

# *The New York Times Runs Editorial on U.S. Brain Drain Program Against Cuba*

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Havana, November 17 (RHC) -- In a sixth editorial published in English and Spanish since October 12th, this time entitled "A Cuban Brain Drain, Courtesy of the U.S.," The New York Times blasts the U.S. program implemented by the George W. Bush administration, and still underway, to encourage defection of Cuban medical personnel from assignments overseas. The program, says The Times editorial, is particularly hard to justify.

"It is incongruous for the United States to value the contributions of Cuban doctors who are sent by their government to assist in international crises like the 2010 Haiti earthquake while working to subvert that government by making defection so easy," the article reads. It goes on to note that "American immigration policy should give priority to the world's neediest refugees and persecuted people. It should not be used to exacerbate the brain drain of an adversarial nation at a time when improved relations between the two countries are a worthwhile, realistic goal."

The editorial says that there is much to criticize about Washington's failed policies toward Cuba and the blockade it has imposed on the island for decades. But the so-called Cuban Medical Professional Parole

Program, which in the last fiscal year enabled 1,278 Cubans to defect while on overseas assignments, a record number, "is particularly hard to justify."

The Times recalls that "the program was introduced through executive authority in August 2006, when Emilio González, a hard-line Cuban-American, was at the helm of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. González described the labor of Cuban doctors abroad as 'state-sponsored human trafficking.' At the time, the Bush administration was trying to cripple the Cuban government. Easily enabling medical personnel posted abroad to defect represented an opportunity to strike at the core of the island's primary diplomatic tool, while embarrassing the Castro regime."

The newspaper editorial emphasized that the Caribbean island has one of the highest numbers of doctors per capita in the world and offers medical scholarships to hundreds of disadvantaged international students each year, including some from the United States. According to Cuban government figures, more than 440,000 of the island's 11 million citizens are employed in the health sector.

After going over other details related to Cuban medical services and its revenues for the island's economy, The New York Times says that as long as this incoherent policy is in place, establishing a healthier relationship between the two nations will be much more difficult.

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