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**Speech by the President of WPC Socorro Gomes at the Secretariat meeting**  
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1. Since the election of the new leader of the White House, the talks of dialogue, democratization of international relations, multilateralism and respect to international law have multiplied. There were promises of the end of wars and a world of peace and there is a manifest intention to avoid the danger of a nuclear conflict. For those promises, the current president of the United States even won the Nobel Peace Prize. But those are only promises, words that do not correspond to acts or facts. The world is still burdened by grave threats, humankind lives under the danger of new wars and aggressions and even a nuclear conflict. The rights of peoples are disdained. International insecurity is an attribute of our time.
2. This feature of reality is stressed in circumstances of economic crisis and unrestrained offensive against the rights of workers and peoples, leading to extensive and profound social struggles that are necessarily connected to the struggle for peace and against militarization.
3. Tension spots multiply all over the world. American imperialists announced the end of war operations in Iraq, withdrawing part of the troops, but will leave 50 thousand soldiers and officials there for an undetermined time. What else could we call such contingent but occupation troops? In Central Asia the Afghanistan war intensifies as the United States shift the axis of what it calls "war against terrorism" to that region. And what is worse –that dirty war is being extended to Pakistan. During the last months, every week unmanned drone airplanes have bombed the territories of both countries, bringing death and destruction to villages and killing hundreds of civilians.
4. The Middle East is another permanent tension spot in the world, a region that sees Israel practicing abject crimes, despite promises of retaking talks. In the past weeks, moves were made to a supposed peace agreement due to the initiative of the so-called Quartet of the US State Department. With mere propaganda effects, the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the president of the Palestinian National Authority Mahmud Abbas met. It was an attempt to attract Palestinians to the negotiation board once more, as they have left not due to intransigence, but to the fact that those talks have been fruitless in face of Israel's inflexibility regarding the legitimate claims of the Palestinians.  
The policy of Israeli Zionists is maintained invariable: they do not acknowledge the right of Palestinians to their independent State, having East Jerusalem as its capital, they refuse to repatriate refugees and insist in building settlements, what demonstrate the expansionist meaning of their strategy. The maintenance of the Gaza Strip siege, excruciating the population that is submitted to dire hardship, shows that Israel does not want peace or to live together democratically.  
The occupation of the Golan Hills, in Syria, and of parts of the Lebanese territory also contributes to aggravate the situation in the Middle East.

5. In the present situation, the main tension focus in the world is the policy of nuclear blackmail of the United States and its allies in NATO against Iran and the dangers it may cause. Alongside Israel's unconditional support as the only nuclear power in the Middle East, the United States has chosen the dangerous route of sanctions, harming the people and increasing tension. This is an undeniable demonstration that "multilateralism" and "dialogue" are empty words to imperialism. With all its limitations, the agreement among Iran, Brazil and Turkey meant a step forward. However, it was preliminarily repelled and substituted for sanctions in the UN Security Council. The hypocrisy of imperialist powers regarding the nuclear issue is also made clear by the maintenance of huge arsenals of nuclear weapons and the plans of building those infamous anti-missile shields.

6. The course of militarizing the world will maintain its speed and will achieve a landmark next November, when the NATO summit will take place in Lisbon, Portugal. The NATO Lisbon summit will be held to judge the adoption and execution of a new strategic concept.

7. A brief historical summary – Since the end of Cold War, the NATO summits debate, adopt and apply new strategic concepts. In Rome, November 7, 1991, the approved document reads: "In contrast with the predominant threat of the past, the risks to Allied security that remain are multi-faceted in nature and multi-directional, which makes them hard to predict and assess."

Those tensions "could, however, lead to crises inimical to European stability and even to armed conflicts, which could involve outside powers or spill over into NATO countries." Therefore, concluded the Heads of State and governments of the allied countries, "the military dimension of our Alliance remains essential, but the new fact is that, more than ever before, such military dimension will be at the service of a broad concept of security." That new strategic concept was made official during the war against Yugoslavia in the NATO summit meeting held in Washington, April 23-25, 1999, where the Alliance turned to even more aggressive forms of action. The adaptation to the "new times" happened by means of measures to broaden the Alliance's reach, and grant it greater military capacity in order to perform new harmful actions to the freedom and sovereignty of peoples, including outside the Alliance's territory.

The first materialization of the new concept was NATO's intervention in the Balkan crisis with aggressive military actions, initially in the war in Bosnia, then Kosovo, where the Alliance committed crimes against humankind and became the agent in the destruction of the Yugoslavian Federation.

The new concept adopted in the last moments of the 20th century has led to a stronger and more aggressive Alliance, aimed not only at the so-called "collective defense," but mainly at fulfilling new missions outside the Alliance's territory. Former President of the United States Bill Clinton declared, "North Atlantic allies reaffirm their readiness to face under adequate circumstances regional conflicts beyond the territory of NATO members."

During the same summit hierarchy was reaffirmed: "The United States will maintain about 100 thousand soldiers in Europe in order to contribute to regional stability, support transatlantic bonds and maintain the leadership of the United States in NATO," reads the approved document. That is, a stable Europe under NATO and a stable NATO under the United States, which will hold its global leadership. Or a militarist Europe acting as the grounds for NATO.

At the same time, NATO began its expansion towards the territory covered by the defunct Warsaw Pact and the former Soviet Union. In 1999 that expansion encompassed the first three countries that once took part in the Warsaw Pact: Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary. In 2004 it covered seven more countries: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. In the Bucharest summit, held in April 2008, Albania and Croatia joined the alliance and the membership of Macedonia, Ukraine, and Georgia was being prepared. The policy of "open doors" is maintained to allow other countries to join NATO.

By entering NATO the Eastern Europe countries, including some republics of the former Soviet Union, are more directly under the control of the United States, which maintains a predominant position in the Alliance. It is enough to mention that the Alliance's supreme commander in Europe is an American general appointed by the president in some sort of hereditary right and that the Pentagon directly controls all other chief commandos.

NATO's new strategic concept also resulted in the creation of the Rapid Reaction Force, viewed as one of the most important changes in the Atlantic Alliance since the signature of the Washington Treaty.

It is a permanent force characterized by a formation that is able to move quickly to any place where it is necessary. It possesses air and navy forces ready to act and attack in any stage of operations within short notice. NATO, based on the new strategic concept, took the leadership in the occupation of Afghanistan, the first mission outside the Euro-Atlantic area in the whole history of the Alliance. They are still there, transforming several national armies of European countries into canon fodder and perpetrators of crimes against humankind.

NATO troops are failing miserably along with the American occupation army. An inglorious mission in the name of an unfair cause.

The new concept is also expressed by NATO's stand in the backstage of Georgia's attack against South Ossetia, the invariable support to Israel and the military operations of "pirate hunting" in Africa's northeastern coast in the Indian Ocean.

8. A new stage: intensified aggression in Lisbon –the new strategic concept will take new outlines in the summit to take place in Lisbon in two months and a half. Within the scope of cooperation by inter-imperialist rivalries – always detrimental to peoples, peace and international security – a greater integration is announced among the European Union, NATO and the United States, the increase in the forces of rapid intervention, the modernization of weaponry and a broader range of action.

The Lisbon summit will constitute a new step in the intensification of NATO's concept and action as an aggressive military pact at the service of imperialist powers, the USA and the European Union, a force ready for war, a tool used to impose the will of those powers against the peoples in order to suffocate the fair claims of liberty, social progress and national independence. In practice, that summit will be an increasing factor of tension and instability in a world already plunged in chaos.

The meeting will examine the recommendations of the specialist group appointed by Secretary General Anders Rasmussen in the Strasbourg summit last year. Madeleine Albright, the former secretary of State of the United States during Bill Clinton's presidency, coordinated that group. The document starts with an unashamed lie, that is, "NATO is the essential source of stability in an uncertain and unpredictable world and is part of the effort to reach security and stability."

We, the popular organizations defending peace, affirm in a loud and clear statement that it is the contrary: NATO will hold the Lisbon summit in order to improve and increase its capacity as a machine of war and oppression. If we could speak of security and stability, it will be the security and stability of imperialist powers, of their unfair order, of their monopolies and their policies of plundering, oppression and exploitation of peoples. But even that security will never be, for the peoples will rebel sooner or later.

The document uses false pretexts to support the need to adopt a new strategic concept and makes reference to "new dangers", among which it lists "the connection between technology and terrorism;" "the growing stress upon the regime of nuclear non-proliferation;" "the existence of historic tensions, incidents and instability in Europe's outskirts;" "piracy;" "risks to energy supply;" "environmental neglect" and "computer attacks."

The specialist group recommends the increase of military capacity, the realization of a more sophisticated approach by partners, the adoption of an efficient (meaning more aggressive) structure and waves the flag of stronger union among its members. Those are guidelines to war and aggression against the peoples.

In Lisbon, NATO intends to reaffirm its fundamental principles established since its creation; reinforce the occupation of Afghanistan; reinforce unified command; increase the capacity to deploy troops in strategic spots for extended periods; interfere in issues in other regions; start new partnerships, specially with Russia; promote new memberships, namely to Balkan countries that are still not members, Georgia and Ukraine; promote a military reform in order to achieve greater flexibility, mobility and versatility and maintain its own forces in terms of nuclear weapons, while at the same time combating proliferation. The document makes explicit references – as deserving NATO's attention – to all regions of the planet and highlights Iran, the Middle East, Central Asia,

Korea and Africa (the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan). Even Latin America is mentioned, in a lower degree, showing the broad reach of NATO's strategic vision.

9. The objective of aggrandizing the war machine is the same that moves imperialism today, as yesterday: plundering the resources of nations and peoples, controlling markets and exerting political domination. With that new strategic concept, NATO exacerbates its aggressive nature that has been characteristic since its origin in 1949. One of the most divulged lies during those six decades of existence is that NATO was created as a mechanism to neutralize the threat of a Soviet attack against Western Europe. Now, as we have said, it makes up new pretexts.

The truth is that NATO was created as part of a set of instruments of the US hegemonic policy in Europe after the end of World War II. During many years it represented military subordination of Europe and its instrumentalization during the Cold War. NATO was, and still is, the armed hand of an imperialist policy. It has corresponded, since its origin, to the need to use force in a moment when the United States appeared as a superpower leading capitalist countries, building the world order according to its interests.

Today, in a moment of an acute crisis of the imperialist system and as neocolonialist policies wear out, militarization and war are strategic options of imperialism to maintain its rule over the world.

10. In that context, peace-loving forces will keep fighting military bases and the militarization of the world, demanding the extinction of NATO and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The World Peace Council joins the voices in Portugal and all Europe that raise against this machine of aggression and war as an instrument that not only threatens peace in the Old Continent but also worldwide. The WPC greets in particular the work of the Portuguese Council for Peace and Cooperation that coordinates along with hundreds of entities sisters a vigorous campaign for the dismantling of NATO, as a measure of fundamental importance to building peace among peoples and nations.

11. The Horn of Africa constitutes another worrisome conflict spot. In December 2009 the United States bombed Yemen. Now the fact that Pentagon's budget to the military and security program in Yemen increased from US\$ 4.6 million to US\$ 67 million last year is revealed. Yemen was "upgraded" to "priority" category according to a National Security aide of President Obama. One can observe the intensification of military activity along more than three thousand kilometers throughout the Indian Ocean. In August last year, NATO launched its second naval operation in the Somali coast under the denomination "Ocean shield" with the participation of warships from Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Turkey and the United States.

12. The attention of US imperialism also turned to the African continent. Impoverished by colonialism, with its natural resources plundered, left to its own devices, Africa possesses, nevertheless, huge natural resources, including oil and many minerals. In a clear attempt to occupy strategic positions and start a neocolonialist venture, US imperialism decided to create AFRICOM, the African Commando. The objective is to deploy heavily equipped unities of the American army to be permanently positioned in the continent in order to guarantee, by force if necessary, the interests of the United States in the region. Once again, the proclaimed objective is "fighting terrorism." However, it is nothing but a set of military bases abroad and an intervention force.

13. Lastly, but not less important, the World Peace Council observes with due interest and preoccupation the developing situation in Latin America. The Continent, as well as the Caribbean, is being a target for an intense and broad destabilizing offensive by American imperialism. Militarization is happening fast: the existence of the Fourth Fleet, with its warships cruising the South Atlantic and the Caribbean Sea, threatening sovereign nations and peoples; the establishment of military bases in Colombia, Costa Rica and Panama; the legitimization of the coup in Honduras. Colombia, the main pillar of American militarism in the region, still promotes

the assassination of political activists and blocks the route leading to a political solution to its internal conflict. In Ecuador, a coup attempt promoted by oligarchic sectors connected to imperialism took place. And in the elections in Venezuela and Brazil the political and ideological pressure of imperialist circles is evident, especially in the media, with a view to influence voters to favor conservative and neoliberal political forces. Revolutionary and socialist Cuba is still under siege, blockade and pressure, what demands the WPC's unrestricted solidarity in the struggle against the blockade and for the liberation of the five heroes arrested in the United States.

14. In face of such circumstances characterized by multiplying tension spots and severe threats to world peace, the World Peace Council is called to play a role of greater relevance in the struggle against the imperialist war, for a new world order, for the independence of oppressed peoples and nations, for a world without nuclear weapons or military bases. More than ever, it is necessary to support campaigns under development against NATO, the Fourth Fleet, AFRICOM and military bases, for the withdrawal of imperialist troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, for the end of all occupation of territories by imperialist forces.

15. By developing such campaigns, the World Peace Forum must become the driving factor for the broadest unity of mass movements and organized forces that share with us the same ideal, based on common platforms and the convergence of actions. Isolated and fragmented, peace movements will not have the necessary strength to face powerful enemies such as the warmongering and militarist forces in action all over the world.

16. By making efforts for the unity of peace movements in the world and broadening the base of masses in its action, the World Peace Council fights to affirm its own identity, its principles and character as an anti-imperialist organization, strengthening its own organizational structure in regions and countries, improving the action of the Executive Committee and the Secretariat.

17. Comrades, by reaffirming its campaigns and our principles and following the route of unity, the WPC becomes stronger in order to assume its share of responsibility in the struggle for a better world, for peace, freedom, justice and national independence. Imperialism displays its monstrous power and makes use of brutal methods, but it is a force in historical decline. It is not invincible and will be defeated. The future belongs to the forces of progress, peace and liberation.  
Thank you very much.

Socorro Gomes  
President of the World Peace Council