

The antithesis of ethics

On the day when hundreds of intellectuals coming from every continent are meeting in Havana to take part in an International Conference for World Equilibrium on the date of José Martí's birth, on that same day, by some strange quirk, the President of the United States spoke. In his last State of the Union address to Congress, making use of the teleprompter, Bush tells us more with his body language than with the words arranged by his advisors.

If to the three speeches that I mentioned in my words to the delegates at the Meeting of January 29, 2003 we added the one he gave yesterday on the 28th, translated into Spanish by CNN -accompanied by the raising of eyebrows and odd gestures- recorded and immediately transcribed by qualified staff, this one is the worst of them all on account of its demagoguery, lies and total absence of ethics. I am speaking of the words that he probably added, of the tone he used and which I personally observed; that is the material I worked with.

"America is leading the fight against global poverty, with strong education initiatives and humanitarian assistance (...) This program strengthens democracy, transparency and the rule of law in developing nations, and I ask the members of this Congress to fully fund this important program."

"America is leading the fight against global hunger. Today, more than half the world's food aid comes from the United States. Tonight, I ask Congress to support an innovative proposal to provide food assistance by purchasing crops directly from farmers in the developing world, so we can build up local agriculture and help break the cycle of famine."

At the beginning of this paragraph he is referring to the old commitments taken on by the United States in the past with FAO and other international agencies, one drop of water in the sea of the agonizing present needs of humankind.

"America is leading the fight against disease. With your help, we're working to cut in half the number of malaria-related deaths in 15 African nations. And our Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief is treating 1.4 million people. We can bring healing (...) to many more (...) And I call on you (...) to approve an additional \$30 billion over the next five years."

"America is a force for hope in the world because we are a compassionate people (...)"

"Over the past seven years, we've increased funding for veterans by more than 95 percent (...) And as increase funding we must also reform our veterans system to meet the needs of a new war (...) so we can improve the system of care for our wounded warriors."

"So I ask you to join me in (...) creating new hiring preferences for military spouses (...)"

"By trusting the people, succeeding generations transformed our fragile young democracy into the most powerful nation on Earth (...) our liberty will be secure and the state of our Union will remain strong."

He states all this calmly, but from the beginning of his speech, where he avoids all the thorny problems, he goes along brick by brick laying the foundations of that false liberty and prosperity, without even the slightest mention of the American soldiers who have died or been wounded in the war.

He had begun the speech by pointing out that "most Americans think their taxes are high enough (...)". He threatens Congress: "(...) [you] should know (...) if any bill raising taxes reaches my desk, I will veto

it.

"Next week I'll send you a budget that terminates or substantially reduces 151 wasteful or bloated programs, totaling more than \$18 billion. The budget that I will submit will keep America on track for a surplus in 2012."

Either he made a mistake with the figure, or the collecting of \$18 billion means nothing to a budget that totals 2.8 trillions.

The most important thing is to distinguish between the deficit of the State budget which totaled 163 billion, and the deficit of the current account of the balance of payments that totaled 811 billion in 2006, and the public debt is calculated at 9.1 million millions. His military spending totals more than 60 percent of the total invested in the world for that reason. Today, on the 29th, one ounce of gold broke a record at 933 dollars. This mess results from the unrestricted issuing of dollars in a country whose population spends more than it saves and in a world where the purchasing power of United States currency has been extraordinarily reduced.

The formula his government usually employs is to express confidence and assurance in the economy, lowering the bank interest rates, throwing more bills into circulation, worsening the problem and postponing the consequences.

What does the price of sugar mean today, as it stands now at 12.27 cents a pound? Scores of poor countries dedicate themselves to its production and export. I mention this example just to illustrate that Bush deliberately entangles and mixes everything up.

The President of the United States carries on like this in his Olympian stroll through the problems of a planet lying at his feet.

"Tonight I ask you to pass legislation to reform Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, modernize the Federal Housing Administration, and allow state housing agencies to issue tax-free bonds to help homeowners refinance their mortgages (...)"

"We share a common goal: making health care more (...) accessible for all Americans (...). The best way to achieve that goal is by expanding consumer choice, not government control (...)"

"(...) we must trust students to learn if given the chance, and empower parents to demand results from our schools."

"African-American and Hispanic students posted all-time highs (...) Now we must work together to increase accountability, add flexibility for states and districts and reduce the number of high-school dropouts (...)"

"Thanks to the (...) Scholarships you approved, more than 2,600 of the poorest children in our Nation's Capital have found new hope at a faith-based or other non-public school. Sadly, these schools are disappearing at an alarming rate in many of America's inner cities (...). And to open the doors of these schools to more children, I ask you to support a new \$300 million program (...)"

"Today, our economic growth increasingly depends on our ability to sell American goods and crops and services all over the world. So we're working to break down barriers to trade and investment wherever we can. We're working for a successful Doha Round of trade talks, and we must complete a good agreement this year."

"I thank the Congress for approving the (...) agreement with Peru. And now I ask you to approve agreements with Colombia and Panama and South Korea."

"Many products from these nations now enter America duty-free, yet many of our products face steep tariffs in their markets. These agreements will level the playing field. They will give us better access to nearly 100 million customers. They will support good jobs for the finest workers in the world: those whose products say 'Made in the USA'."

"These agreements also promote America's strategic interests."

"Our security, our prosperity, and our environment all require reducing our dependence on oil (...) generate coal power (...)"

"Let us create a new international clean technology fund, which will help (...) to slow (...) and eventually reverse the growth of greenhouse gases."

"To keep America competitive into the future, we must trust in the skill of our scientists and engineers and empower them to pursue the breakthroughs of tomorrow (...) So I ask Congress for (...) federal support (...) and ensure America remains the most dynamic nation on Earth (...)"

Always appealing to chauvinism, he continues his flight of fancy to other subjects:

"Tonight...America honors (...) the resilience of the people of this region [the Gulf Coast]. We reaffirm our pledge to help them build stronger and better than before. And tonight I'm pleased to announce that (...) we will host (...) the North American Summit of Canada, Mexico and the United States in the great city of New Orleans (...)"

"The other pressing challenge is immigration. America needs to secure our borders -and with your help, my administration is taking steps to do so. We're increasing worksite enforcement, deploying fences and advanced technologies to stop illegal crossings (...) and (...) this year, we will have doubled the number of border patrol agents." This is one of the sources of well-paid jobs that Bush has in mind.

He does not wish to remember that Mexico was robbed of more than 50 percent of its territory in a war of conquest, and he would like nobody to recall that on the Berlin Wall, during its almost 30 years of existence, less people died trying to gain access to the "Free World" than Latin Americans are dying today --no less than 500 each year--trying to cross the border in search of employment, with no Adjustment Act to grant them privileges and motivation as it does for Cuban citizens. The numbers of illegal immigrants arrested and traumatically deported every year totals in the hundreds of thousands.

Straightaway, the speech leaps to the Middle East from which he has just returned after a "Veni, vidi, vici" diplomatic junket.

After mentioning Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, he states: "And that is why, for the security of America and the peace of the world, we are spreading the hope of freedom (...) In Afghanistan, America, our (...) NATO allies and 15 partner nations are helping the Afghan people defend their freedom and rebuild their country."

He makes no mention whatsoever that this was exactly what the USSR tried to do when it occupied the country with its powerful armed forces that ended up defeated in the clash with that country's different customs, religion and culture, independent of the fact that the Soviets had not gone there to conquer raw materials for their great capital and that a socialist organization that never did any harm to the United States attempted to change the course of the nation in a revolutionary manner.

Right away Bush leaps to Iraq which had nothing to do with the attacks on September 11, 2001, and which was invaded because that was what Bush, President of the United States, and his closest collaborators decided to do, with nobody in the world harboring any doubt that the aim was to occupy the oilfields; this action cost that people hundreds of thousands of dead and millions of people uprooted from their homes, or forced into emigration.

"The Iraqi people quickly realized that something dramatic had happened. Those who had worried that America was preparing to abandon them instead saw tens of thousands of American forces flowing into their country. They saw our forces moving into neighborhoods, clearing out the terrorists, and staying behind to ensure the enemy did not return (...) Our military and civilians in Iraq are performing with courage and distinction, and they have the gratitude of our whole nation (...)"

"A year later (...) we've captured or killed thousands of extremists in Iraq (...) Our enemies in Iraq have been hit hard. They are not yet defeated, and we can still expect tough fighting ahead."

"Our objective in the coming year is to sustain and build on the gains we made in 2007, while transitioning to the next phase of our strategy. American troops are shifting from leading operations, to partnering with Iraqi forces, and, eventually, to a protective overwatch mission (...)"

"(...) this means more than 20,000 of our troops are coming home."

"Any further drawdown of U.S. troops will be based on conditions in Iraq and the recommendations of our commanders."

"Progress in the provinces must be matched by progress in Baghdad."

"(...) still have a distance to travel. But after decades of dictatorship and the pain of sectarian violence, reconciliation is taking place -and the Iraqi people are taking control of their future."

"The mission in Iraq has been difficult (...). But it is in the vital interest of the United States that we succeed."

"We're also standing against the forces of extremism in the Holy Land (...) Palestinians have elected a President who recognizes that confronting terror is essential to achieving a state where his people can live in dignity and at peace with Israel."

Bush says not one word about the millions of Palestinians stripped of their lands or driven away from them, victims of an apartheid system.

Bush's formula is well-known: 50 billion dollars in weapons for the Arabs, from the industrial-military complex, and 60 billion for Israel in ten years. We are talking of dollars that maintain a real value. Someone pays for it: the hundreds of millions of workers producing cheap goods with their hands and being paid a minimum salary, and hundreds of millions more who are undernourished.

But the speech does not end here: "Iran is funding and training militia groups in Iraq, supporting Hezbollah terrorists in Lebanon, and backing Hamas' efforts to undermine peace in the Holy Land. Teheran is also developing ballistic missiles of increasing range, and continues to develop its capability to enrich uranium, which could be used to create a nuclear weapon."

"Our message to the leaders of Iran is also clear: Verifiably suspend your nuclear enrichment, so negotiations can begin."

"America will confront those who threaten our troops. We will stand by our allies, and we will defend our vital interests in the (...) Gulf."

We are not talking about the Gulf of Mexico, but the Persian Gulf, in waters that are only 12 miles away from Iran.

There is a historical fact here: in the days of the Shah, Iran was the best armed power in the region.

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When the Revolution triumphed in that country, led by the Ayatollah Khomeini, the United States encouraged Iraq and provided support for the invasion. That was the beginning of a conflict which cost hundreds of billions and untold numbers of dead and maimed, and today is being justified as part of the cold war.

Really, we don't need other media to inform us about the speech made by the President of the United States; all we need to do is to let Bush speak for himself. For people who know how to read and write, people who think, no-one can make a more eloquent criticism of the empire than Bush himself. I'm responding to him on behalf of the country in question.

I have worked hard.

I hope that I have been impartial.

Fidel Castro Ruz

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