

AZNAR'S SILENCE

During a Round Table program aired on Cuban television on April 25, 2003, I pointed out that the then Spanish President José María Aznar, an ally of the world's leader in genocides and massacres, had met with President William Clinton on April 13, 1999, at an uncertain juncture of the war in Yugoslavia, and had told him, verbatim:

"If we're at war, let's make it an all-out war, in order to win, to achieve more than a partial victory. Even if the war must last a month, three months, let's wage it. I don't understand why we have not yet bombed Serbian radio and television".

Aznar and US government spokespeople have kept silence about this. The text that follows has never before been published. I will use other materials, both public and confidential, in reflections to come.

[...]

"AZNAR: I will speak frankly. As I've already told President Clinton, the one thing that cannot happen is for NATO to be defeated now. Not only NATO's credibility, but its very existence as well, is now at stake. Had this conflict taken place 30 years ago, we would not have intervened. Europe has always been plagued by ethnic cleansings, confrontations between minorities and majorities, religious conflicts. Today, this is no longer tolerable. From the political point of view, we will never be in favor of Kosovo's independence, because of what we said before".

Referring to Chirac, the French president, he said: "I will speak with him tomorrow in Brussels. When I want to have a good time with Chirac, I start by saying to him that 'these Americans are truly horrible'. I had dinner with him at the Elysium three weeks ago. I don't know what had happened between you, but he was saying terrible things about you. I told him that was all fine and good, but that I wasn't there to discuss that.

"My idea is that, in order to win the war, the lines of communication between the Belgrade government and the people must be cut off. All of Serbia's lines of communication, its radio, television and phones, must be put out.

"In addition to this, we must restructure our information policy. NATO's information policy is disastrous. We're giving people the impression we've set out on an adventure, not that we're waging a war. There are real communication gaps. We have to go as far as we can on this, patiently cut off all supplies and lines of communication.

"We have to be careful with Italy and Greece. Air traffic and tourism in Italy are being severely affected. D'Alema is doing a good job, given the circumstances. We must not let him arrive at facile solutions.

"We must step up humanitarian aid efforts. Our citizens must see the efficacy of our humanitarian work as the other side of the bombings.

"It would be senseless to change positions now. I spoke with Annan yesterday. I saw that he had a firm stance on the matter. I stressed this to Annan. We can be flexible, but we cannot give people the impression that NATO is withdrawing.

"We can be flexible with respect to whether NATO would lead this force or not, but we cannot content ourselves with having OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) observers return. In

addition to transparency, we must have a guarantee.

"We must continue to pursue this strategy, to see if it possible for him to be overthrown internally" (He is referring to Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic).

"If a number of his generals fear that they can be accused before the Hague Tribunal, they may cooperate. Milosevic will likely try and come to an agreement. We must attempt to have that agreement reduce and not increase his power.

"We need not even touch on the matter of the land operation.

"Everyone understands that plans are in the making, anything else would be illogical. If our current strategy isn't working, we have to explore other options. It must be put on the table for consideration. If everything we're doing leads us nowhere, we'll have to intervene in the coming months. But our actions could not be limited to Kosovo. Rather, they would include other areas of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, going through Bosnia and Hungary, even. The Hungarian president is a young and intelligent leader, he told me that we will never be successful unless the following happens: Milosevic out of office, Kosovo split into two and a reformulation of the policy towards Bosnia-Herzegovina, to be divided as follows: a united Serbian Republic for Serbia, the Croatian part for Croatia and an independent Muslim part. I don't agree with this idea, but I believe it is gaining ground in countries in the region. It will be very hard for Serbs and Albanians to go back to living together again. We must continue to do what we've been doing, but we've been in Bosnia for many years now and we don't know when we will be able to get out of there. The Albanians may accept the idea of a confederation, but this will not be possible if Milosevic remains in power.

"If they have no guarantee of a Serbian presence in the regions that symbolize the birth of their civilization for them, they won't accept it. The feeling that native soil has been lost, that this soil must be "liberated", will arise.

"Our priority is to win the war; we'll see what happens afterwards".

[...]

I ask Mr. Aznar to tell us whether it is true or not that, on April 13, 1999, he advised President Clinton to bomb Serbian radio and television.

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