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Díaz-Canel: the Summit of the Americas is "a spectacle of neocolonial dye"

Against this Latin America that calls things by their name and does not ask permission to exercise its sovereign rights, the list of the excluded was drawn up.



The president of Cuba denounced the exclusionary and discriminatory nature of the Summit that begins this June 8 in the United States. The White House decided to prevent the participation of Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua. That exclusion led the presidents of Mexico, Honduras and Bolivia not to attend. Díaz-Canel assured that "the government of the United States lacks the moral authority to speak of democracy" and remarked: "the United States has the capacity to prevent the presence of Cuba in Los Angeles, but it does not have the power to silence our voice, nor to silence the truth."



From June 8 to 10, the IX Summit of the Americas will be held in Los Angeles, United States. The U.S. government decided to prevent the participation of Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua in the meeting. In rejection of these exclusions, several leaders of the region decided not to attend, among them the figures of the president of Honduras, Xiomara Castro, and the presidents of Mexico, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, and bolivia, Luis Arce.

The president of Cuba, Miguel Díaz-Canel, gave a conference to express his rejection of what he called "a spectacle of neocolonial dye"

Below is the full speech of the President of Cuba:

Comrades, comrades, let me begin with words that are more than a century old: "When a strong people wants to give battle to another, it compels the alliance and the service of those who need it. The first thing that a people does to come to dominate another is to separate it from the other peoples."

It was written by José Martí, 130 years ago after attending the Monetary Conference, an interested treat from the thriving United States to the young republics of Our America at that time.

Accredited by the government of Uruguay, a country of which he was consul general in New York since 1887, Martí, apparently, was almost excluded by inexplicable delays and lying excuses of the State Department.

That Conference failed and it is said that the Cuban contributed decisively to it, who would later write a deep and devastating analysis, dictated by his conscience of the dangers to which Our America was exposed to accepting monetary union.

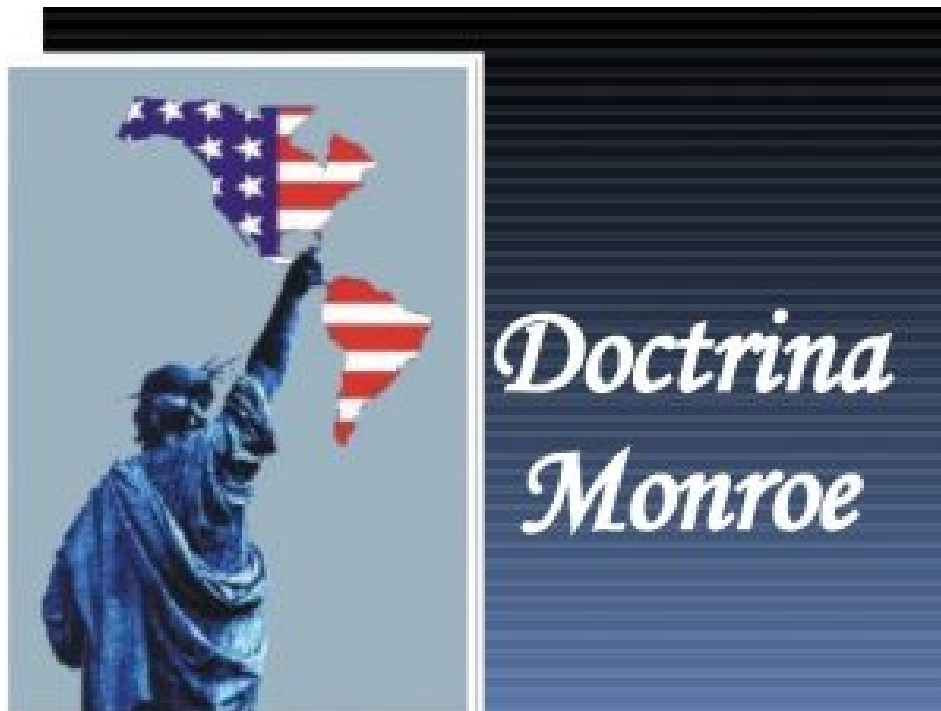
Head-on, without euphemisms of any kind, Martí defined in these lines, the inability of the United States to understand its neighbors to the South. I quote: "They believe in the incontrovertible superiority of 'the Anglo-Saxon race against the Latin race'. They believe in the baseness of the black race, which they enslaved yesterday and vexed today, and of the Indian, which they exterminate. They believe that the peoples of Latin America are mainly made up of Indians and blacks.

"As long as the United States does not know more about Latin America and respects it more, as with the incessant, urgent, multiple, shrewd explanation of our elements and resources, could they come to respect it, can the United States invite Latin America to a sincere and useful union for Latin America? Is it in the interest of Latin America to have political and economic union with the United States?" End quote.

Martí's questions contain in themselves the answers.

Few texts are more visionary about the policy of the United States towards our lands of America, a policy that the excessive ambition of the empire has frozen in time, by refusing to listen to the voices that are not submitted to it.

Whoever doubts it, put those words in front of the exclusionary conception of the IX Summit of the Americas and verify their absolute validity.



The philosophical dogma that always accompanied this insatiable ambition is the so-called [Manifest Destiny](#), a deep-rooted conviction of a racist and supremacist nature, whose conceptual statement that served as its context is the [Monroe Doctrine](#).

Without renouncing either of these two conceptions, the U.S. government convened the IX Hemispheric Summit in the city of Los Angeles, with discriminatory participation and insufficient regional representation.

In the case of Cuba, the exclusion was not only against the government, but also against representatives of civil society and social actors, including our young people. The United States is no longer content to determine who and how the Cuban government should be. Now they propose to define who are the representatives of civil society, and which social actors are legitimate and which are not.

Let me return to the story, which always hides so many lessons:

Between January and February 1928, Cuba hosted the Sixth Pan American Conference, one of the bad seeds of the OAS and the current summits of the Americas. The current president on the island was Gerardo Machado, a satrap of sad memory who would be defeated by a popular uprising in 1933.

There is no serious historian who ignores that "the choice of Cuba as the venue of that conference responded to the subordinate situation that the island had with respect to the United States. We were a Yankee protectorate, so the invitations didn't even leave Havana. They were processed by the Chargé d'Affaires of Cuba in Washington.

Despite that subordination that Machado and his team adorned with fiery acts of genuflection, the then president of the United States, Calvin Coolidge arrived on a warship and in the photos of the time he can be seen in the company of his wife, not next to his Cuban counterpart but several meters ahead.



John Calvin and his wife Grace Coolidge (left) and Cuban President Gerardo Machado and his wife Elvira Machado (several meters back). Cuba July 15, 1928. AP photo.

The order of the masters of the "backyard" to those responsible for Cuban policy was to avoid any uncomfortable discussion. The recent interventions in Haiti and Nicaragua had warmed the atmosphere and the discussions had to be prevented from disturbing the imperial ears.

They say that, on a previous trip to the United States, in order to obtain the headquarters, Machado had committed to Coolidge to avoid any approach or denunciation and to offer the most servile support to the Americans.

He touched the Cuban ambassador in Washington, the repudiable honor of pleasing the powerful visitor with a praise of the intervention that still insults: "We cannot join the general chorus of non-intervention," he said, "because the word "intervention", in my country, has been a word of glory, has been a word of honor, has been a word of triumph; it has been a word of freedom; it has been independence."

A government like the one that received Coolidge would be gladly invited by the organizers of the 2022 Summit of the Americas, as they did 94 years ago with the undisputed dictator Gerardo Machado, defeated five years later by the Revolution of '33.

But that is the Cuba that disappeared forever from the map of political subordination with the 1959 Revolution.

I refer you to the historic speech of the Army General and leader of the Cuban Revolution at the Summit of the Americas in Panama in 2015. With all the time taken away from us in the use of the floor in the previous Summits, Raúl laid down the principles that would guarantee a more fertile relationship between the two Americas.

I quote: "Hemispheric relations, in my opinion, must change profoundly, particularly in the political, economic and cultural spheres; so that, based on international law and the exercise of self-determination and sovereign equality, they may focus on the development of mutually beneficial ties and on cooperation to serve the interests of all our nations and the objectives proclaimed." End quote.

Cuba changed, Our America changes, but the empire does not change.

On the exclusionary and discriminatory nature of the event that will take place between June 8 and 10 in Los Angeles, the revolutionary government has already pronounced itself firmly.

The repudiation that this opportunist selectivity has provoked in most of the governments of the region is known, as well as the clear and firm position assumed by several of them, together with the notable absences to the appointment as a rejection of exclusion.

These confrontations between interventionist policies and sovereign policies also have antecedents in history.

In 1994, when the U.S. government convened the first of these summits and excluded Cuba, Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz summed up the essence of imperial arrogance in one sentence: "How much cowardice, mediocrity, and political misery such exclusion really reflects!" Fidel said.

The U.S. government of the time, in the euphoria of the supposed end of the Cold War, tried to use our most precious symbols to attract the peoples of Our America back to an already forgotten project of recolonization: the FTAA.

And he dared to speak of the Summit of the Americas as "the dream realized by Simón Bolívar." "Nothing else failed to say that it was also the realization of Martí's dreams," Fidel replied from a historic event in the Aula Magna of the University of Havana, in

which he coincided for the first time with the young and already impressive Bolivarian politician, Hugo Chávez.

Just 11 years later, in another historic act that exalted the People's Summit above that of the heads of state, with its famous cry: "FTAA, FTAA, al Carajo..." in Mar del Plata, Hugo Chávez would epitaph on the project of recolonization of Our America. Bolívar and Martí's dreams were coming true.

Against this Latin America that calls things by their name and does not ask permission to exercise its sovereign rights, the list of the excluded was drawn up.

We are honored to top that list alongside the leaders of Venezuela and Nicaragua and alongside you, genuine representatives of our people. As we are honored by the gallant solidarity of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, of Lucho Arce, of Xiomara Castro, of the Caribbean leaders who have emphatically rejected the exclusions and of others who will surely do so in the course of the Summit itself.

In a few hours we will be able to confirm what will be achieved or what proposals will be made in Los Angeles, beyond the inaugural pomp and the photo of the host President with those who attend. The publicity spectacle aimed at the internal politicking of the United States cannot hide the lack of real interest of that government in addressing the most serious and immediate problems of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Official documents and speeches by U.S. politicians and government officials from recent years can be reviewed. The few references to our part of the world reflect the profound misunderstanding of the current realities of a region with its own identity, whose peoples have accumulated cravings for justice, suffer from underdevelopment and growing inequality, and no longer endure the continuous theft of their natural wealth and the increased exploitation of their workers.

Nor do they withstand the pressure and meddling of the United States to force sovereign governments to adopt policies that benefit large transnational corporations, to try to achieve obedience and punish when it is not achieved. They reject the role of the institutions created by the United States, such as the OAS and the rest of the instruments of hemispheric domination.



None of the above appears on the agenda of the Los Angeles appointment.

The issue of migratory movements in the region is intimately related to development and, above all, underdevelopment. It has a close link with the global capitalist model and the advance of neoliberalism, whose economic policies generate greater marginalization, social instability, unemployment, lack of health services, unaffordable and insufficient education systems, and ruptures of the social fabric of communities.

Growing segments of the population will continue to seek the satisfaction of their needs and their dreams of prosperity in the advanced economies of the north. The current reality confirms the old idea that, if development does not begin to drain to the South once and for all, underdevelopment will advance at a faster pace to the North.

Repressive formulas, such as those intended in the document imposed by the United States for the meeting, are not the answer. They allow to temporarily mitigate uncontrolled migratory flows, but they do not solve the multiplicity of causes and conditions that cause irregular emigration.

In the case of Cuba, the U.S. government has for four years pursued a policy aimed at encouraging irregular emigration. As a rule, it gives entry to those who arrive at its borders through irregular means, privileges them with the possibility of obtaining permanent residence under legal formulas established only for Cubans, closed the legal ways to emigrate and maintains a policy of economic war aimed at depressing the standard of living of the population. It is what can be called a perfect recipe for promoting irregular migration.

However, an in-depth discussion on these issues is not foreseen at the summit these days and, of course, no effective result should be expected for a problem that will continue to weigh on our societies and on hemispheric relations.

Nor is a productive discussion on technology transfer expected, without which it is very difficult to expect a boost to the region's development.

The increase in connectivity and internet access in all communities is positive. But if this effort is limited to the promotion of captive markets for commercial advertising, and the orientation and encouragement of incessant consumption, its benefit for Latin America and the Caribbean is nil. Of course, the big commercial companies will win.

If it is aimed at establishing technological platforms that help sow in communities, particularly in young people, the ideas generated in ideological laboratories in the United States to promote behaviors and worldviews that stimulate political apathy and social alienation; encourage selfishness, promote racism, narcissism and aggressiveness, the result will be extremely dangerous. It will also be if it is intended to promote lies, banality, dishonest politicking, slander and informational assassination.

If what is sought is greater influence and more control over our societies through the monopoly in very few hands of the information technology platforms, the obvious goal is the consolidation of hegemonic and imperialist domination with new methods.

One of the most repeated topics of the spokesmen of the United States in promoting the summit of these days is the supposed defense of democracy, which they deceptively equate with the promotion of capitalism, as if it were the same, when in fact they are conflicting concepts.

Nothing in the past and recent history of the United States, nor in its current conduct in the hemisphere, suggests that democracy or respect for human rights are real priorities of its regional foreign policy. When they declare so, they act dishonestly and they know it.

Taking as a reference only the last 50 years, the absolute involvement and collusion of the United States with the bloodiest and most repressive regimes that this continent has known, with which they have most shamelessly practiced murder, disappearances, massacres, torture and extrajudicial executions, has been notorious.

It is an error and an unacceptable act of contempt to assume that our peoples have no memory.

But more importantly, the U.S. government lacks the moral authority to speak of democracy, when it is unable to defend or promote it on its own turf and for its own citizens.

It is not honest to talk about the defense of democratic principles when under recent federal laws the American political system allows unlimited financing of electoral campaigns and the management of politicians, buying them, or what is the same: buying rulers.

It is not sincere to preach democracy in the region when legislation is increasing in many States of that country that restricts the right to vote and the possibility of exercising it, especially if the voter is low-income, belongs to one of the so-called ethnic minorities or lives in neighborhoods considered marginal.

It is difficult to be a promoter of human rights on behalf of a government that is unable to secure the right to essential health services in the richest and most powerful country on the planet; that it does not have, nor has it been proposed to have, the political and legal tools that prevent the indiscriminate sale of weapons of war to the population, with the consequent and growing cost in innocent lives, including children, for whom it becomes a danger to go to school.

The promotion of democracy and human rights are only chimeras in a political system in which the interests of producers and marketers of weapons of war take precedence over the lives of children, the right to health and education.

It is not honest to trumpet human rights when that government allows the growth of racism, along with currents of intolerance and white supremacy; when rates of police and judicial abuse against Afro-descendants remain the norm.

Nor is it when the imprisonment or detention of children and adolescents reach unacceptably high figures. According to data from the American Civil Liberties Association, on any day of the year at least 60,000 children and young people under 18 years of age are locked up or detained in prisons or juvenile detention centers.

According to the Prison Policy Initiative, many of them have not even committed crimes and thousands remain behind bars for non-criminal offenses. The United States is the only country in the hemisphere where children under the age of 18 are sentenced to life in prison without parole.

With this deplorable track record, the U.S. government dares to claim that the criterion for inviting and excluding countries from the hemisphere from the summit meeting was the standards of democracy and human rights. The pretext is an insult to the intelligence and common sense of others.

With the planned design and the documents prepared, it is already known that the meeting will not discuss or approve anything about the economic and social inequality of the region; on marginalization, even within the United States itself. It is known that the growing problem of the judicialization of politics to sabotage the popular will and the governments elected with the support of the most humble sectors will not be addressed, nor will the corporate effort of the large transnationals to corrupt the governments of the region be treated.

The reasons why both the United States and Latin America are among the areas most affected by COVID 19 will not be delved into.

None of the documents presented by the State Department set out to move forward with practical actions in the fight against racism, in favor of the rights of women and children, and to alleviate the uncertain situation of migrants.

The problem of progressive climate change and the natural disasters that threaten the countries of the region so much will be left without practical measures. Terrorism, including state terrorism, and manipulation of the issue for political purposes are not on the agenda. Argentine law over the Malvinas, nor Puerto Rico's right to independence, will not be confirmed.

In the documents to be approved, there will be no pronouncement against unilateral coercive economic measures and their use against countries in the region as a weapon of political pressure.

Nor will they ratify the unanimous demand of the region, with the almost absolute support of the international community, to end the criminal economic blockade suffered by the Cuban people for 63 years.

However, it will not be possible to silence Cuba's voice, nor solidarity with Cuba. We know that the repudiation of the economic blockade will be heard there and that the government of the United States is clearly aware that this feeling is shared from one end of this hemisphere to the other.

For months it has become clear that the opportunity to take advantage of the presence in Los Angeles of regional leaders to truly discuss many problems that weigh on our societies will be lost. It could have been otherwise.

The U.S. government, with its enormous economic and technological power, with its great influence, could have made a momentous contribution in that direction. It required, of course, a dose of humility, of self-criticism, of recognition of the scars that mark our history; a minimum of solidarity and less selfishness, and a sincere recognition that times have changed.

Inter-American communication and interaction are necessary. There must be spaces for dialogue and cooperation between those of us who live south of the Rio Grande and the nations of the north. But it has to be with respect. The Benemerit of the Americas, Benito Juárez, expressed it with brilliant synthesis in 1867 and I quote: "Among individuals, as among nations, respect for the rights of others is peace." End quote.

Latin Americans and Caribbeans do not consider ourselves a backyard, nor anyone's front yard. It is a notion that offends us and we reject it. By constituting the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, CELAC, the countries of our region reaffirm the unrestricted attachment to the defense of sovereignty, independence and self-determination.

By promoting the necessary regional unity and integration, we root the commitment to respect diversity among us. In this region we share countries large and small; those who are rich in natural resources and those who lack them; those who export hydrocarbons or electrical energy and those who import it; large food producers and those who need foreign trade to meet their needs. In addition, there are the small island countries that deserve preferential and differential treatment in the conduct of their international economic relations.

In some cases, we have profound ideological differences, which has not prevented the development of relations, and even cooperation, both to resolve serious political conflicts and to contribute to solving deep social problems and providing services to the most needy populations. In 2014 we unanimously assumed in Havana the commitment to the Declaration of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

With this vast, rich, and complex region, the United States could cooperate and join efforts to meet the great challenges of today's world. But it has to be with absolute respect for sovereign equality.

Times have changed and Our America does not accept the imposition of the interests of imperialism, just as it does not accept that we are used for the conflicts of the United States with those it identifies as strategic rivals in other parts of the world.

Our people have reason to ask: Why do we pay attention to an event that aims to have results of little significance, with great absences among the attendees and from which the United States decided to exclude in advance several countries in the region?

The problem is that we cannot ignore an additional effort, although failed, to reissue the Monroe Doctrine, nor can we stop denouncing the farce of once again summoning the countries of the region for a spectacle of neocolonial dye. The United States has the capacity to prevent Cuba's presence in Los Angeles, but it does not have the power to silence our voice, nor to silence the truth.

Our people have been aware of these issues. He is informed like few others and understands the current situation in the hemisphere. It is a participant in foreign policy and is the guarantor of national sovereignty and independence in the face of American hegemonic ambition. It also has an international vocation for solidarity and an earned right to keep abreast of developments in the region.

A People's Summit will also be held in Los Angeles on the 8th, 9th and 10th. The information that arrives indicates that it will be a true scenario of debate and confrontation of ideas, with a broad agenda and attached to the most urgent concerns of the region as a whole, with the participation of social organizations, unions, youth groups, community associations and people with deep social conscience in general.

Everything announces that the true transcendental political event will occur there and it is in that in which we regret the impossibility of having a significant face-to-face participation. We know that the contribution of the Cubans would have been an important contribution and it would also be an experience for you as you listen to the problems and approaches of the thousands of very diverse participants who will attend the forum.

At a time like the one that the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean are experiencing today, it is wise to return to José Martí. His enduring essay entitled "Our

America" has a validity that amazes. In it the apostle embodied teachings for all times. Martí said:

"... the urgent duty of our America is to teach itself as it is, one in soul and attempt, swift victor of a suffocating past, stained only with fertilizer blood that tears off the fight with the ruins, and that of the veins that our owners left us chopped. The disdain of the formidable neighbor, who does not know it, is the greatest danger of our America; and it is urgent, because the day of the visit is near, that the neighbor knows her, knows her soon, so that he does not disdain her."

Thanks a lot

Héctor Bernardo for La Pluma

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