

The Speech the President of Brazil Should Have Made

Written by Cristovam Buarque
Monday, 08 July 2013 15:47



"Young people of Brazil, young men and women:

"We were wrong. Forgetting your dreams, we all made mistakes, all of us who received your mandate to govern Brazil well. All of us, we politicians and our parties, made mistakes. But, I must admit that those who erred the most were those of us who have been governing Brazil for the last 10 years. As your president, I myself was even more in error.

"As the world's 6th largest economy, we erred by being the nation rated 88th in education; by allowing Brazil to be the world's most violent country that is not at war; by always prioritizing the private — especially private transportation — to the detriment of the public; by tolerating corruption and not successfully punishing the corrupt.

"We erred by consuming the present without investing in the future; by leaving all the youth without dreams of utopia for their country and by leaving some of them without the attention essential to their present needs; by putting together administrations of accords, apportioning out the political posts without always utilizing the most capable.

"We were wrong, and we have to thank those of you who headed into the streets to show your indignation with the political reality of Brazil. We will err even more if we do not understand that two million people in the streets cannot accept less than a revolution.

"I believe — and I would like to hear your opinion on this — what we have now is not a socioeconomic revolution, like the one that, some decades ago, brought me into the streets and into even more radical struggles. For me, the economy and the society were in need of serious readjustments, of an inversion of priorities, but the revolution for which you are heading to the streets lies in the subversion of the present political structure.

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"To make a revolution in politics so that our leaders will be aware of the volition and necessities that are in the soul of the people, and so that those who execute our laws will have the merit necessary to occupy the diverse positions with the competence that the modern state demands.

"As the president of Brazil, this is how I feel, but I want to hear you, to be aware of what you are thinking, I am asking that you choose and send me interlocutors, none of them with a monopoly, I will hear all the voices and not only that of my political party and my base of support. When the people put two million protesters in the streets, the head of state cannot remain blindly restricted to his or her supporters and advisers.

"On Monday I shall even submit to the Congress the proposal to hold an exclusive constitutional convention to define the legal boundaries of a revolution in politics. Before going into effect, these constituents' proposal will be submitted to a plebiscite to determine if it is in accord with what the people desire. I shall also require that my ministers completely reanalyze the priorities of the governmental investments and expenditures, not only for the months that remain of my mandate but also for the future of our country.

"As someone who in my youth struggled like you for a better Brazil, I remain enthusiastic and grateful for the fact that history has placed before me the challenge of presiding over a country where two million people are in the streets protesting the accumulation of so many years of errors, especially those of my administration. Elected democratically, I now must go beyond the election and adjust to the will of the people. Challenges like this permit a head of state to go down in history, not only as an administrator of an inheritance received, but as a statesperson of the future to be constructed.

"I thank you not only for sounding the alarm, but above all for the historical opportunity that you have offered me. I shall not stop listening to you; I shall not disappoint you. You can be certain that I will dedicate each instant that remains of my mandate to keeping informed of the times and of you.

"Thank you very much. Long live the democracy. Long live the Brazil that you want to construct."

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