

SWEETENED REALITIES THAT FADE AWAY

I was surprised today when I listened to the speech delivered by Jose Miguel Insulza in Cartagena. I thought that the person who was speaking on behalf of the OAS would at least claim some respect for the sovereignty of the peoples of this hemisphere which were for years colonized and cruelly exploited by colonial powers.

Why didn't he say a single word about the Malvinas Islands, or demand respect for the sovereign rights of the sister nation of Argentina?

The Cartagena Summit went through episodes that will not be easily forgotten. It is true that its celebration required a huge effort. Despite of the several hours that have elapsed since its inaugural session, we have no idea of what ever happened during the lunch sponsored by Santos, with which he attempted to make it up for the colossal amount of energy used up by the participants in that Summit.

Those who may find this entertaining, will very seldom in their lives have the opportunity to watch the faces of more than thirty political leaders in front of the TV cameras since they got off the car until the moment when, after the heroic and final effort of walking down a long and carpeted corridor, they climbed up the ten or twelve little steps to the stage where the host, smiling and happy, awaited to greet them. It didn't matter whether they were young or of age, or whether they had flat feet, kneecap surgeries or difficulties in one or both legs. They were forced to keep on to the top. Whether rich or poor, they were compelled to observe the protocol.

Curiously enough, Obama was the only one who took advantage of that trajectory to do some workout. As he was walking all by himself, it was easier for him to do so: he adopted a sport-like pose and jogged up through the steps.

The women attending the Summit either as companions or as Heads of State were the ones who did it best. Once again they proved that the world would be a far better place if they took care of political affairs. Perhaps there will be fewer wars, although no one could be sure of that.

Anyone would say that, out of obvious political reasons, Obama was the figure that caused the worst impression in me. However, this was not the case. I saw he was pensive and at times quite absent. It was like if he were sleeping with open eyes. No one knows how much rest he had before arriving in Cartagena, which Generals he spoke with, what problems were on his mind; whether he was thinking about Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, North Korea or Iran. Quite certainly, of course, he was thinking about the elections, the Tea Party moves and Mitt Romney's sinister plans. At the very last minute, shortly before the Summit, he decided that the contributions of the richest should account for at least 30 per cent of their incomes, like it used to be before the Bush junior administration. This, of course, would allow him to portray a clearer image of his sense of justice before the Republican right.

But the real problem is this: the enormous debt accumulated by the federal government, which exceeds 15 trillion dollars and demands no less than 5 trillion dollars in resources. The tax to be imposed on the richest will contribute around 50 billion dollars in a period of ten years, while the need for money will increase to 5 trillions. Therefore, he will be receiving one dollar per every 100 that are needed. These estimates can be made even by an eighth grader.

We should remember very well what Dilma Rousseff demanded: "relations 'on equal terms' with Brazil and the rest of Latin America."

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"The Euro-zone has responded to the economic crisis with a monetary expansion, thus provoking a 'tsunami' that has led to an appreciation of the Brazilian currency and has damaged the competitiveness of the national industry", she stated.

Those realities do not escape Dilma Rousseff, a capable and intelligent woman who knows how to address them with authority and dignity.

Obama, who is used to say the last word, knows that the Brazilian economy is emerging with and impressive strength and that, in association with others like those of Venezuela, Argentina, China, Russia, South Africa and others from Latin America and the world, will trace the future of the world's development.

The biggest problem of all is to preserve peace from the increasing risks of a war that, given the destructive power of modern weapons, would push humanity to the edge of an abyss.

I realize that the meetings in Cartagena are taking a long time and the sweetened realities are fading away. Nothing was said about the guayabera shirts presented to Obama as a gift. Somebody will have to compensate the Cartagena designer Edgar Gómez.

Fidel Castro Ruz

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