

Thirst for blood (II)

I promised I would continue the reflections today, using textual news and adding pertinent commentaries.

"NEW YORK, March 13 (ANSA) – The absence of Argentina in the itinerary of the new trip by the U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to South America is another sign of Washington's annoyance with the authorities in Buenos Aires, according to the New York Times today.

"The newspaper recalled that Rice is visiting Brazil and Chile this week but 'notably absent from her itinerary' is Argentina where Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, wife of ex-President Néstor Kirchner, 'became the first woman elected to be the country's President.'

"The omission underscores Washington's disappointment with the new Kirchner government, which has continued to strengthen ties with the President of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, while 'accusing the United States of political motives' in the case of the \$80,000 illegally brought into the country by Venezuelan officials.

"The New York Times describes this money as 'suspected to be a secret contribution made by Venezuela to the Kirchner campaign'."

"BRASILIA, March 13 (EFE) – The U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice expressed her hope that Colombia's neighbors would fulfill their commitment to prevent FARC guerrillas from using their territories 'to continue killing innocent people.'

"'We are very concerned with the regional situation (in South America)', said Rice at a press conference today in Brasilia accompanied by Brazilian Foreign Affairs Minister Celso Amorim.

"'Countries cannot be threatened from within or from outside. And we must avoid that the terrorists continue killing innocent people', the head of U.S. foreign policy said after meetings with both Amorim and with Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva."

"BRASILIA, March 13 (ANSA) - [...] the official said that the U.S. government maintains good relations with left-wing leaders such as Brazilian President Luiz Lula da Silva and Chilean President Michelle Bachelet.

"After the press conference, Rice and Chancellor Celso Amorim had lunch together at the Itamaraty Palace."

"BRASILIA, March 13 (AP) - [...] Rice made these declarations a day after President George W. Bush said that the recent crisis between Colombia and Ecuador was 'the most recent step of a worrisome pattern of provocative behavior on the part of the Caracas government'.

"Washington is toughening its rhetoric against Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, at the same time it is praising its South American allies for firmly confronting terrorism."

In Brazil, after dealing with the subject of the future composition of the Security Council, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice clearly explained that the United States would not be opposed to Brazil's entry into that Council, but she warned that its support was committed to Japan, its strategic and economic partner.

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"SANTIAGO, March 13 (AFP) – The U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will make a brief visit to Chile on Friday, where she will be meeting with President Michelle Bachelet to consolidate bilateral ties and review the regional situation.

"Rice will arrive in Santiago Friday afternoon, coming from Brazil, where she had arrived this Thursday. The chief of the United States diplomacy will be in the Chilean capital for almost six hours, and she will be returning to Washington on the same Friday, just before taking off on a trip to Moscow."

According to that same agency, the U.S. ambassador in Santiago, Paul Simons, declared:

"The fact that she is coming to Chile in the middle of a very busy schedule shows the importance she is giving to conversations with her colleague, Chancellor Foxley, and with the President about our positive agenda."

"Brazil and Chile 'are countries that are friends and strategic regional partners of the United States', the diplomat added in a press conference.

"With the Chilean authorities, Rice will be discussing the state of bilateral relations, but also the regional situation following the serious crisis created by the Colombian military incursion into Ecuadorian territory, resulting in the death of the second-in-command of the FARC guerrillas, Raúl Reyes.

"'We shall be talking about the regional situation', Simons disclosed.

"In Santiago, Rice will also give the go-ahead to her Chilean colleague for the so-called 'Chile-California Plan for the Twenty-first Century', an agreement that would like to take advantage of similarities in geography, climate and productivity between the South American country and that U.S. state.

"The agreement is unprecedented and it came up following a personal conversation between Foxley and Rice, according to ambassador Simons without disclosing any more details."

Unquestionably, the U.S. ambassador in Chile, as it is his habit let too much slip out, speaking of a plan that the Chilean government still hasn't even publicly mentioned, nor has there been any decision made about something that appears to be a fantasy from Arabian Nights.

On the Internet there is also much news about the U.S. Secretary of State's tour. On March 13th, the following headlines could be read:

BBC World – London, Great Britain. "Rice: Borders, No Hiding Places."

Terra – News Portal, Spain. "Rice Ratifies in Brazil U.S. Commitment with Colombia and Against the FARC."

Alarde – Brazilian newspaper. "U.S. Defends South American Security Plan."

El Observador – Venezuelan newspaper. "Rice Insists that U.S. Studies Information about Alleged Venezuelan Ties with the FARC."

Ansalatine – Italian News Agency. "Rice proposes joint action against FARC."

BBC World – London, Great Britain. "Rice Visits 'Strategic' Partners"

El Nuevo Diario – Nicaraguan newspaper. "U.S. Toughens Rhetoric against Chávez in Rice's Tour"

AFP – French News Agency. "Rice Will Visit Chile to Consolidate Ties and Talk about the Regional

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Situation."

EFE – Spanish News Agency. "Rice Ratifies in Brazil U.S. Commitment with Colombia and Against the FARC."

AFP – French News Agency. "Rice: U.S. Examines Ties between Chávez and FARC and will Take Action".

La Prensa – Argentine newspaper. "Borders cannot be a Hide-Out, U.S. Warns".

On March 14th, O Estado de Sao Paulo, a Brazilian news site, successively sends three articles titled: "Untimely Interference", "Rice Discusses African Tourism in Bahia" and "Amorim and 'Condi' Make Mistakes."

O Globo on Line – Digital Site of the Brazilian TV channel. "Condoleezza: Borders are not 'Hiding Places'".

El Mercurio – Chilean newspaper. "Rice, Arriving Today in the Country, Will Discuss with the Chilean Government a Request to send Peace Forces to Kosovo."

Crónica Digital – Chilean News Site. "Policy: Sticks and Carrots: Condoleezza Rice's Chilean Agenda."

Condoleezza Rice herself would have to answer some questions: How many Americans have been killed by bombs sent by Cuba? Has even one single brick ever been broken because of an explosive device coming from our country? Why are we being included in the grotesque list of terrorist countries, the same one on which Venezuela's inclusion is being arbitrarily threatened? Who used terrorism against our homeland to blow up planes in mid-air, commit acts of sabotage, and launch mercenary invasions and threats of bombings and wars, economic blockade and actions that have cost thousands of lives and hundreds of billions of dollars? Who is going to believe you or Bush? Why are you insisting on provoking fratricidal wars between the peoples of Latin America?

In Iraq, more than a million people have died. How many deaths does the United States of America offer Latin America, a region with over 500 million inhabitants, to defend its democracy and its empire?

It is a real fact that Bush and his group are much more trapped in their foreign policy errors than even Nixon when he resigned in 1972. The bloody Iraqi War and its rejection by the U.S. people, the toll in human lives, the extremely high number of wounded and maimed for every death in the military adventure, all reveal a situation full of contradictions: the deteriorated image of the United States and the impossibility of giving up the wars of conquest for raw materials, the dollar and the price of gold, currency devaluations and inflation, consumerism and the inability to supply themselves with consumer goods, production of ethanol and the world shortage of food, fascist methods and democratic demagoguery, torture practices and secret prisons and human rights, maximum environmental pollution of the country and the species' right to survival, the benefits of science for health and the use of the same to massively liquidate or invalidate human beings, the brain drain and underdevelopment of poor countries, the price of oil and the ever-greater wasting of energy, the November elections and growing numbers of Latinos dying on the border.

The list would be endless. It is, in essence, a contradiction between life and death.

Today, on Sunday March 16th, we can read the dispatches which correspondents were writing in Havana yesterday night, Saturday, about the material published today in Juventud Rebelde, received by them in advance on the previous day.

It is remarkable that none of the capitalist news agencies have published a single word on what was written about the former guerrilla Pedro Pablo Montoya who killed a leader of the FARC and cut off his hand in order to receive a bounty of 2.6 million dollars that was legalized by an Attorney General of

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Colombia. He was probably an agent infiltrated by the Yankees. The issue has elicited a great debate due to its ethical implications.

Condoleezza is off to Moscow, Bush announces a trip to the Ukraine and Bucharest for the first days of April and he will conclude the tour in Croatia, Serbia's neighbor, from which imperialism ripped its vital province of Kosovo, site of its culture and source of essential material resources that formed the basis of its development.

McCain has just arrived in Iraq for the eighth time, to offer his full support to Bush's war, and to the 3 trillion dollars it has cost, to which millions of victims must be added, among the displaced and the dead, for the price of the fallen and mutilated Americans already mentioned.

What can the world expect from such a policy?

The imperialist leaders and officials are working feverishly, threatening everyone with their brutal strength, but the empire is unsustainable and it doesn't give up. It is thirsty for blood. We must persistently denounce it!

Fidel Castro Ruz

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