

Defending the Homeland in the face of U.S. threats

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By María Josefina Arce

October 22 marked an aggravation of the so-called "October Crisis". On that day, sixty years ago, in an openly aggressive act, the United States decreed a military naval blockade of Cuba, which made many fear an imminent confrontation.

In a speech to the nation that sought to influence public opinion, President John F. Kennedy announced the measure, which he justified with the presence on Cuban soil of missiles from the then Soviet Union and a supposed threat to the security of the Americans.

Two days later the blockade would materialize, said the leader of the Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro, in an interview with the Spanish intellectual Ignacio Ramonet for his book "Cien horas con Fidel" (One Hundred Hours with Fidel).

Historians point out that this was the first step in a series of military measures ranging from a surprise attack against the rocket sites to an invasion.

Let us remember that months earlier, in February, the genocidal economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States against the Greater Antilles had been made official.

In those tense moments, the Cuban people demonstrated their cohesion and confidence in the wise leadership of Fidel, who had made it clear that Cuba had no obligation to be accountable to the United States, which did not have the right to decide the type and number of weapons we should have.

Cubans mobilized to defend the revolution and the sovereignty and independence achieved after more than one hundred years of struggle. Around 300,000 combatants with a high fighting spirit were put to arms, recalled the historic leader.

The people had already shown their courage and firmness in the face of aggression, and their decision not to give in to any threat.

In April 1961, in less than 72 hours, the Cubans defeated the mercenary invasion of Playa Girón, financed by Washington. It was a humiliation for the U.S. administration, presided over by Kennedy.

But in addition, the Cubans were protagonists of the feat that went down in history as the cleaning of the Escambray, a mountainous massif in the then province of Las Villas, where bands of counterrevolutionaries operated, prepared and financed by the CIA, Central Intelligence Agency of the United States, in support of the mercenary invasion of Playa Giron.

During the so-called "Missile Crisis", the Cuban people demonstrated to the world that they were determined to defend their homeland, at whatever cost. A spirit of struggle and resistance that has remained alive throughout the decades, in the face of the constant aggressions of the United States of which we have been and are the object.

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