

## THE BEST AND MOST INTELLIGENT

Yesterday, because of a lack of time and space, I did not write one word about Barack Obama's speech on the Libyan war that he gave on Monday, March 28. I had a copy of the official version that the US administration had provided to the press. I underlined some of his statements. I went through it again and concluded that it was not worth wasting too much paper on.

I recalled what Carter had told me about the US forestry industry when he visited Cuba in 2002, since he owns a family-run tree farm in Georgia. During his recent visit I asked him about his farm and once again he explained how he plants 3 pine trees per every 2 meters, equaling 1,700 trees per hectare that are harvested 25 years later.

Many years ago, I read in a Sunday issue of The New York Times that this publication used the equivalent of 40 hectares of forest to produce its printed edition. So, this explains my concern about saving paper.

Of course, Obama is an expert articulator of words and phrases. He could make a living out of writing children's short stories. I am familiar with his style because, long before he took office, I read and underlined his book entitled *Dreams from My Father*, which was the first thing I read of his. I did so with respect and recognized that the author knew how to select the precise words and correct phrases to win over the readers' sympathies.

I confess that I did not like the way he used suspense, concealing his political ideas until the end. I made a special effort not to jump to the last chapter to read his opinions on various issues that, in my opinion, were crucial at this stage of human history. I was sure that the severe economic crisis, the colossal military expenditures, and the young blood that was shed during the times of his republican predecessor would help him defeat his electoral adversary, despite the enormous racial prejudices of US society. He was aware about the risk of being physically eliminated.

For obvious reasons of traditional politicking, prior to the elections, he went after the votes of the Miami-based anti-Cuban factions, most of them led by reactionary people who had supported Batista. These people turned the United States into a banana republic, where electoral fraud decided no less than Bush W's electoral victory in 2000, throwing a future Nobel laureate into the garbage: Al Gore, vice-president under Clinton and a presidential candidate.

A basic sense of justice would have led President Obama to rectify the outcome of the infamous trial that led to the inhumane, cruel and particularly unfair imprisonment of five Cuban patriots.

His Union Addresses; his speeches in Brazil, Chile and El Salvador; and his address on NATO's war on Libya forced me to underline the aforementioned speech more than his own autobiography.

What are the worst parts of his statement and how can one explain the approximately 2,500 words in the official version?

From a domestic standpoint, the speech's complete lack of realism places its happy author in the hands of his worst adversaries, those who want to humiliate him and take revenge for his November 2008 electoral victory. The beating they gave him in late 2010 is still not enough for them.

From an external standpoint, the world gained more awareness of what the UN Security Council, NATO and Yankee Imperialism really represents to many nations.

To be as brief as I have promised, I'll tell you that Obama began his speech by saying that he has played his role in "stopping the Taliban's momentum in Afghanistan, and going after al Qaeda all across the globe."

He immediately added that: "For generations, the United States of America has played a unique role as an anchor of global security and as an advocate for human freedom."

This is something that —as our readers know— Cubans, Latin Americans, Vietnamese and many others, can bear witness to.

After this solemn declaration of faith, Obama invested a lot of time to speaking about Qaddafi, about his horrors and the reasons for which the United States and their closest allies: "—United Kingdom, France, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Turkey— all of whom have fought by our sides for decades [...] have chosen to meet their responsibilities to defend the Libyan people."

Further on he added: "...NATO, has taken command of the enforcement of the arms embargo and the no-fly zone."

He confirmed the objectives of this decision "Because of this transition to a broader, NATO-based coalition, the risk and cost of this operation —to our military and to American taxpayers— will be reduced significantly."

"So for those who doubted our capacity to carry out this operation, I want to be clear: The United States of America has done what we said we would do."

He then went back to obsessing on Qaddafi and to the contradictions that assail his mind: "Qaddafi has not yet stepped down from power, and until he does, Libya will remain dangerous."

"It's true that America cannot use our military wherever repression occurs. And given the costs and risks of intervention, we must always measure our interests against the need for action."

"The task that I assigned our forces —to protect the Libyan people [...] — carries with it a UN mandate and international support."

He returned to his obsessions over and over again: "If we tried to overthrow Qaddafi by force, our coalition would splinter. We would [...] have to put US troops on the ground to accomplish that mission, or risk killing many civilians from the air."

"...we are hopeful about Iraq's future. But regime change there took eight years, thousands of American and Iraqi lives, and nearly a trillion dollars."

A few days after the NATO bombings began, a few reports started to appear about a US fighter-bomber that had been shot down. A source later confirmed the reports. Upon seeing a falling parachutist, some of the country folk did what people traditionally do in Latin America: they went to go see, and if someone needed it, they would provide help. No one can know what they were thinking. They were most definitely Muslims working the earth who would not be in favor of the bombings. A helicopter, which suddenly arrived on the scene to rescue the pilot, opened fire against the rural farmers, seriously injuring one of them. It was a miracle that they didn't kill them all. As the world knows, Arabs are traditionally hospitable towards their enemies, they invite them to stay in their own houses and turn their back to not see which way they take. Even a coward or a traitor could never represent the spirit of a social class.

The strange theory, that he included in his speech, could only occur to Obama, as shown in the following passage:

"There will be times, though, when our safety is not directly threatened, but our interests and our values are. [...] And in these circumstances, we know that the United States, as the world's most powerful nation, will often be called upon to help."

"In such cases, we should not be afraid to act -- but the burden of action should not be America's alone. As we have in Libya, our task is instead to mobilize the international community for collective action."

"That's the kind of leadership we've shown in Libya. Of course, even when we act as part of a coalition, the risks of any military action will be high. Those risks were realized when one of our planes malfunctioned over Libya. Yet when one of our airmen parachuted to the ground, in a country whose leader has so often demonized the United States -- in a region that has such a difficult history with our country -- this American did not find enemies. Instead, he was met by people who embraced him. One young Libyan who came to his aid said, "We are your friends. We are so grateful to those men who are protecting the skies."

"This voice is just one of many in a region where a new generation is refusing to be denied their rights and opportunities any longer."

"Yes, this change will make the world more complicated for a time. Progress will be uneven, and change will come differently to different countries. There are places, like Egypt, where this change will inspire us and raise our hopes."

Everyone knows that Mubarak was an ally of the U.S., and when Obama visited the University of Cairo, in June 2009, he could not ignore the tens of billions of dollars stolen by him in Egypt.

He continued with the emotional story:

"...we welcome the fact that history is on the move in the Middle East and North Africa, and that young people are leading the way. Because wherever people long to be free, they will find a friend in the United States. Ultimately, it is that faith -- those ideals -- that are the true measure of American leadership."

"...our strength abroad is anchored in our strength here at home. That must always be our North Star -- the ability of our people to reach their potential, to make wise choices with our resources, to enlarge the prosperity that serves as a wellspring for our power, and to live the values that we hold so dear."

"And let us look to the future with confidence and hope not only for our own country, but for all those yearning for freedom around the world."

The spectacular story reminded me of the Tea Party, Senator Bob Menendez and the illustrious Ileana Ros, the fierce wolf that defied the law to keep the Cuban boy Elian Gonzalez kidnapped. She is now nothing less than Head of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives of the United States.

Gaddafi never tires of repeating that Al-Qaeda is making the war on him and sends fighters against the government of Libya, because he supported Bush's war on terror.

That organization once had excellent relations with the American intelligence services in the fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan, and has plenty of experience on the working methods of the CIA.

What if the allegations of Gaddafi were true? How would Obama explain to the American people that part of those ground combat weapons fell into the hands of the men of Bin Laden?

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Would it not have been better and and more intelligent to have struggled to promote peace and not war in Libya?

**Fidel Castro Ruz**

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