

REFLECTIONS BY COMRADE FIDEL

THE UNITED STATES' HEMISPHERIC RESPONSE: A FOURTH INTERVENTION FLEET

It had come into being in 1943 as a means of combating Nazi submarines and protecting navigation routes during the Second World War. It was decommissioned in 1950, when it became superfluous. The South Command was designed to meet the United States' hegemonic needs in our region at the time. After 48 years, however, it has recently been resurrected, and its interventionist aims need not be proved: U.S. military chiefs themselves divulge these in their declarations in a natural, spontaneous, at times discrete fashion. Overwhelmed by problems with food prices, energy, unequal trade, the economic recession which affects the most important market their products have; inflation, climate change and the investments required to satisfy their consumer dreams, they mismanage the time and energy of leaders and subordinates alike.

Truth is the decision to reassemble the Fourth Fleet was announced the first week of April, almost a month after the Ecuadorian territory was attacked with U.S. bombs and technology and when, owing to U.S. pressures citizens of different countries were killed or wounded. This was vigorously condemned by Latin American leaders at the Rio Group meeting held in the Dominican Republic's capital.

But worst still is that this is taking place at a time when the dismemberment of Bolivia encouraged by the United States meets with nearly unanimous condemnation. U.S. military chiefs themselves have explained they will be responsible for over 30 countries and for covering 15.6 million square miles of neighboring waters in both Central and South America, the Caribbean Sea and its 12 islands, Mexico and the European territories this side of the Atlantic.

The United States has 10 *Nimitz* aircraft carriers whose parameters, more or less similar, are the following: maximum load capacity of between 101 and 104 thousand tons; 999-feet-long and 230.4-feet-wide deck; 2 nuclear reactors; maximum speed of 35 miles/hour; capacity for 90 war planes. The last to be commissioned bears the name of *George H.W. Bush*, the current president's father. It has already been baptized with a bottle of champagne by the progenitor himself and should be ready to join the other vessels in coming months.

No other country in the world can boast of a vessel like these, equipped with sophisticated nuclear weapons, able to get within a few miles of any of our countries. The next aircraft carrier to be commissioned, the *USS Gerald Ford*, will be a new type of vessel which employs stealth technologies that cannot be detected by radars and electromagnetic weapons. The main manufacturer of the two types of vessels is Northrop Grumman, whose current president is also a member of the board of directors of the U.S. oil company Chevron-Texaco. The last *Nimitz* cost six million dollars. This did not include the cost of the planes, projectiles or operations, which can reach figures in the billions. It sounds like a science fiction story. With that money, the lives of millions of children could have been saved.

What is the declared objective of the 4th Fleet? "To combat terrorism and illegal activities such as drug trafficking", not to mention sending a message to Venezuela and the rest of the region. It has been announced that it will begin operations next July 1st.

Head of the South Command U.S. Navy Admiral James Stavrides has stated that the United States needs to work harder in “the market of ideas, to win over the hearts and minds” of the people in the region.

The United States has already deployed the Second, Third, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh fleets in the Western Atlantic, Eastern Pacific, Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, Eastern Atlantic and Western Pacific Oceans. The Fourth Fleet was needed to patrol all the seas worldwide. The United States has a total of nine *Nimitz* aircraft carriers, active or nearly ready for combat, such as the *George H.W. Bush*. It has sufficient reserves to triple or quadruple the power of any of its fleets in a given theater of operations.

The aircraft carriers and nuclear bombs our countries are threatened with serve to spread terror and death, but not to combat terrorism and illegal activities.

They should also serve to fill the empire's lackeys with shame and strengthen solidarity among the peoples.

Fidel Castro Ruz

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