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Is the Horror in Paris Different from that of Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon?



Once again, Paris has become a battle field. Dozens dead, hundreds injured along with the same type of response coming from the French Government that they had on the jihadist attacks that took place in the United States and Spain when similar actions generated identical massacres. ([Read the complete article](#))

Close Guantanamo and Return It to Cuba

President Barack Obama has yet to fulfill the promise he made in his January 22, 2009 executive order to shutter Guantanamo "no later than one year from the date of this order." ([Read the complete article](#))



France

Is the Horror in Paris Different from that of Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon?



November 14, 2015

By Carlos Aznárez

Once again, Paris has become a battle field. Dozens dead, hundreds injured along with the same type of response coming from the French Government that they had on the jihadist attacks that took place in the United States and Spain when similar actions generated identical massacres. Facing the horror they are responding with even more horror, with big headlines in the mainstream media, "Now

the war has started!" They are acting shocked at the idea that the Arab and Muslim world would target the sacrosanct French democracy, knowing full well that the majority of them repudiate ISIS and their protectors.

Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad is right when, after expressing his condolences for the victims of the attacks, reminded everyone that "France knew yesterday what we been living in Syria for five years". And he is precisely the person who on numerous occasions tried – as did Libyan leader Gadaffi before him—to convince the French rulers not to arm, logistically equip and fund with millions of dollars the mercenary armies that have sown terror, death and spawned the desperate exile of hundreds of thousands of Syrians and Iraqis. In each occasion that this message was delivered in international forums, the French position was always the same; ratifying their belief that exporting war, aligning itself with NATO and subordinating itself to the imperial mandate emanating from Washington, that is to solve "the Syrian problem", the overthrow of Al-Assad had to take place.

It is clear that it is the same thing that happened to the right-wing government of Spain in 2004 with the train bombing - it backfired on them. On that occasion the jihadists, whom Spain and its alliance with NATO had wanted to fight through its presence in Iraq and Afghanistan, decided to respond with the same medicine that was just administered in Paris. Unfortunately those who pay for the mistakes of the powerful are always the common citizens whose only guilt perhaps was to vote and catapult to the office of presidency one those serial killers who now condemned them to death.

This terrible incident was a repeat of the scenario of the massacre of Charlie Hebdo. Once again the repeated pronouncements of hypocritical revenge can be heard. All of the European leaders are at this time promising more repressive measures while manufacturing more armaments to feed the military interventions that are at the very root cause of what just took place in Paris. Those leaders are now censoring any ideas of departing NATO by proclaiming, "Today we are all France".

Those leaders are being exposed for having similar attitudes with jihadism - which does not represent Islam in any way - Hollande, Rajoy, Sarkozy, Merkel and those who sponsor them from the Pentagon, are the main cause of

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these barbaric actions. They have fed them endlessly chasing Muslims from the periphery of Paris and several French cities, denying them the use of places to pray generating raids at mosques where it was common for them to peacefully practice their right to their religion. Since 2011 France has instituted laws that prohibit the use of the veil, Islamic skirt and the burka in public spaces. These types of discriminating laws have not been forced onto French citizens who commune with Judaism. They have segregated the Islamic world by exposing it to the French society as "the enemy", in the same way that Israel has portrayed the Palestinians for more than six decades.

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It is no mystery to anyone, especially to the devalued French Intelligence Services, that many of the humiliated, unemployed suffering under the draconian and racist laws in the poverty stricken "Banlieue" area of Paris were recruited there by the Nusra Front and ISIS. How ironic that those who joined into the experience of sowing terror in Syria and Iraq came from French territory and in many occasions were approved and viewed by the government as being their front soldiers. At that time the massacres produced by these mercenaries in Mossul, Raqqa, Aleppo, Homs and Palmyra did not worry Sarkozy or Hollande. They were considered "collateral damage" far away from the Parisian comfort that seemed immune and inviolable to mass violence. Little was said about the bloody bombing that took place last week in the Lebanon and was actually probably celebrated in Tel Aviv and in the White House, since that massacre occurred in a neighborhood controlled by Hezbollah. In this case, the dead were Arab as are the Palestinians being killed these days in the West Bank or in Gaza, whose names do not count enough to make it into the corporate media, neither does the pain of relatives and the horrific images from their devastated homes.

What has just happened in Paris also has another no less important explanation. In the past months there has been a shift in the balance of power in the war in Syria. Russia decided to intervene, coming to the rescue of a government and a people besieged by terror, and did it on its own terms, and achieving immediate success in the fight against ISIS. This development proved to all that all previous actions, propagandized by NATO and the United States, had been a gigantic farce. The jihadists were beaten in their main bases, many of their stores of weapons were destroyed and a feeling of betrayal set in amongst them against their benefactors who supported them from Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Western countries. Many of these mercenaries fled the wars and chose to return to their places of origin, including the Europeans. So much so, that this "return" was anticipated by some French commentators, who claimed that "now the danger can erupt at our own feet."

That is precisely what this condemnable jihadist revenge is all about. Beyond the false cries of those who govern them, this should be an urgent wake up call for French society, and others in Europe, to question their governments and to demand an end to their expansionist and authoritarian ideas. To cease their xenophobic behavior that provoked the massive fire in the immigrant camp in Calais just hours after the attack in Paris. It is important to look at those who flee wars, provoked by NATO, as brothers and not as enemies. They cannot be looked at as scapegoats and should be treated with humanitarian understanding and not treated as dangerous second class citizens.

Perhaps these circumstances marked by such pain can serve as the turning point to search for a different starting point. If this does not occur no one should be entitled to ask with horror, "why us?"

Haiti

As Cholera Resurges in Haiti, the UN's Commitment to Prevent It Fails

October 18, 2015

By Nancy Young

We were driving back from watching a soccer game here in central Haiti when my friend instinctively rolled up his window. It can get dusty on Haitian country roads, so I rolled up mine, too, even though I didn't see anything in the air.

I did see the man up ahead on a bicycle wearing a surgical mask. I noticed his mournful eyes even before I knew anything else. He was pulling a heavy covered wooden cart, about the size of a large pickup bed. Hard work, I thought, on this hot day. The burden made him weave a little from side to side.

"Cholera," my friend said.

It took a moment for my mind to catch up. By the time I formed the words, "What is he carry-?" I had answered my own question. "Where is he taking them?"

"Cemetery."

This was in the early months of 2011, when the cholera epidemic — a disease that had never been seen in Haiti — was still new. Now, we commemorate the five-year anniversary of the start of an epidemic that has killed more than 9,000 people and sickened another 745,000.

I don't know the stories of the people who were being taken to the cemetery by that mournful man on the bicycle back in 2011, but last week in Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, and in New York City and Geneva as well as on a new website, FaceJustice.org, passersby and United Nations officials alike could see the faces and read the stories of Haitians hurt not just by cholera, but also by the indifference of the UN, whose peacekeepers brought the disease into the country in the first place.

Passersby learned from the large photos we assembled on the street about the lives of people like Olivia Jean-Pierre, a Haitian mom, who had this message for the UN:

In 2011, my two girls became sick with cholera. I can't imagine if I had lost them. When a mother loses her child, it's like her insides are torn out.

My girls haven't yet become 100 percent again. They go to school and put their heads on their desks, saying their heads hurt. Everyone that suffered from cholera, they are like the walking dead.

For four years, I've been marching, seeking justice and reparations alongside other cholera victims. But these efforts haven't succeeded. If you will stand with me, if you will join this struggle with me, I will be very pleased. I await your response.

Jean-Pierre's story was one of those also presented on postcards to UN officials just before the Security Council's vote last week to reauthorize peace-



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keeping troops in Haiti for another year.

Even in the early days of the epidemic, in October 2010, there was evidence that the UN peacekeepers in Haiti inadvertently introduced the disease. Waste that flowed into the Artibonite — Haiti's main river — was seen coming straight from a sewage pipe at the peacekeeper base in the village of Meille, upstream from where the first cases happened.

Not long after, scientists showed that the strain of cholera newly infecting so many thousands of people in Haiti was endemic to Nepal. The peacekeepers stationed at the peacekeeping base, which is on the outskirts of the town of Mirebalais, were from Nepal.

As the evidence mounted, the UN could have accepted responsibility, apologized and used its tremendous resources to make it right. Yet it didn't. So, the fight for justice by Haitian victims of cholera and those who care about them goes on.

What do they want?

An apology, for starters. They also want reparations for the cholera victims and their families. Such reparations would help children like 9-year-old Pierre-Louis and 13-year-old Julien, who have been orphaned by cholera, as well as families who are struggling to pay back loans they took out while their breadwinner was recovering from cholera.

They want one more thing — something that will help the victims and prevent future victims as well.

Cholera is not a hard problem to solve anymore; it is easily preventable with clean water and good sanitation. If it weren't, we would still be getting sick with it regularly here in the United States, as we did until a little over a century ago.

But most people in Haiti don't have access to clean water and good sanitation infrastructure — things that a powerful organization like the UN could — and must — help them to get. So far, however, a UN-supported plan to eliminate cholera through water and sanitation remains drastically underfunded at only 18 percent. Over the summer, the office set up to coordinate the UN's cholera response in Haiti closed.

Meanwhile, Haitian families remain vulnerable. Cholera cases have been surging in 2015, and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Ocha) reports a tripling in cases over 2014.

Moreover, the lack of access to clean water and sanitation has a disproportionate impact on women and girls, who spend hours each day fetching water from distant, questionable sources.

Cadet Gary, another Haitian whose story was being told at our protest near the UN recently, tried to take the recommended precautions against cholera. But in 2014, Gary, a 52-year-old father, and his 18-month old son caught cholera and nearly died from it.

"Cholera hit our country in 2010 and we thought it would be here temporarily, but it seems it is here to stay," Gary said. "It is part of our air now."

<http://passblue.com/2015/10/18/as-cholera-resurges-in-haiti-the-un-commitment-to-prevent-it-fails/>

Source: Pass Blue

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Brazil

Brazil: Sharp Increase in the Murder of Black Women



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November 11, 2015

Over the last decade, murders of Black Women in Brazil grew by 54 percent. Meanwhile, the deaths of light skinned women fell by 9.8 percent.

The number of murders of Black women surged by 54 percent over the last ten years, rising from 1,864 in 2003 to 2,875 in 2013, according to a new study released by Brazilian government on Tuesday.

Representative of U.N. Women in Brazil Nadine Gasman said the report sheds new light on the violence inflicted against Black or African-descendent Brazilian women.

"Black women are exposed to direct violence in which they are fatally victimized, impacting the children and the people close to them," Gasman stated, adding that, "It is urgent to create public awareness around racism and by promote institutional responses to support Black women." The report was carried out by the Latin American Social Sciences Institute (FLACSO) in coordination UN Women Brazil and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The new publication went on to find that an average of 13 women were killed per day in 2013, making Brazil the fifth highest country among the 83 nations for which statistics are available through the World Health Organization.

Only El Salvador, with 8.9 murders for every 100,000 women, Colombia with 6.3, Guatemala with 6.2 and Russia with 5.3 have higher femicide rates.

The findings take place as the Brazilian government took an important step earlier this year to combat femicide by signing into law a measure that increases the penalty for such crimes. The new legislation alters the criminal code to describe femicide as any crime that involves domestic violence, contempt or discrimination against women. It also defines such acts as "aggravated murder," which increases the penalties to 12 to 30 years.

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Brazil-Sharp-Increase-in-Murders-of-Black-Women--20151111-0032.html>

Source: teleSUR

Cuba

Cuba–US Relations and the Perspicacity of Fidel Castro's Thinking

November 12, 2015

By Arnold August

In an online interview with an alternative US-based website published on January 7, 2015, I was asked about my take on the seeming rapprochement between the United States and Cuba. With regard to the December 17, 2014 announcement, I responded:



“On that December 17, the situation caused me to think of the public statement Fidel Castro made to his followers on January 8, 1959, just eight days after the triumph of the Revolution:

‘This is a decisive moment in our history: The tyranny has been overthrown, there is immense joy. However, there is still much to be done. Let us not fool ourselves into believing that the future will be easy; perhaps everything will be more difficult in the future’”(my translation).

I realize that one cannot at all compare the January 1, 1959 victory with the one on December 17, 2014; in the same manner, the tenuous situation existing in 1959 and the early 1960s characterized by open U.S.-sponsored terrorist attacks and the Playa Girón [Bay of Pigs] invasion cannot be correlated to the post-December 17 situation as it is evolving so far.

However, I continue to follow events and reactions from all over the world and the full political spectrum from left to right. And I am thus forced to remember the statement by Fidel that initially and spontaneously sprung to mind on December 17, 2014. That day ushered in an ‘immense joy’ in Cuba and among many people in the world, and rightly so, as David was finally rewarded after more than five decades of persistent and heroic struggle against Goliath. It is this ‘immense joy’ that at times can camouflage the adversities that in principle are supposed to have been alleviated but that in fact contain the seeds of even more difficult challenges. I believe that the situation points to the notion that ‘everything will be more difficult in the future.’”

Only days after the interview was published, I began to have some regrets about the assertions quoted above. Even though I was careful to indicate the obvious – that one cannot compare the contexts of 1959 with the 17D (as the Cubans refer to it, for December 17), the last thing I would want to do is quote Fidel Castro out of context.

My main point was to have readers appreciate the perspicacity of Fidel Castro's Thinking, as applied to today's entirely different context. In his customary astuteness, he was able to peer into the future – way into the future – and come back to the reality of January 8, 1959 in order to provide a sober long-term context for the new Cuban Revolution.

In this article, the only aspect of Fidel Castro's widespread and profound thinking consists in examining an historic step in the Cuban Revolution. The remarkable insight he exhibited on January 8, 1959 allowed him to analyze dia-

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lectically how immense problems on the horizon can be camouflaged by the equally immense joy exhibited right after the Triumph of the Revolution. Despite providing the caveat that conditions in both periods are completely dissimilar, did I state my message clearly enough regarding applying his 1959 pronouncement as a guide to the current situation? While I was still convinced of the correctness of the assertion, there were lingering doubts in my mind. This uncertainty began to dissipate as I read with my usual keen interest what Cuban academics, researchers and journalists were writing. Some, but not many, wrote essentially something similar as I had. For example, Elier Ramírez Cañedo, the young researcher and co-author along with Esteban Morales of a 2015 watershed book on Cuba–US relations, wrote a two-part article on his area of expertise. The second part, to which I allude below, was published on his own blog on January 28, 2015, reproduced the very same day in Iroel Sánchez's blog *La pupila insomne*, followed by a reproduction on February 7, 2015 in *Cubadebate* and the Communist Youth League daily *Juventud Rebelde*. Elier Ramírez Cañedo wrote how Fidel declared on January 8, 1959 that "it is possible that in the future everything would be more difficult. I believe that now as well, it is possible that the future will be more difficult, especially in the realm of the ideological and cultural confrontation with imperialism."

The well-known journalist Rosa Miriam Elizalde penned an article on July 21, 2015 in *Cubadebate* with the telling title "Cuba–US: The Difficulty Is Coming Now" ("Cuba-EEUU: Lo difícil viene ahora"). Of interest is a reader's online comment made on that article about the significance of the January 8 declaration by Fidel Castro that states "no one here should think that in the future everything will be easy, maybe everything in the future will be more difficult." In October 2015, journalist Rafael Cruz Ramos expresses in a post on his blog, which was reproduced in *CubaSí*, his concern, among other things, about the current situation. He writes, "Fidel was right when he said that the current battles are more complex than those in the Sierra Maestra." Others have written similar articles.

In hindsight, it seems that my initial assertion regarding Fidel Castro's Thinking on this particular issue of steps in the Revolution was not out of place, given the correlations from some of the Cuban press, as mentioned above, and in light of the events that transpired since then (i.e., from the 17D to fall 2015), which I have followed closely. On the contrary, it was very appropriate. This conclusion constituted a mixed blessing, since it is not comforting to acknowledge that an ongoing Revolution since 1959 can still confront a situation that "may be" more difficult now than the period leading up to it. One can also counter my position by indicating there are not that many journalists or public figures who share this opinion. This is true. However, this apparent lack of widespread attention is another reason for ratifying the view on Fidel Castro's Thinking. The current manifest scarcity of caution among some may in fact reflect a certain amount of "immense joy" pushing the stark reality of US imperialism's intentions to the background.

Elier Ramírez Cañedo makes an extremely important qualification that the more difficult time now is to be found "especially in the realm of the ideological and cultural confrontation with imperialism." While it is a broad topic, one example stands out. When visiting Havana not long after the 17D, I could not help but notice the American flag being widely exhibited as clothing apparel on virtually all body parts, on taxis and cars, and in shops. As a Canadian, this struck me as a not too subtle warning. Canada is the closest ally of the US in the West, and Canadians are frequent visitors to their neighbour to the south. However, we do not see such a virtual carnival-like display of the US flag in Canada. In fact, many Canadians would abhor such fanfare as the nationalist anti-US imperialist sentiment in Canada, while not the highest in the

world, is enough to draw the line. This negative pre-sentiment regarding the mushrooming of the US flag in Havana was confirmed and even further highlighted by journalist Luis Toledo Sande's series on the flag issue in three articles complete with photos, published in Cubadebate and blogs. In my view, these trends and many others corroborate Elier Ramírez Cañedo's concern about the complicated "ideological and cultural confrontation with imperialism" as a fallout with the 17D.

The US blockade against Cuba is now more than ever a subject of debate in Cuba and elsewhere, especially in the US. On October 27, 2015, in the United Nations General Assembly, the US was decidedly defeated in a record vote of 191 in favour of the Cuban resolution to lift the blockade and only two – the US and its closet political and military ally, Israel – in favour of maintaining it, and no abstentions.

Much has been written in Cuba and the US on the blockade both by the two governments and by experts on both sides. These debates concern primarily those measures that have been – and can still be – carried out by President Obama while the blockade is applied in full force both by his executive wing and the legislative body, the Congress, of the US government. The main conditions of the blockade are the prerogative of the Congress. Some commentators indicate that there are contradictions or inconsistencies in the Obama Administration's policy with regards to the blockade. The narrative is that the US President is not doing what is expected of him based on his apparent opposition to the blockade and the use of his executive prerogatives to restrict to the maximum the effects of the blockade. I may be wrong, but it is perhaps not the case that there are in effect contradictions or inconsistencies.

However, if one carefully examines the official documents, the White House and Department of State seem to protect themselves by leaving the door open to the continuation of the blockade and restricting Washington's action to a strict minimum. The US statements seem to speak for themselves. Whether or not the Administration is really even in words in favour of lifting the blockade is at best not clear, as we can now see. It may be preferable to be on the safe side and not harbour illusions, but also pressure the Administration on that basis. In Obama's December 17, 2014 declaration, he listed a series of issues that he wants to address regarding Cuba, such as democracy and human rights, people-to-people travel and remittances from Americans to the "emerging Cuban private sector," that is, 500,000 self-employed workers. He then concludes that "as these changes unfold, I look forward to engaging Congress in an honest and serious debate about lifting the embargo." In other words, it seems that a condition for confronting the majority Republican in Congress is the evolution of change in Cuba according to US standards. His stand does not appear to be a principled unconditional demand that Congress lift the blockade. Secretary of State John Kerry expounded on this angle by saying:

"Look, I can't tell you when the embargo will be lifted, because it really depends, to a large degree, on the decisions and choices made by Cubans. They have to make it possible to lift the embargo. And the Congress of the United States appropriately is very concerned about human rights, about democracy, about the ability of people to speak their mind, and to meet, and to do things. And we'd like to see – we're not asking for everything to change overnight, but we want to see Cuba moving in the right direction, and our hope is that it will." (emphasis added)

The impression was given in some media around the world that Obama called for the lifting of the blockade in his speech to the United Nations General Assembly on September 28, 2015. In fact, what he said, in talking about human

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rights in Cuba and Cuba–US people-to-people contacts, was, “as these contacts yield progress, I’m confident that our Congress will inevitably lift an embargo that should not be in place anymore” (emphasis added).

Words and semantics are used very deceivingly by US imperialism. The US employs words that seemingly take a just position but in fact camouflage the real nature of US tactics and strategy. Take as an example the 2009 US-orchestrated military coup d’état in Honduras and the expulsion of the constitutionally elected president Mel Zelaya. At first, both Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton did not use the word coup. Facing the outrage of all of Latin America, they finally used the word coup, but not military coup d’état. To employ this latter term would provide the legal basis for the restriction of military aid to the putschists, which Washington did not in any manner wish to do. In a similar fashion, facing international pressure, Obama and Clinton said they favoured the return of Zelaya to Honduras. However, on both occasions in which he attempted to enter the country, the US opposed it, claiming that this return had to be carried out with the full involvement of the US and its allies. Thus, the words of favouring the “return of Zelaya” in fact carried no meaning as did the so-called opposition to the coup.

Similarly, the semantics of supporting the lifting of the blockade carry little weight, given that they seem to be conditional to Cuba “doing more,” “opening up” and so on. The older pre-17D crude diplomacy has changed in the 17D to “soft power” attempts to influence from within. This is carried out to a certain extent as “democracy promotion” programs still funded by the US. Obama said with regard to Cuba that the US is no longer in the business of regime change but the regime change programs are continuing. Thus, words from the mouth of the Imperial power cannot be taken at face value and must be scrutinized.

It is now well-known – and made explicit by the Obama Administration – that the US stance toward Cuba in the 17D is only a change in tactics, such as the re-establishment of diplomatic relations and the reopening of embassies in both countries. However, the US main strategy remains the overthrowing of the Revolution or changing it from within so that it has no resemblance to its pre-17D years. It is necessary to expand on the concept of strategy. It can be recalled that Obama came to his new position on Cuba because among other points, as he and others have admitted on several occasions, the American Cuba policy was isolating the US from Latin America and the Caribbean. The Summits of the Americas, led by the US and held every few years, in principle includes all the countries of South and Central America, the Caribbean, and North America. However, Cuba has been systematically excluded. At the VI Summit of the Americas held in Cartagena, Colombia in April 2012, when Cuba was still not included, the conflict between the south and the north had arrived at the breaking point. The entire South demanded the inclusion of Cuba, threatening a de facto collapse of the next Summit if it did not incorporate the island. The next VII Summit of the Americas in Panama was to be held in April 2015. Thus, if Obama had not changed tactics immediately, the US – and not Cuba – would have been blamed for breakdown of the Panama Summit.

A corollary to the Obama strategy for Cuba is the US strategy for Latin America to defeat the new progressive and left-wing movements and governments such as Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and even the more moderate ones such as Argentina and Brazil. In fact, the US Cuba strategy is part and parcel of the strategy for Latin America. It is thus no accident that, while the impression is given that the US has softened up on Cuba and finally came to its senses, there have been US-assisted and supported destabilizing efforts in all of the

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above-mentioned countries. If they succeed in this in part or whole, it would be a major setback for the entire region, including Cuba. It would also be a defeat for the world, as Latin America and the Caribbean is the most promising region for socio-economic and political progress. The region is now a concrete foundation for developing a multipolar world that would leave behind the US hegemony-based unipolar globe.

Thus, the astuteness of Fidel Castro's statement on January 8, 1959 takes on relevance today, that is, that the situation may be more difficult in the future. This may be challenged by some, and understandably so, by pointing out that in 1959 Cuba was alone, while now Cuba is part of this new regional bloc whose members in general support each other. However, this new Latin America has been established with many sacrifices and struggles, such as in the case of Venezuela since the 1998 election of Hugo Chávez as president. Any significant defeat in Latin America may have, as the US desires, a domino effect in the region. The situation today is more difficult than in 1959, seeing as the peoples have so much more to lose. However, I think that the US will lose again. For example, in Venezuela, even if there is a temporary defeat or stalemate in elections, the Bolivarian Revolution has become, and is growing as, a material force in Venezuelan society. Once people are consciously and actively participating in their own ongoing empowerment and defence of their national sovereignty, this material force can in the long run defeat even the most formidable enemy.

From the US and its American blogger advisors to some Cuban bloggers, the image of the dissidents is changing from one that has been discredited as mercenaries of the US to another, younger sort. The new crop gives the impression that they are not interested in regime change funds. They are not easy to detect. Dissidence is being renovated in the context of the 17D, and is, in my view, a cancer that strives to eat away at Cuban society from within, targeting especially youth, artists, intellectuals and journalists.

The acumen of Fidel Castro's Thinking as applied to the 17D that "perhaps everything will be more difficult in the future" is ratified, in my view, in light of both the foregoing discussion and the fact that Cuban society has accumulated problems over the last decades.

However, like Venezuela and the rest of Latin America, there is no doubt in my mind that Cuba will overcome this more difficult and complicated situation. The Congress of the Communist Youth League was held in July 2015. Contrary to the disinformation disseminated by the mainstream US media about censorship and the press in Cuba, one could view on Cuban television virtually all the proceedings and debates in this Congress of 600 delegates. Never have I been so impressed by so many spontaneous and unwritten interventions, profound in content, by Cubans at these types of events. It strikes me that any of them could be future leaders of Cuba. Even though the conditions now are very different and may be more difficult and especially complicated than the period leading up to the Revolution, new generations prepare to continue the legacy, in the context of defying the current situation. The new generation of dissidents whose "dissidence" is being recycled to match the 17D conditions is no match for the young Cuban revolutionaries.

Furthermore, those in the US who are banking on self-employed workers to drain Cuba from the inside completely underestimate the political/ideological consciousness and patriotism of the vast majority of Cubans. Cubans are steeped in this tradition. President Raúl Castro made it very clear in his remarks on December 17, 2014. He opened by stating right from the beginning:

"Since my election as President of the State Council and Council of Ministers

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I have reiterated in many occasions our willingness to hold a respectful dialogue with the United States on the basis of sovereign equality, in order to deal reciprocally with a wide variety of topics without detriment to the national Independence and self-determination of our people.

This stance was conveyed to the US Government both publicly and privately by Comrade Fidel on several occasions during our long standing struggle, stating the willingness to discuss and solve our differences without renouncing any of our principles.”

Cuba has gone through many years of revolutionary and patriotic struggles. In my view, one period consisted of 1868 to 1898, during the patriotic wars against Spanish colonialism and in favour of independence and a more just society. A second historic period was the negative one of US domination from 1898 to 1959. A third era was initiated in January 1, 1959, steeped in the 1953 Moncada action and the ensuing program as the basis of the Revolution. From 1959 to the present, Cuba has been going through this era.

The 17D is not historic in that sense but, rather, is another chapter in the current period with its promises as well as perhaps even more difficulties and challenges, in entirely different circumstances than the period leading up to the January 1, 1959 victory.

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/cuba-us-relations-and-the-perspicacity-of-fidel-castros-thinking/5488367>

Source: Global Research

Cuba

What Obama Can Do



Despite the fact that Congress must take action to definitively end the blockade, President Obama has broad executive powers to substantially modify its implementation much more than he has thus far

November 13, 2015

Despite the fact that Congress must take action to definitively end the blockade, President Obama has broad executive powers to substantially modify its implementation much more than he has thus far. Listed below are a number of steps he could take immediately.

1. Allow Cuba to use the dollar in international transactions.
2. Permit Cuban transactions in USD to be handled within the U.S. banking system.
3. Facilitate the opening of correspondence accounts by Cuban entities in U.S. banks.
4. Instruct U.S. representatives in international financial institutions to refrain

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from creating obstacles to the granting of credit to Cuba.

5. Halt the levying of fines on international banks for processing Cuban transactions.

6. Authorize Cuban aircraft and ships to transport passengers, cargo and mail between the two countries.

7. Authorize the direct export of U.S. products to Cuba.

8. Allow Cuba to import from other countries products which have more than 10% U.S. made components.

9. Permit imports to the U.S. of high demand Cuban goods and services such as cigars, rum and biotechnology products, including those manufactured in other countries using Cuban raw materials such as sugar and nickel.

10. Authorize U.S. companies to invest in Cuba.

11. End limitations of Cuban products which U.S. visitors to the country wish to import for their personal use.

12. Authorize U.S. citizens to receive medical treatment in Cuba.

13. Permit the granting of credit to Cuba for the purchase of products in the U.S. market, with the exception of agricultural products for which credit is prohibited by law.

<http://en.granma.cu/mundo/2015-11-13/what-obama-can-do>

Source: Granma International

Cuba

Close Guantanamo and Return It to Cuba



November 15, 2015

By Marjorie Cohn

President Barack Obama has yet to fulfill the promise he made in his January 22, 2009 executive order to shutter Guantanamo “no later than one year from the date of this order.” Any individuals remaining there at the time of closure, Obama wrote, “shall be returned to

their home country, released, transferred to a third country, or transferred to another United States detention facility in a manner consistent with law and the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States.”

After threatening to veto the final draft of the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) partly because it forbids the transfer of Guantanamo detainees to the United States and tightens barriers to sending them to other countries, Obama caved. A White House spokesperson said Obama would sign the legislation, which passed overwhelmingly in the House and Senate. Bernie Sanders was one of three senators to vote against the bill.

Nearly seven years after Obama's promise, 112 men remain at Guantanamo, half of whom have been cleared for release. Obama has released 54 prisoners and is reviewing the cases of others still being held.

In March 2011, Obama designated 46 men to remain in indefinite detention without trial, but promised periodic review of their cases. Arbitrary detention violates the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, a treaty the United States has ratified, making it part of U.S. law under the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. constitution.

The periodic reviews didn't start until November 2013, spurred by hunger strikes at the prison. The reviews continue to be conducted. As a result of those reviews, 14 additional men were cleared for release and five of them have been released.

In April 2013, Obama said, "I think it is critical for us to understand that Guantanamo is not necessary to keep America safe ... It hurts us in terms of our international standing ... It is a recruitment tool for extremists. It needs to be closed." Yet it remains open.

One of the transfer restrictions required the secretary of defense to notify Congress 30 days before transfer that it would be good for national security. But to avoid being personally responsible if a detainee were to become a terrorist, former Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel hesitated to allow transfers. Actually only seven percent of the detainees released during Obama's tenure returned to terrorist activity as compared with 19 percent during Bush's presidency.

Obama is reportedly preparing a plan to speed up transfers of half the remaining Guantanamo prisoners to their home countries or other willing nations. The plan will also set forth new security protocols to prevent detainees from returning to terrorist activities once released.

Military experts are conducting surveys of prisons in the United States for possible transfer of detainees. They include the military prison at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas; the Naval Consolidated Brig in Charleston, South Carolina; and the U.S. supermax prison in Florence, Colorado.

In spite of the NDAA, Obama has the power to close Guantanamo. Former White House counsel Gregory Craig and Cliff Sloan, former special envoy for Guantanamo closure, maintain, "the president does not need Congress's authorization to act." They wrote in the Washington Post, "Under Article II of the Constitution, the president has exclusive authority to determine the facilities in which military detainees are held ... The determination on where to hold detainees is a tactical judgment at the very core of the president's role as commander in chief."

According to Craig and Sloan, "Congress's purported ban on funding any movement of detainees from Guantanamo Bay to the United States restricts where 'law-of-war' detainees can be held and prevents the president from discharging his constitutionally assigned function of making tactical military decisions. Accordingly, it violates the separation of powers."

Lt. Col. David Frakt, who has represented Guantanamo detainees before the military commissions and in federal habeas corpus proceedings, concurs. "When the Obama administration really wants to transfer a detainee, they are quite capable of doing so," Frakt wrote in JURIST. He said Obama should direct his attorney general to inform the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals that the Department of Justice no longer considers the cleared detainees to be detainable.

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Col. Morris Davis, former Chief Prosecutor for the Terrorism Trials at Guantanamo, personally charged Osama bin Laden's driver Salim Hamdan, Australian David Hicks, and Canadian teen Omar Khadr. All three were convicted and have been released from Guantanamo. "There is something fundamentally wrong with a system where not being charged with a war crime keeps you locked away indefinitely and a war crime conviction is your ticket home," Davis wrote to Obama.

Of the 780 men held at Guantanamo since 2002, only eight were tried and convicted of war crimes. Of those, just three remain at Guantanamo.

Many of the detainees reported being assaulted, prolonged shackling, sexual abuse, and threats with dogs. Australian lawyer Richard Bourke, who has represented several Guantanamo detainees, charged they have been subjected to "good old-fashioned torture." Detainees who engage in hunger strikes are subjected to force-feeding, a practice the UN Human Rights Council has called torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. At least seven men have died at the prison camp.

The United States has illegally occupied Guantánamo since 1903, after Cuba's war of independence against Spain. Cuba was forced to include the Platt Amendment in the Cuban constitution. The amendment granted the United States the right to intervene in Cuba as a prerequisite for the withdrawal of US troops from the rest of Cuba. That provision provided the basis for the 1903 Agreement on Coaling and Naval Stations, which gave the United States the right to use Guantánamo Bay "exclusively as coaling or naval stations, and for no other purpose."

President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a new treaty with Cuba in 1934 that allows the United States to remain in Guantánamo Bay until the US abandons it or until both Cuba and the United States agree to modify their arrangement. According to that treaty, "the stipulations of [the 1903] agreement with regard to the naval station of Guantánamo shall continue in effect." That means Guantánamo Bay can be used for nothing but coaling or naval stations. Article III of the 1934 treaty also says that Cuba leases Guantánamo Bay to the United States "for coaling and naval stations." Nowhere in either treaty did Cuba give the US the right to utilize Guantánamo Bay as a prison camp.

Former Cuban president Fidel Castro has long maintained that Guantanamo is part of Cuba and that the US illegally occupies it. One of Cuban President Raul Castro's requirements for normalization of relations with the United States is the return of Guantanamo to Cuba.

If there is probable cause to believe a detainee committed a crime, he should be sent to the United States for trial in federal court. The remaining detainees should be returned to their countries of origin or third countries if that is not feasible. After shuttering the prison camp, Obama should return Guantanamo Bay to Cuba, its rightful owner.

http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/close_guantanamo_and_return_it_to_cuba_20151115

Source: Truthdig

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Venezuela

At the UN Venezuela Demands Respect for its Right to will to be Independent

November 13, 2015

Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro denounced Thursday at the Human Rights Council of the United Nations (UN), the attacks Venezuela has suffered for its decision to become truly independent.



He called to respect for the people, the country and its national democracy, as evidenced in the massive popular participation of all sectors and a solid electoral system.

He also advocated for the right to self-determination of the South American nations who have decided, like Venezuela, be free and implement more just and equitable economic and social systems.

"Venezuela demands before the Human Rights Council, the utmost respect of all bodies reporting to the collegial body of the Council, which only obeys one voice: The United Nations," said the Venezuelan president in his speech at the headquarters of the Council, based in Geneva, Switzerland.

Likewise, he called on the UN to be alert and prevent this organization –so important for dialogue and meeting of peoples– from being used as a tool against popular political processes that arise in the world, citing as an example the revolutionary process taking place in Venezuela.

Attacks against Venezuela

The Venezuelan president also reported that a smear campaign is now under way to attack the Venezuelan judicial and electoral authorities, for the purpose of undermining the country's institutions.

He warned that Venezuela is also a victim of a campaign of international manipulation using the alleged violation of human rights as an excuse.

"Venezuela is constantly facing harassment and manipulation regarding the issue of human rights, devised by media, by the West in a move to harm our country," he warned.

Maduro added that this manipulation seeks to isolate Venezuela in the international arena, as well as protect those who conspire against the progress made in the country on human rights since 1999, when the Bolivarian Revolution began.

He also spoke of the constant harassment Venezuela has suffered by the US empire, even before the 2002 coup d'etat, which he said was conceived and prepared before the Iraq invasion.

Venezuela is a guarantor of Human Rights

In contrast to the campaigns being run against the country, the Head of State emphasized that in the last 16 years human rights of all sectors of Venezuelan

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At the UN Venezuela Demands Respect for its Right to will to be Independent

society have been respected and said that the Constitution of the nation has become an international reference legal instrument because it dedicates nine chapters to the protection of the rights of the population.

He also said that the national Constitution defines, for the first time in history, the protection of environmental rights and emphasizes the rights of the population in education, health, housing, work, recreation and safety.

"A third of the Constitution was drafted and conceived with a structure that transcendently mark the construction of a new country, which started in 1999. We can say from Venezuela: it was worthwhile to devise a constitution identifying all social sectors" he said.

He mentioned in his speech that Venezuela's response to the attacks against the country was the creation, via the Organic Law, of a National Human Rights Council that has been consulted with all sectors of Venezuelan society to develop a plan that will coincide with the presentation of universal periodic review of the country at the UN.

Venezuela in the Human Rights Council

The Venezuelan president reaffirmed that with the re-election to the Human Rights Council for the period 2016-2018, Venezuela will continue to insist on building a "multipolar multicenter, economic and human" world where all countries of America, Africa and Asia, who make their way to their sovereign self-determination have their place.

Therefore, Maduro urged member countries of the Human Rights Council to make efforts to stop the interventionist actions of imperialist nature, by the major economic and weapons superpowers of the world against countries that do not respond to their interests.

In this regard, he reiterated that Venezuela will continue to support Palestine as a sovereign nation to defend its right to self-determination.

He added that the forced migration and the violence that occurs on the Palestinian territory, caused by Israel, were mainly created by hegemonic countries that tried to impose themselves.

The president welcomed the ratification of Venezuela as a member of the Human Rights Council and recognized the efforts by this UN body for global democracy and true respect for human rights and independent peoples.

He said the Human Rights Council has laid the foundations for renewal and achieved positive progress "rectifying the mistakes that led to the decline of the United Nations mechanisms that existed in the past."

On October 28, with 131 votes, Venezuela was reelected as a member of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations for a second consecutive term. At the time, President Maduro highlighted the country's diplomatic victory despite the fierce campaign by US and international right against the Bolivarian Government.

<http://www.avn.info.ve/node/329525>

Source: Venezuelan News Agency

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Palestine

Children of Hebron: 'Everyone is Afraid'



Clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinians in Hebron have been especially traumatic for children, experts say.

November 10, 2015

By Matthew Vickery

Hebron, occupied West Bank - At the start of the school day, students at the Tariq

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bin Ziyad school in Hebron mill around outside the white-brick building, talking to friends and playing football.

The teenage students show no rush to head to class. Conversations drift from friendly rivalries between Real Madrid and Barcelona supporters, to jokes about relatives back home.

Suddenly, just seconds later, the students all sprint towards the school doors - but it is not the school bell that gets them moving.

The now-familiar deep thud of a launched tear gas canister can be heard 150m down the road. Another 20 canisters follow in quick succession, turning the air white with gas.

Students pile into the building as quickly as they can. Those in the back shout frantically for the others to move faster; the gas is suffocating.

Living in Hebron over the past month, you are afraid of settlers, afraid of soldiers - you sometimes don't want to leave your home.

"Every day, clouds of gas hover over our school," says the school's head teacher, Rawhay Shukrie. "The gas bombs and the noises are affecting our students every day."

The gas stings the eyes and makes it difficult to breathe. It isn't unusual for those badly affected to pass out.

"All of this affects us - the students, their learning, our teaching," Shukrie explains.

The teachers try to keep a sense of routine but have to react quickly in response to the events outside. Classes must be abandoned and break times reshuffled or shortened.

The school and its surroundings, a built-up neighborhood of schools, shops, and some residential buildings, are located beside the Israeli-controlled part of the Old City, which houses around 500 illegal settlers. In recent weeks, this area has seen a marked increase in Israeli army incursions and violence from soldiers and settlers.

"We can't do anything," Shukrie says. "We just have to rush students into the classrooms, try to keep them safe, calm them and then treat the students who are passing out from the gas."

Psychological first aid

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The escalation in violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories has killed 77 Palestinians and 10 Israelis in recent weeks. Around a third of the Palestinian deaths have been in Hebron.

According to Natalia Garcia, the mental health activities manager in Hebron for Doctors Without Borders (MSF), recent events have exacted a heavy psychological toll on residents of the city. While there have always been tensions due to soldiers, settlers, and Palestinians living in such close quarters, the situation has been exacerbated over the past month - hitting the children particularly hard, she says.

"People are more afraid now than they were a month ago," Garcia explains. "There have been incidents from the army, even in the schools. We've had to deal with the aftermath of this - with trauma in children."

"Schools are now having to carry out psychological first aid for their students."

This takes the form of immediate counselling sessions, where children are encouraged to express their feelings through drawings and re-enactments, she says.

"There is more anxiety. Some children are showing signs of isolation or increased anger, as ways to try and cope with what they are experiencing and witnessing."

For some children, this anxiety can be reflected in a fear of going out or socialising; for others, it takes the form of rage as they lash out at family and friends.

'They hate us'

As the school day draws to a close, a group of children, aged between about eight and 14, gather at the southern entrance of Shuhada Street. They are here to throw stones at the nearby soldiers. It has become something of a routine over recent weeks.

Most of the stones make it nowhere near the soldiers, who stand for the moment with their guns slack, but with their tear gas grenades at the ready.

"They hate us," says 10-year-old Mohammad of the soldiers. He speaks quietly, looking down at the ground as he does so.

The road is littered with burned debris, stones are strewn across the street, and the smell of gas still lingers in the air.

"They do whatever they want," he says, suddenly looking up and projecting his voice. "They come to our houses, and they can take anyone they want; they can kill us. They will take me and my brothers if they wanted to."

He seems to linger on that thought.

'I want to play the way they do'

According to Garcia, some parents have stopped sending their children to school for fear that they could be injured or killed if they leave their homes; the children themselves are afraid.

"Just three weeks ago, I was going to the shop [when] they [Israeli soldiers] started opening fire. When I heard the gunfire, I just started running as quickly as I could," says 11-year-old Saed Seider from the Dabuya area of Hebron.

He seems to be replaying the incident in his mind and looks shaken.

"I started crying. I thought someone had gotten killed. After a few minutes, I

found out that someone had just died."

Seider has sad, tired eyes that belie his youth.

A few weeks ago, he was detained by soldiers for four hours, blindfolded and taken to an army detention centre. He thinks about it every day, but he still has no idea why they took him.

"Every day, I am looking at them [the settler children] having fun. They are playing basketball and football. There is always a soldier with them," Seider says. "The only thing I want to do is play, play without care - the way they do."

Garcia explains that the psychological toll has caused many children to have nightmares. Some younger children have started wetting their beds, she adds.

"There are many who are wanting to sleep in the same room as their parents now because there could be an Israeli army incursion [at] any time."

Schools have also reported soldiers firing tear gas and stun grenades into classrooms, conducting raids during school days - such as in al-Hajj Ziad Jaber school in Hebron's Wadi al-Nasara area, where soldiers forcibly entered the school and started searching children for stones - and numerous students being sent to hospitals for tear gas exposure.

'Left on the ground to die'

In Hebron, MSF has had to quintuple its outreach since the beginning of October to deal with the mounting trauma. The organisation treated approximately 500 people in the first half of last month, and there are still certain areas that its doctors cannot reach due to ongoing clashes and severe restrictions on freedom of movement.

Many residents say they have become afraid to walk in certain areas of the city or to walk alone.

"Everyone is struggling to sleep. We are all keeping an eye on the news; everyone is concerned," says Issa Amro, the director of the anti-settlement organisation, Youth Against Settlements.

Amro says he saw soldiers fatally shoot a young Palestinian man near his home a week ago, even though the man appeared to pose no threat. "He was just left on the ground to die. He was still a teenager."

The incident made him fear for his own life, Amro says.

"Living in Hebron over the past month, you are afraid of settlers, afraid of soldiers - you sometimes don't want to leave your home," he continues. "If you hear that someone was shot, everyone starts calling their family, calling back home, to see whether they are safe or not. Everyone is afraid."

"When the children are out of the house, we worry that maybe they will never come back. We are afraid about our children, our families. We don't feel safe at all right now."

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/11/children-hebron-afraid-151109133313840.html>

Source: Al Jazeera

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Palestine/Europe

After the Attacks: Press Release from EuroPalestine



Paris, November 14, 2015

Our association, CAPJPO-EuroPalestine naturally condemns the barbarous attacks perpetrated by the terrorists claiming to belong to Daesh, and shares the emotion and sadness of the friends and relatives of the 128 victims of these horrific killings, also the hundreds of men and women wounded during the Friday evening massacres.

All the same, we protest against the declarations and the policies of a government which is far from protecting the population and exposes it to the risks of new attacks.

In reality, we do not see how the measures which are only related to "security" could represent efficient protection. It is impossible to watch over everyone everywhere. More police, more cameras will not stop determined killers.

Not to tackle the causes, that is the propaganda about the "clash of civilisations" and the war led by France against countries and people who have never attacked us, this is dramatic.

How could we have imagined how it was possible to get away with bombing Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria?

What right had France to intervene militarily?

Bombings, which, lest we forget, killed thousands of innocent victims, including women and children.

Those "innocent victims" do not seem to stir François Hollande's sympathy, when they are not French?

How can we prevent individuals, who identify themselves with those victims or who are relatives, becoming suicide bombers? And they let themselves "be manipulated" and "recruited" by groups often armed and funded, initially, by Western leaders who want to overthrow this or that government, who is not to their liking? Because they are dictators? But then why do we maintain good relations with other dictatorships in countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt or Africa?

The French government does not answer any of the fundamental questions. And we can't rely on journalists from the mainstream media to ask them.

Why don't we speak about the way these terrorist groups were born? Who armed them? Who financed them? Why don't they explain the fact that they made theirs the logic of the western propaganda about the "clash of civilisations" with its concepts of "superiority of judéo-christian civilisations" and "chosen people", just reversing it and claiming that all the ones who did not march under their banner and accepted their religious practice should be eliminated?

Yes, it's chilling. But it is also chilling to hear on one of the main French TV channel this morning an ex French intelligence officer explain that Israel has

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some good advice to give about the struggle against suicide bombers!

When one knows how the Israeli population has been up in arms for decades, and how the super sophisticated Israeli technology of repression could not enable Israel to prevent attacks, we have reasons to worry!

As long as Israel refuses to deal with the roots of the problem, i.e. its occupation and colonization of Palestine, its population taken into hostages by its leaders, will go on paying the price.

And we too are likely to pay a more and more expensive price for our states' terrorism.

There are calls for "National Unity ". Under those leadership?

Those who develop racism in our country? Those who criminalize solidarity with migrants? Those who ask us to march with tormentors, and child torturers in favor of free speech?

Hollande has just said "The French population will have to make sacrifices".

Which ones? More police, more army, more wars, and less education, health, and retirement pensions?

We should not forget Jean Jaures' sentence: "Capitalism brings the scourge of war in his train much as clouds presage storms".

Let's pay tribute to the victims of terror by preventing more victims, and by acting in a way words such as "Freedom, Equality, Fraternity" make really sense.

Source: CAPJPO-EuroPalestine

United States

What Good Are Our Black Politics When 3 of Every 8 Black Children Under 6 Are in Poverty?

November 11, 2015

By Bruce A. Dixon

There have never been more black elected and appointed officials, more black corporate and military functionaries, more black faces on TV and in the movies than there are right now. There's been a black family in the White House for seven years already and the first lady is from the south side of Chicago.

But what does it really mean to black children in places like Chicago's south side all around the country?

The plain and simple answer is not a whole lot. Current census data pegs the percentage of African American children under 6 who are growing up in poverty at 38%. That's three out of every eight black children in the US. It's been



What Good Are Our Black Politics When 3 of Every 8 Black Children Under 6 Are in Poverty?

just a little higher once or twice in the several decades that particular statistic has been kept, but never by much, and not since the early 1980s.

Why? Politics isn't just about voting, elections and political parties. Politics broadly speaking is about how we humans arrange our collective affairs. And black politics, as far back as anybody can recall, black politics has never been aimed at confronting those who wield power, or contesting for that power. Black politics has always been about representation, about which black faces would best serve as designated spokespeople for the rest of us, which of them might best broker for our interests. Brokers don't contest power.

The current waves of mass incarceration and gentrification would have been impossible without the active collaboration of large groups of black preachers, black business leaders and black politicians, the kind of black political class which views its own glittering careers as the indisputable proof that something great is being accomplished on behalf of the oppressed.

So far, the newest wave of so-called "movement activists" are walking down that same well-traveled road. They're asking for more representation, with themselves as the brokers this time. They want town hall meetings and to their own presidential debates. But as Glen Ford points out, they don't have demands.

They're not proposing abolition of the crushing burden of student and consumer debt.

They're not championing laws that would make the kinds of mortgage fraud perpetrated by the big banks illegal, or which would let cities snatch underwater homes from the speculators.

They're not educating or organizing parents and communities to resist the wave of school privatizations or to opt out of the standardized testing which provides the fake justification for them.

They're not speaking or mobilizing against the permanent warfare state which swallows fully half the nation's revenue, money which could be spent transforming cities, industries, economies, and tens of millions of lives.

They're not building new political organizations that value and practice democracy internally, that prefigure the world we deserve.

This new movement crowd has lots to say about the slippery nebulous demons of white supremacy and institutional racism, but almost nothing against the state and corporate actors who exercise real power. Like the classes of broker-leaders before them, they don't have answers to gentrification, or the housing crisis or mass incarceration, or much to say to the three out of every eight black children in poverty, except to point to their own careers, while declaring how they love their blackness, and that of the pretty first lady in the white House. And yours too.

<http://www.blackagenda.com/what-good-are-black-politics>

Source: Black Agenda Report

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United States

Marco Rubio: Beauty and the Beast

November 10, 2015

By Max J. Castro

Marco Rubio is the most dangerous Republican in America.

He is not the most obnoxious, not by a long shot. Donald Trump has that dubious distinction locked up, and

there are others I would put ahead of Rubio in this category. Indeed, Marco comes across as rather amiable. If all you knew about Rubio is how he presents himself, which he does very well, you might even vote for him.

He is young, handsome, articulate, knowledgeable about the issues, and intelligent enough for a politician (although not even in the same league as Bill Clinton or Barack Obama.) His tone is measured rather than shrill. He focuses on attacking the Democrats rather than participating in the circular firing squad which is the Republican nomination race. It is all of this that makes Rubio the perfect wolf in sheep's clothing and the most dangerous Republican in the race.

Rubio presents a nice persona but his ideology and his policy positions from the time he was in the Florida legislature to this moment are mean, mean, mean. The most vulnerable people in Florida – poor children in need of specialized health care, low-income working people who can't afford private health insurance, the unemployed, incarcerated youths and adults who risk being injured or killed by out-of-control-guards – are paying dearly for the Robin-Hood-in-reverse policies of the Republican legislature and governor. In the meantime, the legislature has lavished tax benefit after tax benefit on rich individuals and even richer corporations.

I can imagine someone who, unlike myself, is a firm believer in the Gospels, Pope Francis for instance, looking at these warped priorities and denouncing them with one word: anti-Christian.

No one is more responsible for laying down these mean-spirited policies than then-Speaker of the Florida House Marco Rubio and his estranged buddy, former governor Jeb Bush. The fact that the current governor, Rick Scott, has doubled down on these priorities does nothing to excuse Rubio-Bush. Their actions laid down the blueprint for a world view and a politics that Francis might call anti-Christian and I call simply inhuman. Let me give an example of the ideologically-driven essential meanness beneath Rubio's slick presentation of self. A friend who used to run a big organization dedicated to improving the lives of children in Miami-Dade County asked Rubio to do something so that immigrant children might get decent health care. Rubio's bottom line response was this: "We don't want to create another entitlement."

Perish the thought that sick children have a right to health care! Rubio's remark was nothing more than a stock Republican talking point, the kind of thing he might have learned at those seminars run by right-wing groups to ensure legislatures are controlled by right-thinking members now and into the future. But that doesn't detract from the sheer savagery, the elemental indecency. What society in the world that this country considers a peer (similar



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political system, high GDP per capita) would question a child's entitlement to health care?

Translating into words what would be better expressed through a Venn diagram, the intersection between decent societies and societies that would deny children health care is an empty set. That means that right now we don't live in a decent society. We may shout to the four winds that we are the most generous nation in history. Until health care is a right of every person in this country, few outside our borders will not believe us.

When the initial shock set off by the murderous attacks of 9/11 began to ease into mourning, many began to ask the question: "Why do they hate us?" Politicians and pundits quickly jumped in to supply what became the generally accepted answer: Because of our freedom.

Undoubtedly, that's true of a few fanatics. But outside this thankfully limited number of plain haters, there is another more powerful reason. Most people in the world know we really have the economic wealth to take care of the health and welfare of our own people, increase dramatically our aid to poor foreign countries, and still provide for more than the "adequate defense" envisioned by the Founders.

They also know that instead we choose to spend our money on military systems, hare-brained invasions, and interventionist adventures of all sorts. And when it comes to aid, we give the lion's share to a rich country, Israel, mainly in the form of weapons. The right-wing governments' that have run Israel since the unspeakable murder of Rabin twenty years ago this week have used those weapons to lay waste to huge slices of Lebanon, the Gaza strip, and even attack a peaceful Turkish flotilla! In each case, there have been many civilian casualties, including some Americans.

The point of this excursion is that a President Marco Rubio would double down on all these wrong-headed domestic and foreign policies. That's the substantive danger, but the political danger is that he has an outside chance of getting into the White House whereas the other Republican don't.

Let me make one thing clear. I don't think Rubio will become president. The Republicans have alienated the key Latino vote. As a Latino, Rubio might be expected to win some of that vote back. But he won't get enough to make a difference. Rubio, for good and bad reasons, is just the kind of Latino the vast majority of Latinos in this country despise. Without decent numbers in the Latino electorate, the GOP can't win. Rubio won't get them.

So why is Rubio dangerous at all? There is a scenario where he might scrape into the White House by the skin of his teeth. Suppose there is mass voter rejection of the Democratic nominee. "Hell, no, I am not voting for a damned socialist!" "Hillary has lied about everything, the emails, Benghazi... We don't want another lying Clinton in the White House!"

I have heard voters say just those sentiments, and they worry me. In such a scenario, and aided by the vicious campaign of vilification the Republicans have in store for any Democratic candidate, Rubio's superficial reasonableness and his boyish good looks might give him a shot.

Yet I hope the voters would be able to see through that facade down to Rubio's heart, where they would find nothing but an ideological black hole.

<http://progresoweekly.us/marco-rubio-beauty-and-the-beast/>

Source: Progreso Weekly

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