

The state of the union

After his January 12 address at the University of Tucson, Arizona, on the massacre that had took place four days earlier, people awaited with interest for the US president's speech on the same topic. Six people died and fourteen were injured, including young Democratic congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, who was elected to the United States Congress for the third time and had been opposed to the anti-immigration law in Arizona, a state that was part of the territory snatched from Mexico in the unjust war of 1848.

The Tea Party, the rightwing fascist element of the Republican Party, gained a notable victory of the voters who bothered to come out and vote in the elections.

The people of Arizona, as in the rest of the United States, reacted with indignation. Their behavior was without a doubt the right thing to do, and that is what I said.

I have never doubted the ethics that usually characterize the people, independent of the policy of governments.

If that address by Obama was lacking, in terms of addressing the incredible demonstration of primitivism reflected in the widespread and practically unrestricted use of lethal firearms, his State of the Union address deserves an ethical and political analysis since, independently of the president and the congress, the United States is a superpower upon which the human species, and several other important factors, depend.

No country on its own should look for or can come up with answers to the problems that the world faces today.

In the first place, Obama is engulfed in an electoral process. He has to speak for both the democrats and republicans, those who vote, those who don't vote, multimillionaires and beggars, Protestants and Catholics, Christians and Muslims, believers and nonbelievers, blacks and whites, those who support stem cell research and those who don't support it, homosexuals and heterosexuals, every citizen and their counterpart, to end by saying that they are all Americans, as if the remaining 95.5%, or 6.9 billion inhabitants on the rest of the planet did not exist

Obama dives into this subject on the first pages of his address that lasted an hour:

"At stake right now is not who wins the next election...at stake is whether new jobs and industries take root... it's whether we sustain the leadership that has made America not just a place on a map, but the light to the world.

"We are poised for progress...the stock market has come roaring back. Corporate profits are up. The economy is growing again."

Immediately following these words, Obama tried to move us with a passage that seems to be taken straight from a US movie that my generation will remember, *Gone with the Wind*, about the terrible civil war between the industrialized north and the agrarian and slavery-practicing south, during the time of the exceptional leader, Abraham Lincoln.

"That world has changed. And for many, the change has been painful. I've seen it in the shuttered windows of once booming factories, and the vacant storefronts on once busy Main Streets. I've heard it

in the frustrations of Americans who've seen their paychecks dwindle or their jobs disappear —proud men and women who feel like the rules have been changed in the middle of the game.”

“Steel mills that once needed 1,000 workers can now do the same work with 100.”

“Meanwhile, nations like China and India realized that with some changes of their own, they could compete in this new world...Just recently, China became the home to the world's largest private solar research facility, and the world's fastest computer.”

“...America still has the largest, most prosperous economy in the world..”

“We know what it takes to compete for the jobs and industries of our time. We need to out-innovate, out-educate, and out-build the rest of the world. We have to make America the best place on Earth to do business...And tonight, I'd like to talk about how we get there.”

Obama never talks about the big monopoly businesses that today control and plunder the planet's resources. He never mentions the Bretton Woods accord, the system imposed on a world in ruins because of war, where the United States takes over control of the financial institutions and the International Monetary Fund, where they fiercely hold on veto power. He never says one word about the colossal con by Nixon in 1971 when he unilaterally suspended the conversion of the dollar in gold, printed US dollars without any sort of limits, and acquired uncountable goods and riches in the world, for which he primarily paid with paper, whose value over 40 years has fallen to 2.5% of what it was worth then.

On the other hand, Obama likes to tell poetic tales about small businesses to supposedly dazzle, captivate and move the audience who are not warned about the reality. His speech, style and tone all seem designed to have the audience listen, like well-behaved children, to his moving stories.

“Robert and Gary Allen are brothers who run a small Michigan roofing company. After September 11th, they volunteered their best roofers to help repair the Pentagon. But half of their factory went unused, and the recession hit them hard. Today, with the help of a government loan, that empty space is being used to manufacture solar shingles that are being sold all across the country. In Robert's words, ‘We reinvented ourselves.’”

“We're issuing a challenge. We're telling America's scientists and engineers that if they assemble teams of the best minds in their fields, and focus on the hardest problems in clean energy, we'll fund the Apollo projects of our time.”

Then, without pause, he took our breath away:

“At the California Institute of Technology, they're developing a way to turn sunlight and water into fuel for our cars.”

The planet has been saved! Or, at least, it won't perish due to an excess of CO2 or for lack of energy. It reminds me of something that happened over 40 years ago when a group of young enterprising scientists spoke to me with great enthusiasm about this same idea, based on theoretic principles. My blind faith in science led me to go find everything that they asked for, including an isolated facility where they would work for years with such enthusiasm that even when a motor blew up and almost killed a group of them, they continued their research.

I'm not denying anything, and much less of a great institute of California, but please Mr. President, share this information with the world so that other scientists can work on this same project. It is not a matter of profits, humanity would be prepared to pay anything your scientists want, and I am almost sure that even Michael Moore would applaud were you to then receive 10 Nobel prizes.

After another encouraging comment about Oak Ridge National Laboratory and supercomputers installed so that nuclear plants can produce more energy, the president assured us: "With more research and incentives, we can break our dependence on oil with biofuel, and become the first country to have a million electric vehicles on the road by 2015. (Applause.)"

Unruffled the president continued:

"Think about it. Over the next 10 years, nearly half of all new jobs will require education that goes beyond a high school education. And yet, as many as a quarter of our students aren't even finishing high school. The quality of our math and science education lags behind many other nations. America has fallen to ninth in the proportion of young people with a college degree. And so the question is whether all of us —as citizens, and as parents— are willing to do what's necessary to give every child a chance to succeed."

"...we will reach the goal that I set two years ago: By the end of the decade, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. (Applause.)"

"Others come here from abroad to study in our colleges and universities. But as soon as they obtain advanced degrees, we send them back home to compete against us. It makes no sense."

Of course, we are expected to excuse this fostering of brain drain, which our friend Obama has no interest in trying to hide, we must excuse him given his passion for science and healthy competition.

"The third step in winning the future is rebuilding America. To attract new businesses to our shores, we need the fastest, most reliable ways to move people, goods, and information —from high-speed rail to high-speed Internet."

"Our infrastructure used to be the best, but our lead has slipped. South Korean homes now have greater Internet access than we do. Countries in Europe and Russia invest more in their roads and railways than we do. China is building faster trains and newer airports."

"...over the last two years, we've begun rebuilding for the 21st century, a project that has meant thousands of good jobs for the hard-hit construction industry. And tonight, I'm proposing that we redouble those efforts."

"Within 25 years, our goal is to give 80 percent of Americans access to high-speed rail."

"Within the next five years, we'll make it possible for businesses to deploy the next generation of high-speed wireless coverage to 98 percent of all Americans... It's about a rural community in Iowa or Alabama where farmers and small business owners will be able to sell their products all over the world."

"...this will make America a better place to do business and create jobs."

"...a parade of lobbyists has rigged the tax code to benefit particular companies and industries."

"...we set a goal of doubling our exports by 2014 —because the more we export, the more jobs we create here at home... [...]Recently, we signed agreements with India and China that will support more than 250,000 jobs here in the United States."

"...I made it clear ... that I would only sign deals that keep faith with American workers and promote American jobs...that's what I intend to do as we pursue agreements with Panama and Colombia ..."

Some of the things Obama talked about give an idea of the dramatic suffering endured by the poorest segments in his own country in the midst of the 21st century. For example, he said:

"I'm not willing to tell James Howard, a brain cancer patient from Texas, that his treatment might not be covered."

"We are living with a legacy of deficit spending that began almost a decade ago. And in the wake of the financial crisis, some of that was necessary to keep credit flowing, save jobs, and put money in people's pockets."

"..... tonight, I am proposing that starting this year, we freeze annual domestic spending for the next five years."

"The Secretary of Defense has also agreed to cut tens of billions of dollars in spending that he and his generals believe our military can do without."

"And if we truly care about our deficit, we simply can't afford a permanent extension of the tax cuts for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans. (Applause.) Before we take money away from our schools or scholarships away from our students, we should ask millionaires to give up their tax break."

"Because you deserve to know when your elected officials are meeting with lobbyists, I ask Congress to do what the White House has already done -- put that information online."

I think the mere presence of an army of lobbyists working and negotiating with members of Congress is a shameful fact for any civilized country.

".... America's moral example must always shine for all who yearn for freedom and justice and dignity", Mr. Obama tells us, and immediately passes on to another theme.

"Look to Iraq, where nearly 100,000 of our brave men and women have left with their heads held high."

Mission accomplished!, I remembered.

"Because Republicans and Democrats approved the New START treaty, far fewer nuclear weapons and launchers will be deployed."

"Because of a diplomatic effort to insist that Iran meet its obligations, the Iranian government now faces tougher sanctions, tighter sanctions than ever before. And on the Korean Peninsula, we stand with our ally South Korea, and insist that North Korea keeps its commitment to abandon nuclear weapons."

The President, as I could observe, did not mention a single word about the selective assassination of Iranian scientists by the intelligence agencies of the United States and its allies, about which he knew full well.

Instead, he expanded the information for us:

"This is just a part of how we're shaping a world that favors peace and prosperity. With our European allies, we revitalized NATO and increased our cooperation on everything from counterterrorism to missile defense."

Of course our illustrious friend did not say a word about the urgent need to prevent global warming from continuing its rapid increase, or the catastrophic rains and snow that have just struck the world, or the food crisis that now threatens 80 countries of the third world, and of course the tens of millions of tons of corn and soybeans that large U.S. companies are devoting to the production of biofuel, while the world's population, already at 6.9 billion, will rise to 7 billion within 18 months.

"This March, I will travel to Brazil, Chile, and El Salvador to forge new alliances across the Americas."

In Brazil, of course, he will be able to learn of the devastation and the deaths and disappearances caused by the unprecedented rains that have just taken place in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. It will undoubtedly be an occasion for self criticism that the U.S. refused to sign the Kyoto agreement, and promoted under his own government, the suicidal policy of Copenhagen.

In Chile, the politics now get complicated. Presumably, someone must pay tribute to Salvador Allende and to the thousands of Chileans murdered under the dictatorship of Pinochet, imposed on Chile by the United States. This is compounded by what I explain next. Another embarrassing situation is expected to occur in El Salvador, where American supplied weapons and forces trained and educated in U.S. counter-insurgency military schools, tortured and committed horrible crimes against the combatants of the FMLN, whose party won the electoral vote most recently.

It is almost impossible to believe what you read then, when the President says:

"Around the globe, we're standing with those who take responsibility -- helping farmers grow more food, supporting doctors who care for the sick,...."

Many people know what America did with our doctors in Venezuela and other Latin American countries, hatching plans to promote defections and offering them visas and money in the United States to abandon their hard and dedicated work. Everybody knows about the free trade agreements and the massive subsidies on U.S. agricultural products to ruin the cereal and grain producers in Latin America. With these practices they ruined the production of cereals and maize in Mexico, making it dependent on U.S. agriculture.

In countries as poor as Haiti, which supplied nearly all its own rice, the transnational companies ruined the production with its subsidized surpluses and kept the country from supplying this commodity and from offering increasing employment to thousands of Haitian workers.

Now it turns out, according to Obama's speech, America is the Olympic champion of medical help and administrative honesty in the world. These issues are extensive and difficult to collect in a single reflection.

We recall that the industrialized countries are the main looters of physicians and research scientists of the third world. The U.S. military budget exceeds that of all the other countries combined, its arms exports are double or triple if compared to those of the other states; their deployed nuclear arsenals number over 5,000 strategic weapons, it has more than 500 military bases overseas; its nuclear aircraft carriers and naval fleets dominate the seas of the planet. Is the American dream to be a model for the world? Who is the President of the United States trying to fool with that speech?

In the final pages of his delirious message he said:

"That dream is why I can stand here before you tonight. That dream is why a working-class kid from Scranton can sit behind me. (Laughter and applause.) That dream is why someone who began by sweeping the floors of his father's Cincinnati bar can preside as Speaker of the House in the greatest nation on Earth."

"And that dream is the story of a small business owner named Brandon Fisher.

"Brandon started a company in Berlin, Pennsylvania, that specializes in a new kind of drilling technology. And one day last summer, he saw the news that halfway across the world, 33 men were trapped in a Chilean mine, and no one knew how to save them."

"But Brandon thought his company could help. And so he designed a rescue that would come to be known as Plan B. His employees worked around the clock to manufacture the necessary drilling equipment. And Brandon left for Chile."

"Along with others, he began drilling a 2,000-foot hole into the ground, working three- or four-hour -- three or four days at a time without any sleep. Thirty-seven days later, Plan B succeeded, and the miners were rescued. (Applause.) But because he didn't want all of the attention, Brandon wasn't there when the miners emerged. He'd already gone back home, back to work on his next project."

"And later, one of his employees said of the rescue, "We proved that Center Rock is a little company, but we do big things." (Applause.)"

Obama spoke the night of the 25th for the 26th.. Today January 27, the American news agency AP reported to the world press as follows:

"The head of the rescue workers who recovered 33 miners alive after being trapped for 69 days at the bottom of a mine in Chile corrected President Barack Obama on the role of an American in the rescue.

"Believing that they were the only participants in the success, I think is too much. It does not seem right," Chilean engineer Jorge Sougarret, who led the rescue of the miners in October, told the El Mercurio daily.

"Obama said that Brandon Fisher," ... saw a news story that came from across the world, that 33 men were trapped in a mine in Chile and no one knew how they could be saved. "

"... Fisher 'chose a rescue project, known as Plan B. His employees worked against the clock to manufacture the equipment necessary for rescue. Thirty-seven days after Plan B was successful and the miners were rescued. "

"Sougarret said that Fisher did not design the rescue plan, one of the three that were used to bring the miners to the surface, but his company provided the hammers used for drilling. And he was paid \$ 100,000 for the hammers.

"What they did was to provide us with this technique, as there were others. It was not exclusive. That's why it was called Plan B. And Plan A and C continued to operate. Therefore what they did is not a unique operation. No doubt that his complete team took part and made it possible for us to achieve success," said Sougarret.

"The head of the rescuers, manager of one of the five major state-owned copper deposits, said the technical team composed of the state-owned Codelco and two major private mining companies decided the implementation of Plan B, which was successfully completed on October 13 with the rescue using a tube inserted through the hole."

Alter extolling the prowess of the small Center Rock business, regardless of the personal merits of young Brandon Fisher, Obama, in his unbridled advocacy which led him to not even mention the efforts of the Chilean rescuers, who labored arduously for weeks to save the trapped miners, ended his inflamed lecture:

"The idea of America endures. Our destiny remains our choice. And tonight, more than two centuries later, it's because of our people that our future is hopeful, our journey goes forward, and the state of our

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union is strong.”

“Thank you. God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America.” (Applause.)

It is difficult for God to bless so many lies.

Fidel Castro Ruz
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