

IDEAS CANNOT BE KILLED

A few days ago, while analyzing the expenses involved in the construction of three submarines of the Astute series, I said that with this money "75,000 doctors could be trained to look after 150 million people, assuming that the cost of training a doctor would be one-third of what it costs in the United States." Now, along the lines of the same calculations, I wonder: how many doctors could be graduated with the one hundred billion dollars that Bush gets his hands on in just one year to keep on sowing grief in Iraqi and American homes. Answer: 999,990 doctors who could look after 2 billion people that today do not receive any medical care.

More than 600,000 people have lost their lives in Iraq and more than 2 million have been forced to emigrate since the American invasion began.

In the United States, around 50 million people do not have medical insurance. The blind market laws govern how this vital service is provided, and prices make it inaccessible for many, even in the developed countries. Medical services feed into the Gross Domestic Product of the United States, but they do not generate conscience for those providing them nor peace of mind for those who receive it.

The countries with less development and more diseases have the least number of medical doctors: one for every 5,000, 10,000, 15,000, 20,000 or more people. When new sexually transmitted diseases appear such as AIDS, which in merely 20 years has killed millions of persons, -- while tens of millions are afflicted, among them many mothers and children, although palliative measures now exist-- the price of medications per patient could add up to 5,000, 10,000 or up to 15,000 dollars each year. These are fantasy figures for the great majority of Third World countries where the few public hospitals are overflowing with the ill who die piled up like animals under the scourge of a sudden epidemic.

To reflect on these realities could help us to better understand the tragedy. It is not a matter of commercial advertising that costs so much money and technology. Add up the starvation afflicting hundreds of millions of human beings; add to that the idea of transforming food into fuels; look for a symbol and the answer will be George W. Bush.

When he was recently asked by an important personality about his Cuba policy, his answer was this: "I am a hard-line President and I am just waiting for Castro's demise." The wishes of such a powerful gentleman are no privilege. I am not the first nor will I be the last that Bush has ordered to be killed; nor one of those people who he intends to go on killing individually or en masse.

"Ideas cannot be killed", Sarría emphatically said. Sarría was the black lieutenant, a patrol leader in Batista's army who arrested us, after the attempt to seize the Moncada Garrison, while three of us slept in a small mountain hut, exhausted by the effort of breaking through the siege. The soldiers, fuelled by hatred and adrenalin, were aiming their weapons at me even before they had identified who I was. "Ideas cannot be killed", the black lieutenant kept on repeating, practically automatically and in a hushed voice.

I dedicate those excellent words to you, Mr. W. Bush.

Fidel Castro Ruz

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