

*U.S. magazine The Nation
publishes interview with Cuban
president*



Washington, October 29 (RHC) -- "We have lived under the blockade since we were born," said Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel in an interview published Saturday in the U.S. weekly The Nation.

The prestigious newspaper, founded in 1865, spoke exclusively with the Cuban leader during his recent visit to New York on the occasion of the High-Level Segment of the 78th regular session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I thank you for allowing me to address the American public, especially the millions of Latinos and Cubans living in the United States," said Díaz-Canel, who also spoke about the future of socialism, the economic difficulties and the commitment to his people.

"For example, my generation, that of the 1960s, was born with the blockade. Our children and grandchildren - I have grandchildren - have grown up under the sign of the blockade," he emphasized.

However, the blockade changed significantly in the second half of 2019. It became even tougher than before, he said explaining that this unilateral siege was made tougher by the implementation of more than 243 measures by Donald Trump's administration, he added.

Trump strengthened the blockade by internationalizing it and applying for the first time Chapter Three of the Helms-Burton Act, argued the also first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba.

He explained that with this "they cut off our access to foreign capital, to international convertible currencies and to remittances; Americans could no longer visit Cuba and they exerted financial pressure on banks and financial groups that had business with Cuba".

Díaz-Canel insisted on the negative impact of the measure adopted by Trump a few days before leaving office on the inclusion "in a false list that says that Cuba is a country that supports terrorism."

"The whole world knows about Cuba's humanist vocation and how we contribute to peace. We do not send soldiers anywhere; we send doctors," the head of state said, stressing that such designation is "absolutely false," he added.

He also denied the slanderous accusations against this cooperation. "When we send our doctors abroad to act in solidarity and provide services to other parts of the world, the United States claims that we are actually involved in human trafficking," he said.

Díaz-Canel said that just when the economic situation was worsening, Covid-19 hit and greatly affected Cuba, as everywhere else, but "the U.S. government acted perversely and tightened the blockade."

"I emphasize the government and not the people of the United States because we have deep respect and ties of friendship with the people of the United States," the Cuban president emphasized.

I believe that the U.S. government thought that the Cuban Revolution would not survive that moment, he pointed out, adding that the situation was critical and was accompanied by a huge media campaign to discredit it.

We turned to our health system -an efficient, free and high quality system that considers health a right- and we turned to our scientists, especially the younger ones, he said.

Our scientists - the statesman pointed out - designed the ventilators and developed five candidate vaccines, three of which are now recognized for their efficacy. And that saved the country.

However, we came out of the pandemic with many problems, many of them accumulated since before 2019, Díaz-Canel indicated.

"We have shortages of medicines, food and fuel. We suffer prolonged blackouts that harm the population and directly impact the lives of people, particularly young people," he said.

Even so, we, as a generation, have an enormous challenge: to ensure that this momentary distancing of Cuban youth -young people born during the Special Period who have lived all these years in a really difficult economic and social situation- does not lead to an ideological rupture with the Revolution and with the country itself, he stressed.

He also referred to Cuba's position on the war in Ukraine. He made it clear "that we are a country of peace" and reiterated the need to seek the paths of dialogue and diplomatic solutions to put an end to the conflict.

Responding to a question about his generational commitment, he remarked: "I was born in 1960 and celebrated my first birthday the day after the victory at Playa Giron. The birth and life of the revolution marked my generation".

He commented that as a representative of a whole generation that has come to assume the responsibilities of political life and government, he feels "an enormous commitment to the Revolution, to the Cuban people and to Fidel (Castro) and Raúl (Castro), who have been visionary leaders to whom we owe our gratitude and recognition".

We define ourselves as a generation of continuity, although not a generation of linear continuity, Díaz-Canel warned.

"Continuity does not mean lack of transformation, but quite the opposite: a dialectical continuity, so that, while we transform, advance and try to perfect our society to the maximum, we do not abandon our convictions to build socialism in our country," the Cuban president said. (Source: Prensa Latina)

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