

A people under fire

Venezuela, whose people are heirs to Bolivar's ideas which transcend his era, is today facing a world tyranny a thousand times more powerful than that of Spain's colonial strength added to that of the recently born United States which, through Monroe, proclaimed their right to the natural wealth of the continent and to the sweat of its people.

Martí denounced the brutal system and called it a monster, in whose entrails he had lived. His internationalist spirit shone as never before when, in a letter left unfinished due to his death in combat, he publicly revealed the objective of his restless struggle: "...I am now every day risking my life for my country, and for my duty -since I understand it and have the courage to do it- to timely prevent, with the independence of Cuba, that the United States expand over the Antilles and that they fall, with this additional force, over our lands in America..."

It was not in vain that he stated in plain verse: "With the poor of this earth, my fate I wish to cast". Later, he proclaimed categorically: "Humanity is homeland". The Apostle of our independence wrote one day: "Let Venezuela call on me to serve her: I am her son".

The most sophisticated media developed by technology, employed to kill human beings and to subjugate or exterminate peoples; the massive sowing of conditioned reflexes of the mind; consumerism and all available resources; these are being used today against the Venezuelans, with the intent of ripping the ideas of Bolivar and Martí to shreds.

The empire has created conditions conducive to violence and internecine conflicts. On Chavez's recent visit last November 21, I seriously discussed with him the risks of assassination as he is constantly out in the open in convertible vehicles. I said this because of my experience as a combatant trained in the use of an automatic weapon and a telescopic sight. Likewise, after the triumph, I became the target of assassination plots directly or indirectly ordered by almost every United States administration since 1959.

The irresponsible government of the empire does not stop for a minute to think that the assassination of Venezuela's leader or a civil war in that country would blow up the globalized world economy, due to its huge reserves of hydrocarbons. Such circumstances are without precedent in the history of mankind.

Cuba developed close ties with the Bolivarian government of Venezuela during the hardest days resulting from the demise of the USSR and the tightening of the United States economic blockade. The exchange of goods and services grew from practically zero level to more than 7 billion dollars annually, with great economic and social benefits for both our peoples. Today that is where we receive the fundamental supplies of fuel needed for our country's consumption, something that would be very difficult to obtain from other sources due to the shortage of light crude oil, the insufficient refining capacity, the United States' power and the wars it has unleashed to seize the world oil and gas reserves.

Add to the high energy prices, the prices of foods destined by imperial policy to be transformed into fuel for the gas-guzzling cars of the United States and other industrial nations.

A victory of the Yes vote on December 2 would not be enough. The weeks and months following that date may very well prove to be extremely tough for many countries, Cuba for one; although before that the empire's adventures could lead the planet into an atomic war, as their own leaders have confessed.

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Our compatriots can rest assured that I have had time to think and to meditate at length on these problems.

Fidel Castro Ruz

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