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Correa once again...

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The first time I saw him he was not president yet. He wanted to, and I was fascinated by his wide smile, perfect teeth, and above all, his easy-going vibe. I am referring to something that happened 13 years ago. He was a man much more attractive than he is today. I am talking about, of course, Rafael Correa.

Later, obsessions I have, I read many of his speeches on economy and then I was dazzled by his way of saying things. What a brilliant man and what a knack for writing about such complex issues!

And I saw him in events carrying boys and girls, happy to bring peace and improvement to his people. He smiles with artists, singers, with Cuban medical brigades.

I cried a lot with him when Fidel passed away. There were several stunning speeches, but I feel Correa's in my heart: "Most people loved you with passion, few people hated you but nobody could ignore you. Some fighters in their old ages are accepted even by their recalcitrant opponents because they are no longer dangerous. But you gave no respite, because until the end your clear words and mind defended all principles, told the truth and reported crimes. Bertolt Brecht said

that only men that fight their whole lives are the ones that are indispensable. I knew Fidel and I know he never aimed at being indispensable but he did fight his whole life. He was born, lived and died with the foolishness of what now is something foolish, accepting the enemy, the foolish thing of living with no price. You will continue to run through mountains with a ruby, five strips and a star.”

I remember the Ecuadorian leader opening his shirt (always embroidered with indigenous symbols) yelling at those who wanted to dethrone him “shot me here.” He was wounded that time and since his recovery, he led his “Citizens’ Revolution.”

The same Revolution that has given Ecuador better life conditions in the last ten years. He talked about it in the Main Hall of the University of Havana. He loves economy and he explained how economy can help a country.

He has been granted 13 Doctorates Honoris Causa in different Universities. He has been also awarded with the special honor Jose Marti in Cuba, among others; or the special honor as illustrious son of the city of Santiago de Cuba, for a man who helped rebuilding the eastern city.

He could not been there without visiting the highland stone where the ashes of Fidel are kept. Correa laid a ceremonial wreath with a wonderful dedication. But his eyes were shocking. The things you could see through them, as if both were talking to Fidel. He is one of the greatest Latin American sons that Fidel left.

Then he danced at night with an Ecuadorian group —two dozens of Ecuadorians gathered to see their President— at CUJAE. He also sang and brimmed over with happiness as if he were a professor.

He will be back to the classrooms and he will have new students, but Correa will cling to the minds of his contemporaries as skilled President who turned economy into a weapon to create and develop a Citizens’ Revolution.

**Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Diaz / Cubasi Translation Staff**

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