

## Brother Obama

The Spanish kings brought us the conquistadors and landowners; their imprints remained in the circular mounds of earth assigned to the gold prospectors in the river sand, an abusive and shameful form of exploitation whose vestiges can be seen from the air at many sites in the country.

Today to a great extent tourism consists in showing off the glories of the scenery and tasting the food delicacies from our seas; we always share this with the private capital of the large foreign corporations whose revenues, if they don't reach the billions of dollars per capita level, don't even deserve to be noticed.

I must add, since I am obliged to mention the subject, and mainly for the young people, that few people are aware of the importance of such a condition at this singular moment in human history. I wouldn't say that time has been lost but I don't hesitate in stating that neither you nor we are not sufficiently well-informed about the knowledge and awareness we should possess in order to confront the realities challenging us. The first one we should be aware of is that our lives are a historical fraction of a second, that we must also share the necessities of life of all human beings. One of these characteristics is the trend of placing too high a value on their role: and this is contrasted on the other hand with the extraordinary number of persons who embody the loftiest of dreams.

But nobody is good or bad per se. None of us are designed for the role that must be taken on in a revolutionary society. In part, we Cubans have the privilege of having the example of José Martí. I even wonder whether he had to fall or not at Dos Rios when he said "Now is my time" and he charged against the Spanish in their trenches in a solid line of fire.

He didn't want to return to the United States and nobody would make him return. Someone ripped some pages from his diary. Whose perfidious fault was that? No doubt it was the work of some unscrupulous plotting soul. We know of differences among the leaders but there were no instances of indiscipline. Our glorious black leader Antonio Maceo declared: "Whoever should try to take over Cuba will be covered in the dust of its earth drowned in blood, unless they perish in battle." We also acknowledge Máximo Gómez as the most disciplined and discrete military leader in our history.

Looking at it from another angle, how can we not help but admire the indignation of Bonifacio Byrne when he declared, from the distant ship that was bringing him back to Cuba and as he saw the other flag flying beside our lone star flag: "My flag is the one that has never been a mercenary one...", immediately adding one of the loveliest phrases that I have ever heard: "If fragmented into tiny bits it should again be my flag someday...the raised arms of our dead will be ready to defend it still!..." Nor shall I forget the passionate words of Camilo Cienfuegos that night when several dozens of meters away bazookas and machine guns of US origin and in the hands of counter-revolutionaries were being aimed at the terrace where we were standing. Obama was born in August of 1961, as he himself told us. Over half a century would pass since that moment.

Nevertheless, let's see how our illustrious visitor thinks:

"I have come here to bury the last remnant of the Cold War in the Americas. I have come here to extend the hand of friendship to the Cuban people".

This is immediately followed by a flood of concepts, entirely new ones for most of us: "We both live in a new world, colonized by Europeans". The US President went on: "Cuba, like the

United States, was built in part by slaves brought here from Africa. Like the United States, the Cuban people can trace their heritage to both slaves and slave-owners”.

The native populations don't even seem to exist in Obama's mind. Nor does he say that racial discrimination was swept away by the Revolution; that pensions and salaries for all Cubans were decreed by the Revolution before Mr. Barack Obama's tenth birthday. The odious bourgeois and racist custom of hiring thugs to throw black citizens out of recreation centers was swept away by the Cuban Revolution. This would go down in history in the battle that was fought in Angola against apartheid, putting an end to the presence of nuclear weapons on a continent of over a billion inhabitants. That wasn't the purpose of our solidarity; we wanted to help the peoples of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau and others to rid themselves of Portugal's fascist colonial yoke.

In 1961, just two years and three months after the Triumph of the Revolution, a mercenary force, with cannon and armored infantry and equipped with planes, was trained and accompanied by US warships and aircraft carriers in a surprise attack on our country. Nothing can justify that premeditated attack which cost our country hundreds of casualties, both in dead and wounded. Nowhere is it recorded that the pro-Yankee assault brigade was able to evacuate one single mercenary. Yankee combat planes were presented at the United Nations as having been taken by rebel Cubans.

That country's military experience and power is extremely well-known. They also thought that Revolutionary Cuba would be easily knocked out of combat in Africa. The attack through southern Angola of the racist South African motorized brigades brought them close to Luanda, the Angolan capital. A struggle ensued there, lasting for no less than 15 years. I wouldn't even be speaking of this unless I had the elementary duty of responding to Obama's speech at the Gran Teatro de La Habana Alicia Alonso.

Nor shall I attempt to provide details, I will just emphasize that over there a glorious page was written in the struggle for the liberation of human beings. In some way I was hoping that Obama's conduct would be correct. His humble origins and natural intelligence were obvious. Mandela was imprisoned for life and became a giant in the struggle for human dignity. One day a copy of a book telling about part of Mandela's life ended up in my hands and, what a surprise, the prologue had been written by Barack Obama. I glanced over it quickly. The size of the tiny letters used by Mandela to specify information was incredible. It is worthwhile to have met such a man.

I have to indicate yet another experience in the South African episode. I was really interested to learn more details about how the South Africans had acquired their nuclear weapons. I only had very precise information that there were not more than 10 or 12 bombs. Researcher and Professor Piero Gleijeses would be a trustworthy source, having written the excellent "Missions in Conflict: Havana, Washington and Africa 1959-1976". I knew that he was the most reliable source on what had happened and I communicated this to him. He answered me that he had not spoken any more on the matter because in the text he had been replying to the questions of comrade Jorge Risquet, a good friend of his who had been the Cuban ambassador or collaborator in Angola. I located Risquet; he was involved in some other important matters, in the final weeks of a course. That task coincided with a rather recent trip Piero made to Cuba. I had advised him that Risquet was getting on in years and his health was not the best. A few days later, as I had feared, Risquet got worse and died. When Piero arrived there was nothing left to do but make some promises. But I had by that time gotten hold of information about matters dealing with that weapon and the help racist South Africa had received from Reagan and Israel.

I don't know what Obama would say about this story. I don't know whether he knew anything or not, even though it is rather doubtful that he would know absolutely nothing. My modest suggestion is that he should reflect and not try to elaborate any theories now about Cuban policies.

There is one important matter:

Obama gave a speech where he used saccharine words to express: "It's time, now, to leave the past behind. It is time for us to look forward to the future together...un futuro de esperanza. And it won't be

easy, and there will be setbacks. It will take time. But my time here in Cuba renews my hope and my confidence in what the Cuban people will do. We can make this journey as friends, and as neighbors, and as family... together”.

We presume that each one of us ran the risk of having a heart attack upon hearing those words spoken by the President of the United States. With a pitiless blockade lasting for almost 60 years, and those who have died in mercenary attacks on Cuban ships and ports, an airliner full of passengers exploded in mid-flight, mercenary invasions, multiple acts of violence and force?

Nobody could be so naive as to think that this noble and self-sacrificing people would renounce glory and their rights, and the spiritual richness they have earned with the development of education, science and culture.

Furthermore I would point out that we are capable of producing the foods and material wealth that we need, with the efforts and intelligence of our people. We do not need the Empire to give us any gifts. Our efforts shall be legal and peaceful because we are committed to peace and to the sense of brotherhood among all human beings who live on this planet.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fidel Castro', with a long horizontal line above it and a shorter horizontal line below it.

**Fidel Castro Ruz**  
**27 March 2016**  
**10:25 p.m.**

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## **Source:**

Cubadebate  
27/03/2016

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Published on FIDEL Soldier of Ideas (<http://www.fidelcastro.cu>)

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