1988 RR-88-62

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:AM-CUBA-NON-ALIGNED

NON-ALIGNED MINISTERIAL-LEVEL MEETING ON DISARMAMENT BEGINS:
BY LIONEL MARTIN

HAVANA, MAY 29, REUTER - A SPECIAL MINISTERIAL-LEVEL MEETING ON DISARMAMENT OF THE NON-ALIGNED NATIONS BEGAN HERE SUNDAY AT THE MODERNISTIC CONVENTION PALACE IN THE PRESENCE OF CUBAN PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO.

THE INAUGURAL SESSION WAS OPENED BY HATNATHAN SHAMUYARIRA, FOREIGN MINISTER OF ZIMBABWE WHICH NOW HOLDS THE ROTATING PRESIDENCY OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT.

REPRESNTATIVES OF EIGHTY NATIONS HAVE CONFIRMED THEIR ATTENDANCE AT THE MINISTERIAL-LEVEL MEETING BUT MANY MINISTERS AND TOP DIPLOMATIC OFFICIALS WERE NOT AT THE PALACE WHEN THE OPENING SESSION BEGAN.

AFRICAN DELEGATES, INCLUDING MANY MINISTERS, ARRIVED IN HAVANA DURING THE NIGHT ON SPECIAL CHARTER FLIGHTS FROM ADDIS ABABA WHERE THEY WERE ATTENDING A MEETING OF THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY.

CONSENSUS AMONG THE DELEGATES IS THAT THE NON-ALIGNED MEETING ON DISARMAMENT, WHICH TAKES PLACE ON THE EVE OF THE SUMMIT MEETING IN MOSCOW, SHOWS THAT UNER-DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ALSO HAVE A STAKE IN DISARMAMENT AND THEIR OWN VIEW OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT.

IN HIS OPENING ADDRESS, THE ZIMBABWEAN FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT +ONLY A COMPLETE BANNING OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAN MAKE THE WORLD FREE FROM NUCLEAR CATASTROPHE.+ HE CALLED THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR +THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE OF OUR DAY+ AND ASKED FOR +A VERIFICACTION MECHANISM UNDER UNITED NATIONS AUSPICES.+

IN REFERENCE TO SOME NATIONS WHICH HAVE RAISED POINTS WHICH DO NOT BEAR DIRECTLY ON DISARMAMENT, THE AFRICAN STATESMAN SAID: +DISARMAMENT SHOULD NOT BE HELD HOSTAGE TO EXTRANEOUS ISSUES.+ ONE AFRICAN DELEGATE INTERPRETED HIS REMARK AS A CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT REAGAN WHO HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD STRESS THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE DURING THE MOSCOW SUMMIT.

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CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ, THE VICE PRESIDENT OF CUBA SPOKE IN THE NAME OF THE HOST NATION. HE DECLARED THAT +THIS DECADE OF CONTINOUS THREATS TO PEACE HAS BEEN A DECADE OF RETROGRESSION AND INCREASING BACKWARDNESS FOR THE COUNTRIES OF THE THIRD WORLD.+

THE CUBAN LEADER CHARGED THAT +THE THREAT OF WAR HAS SERVED AS A PRETEXT FOR THE FORMER COLONISTS AND IMPERIALIST NEOCOLONISTS TO TRY TO IMPOSE THEIR WILL ON THE UNDERDEVELOPED WORLD.+

SPEAKING OF THE U.N CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT THAT WILL BEGIN IN NEW HORK ON MAY 31, RODRIGUEZ SAID: +THIS TIME THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS WILL NOT MEET LISTENING TO DRUM ROLLS AND WATCHING MILITARY EXPENSES INCREASE. THE ECHOS OF THE GORBACHEV-REAGAN SUMMIT WILL BE HEARD FROM MOSCOW.+

DURING THE TWO DAY MINISTERIAL-LEVEL MEETING HERE DELEGATES WILL VOTE ON DOCUMENTS THAT WERE PREPARED BY A COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS WHICH BEGAN ITS DELIBERATIONS LAST THURSDAY.

ONE DOCUMENT, ENTITLED +THE HAVANA APPEAL+ DECLARES: +IT IS OUR FIRM CONVICTION THAT THE TREATY BETWEEN THE USSR AND THE USA ON THE ELIMINATION OF THEIR LAND-BASED: INTERMEDIATE AND SHORTER RANGE NUCLEAR MISSILES SHOULD MARK THE BEGINNING OF A PROCESS THAT MUST BE CONSOLIDATED++.

THE +HAVANA APPEAL+ ALSO EXPRESSES +THE IMMEDIATE NEED TO REDUCE MILITARY EXPENDITURES IN FAVOUR OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.+

THE NON-ALIGNED MEETING WILL END MONDAY WHEN DELEGATES LEAVE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS SESSIONS ON DISARMAMENT IN NEW YORK. ACCORDING TO A CUBAN SOURCE: IT IS LIKELY THAT CUBAN PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO WILL MAKE THE CLOSING SPEECH.
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