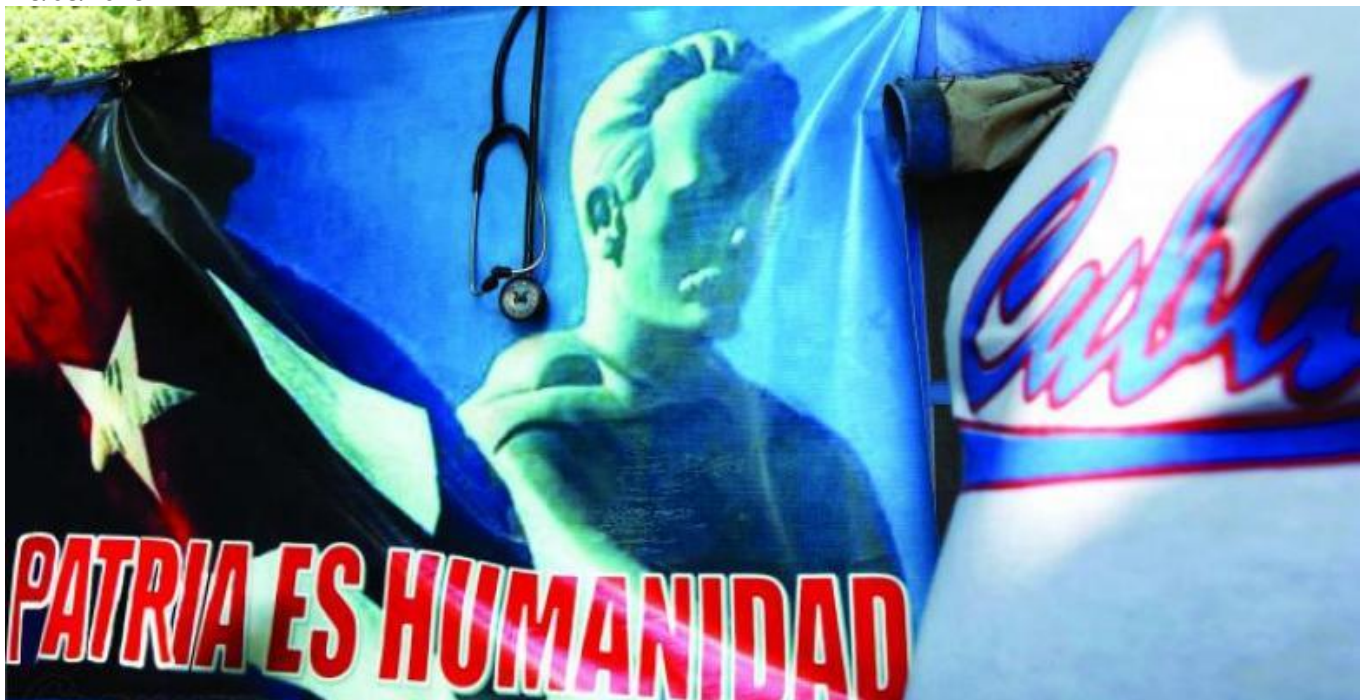

OPINION: Homeland

By: Enrique Ubieta Gómez / Special for CubaSi
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Tired, happy to find colleagues from Our America and other regions of this small planet called Earth, who come together to build networks of solidarity, empathy, to rescue dreams when warehouses burn, at an event called Homeland. Tired and happy, returning from the Book Fair in Santa Clara, which offered an oasis of light and knowledge, where people bought books instead of lamps to light up the nights. "Bring me eggs," a woman told her granddaughter, but the plump girl returned home with a bag of books from the People's Library; and the jazz musicians at the Mas allá bar, the female guitar orchestra at La Luna Naranja, the troubadours at El Mejunje, the decimists mocking each other, and even us at the Club del Poste, and me imagining what Santa Clara would be like without blackouts. But the SEN collapsed, exhausted, and despite that, the joy mixed with a certain dose of revenge didn't fade in the city. It happened shortly after I hugged Dr. Ricardo Carrillo, twenty years without seeing him, the man who welcomed me in the Amazon rainforest of Venezuela, and who remained there, alone, a Cuban comic book superhero for writing and drawing, for three years. Just now, when the internationalists who save lives are under attack.

I returned to Havana to share the warmth and the darkness, and the stars, with my people. The SEN is the National Hero: like hardworking ants, its repairers performed the miracle, and on Sunday it began to move. So on Monday, the meeting of colleagues with which I began my story today opened: more than 400 delegates from 47 countries. Nothing is happening, or maybe it is happening, and a lot is happening, but the country doesn't stop and celebrates two decades of TeleSur, the rebel voice of the Third World, those two words of combat that are no longer used. And Al Mayadeen sets its trap, as it did last year, and I fall again: a pair of immersive technology glasses and I'm in Gaza, walking its streets, or rather, its embankments, among ruined buildings, and dead people scattered everywhere. I hear the cries of children. On one side is the coast, the sea, and it's undignified to imagine that they can remove its inhabitants, expel them from their own country, which isn't Gaza, it's occupied Palestine, to build hotels and residences where murderers, usurers, would live.

My friend Guille Vilar said that denunciation wasn't enough: we must stop, freeze life on the planet, no more sporting events, festivals, concerts, until the genocide stops. I feel guilty. But somehow, this besieged Cuba, amidst blackouts and multiple shortages, resists, providing shelter and education to our brothers and sisters from other

latitudes, including Palestinians. We mock our own hardships, inventing ways of being, laughing and dancing, dreaming, and against all contrary predictions, organizing an Elite Series of Baseball, their deteriorating, hijacked, and beloved national sport.

On the opposite side, hopeful side of this story, China's leading communications consortium showcased its futuristic achievements in Artificial Intelligence, and for a few seconds, we traveled to another planet, where human intelligence was, and will be, at the service of human beings. Socialism or barbarism, that is the choice. The Vietnamese, those who yesterday shot down B-52s and helicopters with stones out of rage, were presenting the summary of a documentary series about the friendship between the Asian country and the Caribbean island, to which the presenters added an exclamation of historical reciprocity: "We too are willing to give our own blood, our feelings, and our intelligence for you." This was the emotional translation of the young Vietnamese man studying medicine in Cuba. There he is, camera in hand, my brother from Bilbao, the tireless and sharp José Manzaneda, who has just won the legal battle against the fascists who were trying to muzzle him.

I then went out for a walk, leaving the University behind, where the Colloquium was in session. The pure air, slightly fresh from a winter that is passing, filled my lungs. Yes, the horizon has never been so blurred, but it's there, even if at times it's not visible. We must row. Discuss and row. Love and row. Trust and row. Support the person next to you, the slow, the sick, but let's leave the lazy, the rogue, the traitor on the shore. That's what it's all about. The Colloquium as well as the boat we are sailing is called Homeland. Homeland is Humanity.

Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSí Translation Staff
