

Cuban President's Statement to the People of Cuba

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On Sunday evening the Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel gave the following statement on national television and radio to the people of Cuba:

We have been honest, we have been transparent, we have been clear and at every moment we have been explaining to our people the complexities of the current moments. I remind you that more than a year and a half ago, when the second semester of 2019 began, we had to explain that we were entering a difficult situation. ... Since then we have remained under that situation as a result of all the United States government moves led by the Trump administration in relation to Cuba.

They began to intensify a series of restrictive measures, a tightening of the blockade, of financial persecution against the energy sector with the aim of suffocating our economy and expecting that this would provoke the desired massive social outbreak, which sows the possibilities for the entire ideological campaign that it has done, to be able to call for humanitarian intervention that ends in military intervention and interference, and that affects the rights, sovereignty and independence of all peoples.

That situation continued, then came the 243 measures that we all know about [Trump's measures tightening the blockade, banning all remittances, etc.] and finally they decided to include Cuba in a list of countries sponsoring terrorism, a spurious, illegitimate and unilateral list that the United States government has adopted, believing themselves, the United States, the emperors of the world.

Many countries suddenly submitted to these decisions, but it must be recognized that others do not allow it to be imposed on them. All these measures led to the immediate cutting off of various sources of foreign income such as tourism, Cuban-American travel to our country, and remittances. A plan was made to discredit the Cuban medical brigades and the solidarity collaborations provided by Cuba, which received an important amount of foreign exchange for that collaboration.

This whole situation caused a situation of shortages in the country, especially of food, medicines, raw materials and supplies to be able to develop our economic and productive processes that at the same time contribute to exports. Two important elements are cut off: the ability to export and the ability to invest resources. And from the productive processes,

to then develop goods and services for our population.

We also have limitations on fuels and spare parts and all this has caused a level of dissatisfaction, coupled with accumulated problems that we have been able to solve and that came from the special period together with a fierce media campaign of discrediting, part of the unconventional war that tries to fracture the unity between the party, the state and people; that tries to portray the government as insufficient and incapable of providing well-being to the Cuban people whereby the U.S. government tries to convey that only with them can a country like Cuba hope to progress.

Those are well-known hypocritical recipes, speeches of double standards that we know very well throughout the history of the United States towards Cuba. How did they intervene in our country, how did they take over our island in 1902, how did they maintain domination of our island in the pseudo-republic stage, and how were those interests dealt a blow by the Cuban Revolution in its triumph?

The example of the Cuban Revolution has bothered them a lot for 60 years and their aggression has been constantly increasing. They have applied an unjust, criminal and cruel blockade, now intensified in pandemic conditions and therein lies the manifest perversity, the evil of all those intentions. Blockade and restrictive actions that they have never taken against any other country, nor against those they consider their main enemies.

Therefore, it has been a policy of viciousness against a small island that only aspires to defend its independence, its sovereignty and to build its society with self-determination according to the principles that more than 86% of the population has supported in the broad and democratic exercise that we supported a few years ago to approve the current Constitution of the Republic of Cuba.

In the midst of these conditions comes the pandemic, a pandemic that has not affected only Cuba, but the entire world, including the United States. It has affected rich countries and it must be said that in the face of this pandemic neither the United States nor those rich countries that had all the capacity to face its effects in the beginning — and in many of those first world countries — with much more wealth, their health systems and intensive therapy rooms collapsed. The poor were disadvantaged because there are no public policies aimed at the people for their salvation, and their indicators in relation to the confrontation of the pandemic have worse results than those of Cuba in many cases.

This is how we were progressing, we controlled the outbreaks and new outbreaks, with a tremendous capacity of our people, our scientists and our health personnel to sacrifice, and almost the entire country has been involved in it. We have created five vaccine candidates, of which one has already been recognized as a vaccine and which is the first in Latin America. Cuba is already vaccinating its population. It is a process that takes time. Vaccines must be produced, but at the moment we have one of the highest vaccination rates in the world and in a few weeks we have exceeded 20% of the population's vaccination, a process that continues.

In recent months, strains that are more aggressive and cause more transmission of the disease have begun to circulate. In the middle of this situation is that a group of complications begin to appear. In the first place, cases occur with a speed and accumulation that exceeds the capacities that we have to be able to create, to attend to these cases in

state institutions. So we have had to go to open up capacities in other centers for the cases. By opening up more centers, we have also had to give priority for electrical energy use, even in the midst of accumulated energy problems that have caused us blackouts. The amount of electricity circuits we are having to protect so COVID patients are treated, creates a situation where more circuits are causing annoying but necessary blackouts, because we have to restore our electricity generation capacities. This has happened in recent days and has caused irritation, misunderstanding, concerns and affectations to the population.

By having more patients, there is more consumption of medications, and our stocks of drugs are also running out, the possibilities of acquiring them being very difficult. In the midst of all this, we continue with will, thinking about everything, working for everyone. Now we have to go to the experience of *[COVID-positive cases]* cases staying home, due to the lack of capacities in a group of provinces, and we have had to summon the family so that they have a more direct, responsible participation. We do not tire of admiring in the midst of this situation the capacity for creative resistance that our people have. And how with these values, if we maintain responsibility and unity, in the shortest possible time with vaccination and with responsible behavior, complying with hygienic sanitary measures, social isolation and physical distancing, we will leave this pandemic peak sooner rather than later, which is not just the case for Cuba.

What Cuba managed to do was postpone this pandemic peak over time with everything we did, and in the shortest time we will overcome it. This is what we have affirmed these days, in our tours of the provinces to specify all the strategies of confronting the pandemic.

In a very cowardly, subtle and opportunistic and perverse way, from the most complicated situations that we have had in provinces such as Matanzas and Ciego de Ávila, those who have always approved the blockade and who serve as mercenaries of the Yankee blockade on the streets, begin to appear with doctrines of humanitarian aid and a "humanitarian corridor." We all know where they come from.

They do this to strengthen the claim that the Cuban government is not capable of getting out of this situation, as if they were so interested in solving the health problems of our people.

If you want to have a real gesture of support with Cuba, if you want to be concerned about the people, lift the blockade and we will see how we engage. Why don't they do it? Why don't they have the courage to lift the blockade? What legal and moral foundation do they have to support a foreign government that applies this policy to a small country in the midst of such an adverse situation.

Isn't that genocide, isn't that a crime against humanity? They make claims that we are a dictatorship. What a strange dictatorship it is that cares about giving its entire population health care, that seeks wellbeing for all, that in the midst of these situations is capable of having programs and public policies based on everyone. A dictatorship that is aspiring to vaccinate everyone with a Cuban vaccine, because we knew that no one was going to sell us vaccines and we had no money to go to the international market to buy vaccines.

Now they shout that we are murderers. Where are the murdered in Cuba? Where are the disappeared?

Why were the other countries that have suffered these events of pandemic peaks not

attacked in the press? Why were they not given the solution of humanitarian intervention? They were not attacked with discrediting campaigns that they have wanted to launch against us.

Life, history and facts show what is behind all this: It is to suffocate and end the Revolution and for that they are trying to discourage our people by misleading them. When people are in severe conditions like the ones we are living in, events like the ones we saw today in San Antonio de los Baños occur.

In San Antonio de los Baños, a group of people gathered in one of the most central parks in the city to protest and demand. Who were those people? They were made up of the people who are experiencing some of the shortcomings and difficulties, there are revolutionary people who may be confused and who may not have all the arguments or who were expressing their dissatisfaction.

Those two groups of people did it in a different way and looked for an argument and asked for an explanation. The first thing they said was "I am a revolutionary" "I support the Revolution."

This was headed by a group of manipulators who were lending themselves to the plans of those campaigns that appeared on social networks. The famous SOSMatanzas or SOS Cuba, the call to the banging of pans, so that in several cities of Cuba there would be demonstrations of this type and there would be social unrest.

This is very criminal, very cruel, especially at this time where we must ensure that people remain in the houses who are protecting themselves from the pandemic. With the morale that the Revolution gives, the revolutionaries of San Antonio de los Baños, the authorities of the province, and a group of comrades from the leadership of the country presented ourselves in San Antonio de los Baños.

This mass of revolutionaries confronted the counterrevolutionaries and we spoke with the revolutionaries and some who may be non-revolutionaries but who were asking for arguments. Later we marched and toured the town to show that in Cuba the streets belong to the revolutionaries.

While this is happening, we know that there are other towns in the country, where groups of people in certain streets and squares have gathered, also motivated by such unhealthy purposes.

The state has all the political will to dialogue, but also to participate. We will not hand over our sovereignty nor the independence of this nation. They have to pass over our corpses if they want to overthrow the Revolution.

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