

Chávez, Evo and Obama (Part One)

I take a break from the tasks that are occupying all of my time these days to dedicate a few words to the unique opportunity presented by the political science of the sixtieth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The yearly event demands singular effort from those taking on the greatest of political responsibilities in many countries. For them, it constitutes a tough test; for the fans of that art, and there are many since it vitally affects everybody, it is difficult to remove oneself from the temptation of observing the interminable but educational show.

In the first place, there are infinite thorny subjects and conflicts of interests. For a great number of the participants it is necessary to take positions on events that constitute flagrant violations of principles. For example, what position to take on the NATO genocide in Libya? Would anybody like to leave proof that under their leadership the government of their country supported the monstrous crime being committed by the US and their NATO allies, whose sophisticated fighter planes, manned or unmanned, undertook more than twenty thousand attack missions on a small Third World State that has barely six million inhabitants, alleging the same reasons that were used yesterday to attack and invade Serbia, Iraq and Afghanistan and which today threaten to do likewise in Syria or some other country in the world?

Was it not precisely the government of the State hosting the UN that ordered the butchery in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, the mercenary attack on the Bay of Pigs in Cuba, the invasion of Santo Domingo, the “Dirty War” in Nicaragua, the occupation of Grenada and Panama by US military forces and the massacre of Panamanians in El Chorrillo? Who promoted the military coups and genocides in Chile, Argentina and Uruguay that cost tens of thousands of deaths and disappeared? I am not speaking about things that happened 500 years ago, when the Spanish were starting the genocide in the Americas, or 200 years ago when Yankees exterminated native peoples in the United States or enslaved Africans, despite the fact that “all men are born free and equal” as the Philadelphia Declaration of Independence states. I am speaking of events that occurred in the last few decades and which are happening today.

These events have to be remembered and repeated whenever an occurrence having the importance and prominence of the meeting taking place at the United Nations where the political integrity and ethics of governments are being put to the test.

Many of these represent small and poor countries needing support and international cooperation, technology, markets and loans that the developed capitalist powers have handled at their whim.

Despite the unabashed monopoly of the mass media and the fascist methods of the United States and their allies to confuse and dupe world opinion, resistance of the peoples grows, and that can be seen in the discussions that are being produced in the United Nations.

Quite a few Third World leaders, despite the obstacles and contradictions indicated, have laid out their ideas with courage. The very voices emanating from the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean no longer bear the lackey and scandalous accent of the OAS that characterized the statements of Heads of State in past decades. Two of them have addressed that forum; both of them, Bolivarian President Hugo Chávez, a mixture of the races that make up the peoples of Venezuela and Evo Morales, pure descendent of age-old native roots, poured out their concepts at that meeting, one of them via a message and the other speaking live, in response to the speech given by the Yankee

president.

Telesur broadcast the three statements. Thanks to that, from the evening of Tuesday the 20th, we were able to learn of President Chavez' message that was thoroughly read out by Walter Martínez on his program, Dossier. Obama gave his speech on Wednesday morning as the Head of State of the UN host country, and Evo gave his speech early that same afternoon. For the sake of brevity, I shall take essential paragraphs of both texts.

Chávez was unable to personally attend the UN Summit, after 12 years of struggle, without one single day's rest that put his life at risk and affected his health and who today is struggling in self-sacrifice for his full recovery. Nevertheless it was difficult for his courageous message to not deal with the most crucial topic at the historic meeting. I transcribe it, almost in its entirety:

"I address these words to the UN General Assembly [...] to ratify, on this day and in this setting, Venezuela's full support of the recognition of the Palestinian State: of Palestine's right to become a free, sovereign and independent state. This represents an act of historic justice towards a people who carry with them, from time immemorial, all the pain and suffering of the world.

"The great French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, [...] wrote with the full weight of the truth: The Palestinian cause is first and foremost the set of injustices that these people have suffered and continue to suffer. And I dare add that the Palestinian cause also represents a constant and unwavering will to resist, already written in the historic memory of the human condition [...] Mahmoud Darwish, the infinite voice of the longed-for Palestine, with heartfelt conscience speaks about this love: "We don't need memories/ because we carry within us Mount Carmelo/ and in our eyelids is the herb of Galilee./ Don't say: If only we could flow to my country like a river!/ Don't say that!/ Because we are in the flesh of our country/ and our country is in our flesh."

"Against those who falsely assert that what has happened to the Palestinian people is not genocide, Deleuze himself states with unfaltering lucidity: From beginning to end, it involved acting as if the Palestinian people not only must not exist, but had never existed. It represents the very essence of genocide: to decree that a people do not exist; to deny them the right to existence.

"...conflict resolution in the Middle East must, necessarily, bring justice to the Palestinian people; this is the only path to peace.

"It is upsetting and painful that the same people who suffered one of the worst examples of genocide in history have become the executioners of the Palestinian people: it is upsetting and painful that the heritage of the Holocaust be the Nakba. And it is truly disturbing that Zionism continues to use the charge of anti-Semitism as blackmail against those who oppose their violations and crimes. Israel has, blatantly and despicably, used and continues to use the memory of the victims. And they do so to act with complete impunity against Palestine. It's worth mentioning that anti-Semitism is a Western, European, scourge in which the Arabs do not participate. Furthermore, let's not forget that it is the Semite Palestine people who suffer from the ethnic cleansing practiced by the Israeli colonialist State.."

"...It is one thing to denounce anti-Semitism, and an entirely different thing to passively accept that Zionist barbarism enforces an apartheid regime against the Palestinian people. From an ethical standpoint those who denounce the first, must condemn the second."

"...Zionism, as a world vision, is absolutely racist. Irrefutable proof of this can be seen in these words written with terrifying cynicism by Golda Meir: How are we to return the occupied territories? There is nobody to return them to. There is no such thing as a Palestinian people. It is not as people think, that there existed a people called Palestinians, who considered themselves as Palestinians, and that we came and threw them out and took their country. They didn't exist."

"Read and reread the document historically known as the Balfour Declaration of 1917: the British

Government assumed the legal authority to promise a national home in Palestine to the Jewish people, deliberately ignoring the presence and wishes of its inhabitants. It should be added that Christians and Muslims lived in peace for centuries in the Holy Land up until the time when Zionism began to claim it as its complete and exclusive property.”

“By the end of World War II, the Palestinian people’s tragedy worsened, with their expulsion from their territory and, at the same time, from history. In 1947, the despicable and illegal UN resolution 181 recommends dividing Palestine into a Jewish State, an Arab State, and an area under international control (Jerusalem and Belem). [...] , 56 percent of the territory was granted to Zionism to establish its State. In fact, this resolution violated international law and blatantly ignored the will of the vast Arab majority: the right to self-determination of the people became a dead letter.”

“...contrary to what Israel and the United States are trying to make the world believe through transnational media outlets, what happened and continues to happen in Palestine —using Said’s words— is not a religious conflict, but a political conflict, with a colonial and imperialist stamp. It did not begin in the Middle East, but rather in Europe.

“What was and continues to be at the heart of the conflict?: debate and discussion has prioritized Israel’s security while ignoring Palestine’s. This is corroborated by recent events; a good example is the latest act of genocide set off by Israel during its Operation Molten Lead in Gaza.

“Palestine’s security cannot be reduced to the simple acknowledgement of a limited self-government and self-policing in its “enclaves” along the west bank of the Jordan and in the Gaza Strip. This ignores the creation of the Palestinian State, in the borders set prior to 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital; and the rights of its citizens and their self-determination as a people. This further disregards the compensation and subsequent return to the Homeland of 50 percent of the Palestinian people who are scattered all over the world, as established by resolution 194.

“It’s unbelievable that a country (Israel) that owes its existence to a general assembly resolution could be so disdainful of the resolutions that emanate from the UN, said Father Miguel D’Escoto when pleading for the end of the massacre against the people of Gaza in late 2008 and early 2009.

“It is impossible to ignore the crisis in the United Nations. In 2005, before this very same General Assembly, we argued that the United Nations model had become exhausted. The fact that the debate on the Palestinian issue has been delayed and is being openly sabotaged reconfirms this.

“For several days, Washington has been stating that, at the Security Council, it will veto what will be a majority resolution of the General Assembly: the recognition of Palestine as a full member of the UN. In the Statement of Recognition of the Palestinian State, Venezuela, together with the sister Nations that make up the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), have denounced that such a just aspiration could be blocked by this means. As we know, the empire, in this and other instances, is trying to impose its double standard on the world stage: Yankee double standards are violating international law in Libya, while allowing Israel to do whatever it pleases, thus becoming the main accomplice of the Palestinian genocide being carried out by the hands of Zionist barbarity. Edward Said touched a nerve when he wrote that: Israeli interests in the United States have made the US’ Middle East policy Israeli-centric.”

“I would like to conclude with the voice of Mahmoud Darwish in his memorable poem *On This Earth: We have on this earth what makes life worth living: On this earth, the lady of earth, Mother of all beginnings/ Mother of all ends. She was called... Palestine./ Her name later became... Palestine./ My Lady, because you are my Lady, I deserve life.*”

“It will continue to be called Palestine: Palestine will live and overcome! Long-live free, sovereign and independent Palestine!” Hugo Chávez Frías

“President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela”.

When the meeting convened the next morning his words were already in the hearts and minds of all the persons meeting there.

The Bolivarian leader was never an enemy of the Jewish people. A man with special sensitivity, he deeply detested the brutal crime committed by the Nazis on children, women and men, young and old in the concentration camps where gypsies were also victims of atrocious crimes and extermination attempts, something nobody of course remembers and is never mentioned. Likewise, hundreds of thousands of Russians perished in those extermination camps, considered to be an inferior race by Nazi racial concepts.

When Chávez returned to his country from Cuba on the night of Thursday September 22nd, he indignantly referred to the speech given by Barack Obama at the United Nations. Few times have I heard him speak with such disappointment about a leader whom he treated with determinate respect, as a victim of his own history of racial discrimination in the United States. He never thought him capable of acting as George Bush would have and he held on to a respectful memory of the words they exchanged at the Trinidad and Tobago meeting.

“Yesterday we were listening to a number of speeches, also the day before yesterday, over there at the UN, lovely speeches like the one made by President Dilma Rousseff; a highly ethical speech like the one made by President Evo Morales; a speech we might catalogue as a monument to cynicism, President Obama’s speech, is a monument to cynicism because his own face was betraying him, his own face was a poem; a man calling for peace, imagine that, Obama calling for peace, with what kind of morals? A historical monument to cynicism, that’s what President Obama’s speech was.

“Lovely speeches, guiding speeches, that’s what we were listening to: the speech by President Lugo, that of the Argentine president, setting courageous positions before the world.”

When the New York meeting convened on the morning of Wednesday, September 21st, the President of the United States, --on the tail of the words spoken by the President of Brazil which opened up discussions and after the de rigueur introduction – took to the podium and began his speech.

“Over nearly seven decades, —he began —, even as the United Nations helped avert a third world war, we still live in a world scarred by conflict and plagued by poverty. Even as we proclaim our love for peace and our hatred of war, there are still convulsions in our world that endanger us all.”

We don’t know when, according to Obama, the UN prevented World War III.

“I took office at a time of two wars for the United States. Moreover, the violent extremists who drew us into war in the first place -- Osama bin Laden, and his al Qaeda organization -- remained at large. Today, we’ve set a new direction. At the end of this year, America’s military operation in Iraq will be over. We will have a normal relationship with a sovereign nation that is a member of the community of nations. That equal partnership will be strengthened by our support for Iraq -- for its government and for its security forces, for its people and for their aspirations.”

What country is Obama really talking about?

“As we end the war in Iraq, the United States and our coalition partners have begun a transition in Afghanistan. Between now and 2014, an increasingly capable Afghan government and security forces will step forward to take responsibility for the future of their country. As they do, we are drawing down our own forces, while building an enduring partnership with the Afghan people. So let there be no doubt: The tide of war is receding

“When I took office, roughly 180,000 Americans were serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. By the end of this

year, that number will be cut in half, and it will continue to decline. This is critical for the sovereignty of Iraq and Afghanistan. It's also critical to the strength of the United States as we build our nation at home. Moreover, we are poised to end these wars from a position of strength. Ten years ago, there was an open wound and twisted steel, a broken heart in the center of this city. Today, as a new tower is rising at Ground Zero, it symbolizes New York's renewal, even as al Qaeda is under more pressure than ever before. Its leadership has been degraded. And Osama bin Laden, a man who murdered thousands of people from dozens of countries, will never endanger the peace of the world again."

Who was Bin Laden's ally, who really trained and armed him to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan? It wasn't the socialists, or the revolutionaries in any part of the world.

"This has been a difficult decade. [...] But today, we stand at a crossroads of history with the chance to move decisively in the direction of peace. To do so, we must return to the wisdom of those who created this institution. The United Nations' Founding Charter calls upon us, "to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security."

Who has military bases everywhere throughout the world, who is the greatest exporter of weapons, who possesses hundreds of spy satellites, who invests billions of dollars every year on military expenses?

"This year has been a time of extraordinary transformation. More nations have stepped forward to maintain international peace and security. And more individuals are claiming their universal right to live in freedom and dignity."

Then he cites the cases of Southern Sudan and Côte d'Ivoire. He doesn't say that in the former, the Yankee transnationals launched themselves on the oil reserves of that new country, whose president, at that very UN Assembly, said that it was a valuable resource, but would run out and he proposed its rational and best use.

Neither did Obama state that peace in Côte d'Ivoire was reached with the backing of the colonialist soldiers of an eminent member of belligerent NATO which had just dropped thousands of bombs over Libya.

A little later on he mentions Tunisia and he attributed the US with the merit of the popular movement that overthrew that country's government, imperialism's ally.

Even more mind-boggling, Obama would like to ignore that the US was responsible for Egypt installing the tyrannical and corrupt Hosni Mubarak government, which betrayed Nasser's principles and allied itself with imperialism, stealing tens of thousands of millions from his country and tyrannizing that courageous people.

"One year ago — Obama states—, Egypt had known one President for nearly 30 years. But for 18 days, the eyes of the world were glued to Tahrir Square, where Egyptians from all walks of life -- men and women, young and old, Muslim and Christian -- demanded their universal rights. We saw in those protesters the moral force of non-violence that has lit the world from Delhi to Warsaw, from Selma to South Africa -- and we knew that change had come to Egypt and to the Arab world."

"Day after day, in the face of bullets and bombs, the Libyan people refused to give back that freedom. And when they were threatened by the kind of mass atrocity that often went unchallenged in the last century, the United Nations lived up to its charter. The Security Council authorized all necessary measures to prevent a massacre. The Arab League called for this effort; Arab nations joined a NATO-led coalition that halted Qaddafi's forces in their tracks"

"Yesterday, the leaders of a new Libya took their rightful place beside us, and this week, the United States is reopening our embassy in Tripoli.

"This is how the international community is supposed to work -- nations standing together for the sake of peace and security, and individuals claiming their rights."

"Now, all of us have a responsibility to support the new Libya -- the new Libyan government as they confront the challenge of turning this moment of promise into a just and lasting peace for all Libyans."

"The Qaddafi regime is over. Gbagbo, Ben Ali, Mubarak are no longer in power. Osama bin Laden is gone, and the idea that change could only come through violence has been buried with him."

Observe the poetic form with which Obama deals with the Bin Laden affair, whatever had been responsible for this former ally, executing him by shooting him in his face in front of his wife and children and throwing his body into the sea from an aircraft carrier, ignoring the religious customs and traditions of more than a billion religious persons and the basic legal principles established by all penal systems. Such methods do not lead, nor will they ever lead, to peace.

"Something is happening in our world, —he carries on, regarding Libya — The way things have been is not the way that they will be. Dictators are on notice. Technology is putting power into the hands of the people. The youth are delivering a powerful rebuke to dictatorship, and rejecting the lie that some races, some peoples, some religions, some ethnicities do not desire democracy.

"The promise written down on paper -- "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" -- is closer at hand The measure of our success must be whether people can live in sustained freedom, dignity, and security. And the United Nations and its member states must do their part to support those basic aspirations. And we have more work to do."

Right away he starts in on another Muslim country where, as it is well-known, his intelligence services along with those of Israel, systematically murder the most distinguished military technology scientists.

He follows up with a threat on Syria, where Yankee aggressivity could lead to a massacre even more horrifying than that in Libya: "today, men and women and children are being tortured, detained and murdered by the Syrian regime. Thousands have been killed, many during the holy time of Ramadan. Thousands more have poured across Syria's borders.

". The Syrian people have shown dignity and courage in their pursuit of justice -- protesting peacefully, standing silently in the streets, dying for the same values that this institution is supposed to stand for. And the question for us is clear: Will we stand with the Syrian people, or with their oppressors? Already, the United States has imposed strong sanctions on Syria's leaders. We supported a transfer of power that is responsive to the Syrian people But for the sake of Syria -- and the peace and security of the world -- we must speak with one voice. There's no excuse for inaction. Now is the time for the United Nations Security Council to sanction the Syrian regime, and to stand with the Syrian people."

Could it be that some country has been left out of the bloody threats made by this illustrious defender of security and international peace? Who granted such prerogatives to the United States?

"Throughout the region, we will have to respond to the calls for change. In Yemen, men, women and children gather by the thousands in towns and city squares every day with the hope that their determination and spilled blood will prevail over a corrupt system. America supports those aspirations. We must work with Yemen's neighbors and our partners around the world to seek a path that allows for a peaceful transition of power from President Saleh, and a movement to free and fair elections as soon as possible.

"In Bahrain, steps have been taken toward reform and accountability. We're pleased with that, but more is required. America is a close friend of Bahrain, and we will continue to call on the government and the main opposition bloc -- the Wifaq -- to pursue a meaningful dialogue that brings peaceful change that is responsive to the people. We believe the patriotism that binds Bahrainis together must be more

powerful than the sectarian forces that would tear them apart. It will be hard, but it is possible.”

He doesn't mention one single word about the fact that that's where one of the largest military bases in the region is and that the Yankee transnationals control and dispose of at will the greatest oil and gas reserves of Saudi Arabia and the Arab Emirates.

“We believe that each nation must chart its own course to fulfill the aspirations of its people, and America does not expect to agree with every party or person who expresses themselves politically. But we will always stand up for the universal rights that were embraced by this Assembly. Those rights depend on elections that are free and fair; on governance that is transparent and accountable; respect for the rights of women and minorities; justice that is equal and fair. That is what our people deserve. Those are the elements of peace that can last.”

“...the United States will continue to support those nations that transition to democracy -- with greater trade and investment -- so that freedom is followed by opportunity. We will pursue a deeper engagement with governments, but also with civil society -- students and entrepreneurs, political parties and the press.

“We have banned those who abuse human rights from traveling to our country. And we've sanctioned those who trample on human rights abroad. And we will always serve as a voice for those who've been silenced.”

After this long-winded speech, the distinguished Nobel Prize laureate embarks on the thorny issue of his alliance with Israel that certainly doesn't come up among the privileged possessors of one of the most modern system of nuclear weapons and means capable of reaching distant targets. He knows full well how arbitrary and unpopular that policy is.

“I know, particularly this week, that for many in this hall, there's one issue that stands as a test for these principles and a test for American foreign policy, and that is the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. One year ago, I stood at this podium and I called for an independent Palestine. I believed then, and I believe now, that the Palestinian people deserve a state of their own.

But what I also said is that a genuine peace can only be realized between the Israelis and the Palestinians themselves. One year later, despite extensive efforts by America and others, the parties have not bridged their differences. Faced with this stalemate, I put forward a new basis for negotiations in May of this year. That basis is clear. It's well known to all of us here. Israelis must know that any agreement provides assurances for their security. Palestinians deserve to know the territorial basis of their state. Now, I know that many are frustrated by the lack of progress. I assure you, so am I. But the question isn't the goal that we seek -- the question is how do we reach that goal.

Peace is hard work. Peace will not come through statements and resolutions at the United Nations -- if it were that easy, it would have been accomplished by now

Ultimately, it is the Israelis and the Palestinians who must live side by side. Ultimately, it is the Israelis and the Palestinians -- not us -- who must reach agreement on the issues that divide them: on borders and on security, on refugees and Jerusalem.

Ultimately, peace depends upon compromise among people who must live together long after our speeches are over, long after our votes have been tallied.

Next, he goes on to verbosely explain and justify the unexplainable and unjustifiable.

“...There's no question that the Palestinians have seen that vision delayed for too long. It is precisely because we believe so strongly in the aspirations of the Palestinian people that America has invested so much time and so much effort in the building of a Palestinian state, and the negotiations that can deliver a Palestinian state. But understand this as well: America's commitment to Israel's security is

unshakeable. Our friendship with Israel is deep and enduring..”

“The Jewish people have forged a successful state in their historic homeland. Israel deserves recognition. It deserves normal relations with its neighbors. And friends of the Palestinians do them no favors by ignoring this truth.

“...each side has legitimate aspirations -- and that’s part of what makes peace so hard. And the deadlock will only be broken when each side learns to stand in the other’s shoes; each side can see the world through the other’s eyes. That’s what we should be encouraging. That’s what we should be promoting.”

Meanwhile, the Palestinians remain exiled from their own homeland, their homes are destroyed by monstrous mechanical machinery and an odious wall that is much higher than the Berlin Wall was, separating Palestinian from Palestinian. The best Obama might have acknowledged is that the very Israeli citizens are by now tired of the waste of resources invested in the military sphere that deprives them of peace and access to the elementary means for living. Just like the Palestinians, they are suffering from the consequences of these policies imposed by the United States and the most warlike and reactionary elements in the Zionist State.

“even as we confront these challenges of conflict and revolution, we must also recognize -- we must also remind ourselves [...]. True peace depends on creating the opportunity that makes life worth living. And to do that, we must confront the common enemies of humanity: nuclear weapons and poverty, ignorance and disease.”

Who can understand this gibberish spoken by the President of the United States before the General Assembly?

He follows up with his unintelligible philosophy:

“To lift the specter of mass destruction, we must come together to pursue the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. Over the last two years, we’ve begun to walk down that path. Since our Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, nearly 50 nations have taken steps to secure nuclear materials from terrorists and smugglers”

Could there be any terrorism greater than the aggressive and bellicose policy of a country whose arsenal of nuclear weapons could destroy life on this planet several times over?

“America will continue to work for a ban on the testing of nuclear weapons and the production of fissile material needed to make them”, Obama goes on to promise us. “And so we have begun to move in the right direction. And the United States is committed to meeting our obligations. But even as we meet our obligations, we’ve strengthened the treaties and institutions that help stop the spread of these weapons. [...]. The Iranian government cannot demonstrate that its program is peaceful

Back to the same old refrain! But this time Iran is not alone; it is accompanied by the Democratic Republic of Korea.

“North Korea has yet to take concrete steps towards abandoning its weapons and continues belligerent action against the South. There's a future of greater opportunity for the people of these nations if their governments meet their international obligations. But if they continue down a path that is outside international law, they must be met with greater pressure and isolation. That is what our commitment to peace and security demands.”

To be continued tomorrow.

Fidel Castro Ruz

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