
Interview: Former Venezuelan President

Carlos Andrés Pérez: 'IMF is totalitarian'

The following is an interview with Carlos Andrés Pérez, former president of Venezuela, a member of the Acción Democrática party, which has ties to the European Social Democrats and a leading Ibero-American political figure. It was conducted in Madrid on Jan. 26 by EIR correspondents Elisabeth Hellenbroich and Dolia Estévez-Pettingell.

EIR: The Non-Aligned nations will be meeting in New Delhi in March of this year. We believe that the unpayable Third World debt will be one of the key issues to be discussed. What would you recommend to the Non-Aligned nations in this respect?

Pérez: The Organization of Non-Aligned Nations is of fundamental importance for all developing nations; perhaps it is the most important for our Third Worldist position. My country, Venezuela, is not part of the Organization of Non-Aligned Nations, but our government is now applying to join in time for the New Delhi conference. That means that we Latin American countries are becoming conscious of the meaning which the Organization of Non-Aligned Nations has in our North-South controversy.

The extremely grave debt crisis faced by all the Third World countries, without exception, makes the need for collective defense of Latin American and Third World interests even more dramatic. I think this New Delhi meeting is going to be vital for two reasons.

First, because I am sure that the organization is going to redefine its non-aligned position more precisely, because there is no doubt that the presidency of Comandante Fidel Castro of Cuba will give it the tint of being aligned with the Soviet bloc. It is very important that it goes back to the profile given it by Tito of Yugoslavia.

Also, it is very important because from here, from this meeting, must come forth clear lines of defense from the industrialized countries on the question of debt payments. I am an advocate of seeking a global renegotiation which would give greater power and greater negotiating capacity to the developing countries.

Global renegotiation would also put the industrialized nations face-to-face with an idea which we hold to be fun-

damental, that of defining a New International Economic Order in which the industrialized nations will no longer unilaterally set for us the terms of exchange, will no longer force the developing nations to submit to the abusive policies which the International Monetary Fund imposes on the poor nations. I call that "economic totalitarianism" by the industrialized nations. It is a totalitarianism which kills not with bayonets, not with cannons, but with hunger.

EIR: Do the Socialist International or governments like Mitterrand's in France and González's in Spain share your views on the role of the foreign debt of the Third World?

Pérez: In relation to the position of European democratic socialism on these questions, I think that we democratic socialists face a challenge. The countries governed by socialist regimes show that socialism is an ideology, a set of principles and a praxis which either tends to struggle for international justice, or which identifies in its nationalisms with the ultraconservative positions of a Mrs. Thatcher or a Mr. Reagan.

This is the challenge facing the nations governed by Olof Palme, François Mitterrand, Felipe González, or Bruno Kreisky. That is to say, socialism has to show its true vitality and its capacity for generating a universal political plan within the bounds of international justice.

EIR: Mr. LaRouche and his wife, the founder the Club of Life, have proposed that the Non-Aligned should pass a resolution which calls for: joint debt renegotiation, New World Economic Order bringing industrialization for the developing sector and international monetary reform. Would you comment?

Pérez: These really are the great aspirations of the Third World countries. These are the points of view which we democratic sectors of Latin America share. We believe that all this is included in what we call the New International Economic Order which has to be, in the first place, new exchange relations which have to also be a situation in which technology transfer is conducted in ways so as to guarantee that it is really in the interest of our nations' development. These points are essential to the creation of the New International Economic Order, and I think they must be dealt with at the New Delhi meeting.

EIR: In your opinion, how can the new government of Spain influence the creation of the New International Economic Order?

Pérez: Felipe González is a man who is fully convinced that the great destiny of Spain lies in its identity with Latin America, and that, in turn, Latin America must understand that this historical link between our nations has to translate itself into a political-economic structure which gives us strength in the context of world decisions and which at the same time gives Spain great bargaining power inside the European Community.