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Former UN General Assembly head asks Obama to stop warmongering

by Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann

Perspective

Fr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, former president of the UN General Assembly (2008-2009) and former foreign minister of Nicaragua (1979-1990), penned an open letter to President Barack Obama in August, before the civil war in Syria captured the United States' attention. In the letter, Brockmann critiques U.S. foreign policy and how it affects the image of the United States around the world. Below is the letter, edited for style and clarity.

His Excellency Barack Obama

President of the United States of America

Managua, Nicaragua, Aug. 25, 2013

Dear Brother President Barack Obama,

I write to you this Sunday morning, Aug. 4, 2013, with a heart overflowing with the purest and most intense love for you, Michelle, and Natasha and Malia Ann, your two beautiful young girls who are so quickly turning into beautiful and sensitive young ladies. With much love also for your entire country, the country where I first saw the light of day, where I received most of my formal education and where, through the example of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., I came to understand better than through any theological textbook what it meant to be a follower of Jesus.

This, President, is my second letter to you. The first was an extremely positive and hope-filled letter. I wrote it from the U.N. when I was still serving as president of the 63rd General Assembly session. This one comes from the same heart full of love and concern for humanity and Mother Earth. Now times have changed, but not so the criminally irresponsible U.S. foreign policy.

Why should you read this letter? I am an old man now, perhaps not far from the end of my life, someone with whom you share, ideologically speaking, next to nothing. Perhaps you should read it because all my life I have taken inspiration from outstanding U.S. citizens whose examples instill an abiding faith in humanity's power to redeem itself. Or perhaps because I recognize the unquestionable historical and contemporary contributions of the people of the United States to the world. For my part, I think you should read this letter because, intellectually, anyone who refuses to engage other rationalities risks, if they are powerful enough, committing terrible crimes.

It seems that even those who appear to be the nicest of people undergo a profound metamorphosis when invested with power. Often, they suddenly become insensitive, lawless despots, cruel to the point of criminality. No matter how much they disliked and denounced their predecessors and loudly proclaimed the need to change, when power is invested on them, they most often find it impossible not to play the tyrant role.

I am writing this second letter from the privacy of my bedroom, sitting by the window on the rocking chair where I daily sit for hours of thought, prayer and reflection. As I write these words, my left hand, extending all the way up to my heart, is resting on my bed. This is the bed on which my father died, on which my mother agonized and the one, perhaps, where I will breathe my last. I consider this room a sacred place. A place where I feel the presence of God, of my father and mother, of my lord, Jesus, and of my mother, Mary. They are watching and, I hope, inspiring me as I write this difficult but love-filled letter to you.

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I well remember -- how could I forget? -- the banner of "credible change" under which you, dear brother, ran your campaign for the presidency of what I can only refer to in God's presence as the terrorist, murderous and genocidal U.S. imperialism. I know it is difficult to hear such words, but believe me, for someone who treasures the people of the United States as I most certainly do, it is far more difficult to utter them. Nonetheless, truth must never be concealed, not if we want freedom. As Jesus himself said, the truth will make us free.

As things stand now, most people in the world know what the United States is all about: full-spectrum dominance. They know that the United States is hooked on wars of aggression. It is possessed by the demons of greed and domination to the extent that it will stop at nothing until it is fully satisfied that it has achieved a total and absolute control over planet Earth, its atmosphere, outer space and cosmic implications.

The only people on Earth who don't know what the United States is all about are the people of the United States itself. They have been subjected all of their lives to official lying and deceit, which is how the U.S. government deals with its own people. The U.S. Army wants blindly obedient soldiers who don't hesitate when ordered to murder people in faraway places they never heard of and who never quite come to understand why they should kill them. That, of course, is the reason why so many U.S. soldiers commit suicide while on the battlefield or when they return home. They simply can't stand having been turned

into murderers. Such is the insane selfishness of which Leo Tolstoy spoke and that I call insane and suicidal selfishness. There is no human or divine law by which the United States has proven willing to abide.

What the world is witnessing today is not all that surprising or unforeseen. In my part of the world, back in the early 1800s, Simón Bolívar prophetically proclaimed: "The United States seems to have been destined by Providence to plague our America with miseries in the name of liberty." And closer to our own days, in the early 1900s, our great Augusto César Sandino wrote: "North American capitalism has reached the last phase of its development, transforming itself, as a result, in imperialism; it no longer cares the least about theories of law and justice."

Upon reading these words by two of our greatest Latin American heroes and prophets, some people in the United States might outright disregard them, saying these are words of people who dislike the United States because they, in fact, hate freedom and democracy, which, so they say, is what the United States stands for. That was the way I once heard President George W. Bush explain criticism of U.S. foreign policy. That started me wondering what a freedom-hating person really was.

The fact, however, is that back in your own turf in the year 1858, Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., father of the famous associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, announced that "we are the Romans of the modern world -- the great assimilating people. CONFLICTS AND CONQUESTS ARE OF COURSE NECESSARY ACCIDENTS WITH US, AS WITH OUR PROTOTYPES." This is such a preposterous statement that I thought it merited being written all in caps.

These words were clearly meant to excuse the United States of responsibility for any of its crimes, past, present or future. After all, large-scale looting and murder is what empires are all about. And now it is the United States' turn to play that role. Only two years after Holmes wrote the above passage, on June 27, 1860, *The New York Times* published a poem by Walt Whitman titled "The Errand-Bearers" that triumphantly proclaimed America's imperial destiny:

I chant the new empire, grander than any before -- as in a

vision it comes to me,

I chant America, the Mistress -- I chant greater supremacy ...

This poem was later included in Whitman's great epic *Leaves of Grass*.

So it's quite evident to me that what is now being harvested as America's behavior is what has been sown in its soul as its God-given mission. But clearly there is nothing godly about such arrogance and utter disregard for law and the dignity of human beings regardless of race, nationality or creed. Only worshippers of the golden calf would think otherwise.

It is this kind of thinking that has resulted in turning the United States itself into the worst plague that has ever afflicted humankind and our Earth. In fact, I am one of a growing global majority who think the warmongering foreign policy of the United States is what has brought the world to the dire condition in which it finds itself. This includes the fact that, for the first time in history, humanity faces a real possibility of extinction.

Surely it was to prevent this kind of crime that you were elected president of the United States, in order to help the United States to turn its back on terrorism and give humanity a chance by joining the human family where it belongs and where it would be most welcomed. By continuing to follow the megalomaniac, satanic U.S. aspiration of full-spectrum dominance, the United States will only hasten not just its own demise but that of all of us.

But, dear President Obama, you are humanity's last chance. Don't miss it; don't waste it; don't be afraid if those whose hearts are full of hate don't like what you say and do. As a follower of Jesus, you should expect that. Be the man God meant you to be and who those who voted for you expected you to be. You're meant to play an extremely significant role not only for the United States but for humanity as a whole and our Mother Earth. Forget what the industrial-military complex and Wall Street want. Follow your conscience; having heard one of your pastors, Jeremiah Wright, I know yours has been well formed.

Some people, not just a few, are saying that from the point of view of respect of human dignity; life, peace and respect for sovereignty; and independence and territorial integrity of other countries, you are turning out to be even worse than your predecessor, President Bush. That's quite a mouthful. It's hard to imagine a worse indictment of your presidency. They may be right, but I still refuse to give up on you.

Fasten your seatbelt and begin the real struggle for which you wanted to be president of the United States and for which God had you elected. Have courage because God's amazing grace will never fail you. Acknowledge courageously that any imperialism, of the U.S. or any other world power, is diabolical. It is what crucified Jesus and is responsible for the death of millions during the last decade alone. Have the courage to acknowledge also that capitalism is, in fact, the most un-Christian doctrine and practice ever devised by man to keep us separate and unequal in a kind of global apartheid.

God save us all from greed, selfishness, warmongering, lust for full-spectrum dominance and from the deeply misguided foreign policy of the United States of America itself, which, after all, is the very personification of all those lethal vices threatening the human species with extinction.

Love and blessings upon you, Michelle and the girls,

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