
Obama at the Grand Theater or Obama's great melodrama in Havana?

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It was not the first time during his visit that he spoke broadly and addressed Cubans through the national television, but it really was the only one in which the president of the United States wouldn't share the stage with anybody and would have the whole space for himself since he arrived on this island two days earlier.

As it befits to the political culture he represents and has been happening since he set foot in Havana, once again nothing was left to chance and for more accuracy, the teleprompters brought from Washington, the same ones he used in the recording of his dialogue with Cuba's most popular comedian, escorted him on either side of the stage with a carefully written speech.

An attentive spectator of the audience could perfectly recognize a couple of people –located within the group of forty lawmakers who traveled from U.S. for the occasion– every time the speaker's word should be replied with claps. That group of congresspeople and the US delegation that accompanied the president on his visit were the only ones who applauded the many times, in which his speech took the road of his paternalistic advices, or even worse, that of his more or less disguised interference.

A few seconds before starting, a stagehand rushed to place the shield of the bald eagle in front of the podium, as if they needed a sign of prevalence between the Cuban and US flags doubly located upstage and in front of the audience.

As expected, the beginning was dedicated to condemn the terrorist attacks that the Islamic State has just carried out in Belgium and the commitment "to do whatever is necessary to bring to justice those who are responsible" but, as expected, not even that terrible event motivated the speaker to make a reference to the 3,478 Cubans who have been killed by the terrorism encouraged, financed and practiced from U.S. against the country that, according to his own words "gave him a warm welcome" together with his family and his delegation. Much less he spoke about the total inaction of his government "to bring to justice those who are responsible" of those crimes.

Several times, however he resorted to storytelling, which writer Christian Salmon defined as a “machine of fabricating stories and formatting minds”, in order to –from personal accounts approached with political purpose– present the Cuban Revolution as something of the past. Thus he told us uncontrastable truths: that his father arrived in United States in 1959 and that he was born the same year of the CIA's invasion defeated at Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs), so as to conceal that incidents such as the kidnapping of little boy Elián González and the unjust imprisonment of the Cuban Five belong to the 21st century and were experienced by the youngest generations of this island.

But we must recognize there were praises too: whatever intelligent person –Obama really is– knows that criticisms are easier to accept if they are preceded by them. Our doctors and athletes were applauded, always individually, without acknowledging, and much less questioning the programs and regulations in full operation that the government of the United States has destined to deprive us of them.

Some opposed pairs were insistently used during the speech (youngsters-history, state-individual, government-people, past-future), in a divisive strategy aimed at the inside of Cuban society in which storytelling returned supported on successful migrant “entrepreneurs”, whose example our guest thinks we should and can follow starting from the “change” he no longer imposes on us, but suggests us from our own compatriots who have capitalized the “opportunities” that US capitalism offers and what some told him when he assumed the role of Santa Claus at a brewery in Havana a day earlier. By the way, the word change appeared fourteen times in his speech.

What reality has taught us is that after every success, thousands vanish along the way. Every economical triumph in today's world means most of the time, the collapse of the hopes of many. Promoting private sector in Cuba, especially when you are professor at the Harvard University and you know for sure the truth behind the Communist Manifesto, where it is said that this practice is abolished in nine out of ten places in the world, is not precisely an act of good faith.

After reviewing some US-Cuba similarities, the contrast between the two countries had a key separate paragraph where democracy is a monopoly in the system that the US has tried to impose on the world. Socialism is synonym of small-mindedness and thus, the Cuban State is a kidnapper of rights:

“Cuba has a one-party system. The US has a multiparty democracy. Cuba has a Socialist economic model and the US has an open market. Cuba highlights the role and rights of the State whereas the US bases its policy on the rights of individuals”.

However, we should ask American people how many days would their multiparty system last if, as Cubans do, they have the right to elect and nominate their representatives without mediators from any political party. In the same democratic line, that same president who had no interest for workers and only praised successful entrepreneurs, told us at Havana's Grand Theater that in his country “workers have voice”, omitting that just 11% of workers in the US are unionized.

When we look around those places where “system”, “democracy”, and “economic model” are perfect for the US, the facts show that the actual exercise of those “individual rights” are only a mere illusion. As historian Fernando Martinez Heredia said, some people may believe that Obama's visit to Cuba would represent a positive change for a vast majority of Cuban people.

Despite not having economical blockade, there is no country near Cuba in better condition than the island. By contrast, they suffer structural violence, child labor and drug trafficking. None of these elements exist in Cuba. When the US talks about “empowering the Cuban people”, what they really mean is to build a minority that meets their needs. The US now says they will not impose the discredited “regime change”, even though they have not retired a single penny from the millions of dollars they spend on it. They are creating the conditions so the change can be carried out by us.

On June 4, 2009, Obama delivered a speech at the University of El Cairo, a symbolic university for Islam and the Arab world, the whole Middle East. It was a wonderful speech for a president with less than five months in office. Fidel wrote then:

“Not even Pope Benedict XVI had declared such ecumenical phrases as Obama did. For a second I imagined the pious Muslim, Catholic, Christian or Jew, or someone from any other religion, listening to the president in the

spacious hall of Al-Azhar University. At a certain moment I couldn't tell whether he was in a Catholic cathedral, a Christian church, a mosque or a synagogue."

A friend told me, you can replace the words Cuba and Cubans for Islam, Iran, Palestinians, or Muslims. Instead of the passages from the Koran (Mohammed's words), substitute them with Jose Marti's words quoted by president Obama last March 22.

Shortly after, it took place the "Arab Spring" and the fall of secular societies like that of Syria. Today, Palestinians are worse than in 2009. And Arab citizens are the biggest losers in that "change" promoted by Washington.

Seven years later, the Middle East is a living hell without a foreseeable end and Obama keeps delivering ecumenical speeches. He now talks to Latin America from Cuba amidst a neoliberal counter-reformation in the region promoted by his government. And he quotes Jose Marti —at Havana's Grand Theater—, the same man who warned "preventing the United States from spreading through the Antilles as Cuba gains its independence and from overpowering with that additional strength our lands of America". Cuba has welcomed and listened to him with respect. Cuba is willing to move forward and reach peace after several years of struggle. But we must not confuse courtesy with naivety.

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