

Impressions

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Two months of observing the Trump government begins to furnish a profile of possibilities. Great in rhetoric, candidate Trump was specific solely in some clichés, always leaving the impression that he was going to revolutionize the world. His point of departure was a rejection of what exists, combined with a promise of utopia and redemption for his own. Never again, he vowed in his inaugural discourse, would there be the carnage that characterized his country in earlier decades. The marvel of unachievable promises is that it is not necessary to deliver on them in order to satisfy the hard base. At the same time, promises do not suffice to change the reality.

Two months after the government began, it is possible to start to discern what it wants to achieve and what it is in fact doing to achieve this. The first thing that seems evident to me is that there is a frank disagreement between the majority of analysts and the media - and, certainly, the Democrats- with respect to the facts as they have come about. The rhetoric has been so profuse and confused that the U.S. press and, in general that of the world, has fallen into a game of judgments more than one of analysis. More specifically, Trump and his White House team are evaluated and judged under contextual frameworks that may not applicable to the situation.

My reading of the reality is that Trump is not simply *another* president with his peculiar emphasis and project of government. Trump came to change the reality and, two months after the government's inauguration, it appears sufficiently evident that he possesses a very well-conceived and articulated strategy for altering the established order. When Bannon speaks of himself as a Leninist he divulges more than is frequently interpreted: in effect, the objective is to change the status quo, to remove the "elite" from power and to change the political reality. For this to occur they have devoted themselves to undermining one after another of the mechanisms that had for decades constituted the brakes on executive power. The confrontation with the press is not a misunderstanding and even less so an error: it is a strategy engendered to convert the "representation of the elite" into the opposition.

While the attack strategy on the established order is clear and integral, in addition to being structured, one step following the other, there is nothing similar in place for what happens after. That is, there is clarity on how to advance but not concerning how the

objective is to be achieved. The definition of the political project is so nebulous -general, abstract and, above all, utopic- that accuracy or concretion is not required. In other words, everything suggests that what is being pursued is to break with what exists to afterward begin to think of what to construct or whether to construct something at all. Like so many other populist projects, Trump's proposes that "the solution is me"; thus, no definition is required. The great question is whether the system of checks and balances will permit him to accomplish this.

The muddle into which the new administration has gotten itself in the health issue is paradigmatic: for years, the mantra among the Republicans was opposition to (therefore, termination of) the health program known colloquially as ObamaCare. Polls showed that the program was highly unpopular among the population in general, although not among the Democratic leaders. Paradoxically, the program was highly unpopular among its beneficiaries, especially when, a few days prior to last November's election, ObamaCare fees were raised. No one wanted to recognize the evident contradiction: the program might be expensive and less than Obama had promised, but its beneficiaries needed to have *some* program. Trump and his fellow believers made it to the government and announced the removal of ObamaCare; with that fact, at that very instant, the program suddenly became popular: instead of proposing an alternative, Trump threw himself into the fray like gangbusters, legitimizing the program whose promise of annulment had aided him in reaching at the presidency. Like Nixon going to China, but without proposing it. The plan of attack was obvious, but not the actual response: we first burn the house, then we see what happens.

For Mexico, these experiences supply relevant lessons. Above all, the initial pounding has been losing strength because there was no plan behind the obvious. The excellent management of the visit of the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security allowed the overshadowing of the most radical of the group closest to Trump, making possible the statement of the new Secretary of Commerce in the sense that the negotiation on NAFTA would be benign for the Mexican peso: this exhibited understanding of the enormous risks to the U.S. of persisting in aggressiveness.

The risk, for the U.S. and for Mexico, is that after the massive destruction in which they have incurred -beginning with the U.S. "trademark"-, there is no turning back. Today all Mexicans know that the NAFTA is vulnerable, along with which its function as a source of certainty has deteriorated. I entertain no doubt that a benign resolution will be reached, but the damage done will have been immense. It is for this reason that, after concluding

this painful episode, Mexico will have to dedicate itself to building its own sources of certainty, because those of the power of the North are no longer what they were.

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