

Applauses and Silences

Yesterday on May 31st, an AFP dispatch read: "Cuba has accepted to reopen negotiations with the United States about migration and direct mail service, a new signal of the thaw that is happening just before an Organization of American States (OAS) Summit where the Cuban situation will dominate conversations.

"The head of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, Jorge Bolaños, communicated on Saturday that Cuba 'is waiting to reinitiate conversations about emigration and direct mail service', said a senior State Department official who remained anonymous.

"From El Salvador where she is attending a ministerial conference on regional trade, Hillary Clinton said that Washington was pleased to resume conversations with Havana on those issues."

Suddenly a rather undiplomatic sharp remark indicated that:

"'There will be an open dialogue as soon as there are changes on human rights and movement towards democracy' in Cuba", the EFE agency writes.

What is the kind of "democracy" and "human rights" advocated by the United States? Was it really necessary to launch that humiliating and arrogant warning?

Today when I saw the inauguration of Mauricio Funes on television and he spoke about reestablishing relations with Cuba, deafening applause and shouts of joy erupted in the room unlike anything else that had been heard during his speech. There, among the guests, was Hillary. Earlier, the speaker, who strayed many times from his written speech, had made the mistake of greeting Mrs. Clinton who is Secretary of State, even before Lula da Silva, the president of the South American giant who was sitting there in a group of presidents from our region.

The speaker, even before the end of the extended applause for Cuba -that could perhaps hurt Mrs. Clinton- started to speak and he again mentioned the United States with the best of intentions. However, very few people in that large room applauded that country.

A crucial moment, one that was much applauded in Mauricio's speech earlier on, happened when he mentioned the distinguished Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero whose tomb he had visited that morning. While he was saying Mass, that defender of the poor had been murdered with impunity by the bloody ARENA Party tyranny imposed on El Salvador by imperialism. In that room there were also legislators and senior officials representing the party that had murdered him; among them several of the few who applauded the United States.

In certain circumstances, not just words do the speaking; so do applauses and silences.

Fidel Castro Ruz
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