

Contradictions in U.S. Foreign Policy

After the G-20 Summit that took up the world's attention, news continued to arrive through the press agencies about the feverish activity of the man who had been the star in London, Barack Obama, the new president of the United States; he has embarked on the first 100 days of his administration, under the scrutiny of those who closely follow international politics.

As punctual as a digital watch, he travels from one place to the next, meeting with political leaders, commemorating anniversaries, receiving honors, visiting cities, holding press conferences, announcing plans, launching messages and making speeches.

With the supersonic G-20 Summit barely concluded, he leaves for Strasbourg, France, on the German border. He meets there on the 3rd with Sarkozy who was happy about not having had to leave the G-20 table in London. They deal with numerous problems which concern Iran, Afghanistan, Russia, the Near East and they promise to work "hand in hand" to build a new world. "I am convinced that the United States, Russia and Europe are interested in preventing Iran from having atomic weapons. In many cases we have common interests with Russia, but we also have differences of opinion on key issues", he states.

It is announced that both Obama and Sarkozy will participate with 26 other countries in the NATO summit that would begin that afternoon in the German town of Baden-Baden and would conclude the following day in Strasbourg.

Before leaving, he states that "Europe should not let the United States bear this burden alone because this is a problem concerning both and a joint effort is necessary".

"We do not seek to be chiefs in Europe; we are seeking to be partners with Europe".

He leaves Strasbourg en route to the town of Baden-Baden to meet with German Chancellor Angela Merkel before a dinner with the 26 NATO heads of states and governments, plus those of Croatia and Albania who are applying for admission. The summit will serve as the opening for the 60th anniversary of the military organization.

There they intended to analyze relations with Russia that "reached their lowest point in the past month of August after the Russia-Georgia war".

Another objective was discussion to renew the Alliance's strategic action concept dating back to 1999 to adjust it to the new threats.

Discussion of the Afghanistan and Kosovo situation would follow.

On the 3rd in Strasbourg, Obama meets with more than three thousand young French and Germans and he delivers a short speech which shall be talked about considerably in the future because of its audacity.

"I have come to Europe this week to renew our alliance. The United States is changing but it cannot only be America that is changing". Then he announces the contents of the speech he will be making in Prague about nuclear proliferation and he asserts that his aim is: "a world without nuclear weapons".

At another moment he added: "Even now, that the Cold War has ended, the expansion of nuclear weapons or the theft of nuclear material could bring destruction to any city on the planet".

The growing concern in the world about the enormous destructive and annihilating power of those

weapons is unquestionable; it joins the concerns of other states, especially the American society itself, about the risks of nuclear sabotage. That is what Obama literally says with his phrase: "the theft of nuclear material could bring destruction to any city on the planet".

On April 4, giving a speech at the NATO Summit, he welcomed Croatia and Albania to the heart of that military entity thus bringing to 28 the number of members. The president of the United States stressed that 140 Albanian and 296 Croatian soldiers have served in Afghanistan. "I think that both will be steadfast contributors to the Alliance".

The contradictory forms with which the American president expresses his ideas are evident.

"The doors of the Alliance will continue to be open for other countries who comply with NATO standards and who can make a significant contribution to the security of the Alliance."

The EFE news agency explains: "Russia reveals itself to be highly critical of NATO expansion towards the east, and in particular towards the former Soviet republics that it considers to be its natural sphere of influence".

"Last year at its April summit in Bucharest, the Alliance promised an eventual path to the admission of the Ukraine and Georgia supported by Obama's predecessor George W. Bush", the cable reminds us.

Could it be that there is any doubt about NATO being a warlike and aggressive organization, one that threatens not only Russia but also other countries in any part of the world? Could the Guantanamo torture centre have been created and maintained without the cooperation of the numerous NATO countries?

Yet again, the audacity and the contradictions are expressed at the first summit of the president of the United States with the European Union in Prague. He promised "to lead efforts for a world without nuclear weapons".

"We cannot succeed in this endeavor alone, but we can lead it."

He specifically stated that he hoped to achieve a speedy end to nuclear testing and confirmed his hope of seeking Senate approval for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

"I also advocate a world summit meeting on nuclear security to be held next year", the cables point out.

There is also information that "Obama was woken up to be informed of the launching of a North Korean rocket that apparently flew over Japan. He requested that the UN Security Council respond firmly to the provocation in an emergency meeting held that very same Sunday."

On March 12, the Peoples' Republic of Korea had announced that between April 4 and 8 it would be launching a communications satellite as part of a peaceful spatial program. That was known when Obama spoke in Strasbourg to the French and German young people.

After he was informed in Prague, he drew up a statement which expressed: "Rules must be binding. Violations must be punished. Words must mean something."

Launching a rocket that will orbit communications media, testing technology or taking a tourist on a trip are not crimes unless they are done by the Peoples' Republic of Korea which does not belong to the club of the most powerful and those who have the resources to apply such sophisticated technology. Japan took advantage of the opportunity to adjust its anti-satellite missiles and to improve its defense without anybody questioning that right.

I think it was an exaggeration to wake up Obama in the early morning hours.

Before leaving Prague, at a gathering of 30,000 people, he said: "To say that nuclear weapons are inevitable is like saying that the use of nuclear weapons is inevitable. Humanity must once again become master of its own destiny".

This is a very strong assertion. However, he later added that the space shield that the U.S. projects for European territory is a program that responds to the Iranian nuclear menace. Such a statement is not consistent with the truth and I do not understand his reiteration of it.

Russia rejects that plan for the space shield and considers it to be expansionist; therefore, it demands its cancellation.

During the night of Sunday the 5th, he arrived in Turkey.

After meeting on Monday with Turkish leaders in Ankara, the capital of that Euro-Asian nation, and delivering a speech in parliament, he announced that he would be traveling to Istanbul to attend the Second Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations.

In Prague he had promised to support Turkey's admittance into the European Union, something which is opposed by France, Germany and others.

In Ankara, he again asked for Turkish admission to the European Union. He pointed out that, nevertheless, Turkey ought to make efforts to reinforce its democracy.

The first thing he did upon arrival in that country was to pay tribute to Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic.

"We shall be respectful even though we may not agree", he stated before parliament; another profound phrase.

"The United States is not, nor will it be, at war with Islam," he said.

Thousands of Turks had taken to the streets to protest U.S. policies.

The president of the United States ended his visit on the 7th at 2:20 Istanbul time, Turkey's main city, after a tiring 8-day tour.

His last meeting was with the students. He made a plea to the young people to lay bridges between Islam and the West. As EFE reports it, he urged the Muslims to ignore the "caricatures" that depict the Americans as ignorant or insensitive and he assured them that "that is not the country he loves."

The events described reflect the complexity of the tasks Obama bears on his shoulders.

He had frankly declared: "In four or eight years it can be said whether I have pursued the same policies or if things have changed".

Even though he was a messenger with mixed signals, his obvious good health and agile mind operating like a working machine allowed the black president to carry out his first foreign visit with unquestionable political results.

He certainly does not resemble his predecessor at all.

Fidel Castro Ruz

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