

USA: A terrible year

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There will be little reason to celebrate at midnight on December 31 at the White House, because the bad streak will continue in 2022.

Photo: La Vanguardia

By Guillermo Alvarado

The United States ends 2021 with a long list of events that have exposed the fallacies of the "perfect democracy", of the country of opportunities and the land of human rights, to show the starkest face of an empire in decline.

As David Brooks, correspondent of the Mexican daily La Jornada, recalls, the first news reported this year from Washington was the violent attack on January 6 against the Capitol, the nerve center of political life in that nation.

The images of the mobs, whipped up by Donald Trump, storming the legislative branch of the first world power reminded me of those dark times of the decadence of Rome, when Caligula appointed his horse as senator to show his contempt for institutions.

It was also the year in which that country reached the figure of 800 thousand deaths due to the Covid-19 pandemic, something unimaginable in the nation that is supposed to concentrate the greatest human, scientific and technological resources, but which are not accompanied by a political will to protect its population.

Of this enormous number of deaths, more than half occurred in the last eleven months, that is, during Joseph Biden's administration.

It will be difficult to forget the last days of August, when the shameful flight from Afghanistan after 20 years of war and occupation ended with the Taliban back in control in Kabul and left the clutches of the terrorist group Al Qaeda almost intact.

The U.S. film industry will have to work hard to make up for this defeat in the popular imagination, inside and outside the country, and restore the battered dignity of a military power in decline.

Perhaps that is why a gigantic defense budget was approved, the largest ever known, with 778 billion dollars, 25 billion more than what the Pentagon had requested.

In these twelve months the deep cracks in the neoliberal consensus began to show, such as the one caused by the influential senator of the Democratic Party, Joe Manchin, who refused to support Biden's social spending plan because of the weight it will have on the already bulging public debt.

"I can't take that risk with an overwhelming debt of over \$29 trillion and inflationary taxes that are real and harmful to any American worker at the gas station, at the store or on the electric bill" said the lawmaker.

There will be little reason to celebrate at midnight on December 31 at the White House, because the losing streak will continue in 2022.

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