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What Obama Knows

By Fidel Castro Ruz

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The most demolishing article I have seen nowadays about Latin America was written by Renán Vega Cantor, full professor at the National Pedagogical University of Bogotá, which was published three days ago by the website 'Rebelión' under the title "*Ecos de la Cumbre de las Américas*" (Echoes of the Summit of the Americas).

It is a brief article and I should make no versions. Those who specialize on the subject can look it up at the aforementioned website.

I have referred more than once to the infamous agreement that the United States imposed on Latin American and Caribbean countries when the OAS was founded at the foreign ministers meeting held in the city of Bogotá on April, 1948. Just by sheer coincidence, I happened to be there on that date, helping to organize the celebration of a Latin American students' congress whose main goal was to struggle against the European colonies and the bloody tyrannies imposed by the United States in this hemisphere.

One of the most brilliant political leaders in Colombia, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, who had managed to unite, with ever growing strength, the most progressive sectors in Colombia that opposed the Yankees' miscreation, had offered his support to the celebration of the students' congress. No one doubted he would win during the upcoming elections, but he was treacherously murdered.

His death led to a rebellion that has kept alive for more than half a century.

Social struggles have been taking place throughout millennia, since human beings, by resorting to wars, were able to take hold of a surplus production to satisfy the essential needs of life.

As is known, the years of physical slavery, the most brutal form of exploitation, went on in some countries until a little more than a century ago, as it happened in our own homeland during the final stages of the Spanish colonial domination.

Even in the United States, the enslavement of African descendants continued until the presidency of Abraham Lincoln. That brutal form of slavery was abolished there hardly thirty years before it was abolished in Cuba.

Martin Luther King dreamed about the equality of black Americans until almost 44 years ago, when he was vilely murdered on April, 1968.

The accelerated development of science and technology has been a sign of our times. Whether we are aware of it or not, this is what will mark the future of humanity. This is an entirely new era. What prevails in every corner of this globalized world is the real struggle of our species for its own survival.

As for now, all Latin American nations, particularly our own, will be affected by the process that is taking place in Venezuela, the home country of the Liberator of the Americas.

I barely need to reiterate what you already know: the close links that exist between our people and the people of Venezuela and Hugo Chávez, the promoter of the Bolivarian Revolution and the United Socialist Party he founded.

One of the first actions promoted by the Bolivarian Revolution was the medical cooperation program with Cuba. This is an area where our country has achieved a special prestige, which has been recognized nowadays by the international public opinion. Thousands of health centers equipped with state-of-the-art technology manufactured by the world's specialized industry have been founded by the Bolivarian government to provide medical assistance to its people. Chávez, on his part, did not choose to go to expensive private clinics to care for his own health. He trusted it to the same medical services he was offering to his people.

Besides, our doctors have devoted part of their time to the training of Venezuelan doctors in classrooms that have been properly equipped by the Venezuelan government. The people of Venezuela, regardless of their personal incomes, began to receive the specialized services offered by our doctors. It is now among the ones with the best medical care in the world and their health standards have obviously begun to improve.

President Obama knows this only too well and has talked about it with some of his visitors. He candidly told one of them: "The problem is that the United States sends soldiers while Cuba, however, sends doctors".

Chávez, a leader who has not had a minute of rest in the last twelve years and enjoyed an iron constitution, was, however, affected by an unexpected illness that was discovered and treated by the same specialized staff that usually assisted him. It was not easy to persuade him of the need to pay maximum attention to his own health. Since that moment, with an exemplary behavior, he has rigorously followed the treatment prescribed without neglecting his duties as Head of State and leader of his country.

I would dare to describe his attitude as heroic and disciplined. Not even for a single minute does he forget about his obligations; at times he does that to the point of exhaustion. I can attest to that because I have not ceased to be in touch and exchange with him. He has not stopped to devote his fertile intelligence to the study and analysis of the problems of his country. He finds the vile remarks and slanders of the spokespersons of the oligarchy and the empire to be amusing. I never heard him utter any insult or vile remarks when referring to his enemies. That is not his kind of language.

The enemy knows the features of his character and is multiplying its efforts with the purpose of slandering and attacking President Chávez. I, for one, do not hesitate in stating my modest opinion –which emanates from more than half a century of struggles- that the oligarchy will never again be able to govern that country. That is the reason why the US government's decision to promote the overthrow of the Bolivarian government under such circumstances becomes a source of concern.

Besides, to insist on a slanderous campaign stating that among the top leadership of the Bolivarian government there is a desperate quarrel to assume command of the revolutionary government if the President is not able to overcome his illness, is tantamount to building a gross lie.

Quite on the contrary, I have been able to see the closest unity among the leaders of the Bolivarian Revolution.

Under such circumstances, any mistake made by Obama could provoke rivers of blood in Venezuela. The Venezuelan blood is also Ecuadorian, Brazilian, Argentinean, Bolivian, Chilean, Uruguayan, Central American, Dominican and Cuban blood.

It is necessary to bear in mind this reality when analyzing the political situation in Venezuela.

Is it now understood why the workers' anthem is a call to change the world by doing away with the bourgeois empire?