

## Chavez' Article

It was 2006. I was really very ill but very much aware of what was happening. During those days around the middle of September, the XIV NAM Summit where Cuba was elected to the Presidency was ending. I could barely sit up and take my place at a table. That's how I received some important heads of state or government. The Prime Minister of India was among them. The highest ranking visitor I received in that emergency room in the Presidential Palace was the Ghanaian Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, who a few days later would be ending his mandate.

Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the president of Algeria, one of the personalities with whom I met, looked me straight in the eye and said: "If you need my blood Fidel, you have it".

I appreciated it greatly. He had been foreign minister in the government of our friend Houari Boumediene.

Bouteflika as well had just gone through a health crisis that had him teetering on the edge of death. One might say that his recovery was astounding.

His words constituted a noble and selfless support for our cause, which was not expected, by our internationalist spirit that was never exercised in exchange for anything.

His noble gesture took place years after a despicable traitor to the history of his self-sacrificing and combative people coincided, in the city of Monterrey Mexico, with the demands of the head of the empire that I be thrown out of a Summit taking place there, after speaking to the people gathered there, with the exception of Bush who hadn't touched Mexican soil while I was setting foot on the same land.

Just before the minute I left, Hugo Chavez urgently visited me and, indignant about such high-handed behaviour by the head of state of the host country, he exclaimed: "Fidel, tell me how much oil Cuba needs to defeat the Yankee blockade".

The dialogue seemed unreal. It isn't easy to remember, through the mist of emotions, what the exact words of my response were. Doubtlessly, they were words negating my acceptance.

Be that as it may, Cuba's destiny followed its course. The fate of our people was bound to the legendary memory of Che and the thinking of Marti and Bolivar.

Our future cannot be separated from the events happening next Sunday when the day for approving the Constitutional Amendment begins. There is no other alternative but victory.

The destinies of the peoples of "Our America" will depend substantially on that victory and it will be an event which will have influence on the rest of the planet.

However, what is missing is an acknowledgement to Hugo Chavez for his contribution to Spanish literature. His latest article published yesterday on February 12th under the title of "Chavez' Lines", is an inspired document of exceptional quality, of the kind only great writers can pull together. It is pure Chavez, body and soul, reflected in print, the way very few can achieve.

Yesterday's enthusiastic throng is a spectacle which can only be accessed by television for an incalculable number of people in the world.

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The unmasking of the staged self-provocation in the Jewish synagogue is the antithesis of those moving images that in 1945 Soviet troops showed to the world after they stormed and took the Auschwitz concentration camp; they showed the world what had happened to millions of Jews and people from other occupied countries including children, old people and women, imprisoned by the Nazis. It wasn't Eisenhower's soldiers making the effort and spilling their blood to liberate them.

The monstrous world of injustices that imperialism has imposed on the planet marks the inexorable end of a system and an era which cannot have long to survive. This too shall run out. We thank our Venezuelan compatriot for his clarion call.

**Fidel Castro Ruz**

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