

Does the OAS have any right to exist?

Today I spoke frankly about the atrocities committed against the peoples of Latin America. The peoples of the Caribbean were not even independent when the Cuban Revolution triumphed. Exactly on April 19th, the day when the Summit of the Americas finishes, it will be 48 years since the Cuban victory at Bay of Pigs. I was cautious when referring to the OAS; I didn't say a single word that might be interpreted as an offence to that very old institution even though everyone knows how repugnant it is to us.

A rather hostile cable from the British news agency Reuters states that in an interview granted to the Brazilian paper 'O'Globo', Insulza said that Cuba needs to make it clear that it is committed to democracy if it wants to return to the Organization of American States, as demanded by an increasing number of Latin American governments.

He added that the U.S. President Barack Obama is reviewing Washington's decades-old policy of isolating communist Cuba ahead of the Summit of the Americas meeting this weekend, where Latin American leaders are expected to press for an end to the U.S. embargo on the island, in force since 1962.

He said that some countries are also expected to push for Cuba to be readmitted to the OAS, from which it was expelled in 1962 at the height of the Cold War.

Insulza cautioned that the OAS' democracy clause remained an obstacle to the demands pushing to readmit Cuba, a one-party state.

He said that we needed to know if Cuba is interested in returning to multilateral organizations or if it is thinking only about the end of the embargo and economic growth.

He added that this is a Summit of good will countries, but good will alone is not enough to make a change.

Insulza, a former Chilean foreign minister, said that all 34 leaders attending the Summit, from which Cuba is barred, come from democratic countries.

When asked about Cuba he told O'Globo that the General Assembly of the OAS decided that all member countries must adhere to democratic principles.

But Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, one of Washington's harshest critics, has already said he would seek to place the Cuba issue at the center of the summit debates.

Insulza said to O'Globo that the return of Cuba to the body not only depends on the Summit of the Americas, but on the OAS General Assembly.

The OAS has a history which collects all the trash accumulated after 60 years of betraying the peoples of Latin America.

Insulza asserts that Cuba must first be accepted by the OAS before joining that institution. He knows that we don't even wish to hear the loathsome name of that institution, for it has not rendered any single service to our peoples. It is rather the incarnation of betrayal. If one were to add up all the aggressive actions to which it was an accomplice, they would span hundreds of thousands of lives and

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several bloody decades. Its meeting will be a battlefield that will place many governments into an embarrassing situation. However, let it not be said that Cuba has thrown the first stone. Insulza even offends us by presuming that we are eager to join the OAS. The train has passed by a long time ago, and Insulza still does not know it. Some day many countries will ask to be forgiven for having belonged to it.

Evo spoke today at noon. He still hasn't said the last word about whether or not he will be attending the ALBA meeting and the Summit of the Americas. He won an undeniable and overwhelming victory.

Nevertheless he accepted the number of seats assigned to indigenous towns to be reduced to 7 from the 14 he had proposed. The adversary will surely try to exploit that aspect to spur its machinations against the Movement towards Socialism (MAS), betting on the weakening of the movement.

MAS will have to struggle hard to secure both the electoral biometric register and an alternative, if the oligarchy succeeds in postponing the drawing up of the new register. His hunger strike was a brave and daring decision and the Bolivian people's awareness was greatly enhanced.

Now the centre of attention will concentrate on the Summit of the Americas. It will be a privilege to know what will be said there; intelligence and decency will be put to the test. We shall not go down on our knees begging the OAS to allow us entering into infamy.

Fidel Castro Ruz

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