

ONE MORE ARGUMENT FOR THE U.N.

While I am working with the already famous Greenspan book, I read an article published by El País, a Spanish newspaper with a circulation of more than 500,000, according to reports; I would like to pass this on to the readers. It is signed by Ernesto Ekaizer, and it literally reads:

"Four weeks before the Iraq invasion which happened in the night of March 19 to 20, 2003, George W. Bush publicly sustained his demands of Saddam Hussein in the following terms: disarmament or war. In private, Bush acknowledged that war was inevitable. In a long private conversation with the then Spanish president, José María Aznar, held on Saturday, February 22, 2003 at the Crawford Ranch in Texas, Bush made it clear that the moment had come to get rid of Saddam. 'We have two weeks. In two weeks our military will be ready. We will be in Baghdad at the end of March', he told Aznar.

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"As part of this plan, Bush had accepted, on January 31, 2003 --after an interview with the British Prime Minister Tony Blair-- to make a last diplomatic manoeuvre: to introduce a second resolution to the United Nations Security Council. His objective: to clear the way legally for a unilateral war that the United States was getting ready to unleash with more than 200,000 soldiers who were in the region ready to attack.

"Bush was aware of Blair's internal difficulties and he knew of Aznar's. Only seven days before that meeting at the Crawford Ranch, three million people were demonstrating in several Spanish cities against the imminent war. 'We need your help with our public opinion', Aznar asks. Bush explains to him the scope of the new resolution that he is going to present: 'The resolution will be tailor made to help you. I don't care about the content'. To this, Aznar replies: 'That text would help us to be able to co-sponsor it and be its co-authors, and get many people to sponsor it'. Aznar, then, offers to give Bush European coverage, together with Blair. Aznar's dream of consolidating a relationship with the United States, following in the footsteps of the United Kingdom, was about to become reality.

"Aznar had travelled with his wife, Ana Botella, on February 20 to the United States making a stopover in Mexico to persuade President Vicente Fox --unsuccessfully-- of the need to support Bush. On the 21st, the couple, accompanied by the President's assistants, arrived in Texas. Aznar and his wife stayed at the ranch guest house.

"In the meeting on the following day, Saturday, President Bush, his then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, and Daniel Fried, the chief of European Affairs at the National Security Council, were present. Aznar, on his side, was accompanied by his international policy advisor, Alberto Carnero and the Spanish Ambassador in Washington, Javier Rupérez. As part of the meeting, Bush and Aznar had a four-way telephone conversation with the British Prime Minister Tony Blair and the Italian President Silvio Berlusconi.

"Ambassador Rupérez translated from the English for Aznar and also from the Italian for Condoleezza Rice; another two interpreters did the same for Bush and his collaborators. It was Rupérez who drafted the minutes of the conversation in a memorandum that has been kept secret until today.

"The conversation is impressive because of its direct, friendly and even menacing tone when, for example, they refer to the necessity of some countries like Mexico, Chile, Angola, Cameroon and Russia, members of the UN Security Council, voting for the new resolution as a show of friendship towards the

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United States or else they would have to suffer the consequences.

"They are cautioned about zero expectations for the work of the inspectors, whose chief, Hans Blix, had dismantled just one week earlier, on February 14, the arguments presented by United States Secretary of State Colin Powell at the Security Council on February 5, 2003, with 'solid facts' enthusiastically supported by the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ana Palacio. The same facts that Powell himself later described as a bunch of lies.

"The Blix Report

"According to Blix, Iraq was taking steps towards active cooperation in solving the pending issue of disarmament. His tone had been less critical than that of his report of January 27, 2003. 'Since we arrived in Iraq three months ago we have made more than 400 inspections, with no advance warning at 300 sites. Until now, the inspectors have found no prohibited weapons...If Iraq decides to cooperate even more closely, the period of disarmament by the inspections can still be short', the chief inspector pointed out.

"The General Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mohamed El Baradei released information on February 14 that there were still some technical issues left to clear up. But, he added, 'now there are no more disarmament problems left to solve'. According to him, absolutely no proof had been found that Iraq had been carrying out nuclear activities or activities related to nuclear energy, another clear lie about what Powell had stated about the Iraqi nuclear program.

"Both the first results of the inspections and the end of the United States preparations led Bush to set the beginning of the military operation towards the date of March 10, 2003. Later, nine days were added in order to get the second resolution. The process of moral persuasion in which Aznar and Palacios worked by phone and in bilateral meetings did not succeed in pulling in more than four votes: those of the three promoters and Bulgaria. They needed 9 votes.

"The failure of this legal coverage for the imminent war led Bush, with Blair and Aznar, to agree to a summit meeting in the Azores on March 16, 2003, a place suggested by Aznar as an alternative to Bermuda for a reason he explained to Bush: 'Just the name of these islands suggests an item of clothing that is not exactly the most appropriate for the seriousness of the moment in which we find ourselves'. There, on that March 16, Blair, Bush and Aznar decided to replace the United Nations Security Council. They usurped its functions to declare war on Iraq at their own risk. On the morning of March 17, the United Kingdom ambassador at the UN announced in New York the withdrawal of the second resolution. A defeat in the voting would have complicated even further the race towards war."

Fidel Castro Ruz

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