epidemics like HIV/AIDS to ravage entire populations? How long are we going to allow the hungry to not eat or be able to feed their own children? How long are we going to allow millions of children to die from curable diseases? How long will we allow armed conflicts to massacre millions of innocent human beings in order for the powerful to seize the resources of other peoples?

Cease the aggressions and the wars! We, the peoples of the world, ask of the empires, those who try to continue dominating the world and exploiting us: No more imperial military bases or military coups! Let's build a more just and equitable economic and social order, let's eradicate poverty, let's immediately stop the high emission levels, let's stop environmental degradation and avoid the great catastrophe of climate change, let's integrate ourselves into the noble goal of everyone being more free and united.

Mr President, almost two centuries ago a universal Venezuelan, a liberator of nations and precursor of consciences, left to posterity a full-willed maxim: "If nature opposes us, let's fight against it and make it obey us." That was Simón Bolívar, the Liberator.

From Bolivarian Venezuela, where on a day like today 10 years ago, we experienced the biggest climate tragedy in our history (the Vargas tragedy it is called), from this Venezuela, whose revolution tries to win justice for all people, we say it is only possible through the path of socialism!

Socialism, the other spectre Karl Marx spoke about, which walks here

too, is like a counter-spectre. Socialism, this is the direction, this is the path to save the planet, I don't have the least doubt. Capitalism is the road to hell, to the destruction of the world. We say this from Venezuela, which because of socialism faces threats from the US empire.

From the countries that comprise ALBA, the Bolivarian Alliance, we call — and I want to, with respect but from my soul, call in the name of many on this planet — we say to governments and peoples of the Earth, to paraphrase Simon Bolivar, the Liberator: If the destructive nature of capitalism opposes us, let's fight against it and make it obey us, let's not wait idly by for the death of humanity.

History calls on us to unite and to fight.

If capitalism resists, we are obliged to take up a battle against capitalism and open the way for the salvation of the human species. It's up to us, raising the banners of Christ, Mohammed, equality, love, justice, humanity, the true and most profound humanism. If we don't do it, the most wonderful creation of the universe, the human being, will disappear.

This planet is billions of years old, and this planet existed for billions of years without us, the human species, i.e. it doesn't need us to exist. Now, without the Earth we will not exist, and we are destroying *Pachamama*, as Evo [Morales] says, as our indigenous brothers from South America say.

Finally, Mr President, let's listen to Fidel Castro when he said: "One species is in danger of extinction: humanity."

Let's listen to Rosa Luxemburg when she said: "Socialism or barbarism."

Let us listen to Christ the Redeemer when he said: "Blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, we are capable of not making this Earth the tomb of humanity. Let us make this Earth a heaven, a heaven of life, of peace, peace and brotherhood for all humanity, for the human species.

Abridged. Translated by Kiraz Janicke for Venezuelanalysis.com.

4.

THE BATTLE OF COPENHAGEN

BY HUGO CHÁVEZ FRÍAS,

PRESIDENT OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA

“I think it is time for the US to stop seeing itself as a donor and begin to recognise itself as polluter: a polluter must pay compensation for damages and it must pay its ecological debt. It is not charity. This is justice.”

VANDANA SHIVA

DECEMBER 22, 2009

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Copenhagen was the scene of a historic battle in the framework of the 15th Conference of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (COP15). Better said, in the beautiful, snowy capital of Denmark, a battle began that did not end on Friday, December 18, 2009. I reiterate: Copenhagen was only the beginning of a decisive battle for the salvation of the planet. It was a battle in the realm of ideas and in praxis.



Brazilian Leonardo Boff, a great liberation theologian and one of the most authoritative voices on environmental issues, in a key article entitled *What is at stake in Copenhagen?*, wrote these words full of insight and courage: “What can we expect from Copenhagen? At least this simple confession: We cannot continue like this. And a simple proposition: Let’s change course.”

And for that reason, precisely, we went to Copenhagen to battle for a change of course on behalf of Venezuela, on behalf of the Bolivarian Alliance (ALBA), and moreover, in defence of the cause of humanity and to speak, with [Bolivian] President Evo Morales, in defence of the rights of Pachamama, Mother Earth.

Evo, who together with yours truly, had the responsibility to be a spokesperson for the Bolivarian Alliance, wisely said: What this debate is about is whether we are going to live or we are going to die.

All eyes of the world were concentrated on Copenhagen: the 15th Conference on Climate Change allowed us to gauge the fibre we are made of, where hope lies and what we can do to establish what the Liberator Simon Bolivar defined as the equilibrium of the universe, an equilibrium that can never be achieved within the capitalist world system.

II

Before our arrival in Copenhagen, the African bloc, backed by the Group of 77, denounced that rich countries were ignoring the Kyoto Protocol, that is, the only existing international instrument to fight global warming, the only thing that penalises the industrialised states and protects the developing countries.

It is necessary to recognise that the battle had already begun in the streets of Copenhagen, with the youth at the forefront protesting and proposing. I could see and feel, since my arrival in the Danish capital on December 16, the historic power of another world that, for the youth, is not only possible but absolutely necessary.

III

In Copenhagen, from the beginning, the cards were on the table for all to see. On the one hand, the cards of brutal meanness and stupidity of capitalism, which did not budge in defence of its logic: the logic of capital, which leaves only death and destruction in its wake at an increasingly rapid pace.

On the other hand, the cards of the peoples demanding human dignity, the salvation of the planet and for a radical change, not of the climate, but of a world system that has brought us to the brink of unprecedented ecological and social catastrophe.

On one side, the victors of a mercantile and utilitarian civilisation, that is, the “civilised ones”, who for a long time now have forgotten about human beings and opted blindly for increasingly insatiable desires.

On the other hand, the “barbarians” who remain committed in believ-

ing and in fighting for radically changing the logic, that you can maximise human welfare, minimising environmental and ecological impacts. Those who sustain the impossibility of defending human rights if we don't also defend the rights of Mother Earth, as raised by the comrade Evo Morales. Those who act with determination to leave a planet and future for our descendants.

I will not tire of repeating to the four winds: the only possible and viable alternative is socialism. I said it in each of my speeches to all the world representatives gathered in Copenhagen, the world's most important event in the last 200 years: there is no other way if we want to stop this heartless and debased competition that promises only total annihilation.

Why are the "civilised ones" so afraid of a project that aspires to build shared happiness? They are afraid, let's be honest, because shared happiness does not generate profit. Hence the crystal clarity of that great slogan of the Copenhagen street protest that today speaks for millions: "If the climate was a bank, they would have saved it already."

The "civilised ones" do not take the necessary measures simply because it would oblige them to reverse their voracious pattern of life, marked by selfish comfort, and that does not touch their cold hearts, which beat only to the rhythm of money.

That's why the [US] empire arrived late on December 18, to offer crumbs via blackmail, and through this, wash away the guilt marked on its face. In front of this strategy of buying support you could hear throughout Denmark the clear and courageous voice of Vandana Shiva, the Indian thinker, saying a great truth: "I think it is time for the US to stop seeing itself as a donor and begin to recognise itself as polluter: a polluter must pay compensation for damages and it must pay its ecological debt. It is not charity. This is justice."

I must say, in Copenhagen the Obama illusion was definitively destroyed. He was confirmed in his position as head of the empire and winner of the Nobel War Prize. The enigma of the two Obamas has been resolved.

Friday the 18th came to an end without a democratically agreed accord: Obama mounted the platform separately, in a further violation of UN procedures, for which we feel obliged to challenge any decision that does not respect the validity of the Protocol Kyoto. To respect and enhance Kyoto is our motto.

An accord was not possible in Copenhagen due to the lack of political

will of the rich countries: the powerful of this world, the hyper-developed, who do not want to change their patterns of production and consumption, which are as senseless as suicide. “The world can go to hell if it dares to threaten my privilege and my lifestyle”, is what they appear to be saying with their conduct. That is the hard truth, that they do not want to hear from those who act under the historical and categorical imperative to change course.

Copenhagen is not the end, I repeat, but a beginning: the doors have been opened for a universal debate on how to save the planet, life on the planet. The battle continues.

IV

We commemorated the 179th anniversary of the physical disappearance of our Liberator Simón Bolívar in an act of deep revolutionary content; I refer to the meeting of the Bolivarian Alliance with social movements in Denmark on December 17. There I felt, once again that Bolivar is not only a banner of Venezuela and Our America, but is increasingly a universal leader.

It is his living and combative legacy, now embodied in the Bolivarian Alliance, which is becoming a world heritage, that we took to Copenhagen to do battle for the Patria Grande, for the sake of humanity.

Really and truly, Bolivar lives! In Copenhagen it was confirmed that his legacy is more alive than ever. And now he will overcome. Now we shall overcome!

*Translated by Kiraz Janicke
see Links, International Journal of Socialist Renewal, at www.links.org.au*

5.

WHO REALLY WAS TO BLAME FOR THE FAILURE IN COPENHAGEN?

BY FIDEL CASTRO

DECEMBER 26, 2009

Climate change is already causing enormous damage and hundreds of millions of poor people are enduring the consequences.

The most advanced research centres have claimed that there is little time to avoid an irreversible catastrophe. James Hansen, from the NASA Goddard Institute,

has said that a proportion of 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is still tolerable; however, the figure today is 390 ppm and growing at a pace of 2 ppm every year. Each one of the past two decades has been the warmest since the first records were taken, while carbon dioxide increased 80 ppm in the past 150 years.

The melting of ice in the Arctic Sea and of the huge two-kilometre thick ice cap covering Greenland, of the South American glaciers feeding its main fresh water sources and the enormous volume of ice covering Antarctica, of the remaining ice on Mt Kilimanjaro and the Himalayas, and the large frozen area of Siberia are visible. Outstanding scientists fear abrupt quantitative changes in these natural phenomena that bring about the change.

Humanity entertained high hopes in the Copenhagen climate summit after the Kyoto Protocol, signed in 1997, entered into force in 2005. The resounding failure of Copenhagen gave rise to shameful episodes that call for due clarification.

The United States, with less than 5% of the world's population, releases 25% of [industrial] carbon dioxide emissions. The new US president [Barack Obama] had promised to cooperate with the international effort to tackle a new problem that afflicts that country as much as the rest of the



world. In the meetings leading to the summit, it became clear that Obama and the leaders of the wealthiest countries were manoeuvring to place the burden of sacrifice on the emergent and poor countries.

CHAOS IN COPENHAGEN

A great number of leaders and thousands of representatives of social movements and scientific institutions, determined to fight for the preservation of humanity from the greatest risk in history, converged in Copenhagen at the invitation of the organisers of the summit. I'd rather avoid reference to details of the brutality of the Danish police force against thousands of protesters and invitees from social and scientific movements who travelled to the Danish capital. I'll focus on the political features of the summit.

Actually, chaos prevailed in Copenhagen where incredible things happened. The social movements and scientific institutions were not allowed to attend the debates. There were heads of state and government who could not even express their views on crucial issues. Obama and the leaders of the wealthiest nations took over the conference, with the complicity of the Danish government. The United Nations agencies were pushed to the background.

Barack Obama, the last to arrive on the day of the summit for a 12-hour stay, met with two groups of invitees carefully chosen by him and his staff, and in the company of one of them met at the plenary hall with the rest of the high-level delegations. He made his remarks and left right away through the back door. Except for the small group chosen by him, other representatives of countries were prevented from taking the floor during that plenary session. The presidents of Bolivia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela were allowed to speak because the chairperson of the summit had no choice but to give them the floor in light of the strong pressure of those present.

In an adjacent room, Obama brought together the leaders of the wealthiest nations, some of the most important emerging states and two very poor countries. He then introduced a document, negotiated with two or three of the most important countries, ignored the UN General Assembly, gave a press conference and left like Julius Caesar after one of his victorious wars in Asia Minor that had led him to say: "I came, I saw, I conquered."

RICH POLLUTERS BLAME THE POOR VICTIMS

Even Gordon Brown, prime minister of the United Kingdom, had said on October 19: “If we do not reach a deal over the next few months, let us be in no doubt, since once the damage from unchecked emissions growth is done, no retrospective global agreement in some future period can undo that choice. By then it will be irretrievably too late...”

Brown concluded his speech with these dramatic words: “We cannot afford to fail. If we fail now we will pay a heavy price. If we act now, if we act together, if we act with vision and resolve, success at Copenhagen is still within our reach, but, if we falter, the Earth will itself be at risk and, for the planet, there is no Plan B.”

But later he arrogantly said that the United Nations could not be taken hostage by a group of countries like Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Tuvalu. At the same time, he accused China, India, Brazil, South Africa and other emerging countries of being lured by the United States into signing a document that throws the Kyoto Protocol in the waste basket without a binding agreement involving the United States and its wealthy allies.

I find it necessary to recall that the United Nations Organization was born hardly six decades ago, after the last World War, when there were no more than 50 independent countries. Today, after the hateful colonial system ceased to exist thanks to the resolute struggle of the peoples, it has a membership of more than 190 independent nations. For many years, even the People’s Republic of China was denied admission to the UN while a puppet regime was its representative in that institution and in the privileged Security Council.

The tenacious support of the growing number of Third World nations would prove indispensable to China’s international recognition and become an extremely significant element for the acceptance of that country’s rights at the UN by the United States and its NATO allies.

It was the Soviet Union that made the greatest contribution to the heroic fight against fascism. More than 25 million of its people perished while the country was terribly devastated. It was from that struggle that it emerged as a superpower with the capacity to partly balance the absolute domination of the US imperial system and the former colonial powers to plunder the Third World countries unrestrictedly. Following the demise of the USSR, the United States extended its political and military power to the East — up to Russia’s heart — and enhanced its influence on the rest of

Europe.

Therefore, what happened in Copenhagen came as no surprise.

RICH COUNTRIES' HYPOCRISY ON EMISSIONS

I want to insist on how unfair and outrageous were the remarks of the prime minister of the UK and the Yankee attempt to impose as the summit accord a document that was at no time discussed with the attending countries.

During his press conference of December 21, Cuba's foreign minister Bruno Rodriguez made a statement that cannot be disproved. I will quote from some of its paragraphs:

"I would like to emphasise that no agreement of the Conference of the Parties was reached in Copenhagen, that no decision was made as to binding or non-binding commitments or pertaining to international law; that simply did not happen. There was no agreement in Copenhagen.

"The summit was a failure and a deception for the world ... the lack of political will was left in the open ... it was a step backward in the actions of the international community to prevent or mitigate the effects of climate change... the average world temperature could rise by five degrees."

Right then, our foreign minister adds other interesting data on the likely consequences of climate change, according to the latest scientific research:

"...from the Kyoto Protocol until today the developed countries' emissions rose by 12.8%... and 55% of that volume corresponds to the United States. The average annual oil consumption is 25 barrels for an American, 11 barrels for a European, less than two barrels for a Chinese and less than one barrel for a Latin American or Caribbean citizen.

Thirty countries, including those of the European Union, are consuming 80% of the fuel produced."

The fact is that the developed countries [that have signed] the Kyoto Protocol increased their emissions dramatically. Now, they want to replace the adopted bases of the emissions from 1990 with those of 2005. This means that the United States, which is the main source of emissions, would be reducing its emissions of 25 years ago by only 3%. It is a shameful mockery of world public opinion.

The Cuban foreign minister, speaking on behalf of the group of ALBA [Bolivarian Alliance of the Peoples of Our America] member countries,

defended China, India, Brazil, South Africa and other important emerging-economy states. He stressed the concept adopted in Kyoto that “common but differentiated responsibilities mean that the responsibility of the historical accumulators and the developed countries, who are the culprits of this catastrophe, differs from that of the small island states and the South countries, above all the least developed...”

“Responsibility means financing; responsibility means technology transfer on adequate terms. But, at this point, Obama resorts to a game of words and instead of talking of common but differentiated responsibilities, he speaks of ‘common but differentiated responses’... he then leaves the plenary hall without taking the trouble of listening to anybody; neither had he listened to anybody before taking the floor.”

In a subsequent press conference, before departing from the Danish capital, Obama had said: “There has been a meaningful and unprecedented breakthrough here in Copenhagen. For the first time in history, the largest economies have come to jointly accept responsibilities.”

In his clear and irrefutable presentation, our foreign minister said:

“What does it mean that ‘the largest economies have come to jointly accept responsibilities’? It means that they are placing a large part of the burden of financing the relief and adaptation of countries, mostly the countries of the South, to climate change on China, Brazil, India and South Africa. Because it must be said that in Copenhagen we witnessed an assault, a hold-up against China, Brazil, India and South Africa, and against every other euphemistically called developing country.”

These were the resounding and undeniable words used by our foreign minister to describe what happened in Copenhagen.

I must add that at 10am on December 19, after our vice-president, Esteban Lazo, and the Cuban foreign minister had already left, a belated attempt was made to resurrect the Copenhagen cadaver as a summit accord. At that moment, practically every head of state had left and there was hardly any ministers around. Again, the denunciation by the remaining members of the delegations from Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua and other countries defeated the manoeuvre. That was the end of the inglorious summit.

Another fact that should not be overlooked is that at the most critical moment of that day, in the wee small hours, the Cuban foreign minister, together with the delegations waging the honourable battle, offered

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon their cooperation in the ever harder struggle being fought, as well as in future efforts, necessary to preserve the life of our species.

There is no need to prove the substance of what is said here that Obama did. The US president stated on December 23 that people are justified in being disappointed about the outcome of the summit on climate change. In an interview with the CBS television network, the president said that, “instead of a total collapse if nothing had been done, which would have been a huge step backward, at least we could remain more or less where we were”.

According to the press dispatch, Obama is the target of most criticism from the countries that nearly unanimously feel that the result of the summit was disastrous.

Now, the UN is in a quandary since many countries would find it humiliating to ask others to adhere to the arrogant and anti-democratic accord.

To carry on with the battle and to claim in every meeting, particularly in those of Bonn and Mexico, humanity’s right to life, with the morale and the strength that truth provides, is in my opinion the only way to proceed.

Fidel Castro is the former president of Cuba.

6.

WE CANNOT END GLOBAL WARMING WITHOUT ENDING CAPITALISM

AN INTERVIEW WITH BOLIVIAN PRESIDENT EVO MORALES,
FOR WWW.DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG

DECEMBER 17, 2009

AMY GOODMAN: This is Climate Countdown. It's Democracy Now!, democracynow.org. I'm Amy Goodman. We're broadcasting from inside the Bella Center [in Copenhagen].

It's just one day before the COP15 UN climate summit comes to a

close. The summit has been described

the biggest gathering on climate change in history. And now, ten days after it started, are the talks on the brink of collapse?

The dispute between rich and poor countries, between the global North and global South, on key issues, including greenhouse gas emissions and climate debt, remain unresolved. World leaders from more than 110 countries have begun arriving at the summit and are delivering their addresses to the main plenary as we speak. As for civil society, the only thing worse than the endless lines of thousands of people trying to get into the Bella Center are no lines, because civil society has largely been locked out.

Well, just before we went to air today, I interviewed Evo Morales, Bolivia's first Indigenous president. He was re-elected in a landslide victory earlier this month.

On Wednesday, Evo Morales called on world leaders to hold temperature increases over the next century to just one degree Celsius, the most ambitious proposal so far by any head of state. Morales also called on the United States and other wealthy nations to pay an ecological debt to Bolivia and other developing nations.



AMY GOODMAN: President Morales, welcome to Democracy Now!

PRESIDENT EVO MORALES: [translated] Thank you very much for the invitation.

AMY GOODMAN: You spoke yesterday here at the Bella Center and said we cannot end global warming without ending capitalism. What did you mean?

PRESIDENT EVO MORALES: [translated] Capitalism is the worst enemy of humanity. Capitalism — and I'm speaking about irrational development — policies of unlimited industrialization are what destroys the environment. And that irrational industrialization is capitalism. So as long as we don't review or revise those policies, it's impossible to attend to humanity and life.

AMY GOODMAN: How would you do that? How would you end capitalism?

PRESIDENT EVO MORALES: [translated] It's changing economic policies, ending luxury, consumerism. It's ending the struggle to — or this search for — living better. Living better is to exploit human beings. It's plundering natural resources. It's egoism and individualism. Therefore, in those promises of capitalism, there is no solidarity or complementarity. There's no reciprocity. So that's why we're trying to think about other ways of living lives and living well, not living better. Living better is always at someone else's expense. Living better is at the expense of destroying the environment.

AMY GOODMAN: President Morales, what are you calling for here at the UN climate summit?

PRESIDENT EVO MORALES: [translated] Defence of the rights of Mother Earth. The earth is our life. Nature is our home, our house. Happily, the United Nations have declared a Mother Earth Day. If the mother is recognised as Mother Earth, it's something that can't be sold, it's something that can't be violated, something sacred. This is nature. This is planet Earth. And that's why I've come here, to defend the rights of Mother Earth, to defend the rights to life, to defend humanity and saving Mother Earth.

AMY GOODMAN: What does climate debt mean, President Morales?

PRESIDENT EVO MORALES: [translated] It's important to recognize the rights of Mother Earth. And the best way to recognise this is by paying a climate debt. Second, it's important to recognise the damages that have been done and attend to the people who have been affected by climate change, people who will lose their island homes, for example, people who will remain with-

out water.

AMY GOODMAN: Hillary Clinton, the US secretary of state, said today, “We can’t look back; we have to look forward.”

PRESIDENT EVO MORALES: [translated] Looking forward means that we have to review everything that capitalism has done. These are things that cannot just be solved with money. We have to resolve problems of life and humanity. And that’s the problem that planet Earth faces today. And this means ending capitalism.

AMY GOODMAN: The US secretary of state Hillary Clinton also said today that US\$100 billion would be promised if a deal were arrived at, not just by the United States, per year, but in a public-private partnership with a number of countries around the world, but only if a deal is arrived at. She would not say what the US would contribute to this. What do you say about the US spending on the issue of global warming versus — well, you talked yesterday about war.

PRESIDENT EVO MORALES: [translated] The best thing would be that all war spending be directed towards climate change, instead of spending it on troops in Iraq, in Afghanistan or the military bases in Latin America. This money would be better directed to attending to the damages that were created by the United States. And, of course, this isn’t just \$100 billion; this is probably trillions and trillions of dollars. How are we going to spend money to kill and not save lives? We have to spend money to save lives, not to kill. These are our differences with capitalism.

AMY GOODMAN: You called the war in Afghanistan terrorist. Are you saying President Obama is a terrorist?

PRESIDENT EVO MORALES: [translated] People who send their troops to kill outside their country, that’s terror. There’s not only terrorists dressed as civilians; they can also be dressed in military uniforms. Worse still if they’re financed with the money from the peoples, from taxes. Of course, every country has the right to defend itself, just as every country can defend itself. But invading another country with uniformed people, that’s state terrorism.

Moreover, to establish military bases in Latin America with the objective of political control, and where their military base is an empire, that’s not respect for democracy. There is no peace, social peace. There is no development for those countries nor integration in those regions. This is what

we've lived in South America and Latin America.

AMY GOODMAN: What is your message to President Obama at these climate talks?

PRESIDENT EVO MORALES: [translated] After listening to his speech at the heads of state Summit of the Americas, we were very hopeful that he would be an ally in addressing poverty. Now I'm not so hopeful. Rather, we're disappointed. If something has changed in the United States, it's the colour of the president.

For example, I've been accused, in statements of the US administration, of closing unions, of eliminating unions, when I'm doing exactly the opposite. In the report that was done regarding access to trade preferences under the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act program, it was charged that the Bolivian government has been involved in suppressing unions, when, in fact, quite the contrary, the government's been very active in providing infrastructure and support to unions through improving the centres where unions meet, etc.

Even President Bush did not make any observations about the new clauses in the constitution of Bolivia, whereas under the new administration there have been observations and comments made about the new constitution that's been drafted, in particular in relation to the management of the gas and oil sectors. This is a clear involvement in Bolivian internal affairs by the Obama administration. At the end of the day, it seems that they're asking us to change the constitution. This is something that not even Bush did. If we just look at this, this makes Obama look worse than Bush. And the documents are there.

AMY GOODMAN: I know you have to leave. My last question is: you've called for a climate tribunal; what do you mean?

PRESIDENT EVO MORALES: [translated] Those who do damage to planet Earth need to be judged. Those who do not fulfill the terms of the Kyoto Protocol should also be judged. And for those ends, we have to organise a tribunal for climate justice in the United Nations.

AMY GOODMAN: And one degree Celsius?

PRESIDENT EVO MORALES: [translated] That's our proposal.

AMY GOODMAN: Do you think it could be achieved?

PRESIDENT EVO MORALES: [translated] Yes. Yes, otherwise it would be a lack of commitment to humanity.

AMY GOODMAN: Do you think there will be a deal that comes out of Copenhagen?

PRESIDENT EVO MORALES: [translated] I doubt it. We're developing other proposals for my intervention.

AMY GOODMAN: Do you think it's catastrophic that there's no deal?

PRESIDENT EVO MORALES: [translated] No, it's a waste of time. And if the leaders of countries cannot arrive at an agreement, why don't the peoples then decide together?

AMY GOODMAN: We will leave it there. I thank you very much, President Morales.

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7.

THE MAIN ISSUE FOR US IS MOTHER EARTH

AN INTERVIEW WITH PABLO ERICK SOLÓN ROMERO OROZA, BOLIVIA'S CLIMATE CHANGE AMBASSADOR, BY ROBERT S. ESHELMAN FOR THE NATION WWW.THENATION.COM

DECEMBER 9, 2009

On day three of COP15, I spoke with Bolivia's climate change ambassador, Pablo Erick Solón Romero Oroza, about his delegation's position at COP15, how negotiations are proceeding and why Bolivian president Evo Morales has called for a Universal Declaration of Rights for Mother Earth.



WHAT ARE THE DEMANDS OF THE BOLIVIAN DELEGATION AT COP15?

We are asking, first, to discuss the main issue, which for us is Mother Earth. We think that is the key issue.

Second, we are asking for a goal that will save all of humanity. We think the goal that they have put on the table is going to save probably only half of humanity because a two degree Celsius increase and a rise in carbon levels in the atmosphere to 450 parts per million means a 50% chance that there will be severe ecological failure.

Third, we want that climate debt be paid. It should be paid in terms of reduction of emissions, but real reductions, in terms of a transfer of technology and in terms of finance — and that brings me to our fourth point.

We see the numbers when it comes to finance are really too small. Ten billion dollars — when you compare it to what they have spent in terms of military budgets, or to save Wall Street they spent trillions of dollars. But to save the future of mankind, they are saying only US\$10 billion.

The final demand is that we really want to solve this problem. We don't

want to make business out of this problem. We are very against the idea of building a carbon market that will really not solve the problem. We say let's save humanity, let's save the planet and, please, please don't make profit out of this.

AND WHAT HAS BEEN THE REACTION TO THESE DEMANDS WITHIN THE NEGOTIATIONS?

Our demands are included in the negotiations. But we are at a stage where all of our language that is in the negotiating texts has been bracketed, which means we are very far away from agreement on these issues. And the process is moving very slow. If you go into the drafting groups you will see that advances are being made in only a few areas. Negotiations are difficult, but if you really want to delay agreements you will do this sort of thing.

WHAT IS THE BOLIVIAN DELEGATION'S STRATEGY FOR PUSHING BACK AGAINST THIS RESISTANCE TO YOUR DEMANDS?

Our position is that in order to have success we need to have a very important movement of civil society groups that puts a lot of pressure on the governments of the United States and Europe. If they don't see this pressure then of course the outcome will be very bad. But if there is pressure, the negotiations could change.

So I am sure that a lot of negotiators and authorities can change their positions if the pressure comes from the people and not from the corporations. Because, here, what you see, is huge pressure from transnational companies who are thinking, not of how to solve this problem, but how to make a business of climate change.

PRESIDENT MORALES HAS CALLED FOR A UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MOTHER EARTH. WHY DO YOU THINK THERE'S A NEED FOR SUCH A DOCUMENT?

Why, because this problem is about balance — balance between humankind and nature. What we are seeing with climate change is that this balance has been broken. Why? Because humans act as if they are the only ones who have rights and treat our Mother Earth like, in the past century, slaves were treated — as persons that don't have rights, as objects, instruments for exploitation.

So if you want to have a balanced relation, humans must recognise that we are not the only ones who have rights, but also our Mother Earth. We and nature are part of one system and what happens in one part of the system affects the other part.

[The other] way of thinking has been strengthened because of the capitalist system. For the capitalist system everything, nature — even other humans — is considered an object that you can use to obtain a profit. With this system everything can be made into merchandise.

So what we are seeing is the consequence of this vision that you can change everything into merchandise, even nature, even your mother — Mother Earth.

8.

THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES MUST PAY THEIR DEBT

EXCERPT FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH ANGELICA NAVARRO, BOLIVIA'S CHIEF CLIMATE NEGOTIATOR AT COPENHAGEN, FOR WWW.DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG

DECEMBER 9, 2009

AMY GOODMAN: Angelica Navarro, you took the stage by storm, to use a climate metaphor, in June in Bonn, Germany, when you talked about this issue of climate debt. Explain what you mean by it.

ANGELICA NAVARRO: What do I mean and what does Bolivia mean by that? It's basically that developed

countries have over-consumed atmospheric — common atmospheric — space. Twenty percent of the population have actually emitted more than two-thirds of the emissions, and as a result, they have caused more than 90% of the increase in temperatures. As a result, developing countries, we are suffering. Bolivia's glaciers are melting between 40% to 55%. We have extended droughts. We have in the lowlands more flooding. And we are losing between four to 17% of our GDP in the worst years. That is climate debt.

And what we are asking is repayment. We are not asking for aid. We are not begging for aid. We want developed countries to comply with their obligation and pay their debt.

How are they going to pay it? The first part is to pay it through emission reductions domestically. They have really to fulfill their obligations. This is not money... They just have to comply with their obligations, ambitiously, for the first and second commitment period.

And the second part of the climate debt is adaptation debt. Everything that we're already suffering, as Bolivia, as Indigenous people, in Africa and in other parts, that we can accept that is finance and transfer of technology,



but not the peanuts that we are seeing on the table right now, which is not even a fraction of what they have used to save their banks. But apparently, finance and banks are more important than people and life. And that is very sad, but it's like that, because we think that they are negotiating not an environmental agreement. They seem to be negotiating an economic agreement.

AMY GOODMAN: Evo Morales, your president, is calling for a 49% cut in greenhouse gas emissions?

ANGELICA NAVARRO: Yes. Actually, we have several numbers. We are asking for the 49%, and I'm happy to be with Paraguay, because we are co-sponsoring the same submission. This 49% has to be in 2017. But even like that, developed countries will not be able to repay their debt. They have to pay more. The amount is so important that actually developed countries should do negative cuts. How are they going to do that? We have to think about it.

AMY GOODMAN: What is a negative cut?

ANGELICA NAVARRO: Meaning that they have to reduce everything to zero, but on top of that they have to liberate atmospheric space they have occupied unrightfully, for developing countries to develop. What they cannot pay in emission cuts, they can pay a little bit in finance and transfer of technology. We can think on that.

It's not only the cuts, but it's also the degrees that we want to talk about. We are talking less than one degree as Bolivia, because two degrees is the reality of the North. Two degrees is three degrees for Africa or for the South. You have to add at least one degree to what developed countries are proposing.

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LATIN AMERICA vs IMPERIALISM AT THE COPENHAGEN CLIMATE SUMMIT

The 15th Conference of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change held in Copenhagen on December 7-20, 2009, made it starkly clear that the leaders of the world's richest countries are unwilling to commit to what current science indicates we must do to avoid extremely damaging climate change.

The summit was a farcical, undemocratic process whereby a handful of rich countries sought to impose a deal, worked out by them in secret, that not only failed to meet the needs of humanity as dictated by science, but took a step backwards from already existing UN climate agreements.

However, the Copenhagen summit was also marked by powerful resistance, both from inside and outside.

Outside, in the streets, mass demonstrations calling for climate justice were repressed by police.

Inside the summit, African delegates chanted "We will not die quietly," while representatives of the anti-imperialist bloc in Latin America, the Bolivarian Alliance of the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), provided important world leadership and received deafening applause when they insisted that capitalism is incompatible with ecological sustainability and called for systemic change to save Mother Earth.

This pamphlet compiles some of the Latin American socialists' speeches, interviews and articles about Copenhagen that so inspired everyone campaigning to save humanity and the planet.