

"We will persevere, with the consensus of our people and especially the patriotic commitment of the youngest Cubans, in the anti-imperialist struggle and in defense of our independence"

Speech by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, on the "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial, and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba," in United Nations headquarters, New York, November 1, 2017.

(Council of State transcript / GI translation)

• Mr. President;
Your Excellencies permanent representatives;
Distinguished delegates;
U.S. citizens and Cubans resident in the United States who are present in this hall:
I would like to express to the people and government of the United States; Mayor Bill De Blasio; Governor Andrew Cuomo; and other authorities in New York; as well as its citizens and especially families of the victims, our most heartfelt condolences, in the name of the Cuban people and government, for the terrorist attack which occurred yesterday afternoon.
I also express our sincere condolences to the peoples and government of Argentina and Belgium.

Mr. President:
I express the most energetic condemnation of the disrespectful, offensive, and interventionist statements made by the United States Ambassador to the United Nations against Cuba and against the Cuban government, a few minutes ago.
I recall that the United States, where flagrant violations of human rights are committed, of deep concern to the international community, does not have the slightest moral authority to criticize Cuba, a small, solidary country, with an extensive, recognized international record; an honorable, hard-working, and friendly people.
She spoke in the name of the head of an empire that is responsible for most of the wars in progress on the planet today, and which murders innocent people, and is the decisive factor in instability worldwide and the very serious threats to peace and international security, trampling international law and the United Nations Charter, which she has just cynically evoked.
It has not been 55 years, Madam Ambassador, you erred in your first sentence; it has been 26 of these sessions, and more than half a century since the events being discussed today originated.
She lies, uses the same style that predominates in U.S. politics today. This all began before the Cuban nation even existed. When the Cuban people, for the first time rose up in arms in 1868, the appetite for annexation and domination, of what was and is today U.S. imperialism, had already been unleashed.
In 1898, using a pretext - as is characteristic of the modern history of the United States: the explosion of the ship, the Maine, in a Cuban port, they entered as allies of Cuban independence forces and then occupied the country as invaders, and imposed the Platt Amend-



Cuban Foreign Minister, Bruno Rodríguez.

ment, cutting short the independence and sovereignty of Cuba; they conducted three military occupations, imposed 60 years of total domination that ended January 1, 1959, with the entry of the Rebel Army to Havana and the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, that continues to this day carrying on the same struggles that have inspired our people for over 100 years. (Applause)
She lies, she used a phrase, attributing a statement on the so-called October or Missile Crisis to a supposedly Cuban source. I invite her to state the source, to state its author, to present evidence. It sounds like one of the tweets proliferating in this country, in these times of hate, division, and dirty politics. (Applause)
When the Cuban Revolution triumphed, the United States set regime change as its objective. The policy announced by President Trump on June 16 is not new; it is the same policy, it is an old policy anchored in the past.
She mentioned the illustrious U.S. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson. She forgot to say that he was the person who, deceived by his own government, had the unfortunate duty during a session of the Security Council, to show photos of supposed Cuban aircraft, actually of U.S. origin, bearing the emblem of the Cuban Air Force, that on April 15 bombed the city of Havana, caused numerous casualties, and was the prelude to the attack, the invasion, at Playa Girón or the Bay of Pigs.
These bombings and the involuntary lie of Ambassador Stevenson, who had been deceived by his government, occurred even before the declaration of the social-

ist character of the Cuban Revolution. These bombings took place prior to the declaration of the socialist character of our Revolution.
She has spoken of the October Crisis.
She has spoken of the days of President Kennedy's assassination, and the declassification of documents. They have really been hidden from the U.S. people too long. Declassify them all.
But if she wants to talk about these issues, I suggest she read the book
Trained to Kill: The Inside Story of CIA Plots against Castro, Kennedy, and Che, by CIA agent Veciana, in which he recounts his meeting with CIA agent David Phillips and with Lee Harvey Oswald, in Dallas, during the third week of September, 1963.
It has been a history of lies and aggression: Operation Northwoods, Operation Mongoose. Information was just declassified showing that at that time the United States had prepared 261,000 soldiers, ready for a direct invasion of Cuba. Functioning in Florida was the CIA's largest base in history, until that time, with more than 700 agents, until the creation of the even bigger CIA base in Saigon.
She uses a style reminiscent of the trial of Alice in Wonderland: sentence first, trial later.
I speak for my people, and I also speak for those who cannot call President Trump or the U.S. Ambassador by their name, but feel and think like me.
At least she has recognized the total isolation of the United States in this hall and in the world. You are alone on the issue of the blockade of Cuba! (Applause)
She ignores the power of the truth,

underestimates the strength of an idea at the bottom of a cave, which is more powerful than an army, as José Martí said, who wrote, carrying it on his chest, in an unfinished letter with the following phrase: "Everyday I am in danger of giving my life for my country, for my duty... to prevent in time, with the independence of Cuba, that the United States extends itself into the Antilles and falls, with this added strength, upon the lands of our America."
Ambassador, everything began much more than 26 years ago, much more than 55 years ago. Along with the military aggression, the fabrication of pretexts, plans for a direct invasion, measures taken to strangle our economy, state terrorism, destabilization, and subversion, they proposed - and I quote the infamous letter by Undersecretary of State Lester Mallory, signed April 6, 1960 - promoting "... disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship... all possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba ... denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages..." The blockade of Cuba was created "to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government."
Nonetheless, when President Raúl Castro Ruz and President Barack Obama made those surprising, hopeful announcements, December 17, 2014, President Obama described the blockade as failed and obsolete, ineffective in achieving its objectives, causing harm to the Cuban people and the isolation of the U.S. government. Later he described it as useless in advancing U.S. interests, failed, senseless, not viable, and a burden for

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citizens.

But the blockade was never recognized as a flagrant, massive, and systematic violation of the human rights of Cubans, which the United States Ambassador cynically omitted a few hours ago, nor was it recognized as inconsistent with international law or as an act of genocide, as defined by the Geneva Convention, nor was its goal of subjugating our people renounced.

Nonetheless, the President of the United States at that time repeatedly stated his intention to use his executive powers, and work with Congress, to lift the blockade.

A concrete reflection of this intention was the U.S. abstention, in 2016, during the vote on this resolution, which the United States Ambassador has just mocked.

During this period, substantive progress was made in terms of diplomatic relations, dialogue, and cooperation in areas of mutual interest and benefit; but during these last two years, the blockade was maintained, in all fundamental aspects, although some executive decisions were made to modify its implementation in a very limited fashion, but moving in a positive direction. The way in which the use of travel licenses was expanded was significant, given the legislative prohibition on travel to Cuba, that constitutes a violation of the rights and civil liberties of U.S. citizens, which she also failed to mention. Tangible results were also achieved in bilateral cooperation, to our mutual benefit, in such important arenas as confronting terrorism, drug trafficking, and digital crime.



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Mr. President:

This past June 16, President Donald Trump proclaimed the blockade the fundamental axis of his anti-Cuban policy, and announced a series of measures meant to reinforce it.

In an antiquated, hostile anti-Cuban speech, reminiscent of the Cold War, and before an auditorium composed, among others, of rancid Batista henchmen, annexationists, and terrorists, the U.S. government returned to worn-out allegations of supposed human rights violations in Cuba to justify the tightening of the blockade. From this podium, heard this morning was his echo, his echo chamber.

President Trump does not have the slightest moral authority to question Cuba.

He leads a government of millionaires who intend to implement brutal measures against the poor and low income families of this country, minorities and immigrants. He follows a program which encourages hate and division, and promotes a dangerous idea of exceptionalism and supremacy disguised as patriotism, and which will lead to more violence. He ignores the will of voters: two thirds of U.S. citizens and Cuban residents in the United States, as well, support an end to the blockade.

Current U.S. policies harm citizens; corruption reigns in politics which have been hijacked by so-called special interests, that is, by the interests and the money of corporations: no support for education, health, or social security; restrictions on union organizing; and terrible gender-based discrimination.

Deserving of condemnation are the use of torture; police murders of African-Americans; civilian deaths caused by its troops; the indiscriminate, racially motivated death penalty; the murders, repression, and police surveillance of immigrants; the separation of families; the detention and deportation of minors; and the brutal measures threatening the children of undocumented immigrants who grew up and were educated in the United States.

This is the government that lost the

popular vote.

The United States Ambassador has expressed her dream. I prefer to repeat that of Martin Luther King, when he said, "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.' Let freedom ring. (Applause)

She has come to tell us that she recognizes that the future of the island rests in the hands of the Cuban people. She is telling an absolute lie. It was never this way, throughout history. It has been a history of domination and hegemony over Cuba.

The announced policy proposes turning back relations to a past of confrontation, to satisfy the spurious interests of extremist circles within the U.S. right and a frustrated, aging, minority of Cuban origin in Florida. The Presidential Memorandum establishing the policy toward Cuba includes, among other measures, new prohibitions on economic, commercial, and financial relations between U.S. companies and Cuban enterprises.

It additionally restricts the freedom to travel of U.S. citizens with the elimination of individual trips under the so-called category of "people-to-people" exchanges, and increased surveillance for the rest of visitors from that country.

In recent weeks, President Donald Trump has reiterated on four separate occasions, (including before this Assembly this past September), that his government will not lift the blockade on Cuba unless it makes changes to its internal order.

Today I reiterate that Cuba will never accept preconditions or impositions and we remind the President and his Ambassador that this approach, applied by a dozen of his predecessors, has never and will never work. It will be just one more example of a policy anchored in the past.

More recently, under the pretext of the health conditions of some diplomats in Havana, without the slightest evidence of their cause and origin - because they lie when they speak of attacks or incidents -

or the results of ongoing investigations, the government of the United States adopted new measures of a political nature against Cuba, which intensify the blockade and affect bilateral relations in their entirety.

Among them, it suspended the issue of visas for Cuban travelers and emigrants at its consulate in Havana, which undermines the right of citizens to travel freely and visit that country for short periods, as more than 163,000 Cubans have done this year, and seriously hinders the family reunification of others, under the bilateral agreement to grant no less than 20,000 immigrant visas per year. The requirement of an in-person interview with Cuban travelers in U.S. consulates in third countries, and with emigrants in the U.S. consular section in Bogotá, will greatly increase the cost of the procedure and make them unfeasible for a large number of them. Where are their rights in the United States' discourse?

There is no way to justify harming people and families to try to achieve political objectives against the constitutional order in Cuba.

The U.S. government, with the political purpose of limiting travel and damaging international tourism to Cuba, also issued an unfounded and utterly dishonest warning to U.S. citizens to avoid visiting our country.

Through the unjustified expulsion of personnel at our Consulate General in Washington, the only one in the United States, the capacity to provide services to U.S. travelers and especially to Cuban residents here, who have the absolute right to visit and interact normally with their nation, has been severely limited.

Equally, the U.S. arbitrarily and groundlessly reduced the personnel of our Embassy, which has caused, among other consequences, the dismantling of its Economic-Commercial Office, with the malicious political aim of eliminating dialogue with the U.S. business sector, genuinely interested in exploring existing business opportunities, even within the restrictive framework of blockade

regulations.

Nor is it surprising, considering what the Ambassador has said here, or her leaders previously, that the President of the United States ignores the unanimous international support for the progress that he is now reversing, or the similar demand for an immediate, total, and unconditional end to the blockade.

Mr. President:

As President Raúl Castro Ruz expressed, on July 14, "We reaffirm that any attempt to destroy the Revolution, whether through coercion and pressure, or the use of more subtle methods, will fail... Cuba is willing to continue discussing pending bilateral issues with the United States, on the basis of equality and respect for the sovereignty and independence of our country, and to continue respectful dialogue and cooperation in issues of common interest with the U.S. government.

"Cuba and the United States can cooperate and coexist, respecting our differences and promoting everything that benefits both countries and peoples, but it should not be expected that, in order to do so, Cuba will make concessions essential to its sovereignty and independence... nor will it negotiate its principles or accept conditions of any kind, just as we have never done throughout the history of the Revolution." End of quote. (Applause).

Mr. President:

Cuba presents today, for the 26th consecutive time before the United Nations General Assembly, the draft resolution (entitled) "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba."

In the current situation, this text acquires special relevance in the face of the setback that the actions of the new government of the United States against Cuba signal.

The blockade constitutes the greatest obstacle to the country's economic and social development and the implement-

ation of the National Plan, in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda. It is the main obstacle to the development of economic, commercial and financial relations between Cuba and the United States and the rest of the world.

According to calculations rigorously conducted by Cuban institutions, the blockade caused, in the year from April 2016 to April 2017, losses to the Cuban economy on the order of 4.305 billion dollars.

This figure is about double what would be needed as annual direct foreign investment for the Cuban economy to advance substantially toward development.

The accumulated damages reached the enormous figure of 822.280 billion dollars, calculated considering the devaluation of the U.S. dollar vis-à-vis the price of gold. At current prices, this is the equivalent of 130.178 billion dollars.

Dozens of banks in third countries have been affected in the last period by the extreme and tenacious persecution of Cuban financial transactions.

The blockade is contrary to International Law and its aggressively extraterritorial application damages the sovereignty of all states. It also harms economic and business interests in all latitudes.

Mr. President:

The Ambassador of the United States failed to mention that the blockade is a flagrant, massive, and systematic violation of the human rights of Cubans, and constitutes an act of genocide under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. It is also an obstacle to the international cooperation that Cuba provides in humanitarian areas to 81 countries of the South.

The human damages caused by the application of this policy are incalculable. There is not a Cuban family or social service in Cuba that does not suffer the

deprivations and consequences of the blockade. Cuban émigrés also suffer discrimination and prejudices.

Over the last year, the Cuban importer and exporter of medical products, Medicuba S.A., made requests to purchase supplies from 18 U.S. companies that refused or never responded.

Others, such as the U.S. corporation Promega, recognized for the production of diagnostic kits to determine viral load in patients with HIV-AIDS, hepatitis C, or kidney diseases, refused in June 2017 to sell its products to Medicuba S.A., alleging that the Treasury Department maintains commercial sanctions that prohibit the sale of its products to the island.

On that same date, and with the same argument, the refusal to supply to Cuba was received from the company New England Biolabs Inc., which markets a wide range of enzymes, such as Proteinase K, which is a reagent that permits diagnosis of viral diseases such as dengue, zika, and chikungunya, as well as other enzymes with multiple uses for the diagnosis of congenital malformations of fetuses, and to determine compatibility between organ donors and patients who are to undergo kidney, bone marrow, or liver transplants, among others.

Using the same argument, this company refused to provide supplies of a totally humanitarian nature to Cuba.

In April 2017, the German supplier Eckert & Ziegler Radiopharma GmbH, refused to supply to the same Cuban medical enterprise the Ge-68/Ga-68 Generator, or its components, which is a device used to diagnose prostate cancer. According to the company, it was not possible to directly supply the product to Cuba, or through a third country, because the blockade prevented it from doing so.

The cardiology service of the Hermanos Ameijeiras Clinical and Surgical Hospital

urgently requires a circulatory assist device to treat cardiogenic shock, for interventional cardiology and electrophysiology, allowing for the recovery of patients suffering from heart failure and prolonging their lives.

The U.S. company Abiomed, global leader in this market, supplies the Impella system, ideal for treating these conditions. In September 2016 and February 2017, Medicuba S.A. contacted the company in order to study the possibility of incorporating the product into the Cuban health system, which to date has refused to respond.

Mr. President:

We are deeply grateful to all the governments and peoples, parliaments, political forces and social movements, civil society representatives, international and regional organizations that have contributed with their voice and their vote, year after year, to support the justice and urgency of the abolition of the blockade.

We also extend our gratitude to the vast majority of the American people for their support of this commendable goal.

It offends humanity's conscience that the Ambassador of the United States has referred to the Bolivarian government of Venezuela in an unacceptable and interventionist way. She offends the heroic Venezuelan people, their civic-military union, and the Bolivarian Chavista government, led by President Nicolás Maduro Moros.

The government of the United States lies when it declares Venezuela a threat to its national security, which has, curiously, the largest certified hydrocarbon reserves on the planet.

As the Liberator Simón Bolívar wrote, "... the United States appear destined by Providence to plague America with misery in the name of liberty." I respond to the

Ambassador with Bolívar's words.

We are in the midst of a clean, constitutional electoral process in Cuba, where seats are not bought, nor do special interests prevail, where there are no deceptive campaigns where money rules; elections in which the will of voters is not manipulated; elections in which division and hatred are not incited.

Mr. President:

We especially commend all those who have expressed concern and their rejection of the coercive measures announced by the current U.S. government.

The Cuban people will never give up building a sovereign, independent, socialist, democratic, prosperous and sustainable nation. (Applause).

We will persevere, with the consensus of our people and especially the patriotic commitment of the youngest Cubans, in the anti-imperialist struggle and in defense of our independence, for which tens of thousands of Cubans have already fallen and we have run the greatest risks, as we demonstrated in Playa Girón and in the face of all threats.

We will maintain eternal loyalty to the legacy of José Martí and Fidel Castro Ruz. (Applause).

Mr. President:

Distinguished permanent representatives;
Esteemed delegates:

Our people are following this debate with hope. On their behalf, I request that you vote in favor of draft resolution A/72/L.30, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba."

Many thanks. (Prolonged applause).

Exclamations of: "Viva Cuba!" "Cuba sí, bloqueo no!" •



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