

RECONCILIACIÓN SÍ, AISLAMIENTO NO

Never will happen. The administration Bush can claim for international cooperation against the Cuban regime until it disappears. Although the European Union and the majority of the Latin American governments are tired of the buffoonery of Fidel Castro and condemn its deplorable record on human rights, all oppose the US policy of isolation. The same happens with almost all the dissidents in Cuba, with the Vatican, Vaclav Havel, Vicente Fox, with the majority of the democrats and republicans in Congress and with at least a third of Cuban Americans in the south of Florida, to mention a few.

The embargo of the United States has a logic of double刃:

- On the one hand, it tries to pressure La Habana towards change, swinging a noose in one hand and a carrot in the other. Es un tremendo error: Castro simply will not negotiate.
- On the other hand, it pursues implicitly a popular rebellion that the regime cannot smother, a scenario that easily could have preceded the intervention of the United States.

The officials of the Bush administration have denied categorically the allegations of Castro about an imminent aggression. Even so, a escalation of violence in Cuba could easily precipitate the action of the United States. Contributing in part to the US army in the gestation of the fall of Castro, the commander would be engulfed in flames nationalists that would burn for generations.

Isolation against opening; perhaps it is the moment to invert the adjectives associated with each. A policy of opening may be the real line. What else could we conclude after more than four decades of touching the same compás while Castro carries the rhythm?

Recently, the US Department of State published a report that includes a sinnúmero of recommendations to accelerate the death of the regime and to support a new Cuban government. The majority refers to this last, highlighting the pléthora of problems –humanitarian, of infrastructure, environmental, institutional and economic – that await Cuba in its transition and the way in which the United States can help. These are fundamental technical questions that Washington could answer if a transition government asks for it.

It is the political aspects of the report that result in exasperating. The US government has nothing to do with the delicate terrain of what a new Cuban government should do with respect to the officials of the previous regime that violated human rights and, in particular, nothing to do with naming groups

presumably responsible, such as the bodies of security of the State, the police, the Committees of Defense of the Revolution, the leaders of the Party and the officials of the government.

The year past, the Working Group, Memory, Truth and Justice, which I presided, published a report titled "Cuba, the national reconciliation",¹ in which we addressed these issues with care. There, we raised difficult but necessary questions about all the parties involved –the Cuban government, the opposition army and the United States– without tracing equivalencies moral nor assign analog responsibilities, leaving La Habana the longest. A democratic Cuba will also need the United States to take into account its past actions against Cuba. In 1975, Senator Frank Church provided an admirable partial chronicle during the hearings in which it investigated the implication of the CIA in conspiracies to assassinate foreign leaders, including Castro.

The prerogative of seeking justice or how to seek it for the victims of Castro belongs fundamentally to the Cubans in the island. The community in the exile and, in particular, the US government should respect this right and, therefore, not interfere in the events in Cuba. In other words, we run the risk of turning this delicate issue into a explosive spark, which would complicate even more the democracy and the reconciliation.

La exclusión de primos y tíos

The report addressed to the president limits family visits of Cubans Americans (once every three years in place of once a year), reduces the *per diem* legal (from 164 to 50 dollars), and defines the family in restrictive terms with the aim of excluding relatives, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, uncles and aunts. Even when these visits generate a circulation for the regime, the extended family that sustains it is priceless. The reunification of the family is the touchstone for the national reconciliation, and the Bush administration seems indifferent to it.

It is clear that electoral considerations were the driving force behind these measures. We will see if the day of the elections the Cuban Americans of Florida go in masse to support Bush. In the meantime, his administration has inadvertently given John Kerry a free pass. Who would be able to challenge the placement of Cuban families in the center of the US policy? Senator Kerry: the opportunity is his.

Maintaining families separated has nothing to do with the values of the United States. –

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¹ <http://memoria.fin.edu>