

Walking on Solid Ground

On April 2nd, while the G-20 Summit Meeting was beginning and ending in London, the well-known journalist of the influential Washington Post, Karen De Young, wrote: "Senator Richard G. Lugar called on President Obama to appoint a special envoy to initiate direct talks with the island's communist government.

"The nearly 50-year-old economic embargo against Cuba, Lugar (R-Ind.) said...puts the United States at odds with the views of the rest of Latin America, the European Union and the United Nations, and 'undermines our broader security and political interests in the Western Hemisphere.'

"The April 17-19 Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago would present a 'unique opportunity for you to build a more hospitable climate to advance U.S. interests in the region through a change in our posture regarding Cuba policy.'

"Lugar, the ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, -says Karen De Young- is in the forefront of a broad movement advocating a new policy that includes the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other business groups, a number of state governments and human rights groups. A bipartisan majority of Congress has repeatedly voted to ease restrictions on travel and other contact with Cuba, although the measures died after threatened presidential vetoes during the Bush administration."

"Lugar is a co-sponsor of a bipartisan bill introduced in the Senate this week that would end all restrictions on travel to Cuba except in cases of war or direct threats to health or safety".

"Lugar said the appointment of an envoy and initiation of direct talks on subjects such as migration and drug interdiction would "serve vital U.S. security interests . . . and could ultimately create the conditions for meaningful discussion of more contentious subjects."

Karen's article expresses no doubt that the Indiana Senator is walking on solid ground. His starting point is not a philanthropic position. As she states, he is working with "the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other business groups, a number of state governments and human rights groups".

I am certain that Richard G. Lugar doesn't fear the silliness of being described as soft or pro-socialist.

If President Barack Obama travels the world asserting, as he did in his very own country, that it is necessary to invest the sums needed to pull out of the financial crisis, to guarantee the homes where countless families live, to guarantee jobs for the American workers who are becoming unemployed by the millions, to install health services and quality education for all citizens, how can he reconcile that with blockade measures to impose his will over a country like Cuba?

Today drugs are one of the most serious problems in this hemisphere and in Europe. In the war against drug trafficking and organized crime, encouraged in the enormous U.S. market, the Latin American countries are now losing almost ten thousand men each year, more than twice the number lost by the United States in the Iraq war. The number grows and the problem is very far from being resolved.

That phenomenon does not exist in Cuba, a neighboring country close to the United States. On that thorny subject and in the war against illegal migration, the U.S. and Cuban coast guard services have been cooperating for many years. On the other hand, no American has ever died as the result of terrorist actions coming from our country, because such activities would not be tolerated.

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The Cuban Revolution, which has not been destroyed either by the blockade or the dirty war, is based on ethical and political principles; that is the reason why it has been able to resist.

My aim is not to exhaust the subject. Far from it: in this reflection I am leaving out the damage inflicted on our country by the United States' arrogant attitude towards Cuba.

Those who are capable of serenely analyzing the events, as is the case of the senator from Indiana, use an irrefutable argument: the United States' measures against Cuba, over almost half a century, are a total failure.

There is no need to emphasize what Cuba has always said: we do not fear dialogue with the United States. Nor do we need the confrontation to exist as some foolish people think: we exist precisely because we believe in our ideas and we have never feared dialogue with the adversary. It is the only way to secure friendship and peace among peoples.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fidel Castro', with a long horizontal stroke extending from the bottom left.

Fidel Castro Ruz

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