

MY ABSENCE FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Conocía el informe del compañero Raúl al Sexto Congreso del Partido.

Me lo había mostrado varios días antes por su propia iniciativa, como hizo con muchos otros asuntos sin que yo lo solicitara, porque había delegado, como ya expliqué, todos mis cargos en el Partido y el Estado en la Proclama del 31 de julio de 2006.

I had previously read the main report by Comrade Raúl to the Sixth Congress of the Party.

He shared it with me several days before, on his own initiative, as he has done with many other issues without my asking him to do so because, as I have explained, I relinquished all my responsibilities in the Party and the State in the Proclamation of July 31 of 2006.

Doing that was a duty that I fulfilled without hesitating even for a single moment.

I was aware that my health condition was serious, but I was calmed: the Revolution would move on; it was not its most difficult moment, after the USSR and the Socialist Bloc had disappeared. Bush had been in the throne since 2001 and had appointed a government for Cuba. But, once again, the mercenaries as well as the bourgeois were left with their bags and trunks packed in their golden exile.

The Yankees now had another Revolution in Venezuela, in addition to that in Cuba. The close cooperation between both countries will also be recorded in the history of America as an example of the enormous revolutionary potential of peoples that share a common origin and a common history.

Among the many aspects addressed in the draft report to the Sixth Congress of the Party, the one that interested me the most was the one referred to power. It literally states as follows: "...we have reached the conclusion that it is advisable to recommend limiting the time of service in high political and State positions to a maximum of two five-year terms. This is possible and necessary under the present circumstances, quite different from those prevailing in the first decades of the Revolution that was not yet consolidated when it had already become the target of continuous threats and aggressions."

I liked the idea; it was an issue on which I had meditated a lot. Since the early days of the Revolution, I got used to read, on a daily basis, the reports published by the news agencies. I knew about the evolution of events in our world, the achievements and mistakes of Parties and men. There have been abundant examples of that in the course of the last 50 years.

I will not mention them not to expand on that or offend other's sensibilities. I strongly believe that the fate of the world could have been right now very different, if not by the mistakes made by revolutionary leaders who excelled for their talent and merits. Neither do I entertain the illusion that, in the future, the task will be easier -the opposite is the case.

I simply say what I believe is an elemental duty of Cuban revolutionaries. The smaller a country and the most difficult the circumstances, the more obligation it has to avoid making mistakes.

I must confess that I never really worried about how much time I would continue to be President of the Councils of State and of Ministers and First Secretary of the Party. Besides, since we landed, I had been the Commander in Chief of the small troop that grew so big later on. Since I was at the Sierra Maestra, I had refused to become the provisional president of the country after the victory of our forces- that I had early on envisaged- which were still quite modest back in 1957. I did it because the ambitions

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surrounding that position were already obstructing the struggle.

I was virtually forced to occupy the position of Prime Minister during the early months of 1959.

Raúl knew that I would not accept any position now within the Party. He was always the one who continued calling me First Secretary and Commander in Chief, two responsibilities that, as is known, I had relinquished in the aforementioned Proclamation when I got seriously ill. I never tried to carry out such responsibilities –nor could I physically do that- even when I had managed to greatly recover the capacity to analyze and write.

However, he never stopped sharing with me the ideas he conceived.

Another problem emerged: The Organizing Committee was discussing about the total amount of members of the Central Committee that should be submitted to the Congress. Based on very solid criteria, the Committee supported Raúl's idea of an increase among women and descendants of African slaves in the Central Committee. Both sectors had been the poorest and most exploited by capitalism in our country.

Likewise, there were some other comrades who, given their age or health condition, would not be able to pay much services to the Party, but Raúl thought it would be hard for them to see that their names had been excluded from the list of candidates. I did not hesitate to suggest him not to deprive those comrades from such an honor, and added that the most important thing was for me not to appear in that list.

I think I have already received too many honors. I never thought I would live for so many years. The enemies did everything in their power to prevent it. They tried to eliminate me on endless occasions, and many times I “collaborated” with them.

The Congress went on so fast that I had no time to convey a single word about this matter before receiving the ballots.

Around noon, Raúl sent me the ballots with his assistant, and I was able to exercise my right to vote as delegate to the Congress, an honor that the Party members from Santiago de Cuba bestowed upon me without me knowing a single word about it. I did not vote in a mechanical way. I read the biography of the new members that had been proposed. They are all excellent persons, some of whom I had met during the presentation of a book about our revolutionary war at the Aula Magna of the University of Havana, or the contacts with the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, the meetings with the scientists, the intellectuals and other activities. I voted and I even asked that some photos be taken of the moment when I was exercising that right.

I also remembered that I still have quite a lot to write about the history of the Playa Girón Battle. I am working on that and I have committed myself to deliver it very soon. I also have in mind writing about another important event that occurred after.

And all that before the world comes to an end!

How do you like that?

Fidel Castro Ruz
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