

Recollections on the U.S. president's visit to Cuba



By Pedro Martinez Pérez

When I recently learned of the request by Nobel Peace laureate Adolfo Perez Esquivel, of Argentina, to U.S. President Barack Obama, a Nobel Peace laureate himself, asking him not allow his Argentina visit to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the military coup that claimed so many victims in the South American nation, I decided to check the date on which the US president will be arriving in Havana for his official visit here, a moment that will certainly go down in history.

Obama will be welcome in Cuba, and on March 21st and 22nd he will enjoy the hospitality traditional of the Cuban people and government, according to an announcement by Josefina Vidal, a senior official of the Cuban Foreign Ministry and a key figure throughout the on-going process of normalization of relations between our two countries.

And since there is hardly a date on the calendar that does not point to some imperialist action against the peoples of our Americas, may we recall that it was on March 21, 1960, that the U.S. radio aggression against Cuba became official with the launching by the Voice of America of its program "Cita con Cuba."

On May 20th, 1985, the radio aggression was escalated with the establishment of a federally-funded radio

station named after no other than Cuba's national hero, José Martí, transmissions that came to be joined a few years later by TV broadcasts, again under the name of the Apostle of Cuba's independence.

March 21st marks also International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, established by the UN in tribute to the victims of the massacre of Sharpeville, in the 1966 South Africa, the country where on December 10th, 2013, during the funeral of the unforgettable Nelson Mandela, presidents Raul Castro and Barack Obama first shook hands.

As stated by Havana city historian Eusebio Leal, history has moments of light and moments of shadow. Hopefully the visit to Cuba of a US president, after nearly ninety years, will bring light, so that our two nations can continue on the long and difficult road to full normalization of their relations, without blockades or military bases, or media wars aimed at subverting the internal order and bring about system change, and with full respect for the sovereignty and the dignity of both peoples.

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