

I WISH I WERE WRONG!

I was amazed to read the wire services issued during the weekend about the US domestic policy, evidencing a systematic decline in President Barack Obama's influence. His surprising electoral victory had not been possible in the absence of the deep political and economic crisis affecting that country. The American soldiers killed or wounded in Iraq, the scandal about tortures and secret prisons, and the loss of jobs and housing had shaken the American society. The economic crisis was spreading throughout the planet, thus increasing poverty and hunger in the Third World countries.

Such circumstances made it possible for Obama to run for office and be elected in a traditionally racist society. No less than 90 per cent of the poor and discriminated against black people, most of the voters of Latin descent and a broad working and middle class white minority, especially the youth, voted for him.

It was only logical for those Americans who supported him to entertain lots of hopes. After eight years of adventurism, demagoguery and lies, which led to the death of thousands of American soldiers and almost one million Iraqis in a conquest war over the oil of that Muslim country -which had nothing to do whatsoever with the atrocious attack on the Twin Towers-, the American people felt tired and ashamed?

Not only a few people in Africa and elsewhere got excited about the idea that the US foreign policy would change.

However, an elemental knowledge about reality would have been enough in order not to raise hopes about a possible political change in the United States after the election of a new president.

Obama had certainly opposed the war launched by Bush against Iraq long before many others in the US Congress. Since he was a teenager he knew about the humiliations of racial discrimination, and just as many other Americans, he admired Martin Luther King, the outstanding civil rights fighter.

Obama was born, educated, went into politics and managed to be successful within the United States' imperial capitalist system. He neither wished nor could change the system. Curiously enough, despite that, the extreme right hates him for being an Afro-American and opposes anything the President does to improve that country's deteriorated image.

He has come to understand that the United States, with hardly 14 per cent of the world's population, consumes about 25 per cent of the fossil energy, and is the biggest source of emissions of pollutant gases in the world.

Bush, in his ravings, did not even sign the Kyoto Protocol.

Obama, for his part, intends to implement stricter rules against tax evasion. For example, reportedly, the Swiss banks would supply data about approximately 4 500 financial accounts of a total of 52 000 owned by US citizens under suspicion of tax evasion.

A few weeks ago in Europe, Obama committed himself before the G-8 countries, especially France and Germany, to put an end to the use of fiscal heavens by his country in order to inject huge amounts of American dollars into the world's economy.

He offered health care to almost 50 million citizens who had no medical insurance.

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He promised to the US people that he would grease the wheels of the production apparatus machinery, stop increasing unemployment and resume growth

He promised the 12 million Hispanic illegal immigrants he would put an end to the cruel raids and the inhumane treatment they receive.

He made other promises that I will not list, but none of them questions the system of imperial capitalist domination.

The powerful extreme right will not tolerate any single measure that could in the least mean a reduction of its prerogatives.

I will just limit myself to refer to some reports published in recent days by US news and press agencies.

August 21:

- According to a poll published that day by The Washington Post, the confidence of American citizens on Presidents Barack Obama's leadership has substantially decreased.
- In the midst of an increasing opposition against the health system's reform, the telephone poll made by that newspaper and the ABC TV network among 1 001 adults from August 13 to 17 revealed that ... 49 per cent of respondents believe that Obama would be able to significantly improve the US health care system. This results accounts for 20 percentage points less as compared to the period before Obama started his presidential mandate.
- Fifty five per cent of the respondents believe that the US general situation is not going well, as compared to 48 per cent in April.
- The fierce debate over the health reform in the US evidences an extremism that has become a source of concern for experts; they are alarmed about the presence of armed men in popular gatherings, the drawing of swastikas and the images of Hitler.
- The experts in hatred crimes have recommended watching these extremists closely. While many Democrats have felt overwhelmed by the protests, others have decided to directly confront their fellow countrymen.
- The young woman who carried a manipulated picture of Obama, wearing a Hitler's style moustache, nurtured the theory that the President would create 'death panels' that would support euthanasia among senior citizens with no hope of recovery.
- According to reports, there are those who pretend to be deaf and resort to convey messages of hatred and extremism, which Brad Garrett, the former agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), deems as alarming.
- Last week Garrett said to the ABC network that we were certainly living through scary times, and added that the secret services are afraid that something may happen to Obama.
- According to reports, just on Monday last about twelve people were proud to show their weapons outside the Phoenix Convention Center in Arizona, where the President was delivering a speech before the war veterans in which, among other things, he defended his medical reform.
- It was said that another man was carrying a gun bearing the following inscription: the time has come to refresh the tree of liberty, which evoked the phrase pronounced by President Thomas Jefferson (1801-1809) when he said that "the tree of liberty must be refreshed ... by the blood of patriots and tyrants."

- Some messages have been even more explicit; they have wished for the death of Obama, Michelle and their two daughters.
- Those incidents show that hatred has penetrated America's politics more strongly than ever before.
- Larry Berman, from the University of California, who has written 12 books about the US presidency, said to EFE that right now we are talking about people who shout, who carry Obama's pictures in which he appears characterized as a Nazi (...), and refer to the term 'socialist' with contempt. He believes that part of what is going on is due to the racism legacy that still lives on.
- Reportedly, after The New York Times published the day before that the CIA had hired Blackwater back in 2004 to perform the tasks of planning, training and surveillance, this day's newspaper revealed further details about the activities entrusted to that controversial private security company whose current name is 'Xe'.
- The newspaper revealed that the United States Central Intelligence Agency recruited several Blackwater agents to install bombs on board of drones in order to kill Al Qaeda leaders.
- According to the information revealed by government officials to The New York Times, those operations were carried out in bases located in Pakistan and Afghanistan, where the private company equipped the planes with Hellfire missiles and laser-guided bombs.
- It was reported that the current director of the Agency, Leon Panetta, decided at some point in time to cancel the program and reveal before Congress in June the type of collaboration that existed between Blackwater and the CIA.
- According to the news, Blackwater's collaboration ended a few years before Panetta was appointed as CIA chief, because the agency officials themselves questioned the convenience of having external agents participating in programs of selective assassinations.
- Blackwater is said to be the main private security company in charge of protecting the US staff in Iraq during the George W. Bush administration.
- Reportedly, its aggressive tactics were criticized on different occasions. The most serious case occurred on September, 2007, when some agents from the company killed 17 Iraqi civilians.
- After considering the record figures of suicides and the wave of depression spreading among its soldiers, the US army is said to be, little by little, creating some special groups whose task will be to enhance its troops' resistance against the war-related emotional stress.

August 22:

- This day the US President Barack Obama is said to have harshly criticized those who oppose his plan to reform the health system in his country, and accused them of disseminating false and distorted information.
- According to reports, as he himself has pointed out in his speeches, the objective of the reform of the health care system is to put a halt to its rapidly increasing cost and ensure health coverage for almost 50 million Americans who have no health insurance.
- According to the news, this should have been an honest debate, not dominated by the deliberately false and distorted reports that have been disseminated by those who would benefit the most if things continue to be the way they are.

- According to what was published by The New York Times this day, the US State Department has continued funding Blackwater, the private company of mercenaries who were involved in the assassination of Al Qaeda leaders which is now called Xe Services.

- It was reported that the Governor of the State of New York, David Paterson, expressed on Friday last that the media had resorted to the use of racial stereotypes in its coverage of black officials like him, President Obama and the Governor of Massachusetts, Deval Patrick.

- It is said that the White House has estimated that the budget deficit during the next decade will amount to 2 trillion dollars more than the figure recently estimated, which would be a storming blow for President Barack Obama and his plans to create a public health system largely financed by the State.

- Forecasts within 10 years time are said to be very volatile and could vary with time. However, the new red figures in public funding will reportedly pose serious problems for Obama in Congress, and will cause a huge anxiety among the foreigners who are financing America's public debt, especially China. Almost all economists consider them to be unsustainable even if there were a mass devaluation of the American dollar.

August 23:

- The top ranking military who commands the American army is said to have expressed on Sunday last his concern about the loss of popular support in his country to the war in Afghanistan, while indicating that the country continued to be vulnerable to the attacks of the extremists.

- Mike Mullen, the chief of the military joint command said that the situation in Afghanistan was serious and deteriorating, and added that in the last two years, the Taliban insurrection has improved and become more specialized.

- In an interview aired by the NBC TV network, Mullen did not specify whether or not it would be necessary to send more troops.

- According to reports, a little bit more than 50 per cent of the respondents in the poll made by The Washington Post and the ABC TV network, whose results were recently published, expressed that the war in Afghanistan was not worth it.

- Reportedly, by the end of 2009 the United States will have three times more soldiers than the 20 000 who were deployed in Afghanistan three years ago.

Confusion is rampant within the American society.

September 11 will mark the eighth year since the fateful 9/11. On that same day, at Havana's Sports Coliseum, we advised that the war was not the way to put an end to terrorism.

The strategy of withdrawing troops from Iraq and sending them to the Afghan war to fight the Taliban is wrong. The Soviet Union was trapped in a quagmire there. The US European allies will be ever more reluctant to see the blood of their soldiers shed in that country.

Mullen's concern over the popularity of that war is not far-fetched. Those who perpetrated the attack on September 11, 2001, against the Twin Towers were trained by the United States.

The Taliban is an Afghan nationalist movement that had nothing to do with that event. Al Qaeda, an organization that has been financed by the CIA since 1979 and was used against the USSR during the years of the Cold War, was the one that masterminded that attack 22 years later.

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There are still some dark events that require further clarification before the international public opinion.

Obama has inherited those problems from Bush.

I do not have the slightest doubt that the racist right will do its best to try to wear him out by hindering his program and leaving him out of play, one way or the other, at the lowest possible political cost.

I wish I were wrong!

Fidel Castro Ruz

August 24, 2009

5:15 p.m.

Date:

24/08/2009

Source URL: <http://www.comandante.biz/fr/node/24789?height=600&width=600>