

# *Probable cause of mysterious illness among US and Canadian diplomats in Havana has been found*

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Havana, September 20 (RHC)-- Dalhousie University and Nova Scotia Health Authority scientists stated on Thursday that they have discovered the cause of strange symptoms found in recent years among US and Canadian diplomats in Cuba, according to Radio-Canada's investigative TV program *Enquête*.

The research, led by Dr. Alon Friedman, from the Department of Neuroscience and Medical Pediatrics of that Canadian university, contends that neurotoxin exposure is believed to have been behind the mysterious cases of lack of balance and vertigo. The sickening chemicals are easy to be found in pesticides used to eradicate mosquitoes.

According to Cubadebate news website, during a meeting held last July in Havana, the Canadian researchers shared their thesis, in a preliminary way, with Cuban authorities and the Committee of Experts that has been studying U.S. allegations for almost two years.

The mysterious symptoms have caused a diplomatic crisis between Cuba and the United States. In 2017, Washington pulled non-essential embassy staff from the Cuban capital.

In April 2018, Canada withdrew the families of its diplomats stationed in Cuba before also reducing staff.

The scientists were able to examine several individuals before and after returning from Havana, and found changes in their brains after their stay on the island.

“There are very specific types of toxins that affect these kinds of nervous systems... and these are insecticides, pesticides, organophosphates – specific neurotoxins,” according to Dr. Friedman.

In 2016, Cuban authorities launched aggressive fumigation campaigns to eradicate mosquitoes carrying the Zika virus.

In addition, Canadian researchers found that embassies also sprayed their offices, as well as inside and outside the residences of their diplomats, up to five times more frequently than usual.

Cuban specialists believe that although the work of the Dalhousie University research team has been carried out with scientific consistency, the sample is small, and it is difficult to reach definitive conclusions.

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