

The brotherhood between the Bolivarian Republic and Cuba

I had the privilege of having a conversation for three hours last Thursday the 15th with Hugo Chávez, the president of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: he had the courtesy to visit our country once again, this time en route from Nicaragua.

On just a few occasions, perhaps never, have I known a person who has been capable of leading a real and profound Revolution for more than 10 years; with not a single day of rest, in a territory under a million square kilometres, in this region of the world colonized by the Iberian Peninsula which for 300 years dominated an area 20 times greater than itself, a territory having immense wealth, where it imposed its beliefs, language and culture. One could not today write about the history of our species without mentioning what occurred in this hemisphere.

As for Bolívar, he did not fight for Venezuela alone. At that time, the water and the land was much purer; the natural species were varied and in abundance; the energy contained in its gas and oil was unknown. Two hundred years ago, when the struggle for independence in Venezuela began, he did not do it just for the independence of that country, he did it for that of all the still colonized peoples of the continent.

Bolívar dreamed of creating the greatest Republic that had ever existed and whose capital would be the Isthmus of Panama.

In his insuperable greatness, The Liberator, with true revolutionary genius, was capable of predicting that the United States –originally limited to the territory of the Thirteen Colonies of England – seemed destined to sow misery over the Americas on behalf of liberty.

A factor that contributed to Latin America's struggle for its independence was the invasion of Spain by Napoleon who, with his boundless ambition, contributed to creating the right conditions for the beginning of the independence struggles on our continent. The history of humankind is sinuous and full of contradictions; in its turn it becomes ever more complicated and difficult.

Our country speaks with the moral authority of a small nation that has resisted more than fifty years of brutal repression by that empire foreseen by Bolívar, the most powerful empire that ever existed. The immense hypocrisy of its policy and its disdain for other peoples has led it into very serious and dangerous situations. Among other consequences is the day by day evidence of its cowardliness and cynicism, converted into daily practice in international policy, since the vast majority of honest persons on this Earth don't have any possibility of making their opinions known, nor of receiving trustworthy information.

The policy of principles and honesty with which the Cuban Revolution has always exposed successes and errors – and especially determinate norms of behaviour that have never been violated throughout more than fifty years, such as never torturing any citizen – knows no exception. Likewise, it has never yielded, nor will it ever yield, to the media-inspired blackmail and terror. These are historical facts that have been clearly demonstrated. We are dealing with a subject that I could expound upon at length; today we merely mention it to explain the reason for our friendship and admiration for the Bolivarian President Hugo Chávez, a topic I could go into considerably. Suffice it to quote a few elements on this occasion to explain why I stated that it constitutes a privilege to talk for hours with him.

He had not yet been born when the attack on the Moncada Barracks took place on July 26th of 1953. He wasn't even five years old when the Revolution triumphed on the first of January of 1959. I met him in

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1994, 35 years later, when he had turned 40 years old. Since then I have been able to observe his revolutionary development for almost 16 years. Endowed with exceptional talent, an insatiable reader, I can offer testimony of his capacity for developing and intensifying revolutionary ideas. As in every human being, fate and circumstances play a decisive part in the advancement of his ideas. His capacity to remember any concept and repeat it with incredible precision much later is remarkable. He is a true master in the development and dissemination of revolutionary ideas. He has command of these ideas and of the art of transmitting them with astounding eloquence. He is absolutely honest and sensitive in regards to persons, and incredibly generous in his nature.

He requires no praise and, in turn, is accustomed to be generous in giving it. Whenever I do not agree with any of his points of view or any of his decisions, I merely tell him about it sincerely, at the proper time and with the due respect of our friendship. By doing so, I especially bear in mind that today he is the person about whom the empire is most worried, due to his capacity to influence the masses and due to the immense natural resources of a country that they have pillaged mercilessly, and the person they rigorously strike and attempt to take away his authority. Both the empire and the mercenaries at its beck and call, intoxicated by the lies and the consumerism, once more run the risk of under-estimating him and his heroic people, but I haven't the slightest doubt that again they will be taught an unforgettable lesson. More than half a century of struggle indicates that to me with total clarity.

Chávez carries the dialectic within himself. Never, at any time, has any government done so much for its people in such a short time. I am especially delighted to send his people warm congratulations upon the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the beginning of the struggle for the independence of Venezuela and Latin America. As fate would have it, on April 19th we are also celebrating the victory of the Revolution over imperialism at the Bay of Pigs, exactly 49 years ago. We would like to share that victory with the Homeland of Bolívar.

I am also pleased to send a greeting to all our brothers and sisters in ALBA.

Fidel Castro Ruz

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