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In Egypt and Tunisia nonviolence has been the motor of transformation

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The iron dictatorships in Tunisia and Egypt falling in less than one month; the wave of freedom and desire of citizens to participate going around the Arab world; the thousands of citizens in Tunis and other cities of North Africa coming on to the street in solidarity to celebrate the resignation of Hosni Mubarak... all of these are manifestations of the profound and rapid changes that are taking place in the Arab world; transformations unforeseen by the "official analysts" of international powers. Just as the fall of the Soviet Union or the recent economic crisis were unforeseen.

The best comparison can be made with the fall of Ceausescu in Romania, but this wave going around North Africa has a different global dimension and transcendence.

In these events we once more see very clearly the true force of the people and their capacity for transformation which in a very short time can produce unthinkable changes without using violence, or rather, using nonviolence. If on the contrary the cry had been "people take arms against the dictator," the security forces would have come along with bloody confrontations ensuing and leading to the risk of civil war. This would have reinforced and "given arguments" to the dictators for greater oppression in order to remain in power, with a severe cost for the people.

The most important thing to happen in these weeks, hasn't been the departure of Presidents Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak, the most important thing has been the union of the people in non-violent protest, the most important thing has been to resist the violence of agents provocateurs, to resist the violence of their own institutions, to resist the violence of the police. The Egyptian and Tunisian armies were not defeated with weapons or confrontation, but rather with hugs and open hands. The soldiers, those sent, are at the end of the day human beings and for however many weapons they have, in no way are they going to be able to defeat through violence a people that stands up and demonstrates firmly, demanding their rights in a peaceful way and with the methodology of nonviolence. The people can be repressed for a while, but this would discredit the repressors even more and make the moral position of the unarmed people grow even more, which would eventually bring the final victory. This reminds us of the struggles of Gandhi and Luther King. The Egyptian people have freed themselves from a dictator with nonviolence just as India freed themselves from the British. The difference with that struggle is that India counted on a leader, Gandhi, and on this occasion there was no identified leader, the protagonist has been the Egyptian people.

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Thank you Egypt!

Mubarak's resignation marks an extraordinary victory of people: in 18 days of nonviolent mobilization, resisting attacks of all kinds, the Egyptians were able to get rid of a dictator who oppressed them for thirty years!

The courage and perseverance shown by the demonstrators are an example that we hope other peoples will follow. And not just in the Arab world.

The transition to true democracy and a profound change will not be easy and the Egyptian people must remain vigilant and ready for new demonstrations, but now it's time to celebrate.

Now no one can say that a nonviolent revolution is impossible.



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This tremor of nonviolence, of demands for social transformation in a peaceful way, of anxiousness for freedom and democratic participation has only just begun. Following in the path are Yemen, Jordan, Algeria and Morocco with indicators of social mobilisation. What will happen in the Arab Emirates and other dictators of pan-Arabism? What will happen in China where this entire phenomenon of freedom is being censored?

Evidently there is the USA and the European Union whose regimes have been strategically aligned for years and loyal partners of the Egyptian government in their military, political and economic dealings over decades.

After the fall of the USSR, Western powers—with the USA at the head—created a new international enemy: Arabs, or Islam, alarming people about a possible clash of civilisations. The real interest was to be able to continue justifying their irrational arms race, and make us believe in the need to have to counteract this “great danger” and have available a force that could protect us from “them” on a global scale. This new enemy was endowed with the attributes of fanatics, violent and irrational... and to a certain extent this has permeated and been translated into different fields (cinema, TV, international controls, travel restrictions, intolerant legislation against people of Arabic origin). But the events in Tunisia and Egypt, as well as the mobilisations that we’re seeing in other countries of the region, show us populations very different to this rooted stereotype: these are peaceful people, just like any other, with the same needs, aspirations, fears and desire for freedom and democracy; people that need and long to have a dignified life.

The Egyptian and Tunisian people have given the world a lesson in nonviolence and pacifism. They have given a lesson on how to not conform and instead to struggle for their rights. They have given the rest of the world a Master Class in non-violent revolution. They have given us proof, a demonstration effect that will have consequences and repercussions. And, finally, it must be highlighted that the protagonists have all been mainly young people.

All peoples, in their best moments, have made contributions to the human process. We give thanks and celebrate these non-violent revolutions because they open the future for the whole of humanity. We are approaching the Universal Human Nation.

ITALY – MILAN

On February the 12th the news of Mubarak’s resignation transformed a march organised by the Egyptian community in Milan to support the protest in Cairo into a joyful celebration joined by members of WwW and other groups.





SPAIN – VIGO

On January 29th a “Festival of dances for nonviolence” was organized in Vigo. This event launched the campaign “Thousands of consciences connected in nonviolence, from January 30th to October 2nd. A path to travel.”

More or less 100 dancers participated and the audience was around 500 people. Besides the dances, members of WwW explained the campaign and talked about nonviolence.



RUSSIA – ST. PETERSBURG

On December 22nd 2010, the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Academy of Economic Management of St. Petersburg, the World March book has been given to the Vice-chancellor Gnevko Victor Andrevich in front of 500 students and professors. The book will remain in the University’s museum, to which all teachers have access. This event completed the occasions in which the WM Book was officially presented to people and organisations that supported the World March in Russia.



Open Meeting in Toledo Park

Bringing together 12 elected representatives from 11 countries and 5 continents, a 3 day gathering of the World Coordination Team of World without Wars and Violence will take place in Madrid, Spain from the 10th to the 12th of March 2011. In a moment of global optimism following the non-violent revolution that swept through Tunisia and then Egypt, World without Wars and Violence meets to consider the current global situation and to plan its strategy for the coming year.

The last day of the World without Wars gathering on Saturday the 12th of March will take place in the symbolic Park of Study and Reflection, Toledo. This will be an open meeting for all members of the organisation to hear what’s happening at the grassroots and to develop ideas for the future global activities that will be launched on that occasion.

We are very excited to be able to meet with everyone who can make it to Toledo, and for those who can’t, we will attempt to connect via streaming. We hope to launch a strong and exciting project for 2011 and beyond.

Por indicación del Presidente del Gobierno y en contestación a su escrito referente a la campaña "gastos militares no con mi dinero", le señalo que, como consecuencia de la difícil situación económica existente a nivel mundial, el Gobierno se ha visto en la obligación de plantear un conjunto de medidas para acelerar la reducción del déficit mediante el recorte de gasto público.

Comprendemos el malestar que pueden ocasionar a los ciudadanos más afectados, pero se han adoptado desde el sentido de la responsabilidad, añadiéndose a otros esfuerzos de austeridad ya en marcha.

Son medidas de gran calado para situaciones extraordinarias, algunas de las cuales han exigido que el Ejecutivo asuma decisiones difíciles con el convencimiento de que son absolutamente necesarias.

Puedo asegurarle que en estos momentos de duros sacrificios es cuando este Gobierno se siente especialmente más cercano a todos los ciudadanos que están atravesando por dificultades.

Se requiere un gran esfuerzo conjunto y, por ello, el Gobierno ha anunciado que se van a introducir otras medidas que supongan una mayor aportación de quienes dispongan de más recursos, de manera que la carga colectiva de la crisis sea lo más equitativa y justa.

En cuanto a su comentario sobre el gasto en defensa, le comunico que en los tres últimos años los créditos del Ministerio de Defensa se han contraído un 17%. Este esfuerzo de contención y reducción va a continuar en cumplimiento del Plan de Austeridad 2011-2013.

Así, en el Proyecto de Ley de Presupuestos para 2011, los créditos previstos para el Ministerio de Defensa son austeros, con un total asignado de 7.513 millones de euros. En lo que se refiere a los créditos asignados a los programas de modernización, estos se contraen más de un 25% respecto al ejercicio 2010.

Por otra parte, es conveniente tener en cuenta que las inversiones del Ministerio de Defensa en los programas de modernización de las Fuerzas Armadas repercuten directamente en la industria nacional que, con el apoyo de estos programas, se ha situado en un alto nivel tecnológico y la ha capacitado para competir en los mercados internacionales, creando una sólida base industrial que da trabajo, de forma directa o indirecta, a un importante número de personas.

Finalmente, le solicito que haga llegar el contenido de este escrito a los ciudadanos que han secundado esta iniciativa, a los que no hemos podido contestar por no tener sus direcciones. Asimismo, le solicito que notifique a los interesados el contenido del Aviso legal que acompaña a este escrito.

Le agradezco el escrito que nos ha remitido y le envío un cordial saludo.



SPAIN – CANARY ISLANDS

In October last year, the International Association "World without Wars" started a signature collection campaign through the internet advocating for a drastic reduction of military spending to reduce the national deficit as an alternative to the cuts in social spending implemented by the government.

You can see the proposal in Spanish through this link:

<http://actuable.es/peticiones/dilenuestro-gobierno-recorte-gastos-militares-y-no>

It is our understanding that a fair and correct austerity policy should, in the first place, start to hit those less necessary sections of the budget such as weapons spending. Year after year and government after government, in World without Wars we watch in amazement as investment in "Defence" and "Security" is double that given over to Health and Education, as if the prosperity of a country were determined by the number of soldiers and policemen instead of the number of doctors and teachers.

Despite everything and in response to this initiative, the Presidency sent us a letter in which they shamefully argued that such measures are not possible given that the Spanish military industry generates many jobs, leading one to understand that the most important thing is to create employment at any cost regardless of ethical and moral questions regarding the activity undertaken. In this letter they even managed to underhandedly suggest that Spaniards should feel proud of the high level of technology achieved in the field of murder and mutilation of other human beings by our country.

Letter of reply

From World without Wars and Violence, we'd like to firstly clarify that the objective of the Campaign that we launched is not to urge the Government to reduce the general budget destined to Defence in a drastic and homogenous way. What we are suggesting is that our country stops buying weapons for one year in order to save the 18 billion euros which is more than what will be cut from the social budget. We are simply saying that our military grease their guns well and take care of the tanks, planes and boats that they have in order that they may last one more year.

Nevertheless and as you touch on this matter in your letter stating that, in terms of the loans granted, the budget destined to Defence was austere; We'd like to know then how you qualify the budget destined to Health and Education being half that of the Defence budget... Would maybe pathetic or miserable be the correct epithet? And what about Culture that receives a quarter? Not even with a dictionary in hand could we find the right adjective...

But the most surprising thing in the letter is the argument wielded that the military industry is useful because it generates a lot of employment.

This position is as desperate as it is shameful and immoral. Following these criteria we could even end up justifying the existence of organised crime, prostitution rings or drug trafficking given the great number of people occupied in them.

