

Reflections by Comrade Fidel

november 26 2010

EVO'S SPEECH

There are moments in history that require a speech, even if it is as brief as the "*Alea jacta est*" ("The die is cast") pronounced by Julius Caesar when he crossed the Rubicon. It had to be crossed that day, precisely when the ministers of defence of the sovereign states of the western hemisphere were meeting in the city of Santa Cruz, where the Yankees had been encouraging secessionism and the disintegration of Bolivia.

It was Monday the 21st and the news agencies were devoting their time to divulging and commenting on the NATO meeting in Lisbon where that war-mongering institution, using arrogant and uncouth language, proclaimed its right to intervene in any country of the world wherever their interests were being felt to be threatened.

They were completely ignoring the fate of billions of people, and the real causes of poverty and suffering of most of the planet's inhabitants.

NATO's cynicism deserved an answer, and that arrived in the voice of an Aymara Indian from Bolivia, in the heart of South America, where a more human civilization had blossomed before the Conquest, colonialism, capitalist development and imperialism imposed the rule of brute force, based on the power of more developed weapons and technologies.

Evo Morales, president of that country, elected by the vast majority of his people, with indisputable arguments, information and facts, perhaps even before being aware of the monstrous NATO document, provided an answer to the policy that the United States government has historically been carrying out with the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The policy of might expressed through wars, crimes, violations to constitutions and the laws; training the officers of the armed institutions in conspiracies, coups d'état, political crimes that were used to overthrow progressive governments and install regimes of force to which they regularly offered political, military and media support.

Never was there a more timely speech.

Many times using the expressive manner of his Aymara language, he stated truths that will go down in history.

I shall attempt to briefly summarize what he said, using his own phrases and words:

“Thank you very much.

“It is a great satisfaction to receive you, the ministers of defence of the Americas, in Santa Cruz de la Sierra; Santa Cruz, the land of Ignacio Warnes, of Juan José Manuel Vaca, rebellious men who from 1810 fought and gave their lives for the independence of our beloved Bolivia.

“Men such as Andrés Ibáñez, Atahualpa Tumpa, a native brother who, during the republic, fought for autonomy and for equality for all the peoples of our lands.

“Welcome to Bolivia, land of Túpac Katari, land of Bartolina Sisa, of Simón Bolívar and of so many men who fought 200 years ago for the Independence of Bolivia and many countries in the Americas.

“Latin America [...], in recent years, is living through profound democratic transformations seeking equality and dignity for the peoples...”

“...following the footsteps of Antonio José de Sucre, of Simón Bolívar, of so many native, mestizo and Creole leaders who lived 200 years ago.”

“Exactly one week ago, we were celebrating the bicentenary of the Army of Bolivia which, on November 14th of 1810, native peoples, mestizos and Creoles had organized as a military force to fight against Spanish domination...”

“In recent years, Latin America again takes up that decision to free ourselves as in a second liberation that is not only social or cultural but also economic and financial for the peoples of Latin America.

“...this 9th Conference of Ministers of the Defence has on its agenda gender and multiculturalism in the Armed Forces, democracy, peace and security for the Americas, natural disasters, humanitarian aid and the role of the Armed Forces; an appropriate agenda, an agenda that is well-conceived to discuss the hopes of the peoples, not just of Latin America, but of the world”.

“In 1985 [...] the only ones who could be elected or could elect authorities were those having money, those who had a profession or who spoke Spanish or Castilian.

“Therefore, less than 10 percent of the Bolivian population could take part in electing or being elected as authorities, and more than 90 percent of us had no rights [...] there have been various processes [...] some reforms, but in 2009, with the participation of the Bolivian people for the very first time, a new Plurinational State Constitution was passed by the Bolivian people.”

“...in this new Constitution, of course the most excluded sectors [...] had no rights to be elected or to elect the State authorities of the Republic of Bolivia.

“More than 180 years had to go by for us to make some profound transformations and incorporate these historically excluded sectors in Bolivia, and I hope I am not mistaken, I think it is the only country not just in the Americas but in the entire world where 50 percent of the ministers are women and 50 percent are men.”

“Of course beyond norms, the constitution [...] I think that this is the political decision we must take in order to include the most abandoned sectors; after the Constitution was approved by the Bolivian people in 2009, the most excluded, reviled people, those that were considered to be animals, those that were the indigenous movement, now they are represented in the Plurinational Legislative Assembly as well as in the departmental assemblies.

“Something important; for the indigenous movements that do not have a large population, special electoral districts have been created so that our brothers and sisters from the highlands, the valleys and the eastern part of Bolivia may be represented.

The single candidate system also allow for our indigenous brothers and sisters to be represented in the Plurinational Legislative Assembly ...”

“In this way, we permit these indigenous brothers and sisters, who were left out and condemned to extermination, to be present.”

“...that had never happened before ...”

“...when I was a young man, as a union leader I would sometimes dispute with the Armed Forces and later, when I became president, I realized that a large part of the Armed Forces comes from the peasant communities, particularly those in the valleys...”

“Dear Ministers: I would like to tell you that never before did we have such participation; before, it was merely the color of your skin that determined your class in society and now, a indigenous person, a union leader, an intellectual, a professional, a business leader, a soldier, a general, anyone can become the president, democratically. Before, we didn’t have this way of changing Bolivia and our constitution.

“When this conference is putting forth the idea of only democracy, security and peace, of reviewing history, of reviewing the norms, this is for me very exciting; it is a pleasure to review these things dealing with democracy, security and peace in the Americas or in the world, not just for the sake of reviewing.

“If we talk about democracy in Bolivia’s past, there was only a contractual democracy; there was no party that could win with more than 50% as the Constitution of the Plurinational State declares ...”

“...up to 2005, from 1952, the 1950s, in Bolivia there were only ‘contractual democracies’; there were parties winning with 20 percent, 30 percent ...”

“A party in third place could become president; it all depended on the contracts and the distribution of the ministers. This kind of contract was precisely the kind that used to be guided by the United States ambassador. Our compatriots, our Bolivian brothers and sisters, should remember 2002, for example, when there was no winner having more than 50 percent; the party with the highest percentage in the voting got 21 percent. And there was the former US ambassador, Manuel Rocha, pulling together, uniting the neoliberal parties, in order for there to be a government: and those governments didn’t last, they could not endure.

“Luckily, thanks to the conscience of the Bolivian people, these kinds of democracies are being eliminated; now we do not have a ‘contractual democracy’, but a legitimate democracy in the hearts of the Bolivian people who accompany it with the thoughts and feelings coming from the suffering of peoples, under a government program.”

“...a program that brings dignity to the Bolivians, a program that seeks equality of all

Bolivians, men and women; a program that recovers its natural resources, a program that allows basic services to be a human right..."

"...when some of our opposition, like yourselves, every country has its opposition, tells us, some totalitarian government, a dictatorial government, is it my fault that this program proposed by a party has more than two-thirds support in the different bodies of the Plurinational State, by myself I have not been able to win the mayoralty of the city of Santa Cruz.

"We respect our mayor, they won, but I salute you, Mr. Mayor, for the actions you undertook last week to fight against the speculation [...] congratulations Mr. Mayor, you have my respect..."

"And some say to us, one single philosophy, there is no single philosophy; only a program that is working in the different social sectors at the head of social movements of the indigenous peoples and the workers can obtain the support needed to change Bolivia.

"But what do we face along the road if we talk about democracy, conspiracy, coup d'état, attempts at coups in 2008 [...] who was it that contributed to this coup? The former US ambassador.

"I was looking over some history [...] about the 1946 coup d'état when the president was Lt. Col. Gualberto Villarroel, who said as president, I am not the enemy of the rich, but I am more a friend to the poor; this patriotic soldier was the first president who called together the indigenous peoples' congress.

"Another president, Germán Bush, a soldier, who stated: I have not become the president to serve the capitalists.

"The first president to nationalize natural resources, was another soldier, David Toro; I'm speaking of 1937 or 1938 [...], but this soldier was hanged in 1946, they assassinated him in the Palace."

“...and so the offensive was concentrated on the massive part of the Palacio Quemado that was under fire from Illimani Street, at the corner of Bolívar, from Comercio Street, from the Police and from behind from the La Salle and Kersul buildings where the US consulate is located.”

“...watching the fire coming from the Kersul Building, where the US consulate was, and which had been investigating this patriotic soldier who had ensured the first native congress, strafing the building, shooting to kill that soldier...those are the documents we are looking over.

“...history repeats itself; I had to face an ambassador who organizes, who plans to terminate my presidency using anti-democratic means, and I think that this gets repeated all over the world.

“But a comrade, a compatriot of ours who has been the victim of so many military coups tell me: President Evo, you have to watch out for the United States Embassy, there have always been coups d'état all over Latin America and, he says to me, there has never been a coup in the United States because there is no US embassy; I really start to see the truth that history does not hear coups d'état.

“...we, the countries who have suffered attempts at coups from 2002 in Venezuela, 2008 in Bolivia, 2009 in Honduras, 2010 in Ecuador; and we must acknowledge, compatriots from Latin America or the Americas, that the US had a victory in Honduras, strengthening that coup, the American empire has had a victory over us, but also the peoples of the Americas, in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador have won [...] what will the future bring?; we shall see the future.”

“...this internal assessment should be a profound debate by the ministers of defence to guarantee the democracies [...] my ancestors, my people, have permanently been victims of coups, bloody coups, not because they wanted the military, the Armed Forces, but because of internal and external political decisions designed to terminate revolutionary governments, the governments that are born of the people; that is the history of Latin America.”

“...we have the right to propose for ourselves the ways of guaranteeing democracy in each

country, but without coups, or coup attempts.

“We would like this conference of ministers of defence to guarantee an true peoples’ democracy, respecting our regional differences, the differences from sector to sector.

“But also, when we speak of peace, I am saying, how can we have peace if there are military bases? And there too I can speak with some knowledge because I have been the victim of these US military bases, with the excuse of a war against drug trafficking.

“When I was a soldier, a private in the Armed Forces in 1978, the officers and non-commissioned officers taught me to defend the Homeland; the Armed Forces are there to defend the homeland, the Armed Forces cannot permit any foreign uniformed and armed soldier to be in Bolivia.

“...when I became a leader, I personally have been witness to the fact that uniformed and armed DEA members were leading the Armed Forces and the National Police, armed with machine guns, with the excuse of fighting agains drug trafficking against the social movements, persecuting by flying light planes over the marches from Santa Cruz, from Cochabamba, from Oruro, and they couldn’t find us, not with their light planes; and they would say that these were ghost marches, some ghost marches; thousands of comrades looking for retribution and seeking dignity and the sovereignty of out peoples.”

“...I am convinced that it we the people fight for our dignity, for our sovereignty, this cannot be done with military bases nor with military interventions, no matter how small we may be, we, the countries called under-developed, countries called developing countries; we have dignity, we have sovereignty. Also, when I had a seat in parliament they tried to make me support immunity for officials of the US embassy.

“What is immunity? So that US embassy officials, including the American DEA, should they comit some crime, wouldn’t be tried under Bolivian laws; this was an open invitation to kill, to wound us as they did in my region.”

“...Peace is the legitimate daughter of equality, and of dignity which is social justice; if there is no dignity, then there is no social justice and we cannot guarantee peace; how can we give a guarantee? Because there are peoples who rise up in rebellion because there is an injustice.”

“...listening to our UN Secretary General talking about the doctrines, the doctrines we know about in Bolivia, an anti-Communist doctrine that says coups should take place to militarily intervene in the mining communities because of the social movements; the mining communities were great revolutionaries aiming to transform Bolivia.

“In the 1950s, 1960s, they accused us of being Red Communists to the leaders of the mining sector so that we should be imprisoned, exiled, put on trial, even massacred; that era has passed; by now they cannot accuse us of being Reds or Communists – we all have the right to think differently.

“If, for a country or a region, the solution is Communism: fine; for another country it is Socialism: fine. It is the democratic decision of any country.

“But when we have won that struggle and they can no longer justify it with an anti-Communist doctrine to silence the people, to replace presidents, to change governments, another doctrine appears: the war on drugs.

“Of course it is the obligation of all of us to fight against drugs [...] Bolivia is not a drug-culture, Bolivia is not a cocaine-culture, but where is it that cocaine comes from? It comes from the markets of developed countries, that isn't the responsibility of the national government, but we are obliged to fight against it.”

“...behind the war on drug trafficking there cannot be geopolitical interests that need the excuse of the drug war to demonize the social movements, to criminalize the social movements, to confuse the coca leaf with cocaine, to confuse the coca grower with the drug trafficker, or the legal consumption of the coca leaf with the dependence on the narcotic.

“Why is it that they didn't fight against coca right from the last century, if coca is so harmful?”

The Europeans were the first landowners to exploit the coca leaf, surely it wasn't a detour to cocaine.

“Before, the US governments used to give certificates of acknowledgement to the best producers of coca leaves: why? So that the coca leaf grower could supply coca leaves to the tin miners and the US could take the tin to the United States.

“...the world knows, you all know, that the so-called war on drugs has failed; we have to change those policies, of course, what is this new policy, such as for example, ending the banking secrets: could it be that great drug trafficker, the big fish in the drug trafficking world, carries his money in his backpack, in his suitcase, travelling by plane, no, going around the banks – why not end the banking secret in order to end drug trafficking in order to control that drug trafficker?

“Why doesn't every country defend its borders against the entry of all drugs with similar technology, radars? I think there is a capacity out there to control and we cannot control; and it is with the excuse of the war on drug trafficking that controls are put in place, especially directed towards how to recover natural resources for the trans-nationals.”

“...the former US ambassador Manuel Rocha who says: Don't vote for Evo Morales. Evo Morales is the Andean Bin Laden and the coca growers are the Taliban.

“In other words, dear ministers, ministers of defence, according to this type of doctrine, you are at this very moment meeting with the Andean Bin Laden and my comrades from the social movements are the Taliban. Such accusations, often bending the truth out of shape.”

“...now, when they can no longer sustain these anti-Communist, anti-terrorist ideas and doctrines there is another new doctrine that we heard about a few days ago and I would like to take this opportunity to inform my people through the media.

“On the 17th of this month, a meeting of some Latin Americans and some US congressmen in the United States was held, a forum, which stated that there was danger in the Andes, threats to

democracy, to human rights and inter-American security.

“...Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen said that in recent years we have been observing with concern the efforts of several countries in the region, such as Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua , Rafael Correa in Ecuador, which are trying to consolidate their power at any cost, the ALBA Alliance members with Chavez at the head, one after the other manipulating the democratic systems of their countries to serve their own autocratic goals.

“Perhaps we should tell that congresswoman that we didn’t win, like in the US by a margin of one percent or two, here we win by more than 50 percent, or more than 60 percent, and in some regions by more than 80 percent and that is real democracy.

“What does the agenda say about Daniel Ortega, but the coca agenda promoted by Evo Morales, it is a brand new alliance with Iran and Russia, the case of Rafael Correa, the doubtful constitutional reforms with anti-American candidates.

“...under my leadership Bolivia will have agreements, alliances with the entire world; nobody can stop me because we have that right, we are a cultura of dialogue.”

“...without stable democratic partnerships we cannot have regional security: regional security or security for the United States? Now, more than at any other time, is when the US supports its enemies or weakens its enemies; now is the time for the OAS to absolve its legacy of double standards and finally makes its member states comply with the principles and obligations in the inter-American Democratic Charter; it would be a good idea to review the Inter-American Charter.

“The second congressman (he is talking about Connie Mack, and he explains his ideas in these words), I have everything he wrote, all his speeches, but to save time I shall try to summarize, I’d like to speak about some observations for the last six years as member of this Congress, I have frankly seen two administrations: the Republicans and the Democrats.

“Along these lines I think that this idea both the administrations have had in regards to Hugo Chávez, is that we shall not intervene, let’s just sit back and let him implode by himself; and the other thought is, what if Hugo Chávez is crazy, and what does he say, I don’t go for any of these ideas so I don’t think Hugo Chávez is crazy and I don’t think the approach of letting him implode is going to work, Hugo Chávez is a threat to freedom and democracy in Latin America and around the world.”

“...this is what concerns me most, I hope therefore that we become the following majority in the next Congress, as chairman of the subcommittee we shall do just that, we shall look after Chávez, whether defeating him politically or exploding him physically.”

Next, Evo states:

“I would say that this congressman Connie Mack is a self-confessed murderer or conspirator against our comrade brother the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez.

“If anything should happen to the life of Hugo Chávez, the only person responsible will be this US congressman. He says it publicly and it is written in the media and in his speech.”

“Comrade, brother secretary general of the OAS, you have to throw us out of Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia and also another place, also Nicaragua, and apply sanctions: what does that mean? Surely it is an economic blockade like the one against Cuba.”

“I think that’s what the sanctions refer to, so how can some of us countries in the Americas guarantee security and peace when these are the proposals being made by some congressmen, by some Latin Americans.

“I was looking over in this respect, the reason why they had expelled Cuba in 1962, supposedly for being Leninist, Marxist and Communist, Cuba is thrown out of the OAS; now the new doctrine is an anti-ALBA doctrine since, in these countries, we greet Fidel and Chávez and other presidents, since having an instrument such as ALBA is having an instrument for integration, solidarity, unconditional solidarity, sharing instead of competing, practicing policies

of complimentarism and not competition.

“...within that competition only small groups benefit and not the majorities who aspire to that from their presidents.

“Within these policies of competition and not complimentarism, not even capitalism is the solution for capitalism – that is the financial crisis.

“...the new doctrine much like earlier there were the doctrines from the School of Panama, the southern command was training our military, they shut that down thanks to the struggles of the people and now the School of the Americas is no longer around; what do we have now? Joint operations with special forces.”

“...I admire some of the officers of my Armed Forces who give details about those training sessions that they carry out each year on a rotational basis in the different countries of the Americas; what are they for? To propose to them how to wipe out those revolutionary countries, countries that are making profound changes in democracy, training sessions even to rehearse or teach snipers to kill the leaders.

“...with great indignation I had seen some pictures of these joint operations with special forces that rotate from country to country; of course Bolivia no longer participates, as long as I am the president, in these types of joint operations to keep on attacking democracy.

“...for the indigenous peoples' movement [...] this planet, or Pachamama, can exist without human beings, but we human beings cannot live without the planet, without Pachamama.”

“...capitalism is not private ownership because sometimes they try to confuse us and they say that President Evo is questioning capitalism; they are going to take away our homes, our cars; no, private ownership is guaranteed.”

“...the new constitution guarantees a plural economy and that plural economy ensures private ownership, it ensures communal ownership, state ownership and that of all the other social sectors, but when we are talking about capitalism we are talking about this irrational, irresponsible and unlimited growth.”

“Our comrades can no longer find water in the Amazon; when we start drilling in some region we have to go deeper and deeper to find very little water, and when we cannot ensure water on account of drought, exactly the result of global warming, that family must be left to fate, there are billions of them in the world, they are climatic migrants.

“We are not going to resolve that with the participation of the Armed Forces; we are not going to be able to resolve it with the participation of the ministers of defence or with cooperation; it is a structural world-based matter.”

“...we would like to resolve here, for the middle and long term, that the best solution is to put an end to disasters, or putting an end to natural disasters is putting an end to capitalism, changing those exaggerated industrialization policies.

“Of course all of our countries would like to become industrialized, to industrialize for life, to industrialize to be human beings and not to industrialize to end life and human beings; there are doctrines that proclaim and promote war, there are peoples or states living from war and that must end; and what we really have to end are those great weapons industries that put an end to life.”

“...I know that many ministers are bringing messages from their presidents, from their governments, their people; but let's responsible to life, and being responsible to life means being responsible to the planet, or to Pachamama, our Mother Earth, and being responsible to Mother Earth, the planet or Pachamama is to respect the rights of Mother Earth.”

“...I would hope that the Americas, through you the ministers of defence, can lead the guaranteeing of the rights of Mother Earth in order to ensure human rights, life, humankind, not only for the Americas but for the entire world; I feel that we bear a great responsibility in this situation.

“I would like to acknowledge the participation of our Armed Forces, and to be honest with you, I was very much afraid, afraid in the year 2005, 2006, when I came to the Presidency, whether the Armed Forces would be with me or against me in this process.”

“...the Armed Forces taking part in social works, in structural changes, recovering the mines, supporting the policies for the recovery of the natural resources; these Armed Forces are now beloved by the Bolivian people.”

“...the people feel they have Armed Forces that are for the people; now we fortunately have two important bodies in the Plurinational State: the social movements that defend their natural resources and the Armed Forces are also defending their natural resources, and if we go back to 1810, it is obvious that the Armed Forces were born defending their natural resources, the identity and sovereignty of our peoples; only during some times were our Armed Forces used for evil, not to blame the commanders, but because of oligarchic interests or interests that were not of the people, and that obviously caused us a lot of harm.”

“...with policies being imposed from above and abroad, coming from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, privatizations, public companies being sold out to foreign interests.”

“...just the profits [...] 18 percent was for the Bolivians and 82 percent went to the transnational corporations.

“On May the first of 2006, in a supreme decree, first we decided on State control of our natural resources and second, we are convinced that whoever invests has the right to recover their investment and has a right to have profits, and we said that now, with 18 % they could have profits and recover their investment; technicians showed this to me and from the first of May of 2006, 82 percent was for the Bolivians and 18 percent went to the investing corporations; so goes the nationalization in regards to their investments.”

Evo concludes his speech by contributing irrefutable information about the economic results achieved by the revolution.

“Before, the GDP in 2005 was 9 billion dollars, in 2010 it was 18.5 billion dollars of GDP.

“...with the World Bank and the IMF average income per person per year \$1000 [...] in our government it is \$1,900.”

“...in 2005, Bolivia was the second to last country in international reserves and now we have improved from international reserves of \$ 1.7 billion, to this year when we now have \$9.3 billions...”

“...when we were dependent on US governments we could not even eradicate illiteracy; thanks to the unconditional cooperation of Cuba especially, and Venezuela, two years ago we declared Bolivia to be a territory free of illiteracy, after almost 200 years.

“In exchange for this cooperation, what does Cuba ask of us? Nothing. This is called solidarity; sharing the little we have and not sharing what is left over, that is what I learned from Comrade Fidel, a man I admire very much.”

Out of sheer modesty, Evo didn't speak of the colossal advances obtained by the Bolivian people in matters of health. In the ophthalmological field alone, some 500,000 Bolivians had eye surgeries, health services reach all Bolivians and about 5,000 General Comprehensive Medicine specialists are being educated and will shortly be graduated. That sister country of Latin America has more than enough reason to feel proud.

Evo concludes:

“...without the IMF, I mean, if they don't impose economic policies of privatizations, of auctions, we could be better off in democratic matters, if we didn't depend on the United States we would improve our democracy in Latin America, it is the result of these last five years that I have been president.”

“Of course by saying this I am not saying that Bolivia now no longer needs cooperation, Bolivia still needs international loans, international cooperation, I acknowledge the European countries cooperating in Latin America, facilitating loans because we are in a process of profound transformations ...”

“...that the peoples have the right to decide by themselves alone about their democracy, about their security, but while we have interventionist attitudes for any excuse [...] we shall surely have to wait for the liberation of the people and as we can see they are going to keep on rebelling.

“For that reason, I am sure of rebellion towards revolution, of revolution towards decolonization ...”

After Evo’s speech, a mere 48 hours later, Chávez’ speech fell like a bolt from the skies. The lights of rebellion are illuminating the skies of Our America.

Fidel Castro Ruz

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