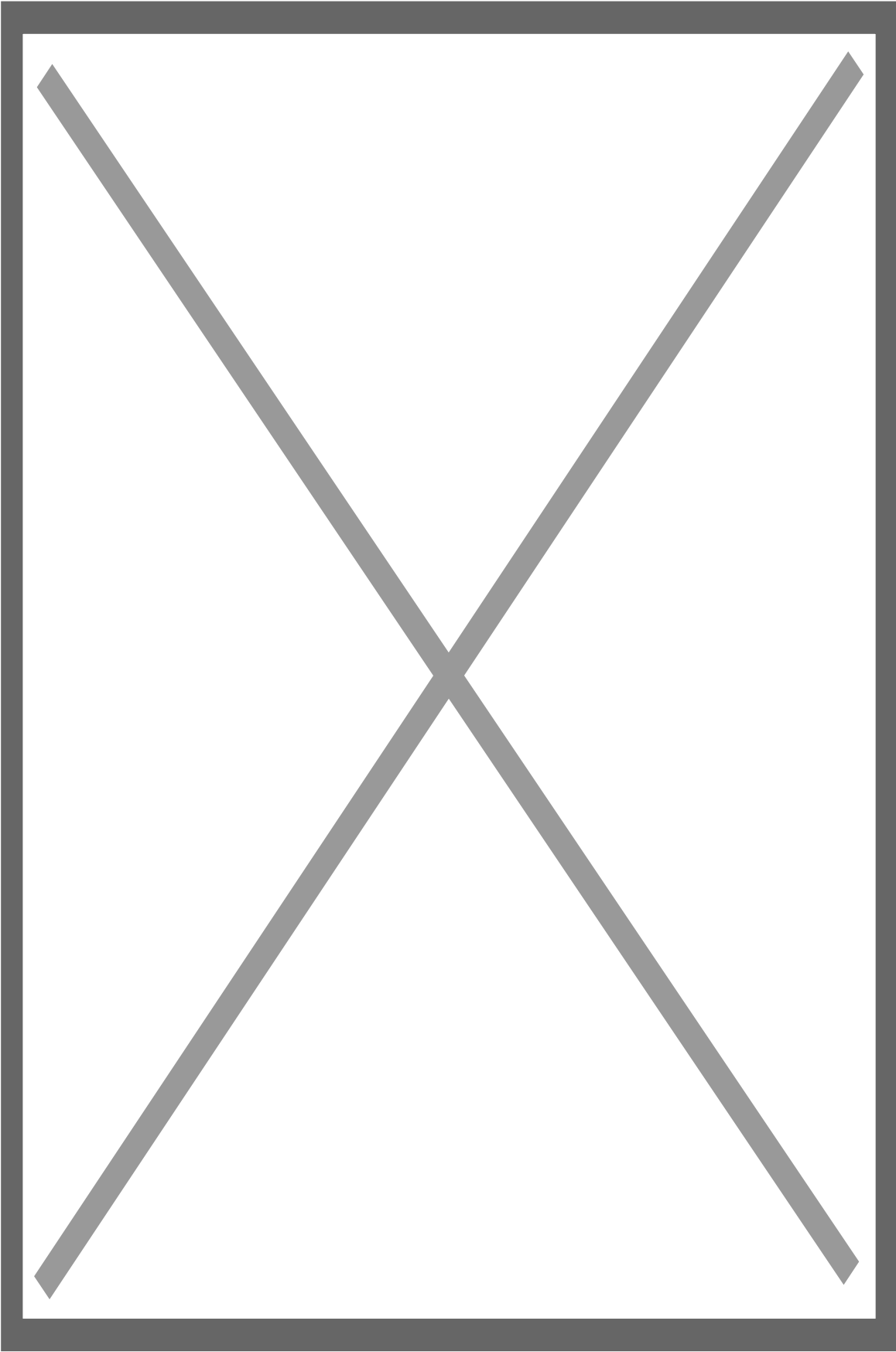


*Full speech of Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez before the UN General Assembly, October 30, 2024. Delivered just prior to the vote of 187 countries in favor of ending the U.S. blockade against the island and two opposed to lifting the blockade*

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Full speech of Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez before the UN General Assembly, October 30, 2024. Delivered just prior to the vote of 187 countries in favor of ending the U.S. blockade against the island and two opposed to lifting the blockade.

Mr. President:

Distinguished Permanent Representatives:

Dear Delegates:

For five days, from Friday, the 18th to Wednesday, October 23rd, Cuban families were deprived, except for a few hours, of electricity, with the anxiety that food would spoil and it would not be possible or very expensive to replace it, and many of them lacked running water.

Hospitals operated under emergency conditions and schools and universities suspended classes. Institutions stopped their activities and essential ones maintained only vital ones. The economy stopped.

Since October 20, Hurricane Oscar hit the eastern part of the country, devastatingly in Holguín and especially in Guantánamo, a province where a U.S. naval base usurps our territory. Despite the strenuous and effective efforts of the internationally recognized Cuban Civil Defense, 8 people died, including a 5-year-old girl, and 2 are missing.

The municipalities of Imías, San Antonio del Sur, Maisí and Baracoa suffered great damage. Satellite photos showed the country in a state of disarray and, in addition, subjected to strong winds and rain.

The serenity, understanding, confidence, awareness and mobilization of the entire people in solidarity support of the neighbors and vulnerable people was impressive, together with 52 thousand selfless and heroic electrical workers who, far from their families, worked uninterruptedly and carried out a feat, together with our Party, Government, Revolutionary Armed Forces and the Ministry of the Interior and organs of People's Power.

The primary cause of the failure of the National Electric System was the lack of fuel that affected generation and caused instability associated with the precarious state of our plants, both direct consequences of the extreme economic war measures applied by the US government since 2019, specifically designed to prevent fuel supplies, and parts and pieces for technical maintenance to our plants and electrical installations, as well as to hinder investment and access to financing.

We have overcome the serious electrical contingency, but the normality of Cubans includes prolonged and frequent blackouts that affect homes and essential services.

Electricity generation in our nation is highly dependent on imported fuels. It is known, however, that the United States government has applied a policy of maximum pressure, in violation of international law, aimed at depriving Cuba of fuel supplies from third countries, through sanctions and intimidation against producers and suppliers, transporters and insurers. In just one year, the previous US government sanctioned 53 vessels and 27 companies associated with shipments to Cuba.

The damage to the Cuban economy from 18 days of blockade amounts to 252 million dollars. That money that our country loses or fails to receive would be enough to ensure the maintenance of our thermoelectric plants, acquire the spare parts that would ensure the normal operation of these plants, and avoid power outages.

The damage from 5 months of blockade is equivalent to the total annual Cuban fuel imports that average about 2 billion dollars.

The government of President Joseph Biden often declares that “helping and supporting the Cuban people” is its policy. Who can believe it?

We deeply appreciate the significant displays of solidarity with Cuba and the offers of cooperation received in recent days from numerous nations and various actors.

Mr. President:

The Cuban economy has experienced unprecedented difficulties in recent years, with a critical impact on the well-being of the population. Our people suffer this on a daily basis. Our government works tirelessly to find solutions to such an adverse challenge. It is an unavoidable and extremely difficult obligation.

The causes of this situation are diverse, as they can be for any country. They are both internal in nature, as well as derived from international events, which are beyond our capacity to act.

What is unique, what is extraordinary about Cuba, is the deliberate efforts of the United States to suffocate the national economy, to sabotage and to put significant obstacles to prevent our growth and development.

No country, even those with much more robust economies than Cuba, could face such a brutal, asymmetrical and extended aggression over time, without a considerable cost to the standard of living of its population.

The United States seeks to send a message of warning.

With the economic blockade against Cuba, imperialism warns the entire world that any nation that dares to firmly defend its sovereignty and build its own future will pay a price for its rebellion.

No one can doubt the capacity that the United States has today to strike with devastating force the economy of any nation.

In the case of Cuba, it has been doing so for 64 years.

The United States is perfectly aware that it violates the Charter of the United Nations and International Law with such ruthless aggression.

It is aware that it contravenes the international norms of trade and navigation. It applies or threatens coercive measures to citizens of any nation, their companies and financial institutions, if they trade or maintain economic relations with Cuba.

Anyone who reads the infamous Helms-Burton Act of the United States will see how this legislation forces the President and his government institutions to exert pressure on other countries, to interfere in their relationship with Cuba, to extend their coercive arm extraterritorially and impose it within the borders of the rest of the member states of this Organization.

The blockade against Cuba is an economic, financial and commercial war and qualifies as a crime of genocide. It is a flagrant, massive and systematic violation of the human rights of our people. It is the most comprehensive, comprehensive and prolonged system of unilateral coercive measures that has been applied throughout history against any country.

What would Cuba be like today if it had had the 164 billion dollars that the blockade has deprived us of since its imposition? These damages amount to 1 trillion 499 thousand 710 million dollars, if the behavior

of the dollar against the value of gold is taken into account.

The surprising thing is that, under these extreme conditions, Cuba has built a social work recognized worldwide and protected the lives of Cubans, with the invariable commitment of not abandoning or excluding anyone.

Mr. President:

Since 2017, the previous United States government began to impose additional coercive measures against Cuba to further reinforce the economic blockade.

It was a political commitment announced by the then President since he was elected, aimed at undoing the discreet progress in the bilateral relationship that Cuba and the United States experienced between 2015 and 2016.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, these measures escalated to an extreme dimension, even more perverse and harmful, going so far as to hinder the purchase of oxygen and lung ventilators.

President Joseph Biden, with surprising mimicry, has left the coercive regime of his predecessor intact and has applied it conscious of its devastating consequences for Cuban families.

During his presidency, the blockade has caused losses to Cuba of more than 16 billion dollars. This means that each day that this criminal policy is in force costs our country 14 million dollars.

These are exorbitant amounts for any nation, even more so for a small, insular economy, without great natural resources and in development, like Cuba's.

The extensive Report presented by the Secretary General of the United Nations, under resolution 78/7, which contains the valuable contributions of 183 Member States and 35 Agencies, Funds and Programs of the UN system, clearly demonstrates the terrible consequences of the blockade on the Cuban population and economy and, due to its extraterritorial effect, on other countries.

This can be seen in the deterioration and instability of basic services that Cubans have been able to enjoy for decades as a result of policies of equity and social justice, including electricity, health, education, water supply, communal services, public transportation, food and medicine production, all of which are required by the scarce financial resources that the country has.

More than 80% of our population has only known a Cuba with a blockade. All young Cubans have had to live in a blockaded country. The Cuban family suffers the anxiety and pain of separation artificially imposed by inhuman measures that affect everyone and are expressed in high rates of emigration. It would be impossible to ignore that the extreme tightening of the blockade is the main reason that has led a significant number of young Cubans to opt for temporary or permanent ways of personal fulfillment outside the Island, which has a lacerating impact on families and the Homeland.

Mr. President:

The right to food is a human right. The accumulated cost of 4 months of economic blockade is equivalent to 1.6 billion dollars. This amount would ensure, for one year, the delivery to all Cuban families of the standard food basket that the population has enjoyed for decades, and that today is not enough to satisfy needs, but meets the indispensable needs with very subsidized prices.

The blockade measures translate into the perennial agony of finding the resources to pay for the punctual shipments that the country contracts and that are so necessary for the consumption of the population.

The prolonged economic blockade also has a very severe impact on food production in Cuba, by hindering the availability of fuel, seeds, fertilizers, feed, pesticides and other inputs, to which are added the difficulties already described for transportation and the availability of electric power.

It is known, since the United States manipulates it to exhaustion and you will surely hear it from its representative in the next few minutes, that by virtue of legal provisions dating from the year 2000, the government of that country allows, within the absolute prohibition of exports to Cuba, that exceptionally food be exported through licenses.

These are sales in one direction and subject to extraordinary limitations, among them the prohibition of these transactions having credits or financing of any kind.

The permit is only granted for sales with advance payment and in cash. Products can only be transported on American ships, which return empty to their ports of origin.

Faced with the need to cover the food consumption requirements of the population, Cuba has been using this limited possibility for years, even with its draconian conditions. But these transactions could become real trade and be much more dynamic, if the blockade did not exist.

The very government that authorizes these sales deprives Cuba of the financial resources it needs to make imports, including food or inputs for the food industry, from any country in the world, not just from the United States.

The human right to health should be sacred. Cuba is capable of producing nearly 60% of its basic range of medicines. This potential has not been guaranteed in recent years due to the extreme intensification of measures against our country that have cost lives, increased infant mortality and reduced the life expectancy of Cubans.

It would be enough to have the money that Cuba is deprived of with 25 days of blockade, which amounts to 339 million dollars, to guarantee for one year the production and availability of antibiotics, analgesics, antihypertensives and many other basic medicines that our patients require, including children, the elderly and pregnant women.

With 12 million dollars, Cuba could acquire the insulin necessary for all our diabetics. In a single day, the blockade causes losses worth more than that amount.

The damage caused by 9 days of blockade is equivalent to the 129 million dollars needed to import the medical supplies that are used annually in our country, including cotton, syringes, catheters, needles and sutures, among other supplies and all the reagents necessary for the national health system.

15 minutes of blockade imply 144 thousand dollars of losses for Cuba, which is the money we need to acquire the prostheses that our children and adolescents with hearing disabilities need.

We continue to be unable to access medical equipment, treatments and suitable drugs from US companies, which we have to buy at exorbitant prices from intermediaries, or replace with generic drugs of lesser efficacy, even for sick newborns and children.

The United States government is perfectly aware of the direct and indirect impact that its policy has on the Cuban health system. It is well aware of the suffering and anguish that it causes, and the consequences in terms of incomplete treatments, postponed surgeries and scarce medical supplies. It cannot hide the fact that its objective, in full consciousness, is to cause harm to the population.

Mr. President:

No government should have as its policy the task of impoverishing and causing shortages in another nation, much less in a neighboring country that has no measures in force against its own. It is a collective punishment prohibited by International Law and International Humanitarian Law.

Among the measures to reinforce the blockade applied in recent years, the US decision to include Cuba on a list of its State Department that classifies countries, in an arbitrary manner, as sponsors of terrorism stands out for its slanderous nature and the enormous economic and humanitarian damage that it indirectly causes.

In sharp contrast, the United States government's tolerance and indifference persists towards individuals and groups that organize, finance and carry out violent and terrorist actions against Cuba from that country's territory. An example of this was the recent release by the United States judicial authorities of an individual who on April 30, 2020, in the street, fired 32 rounds with a machine gun at the Cuban Embassy in Washington DC.

This list has no legitimacy whatsoever. Nor does it contribute in the slightest to the international effort against terrorism. It is an instrument of political coercion through economic actions of punishment and threat.

The presence of any country on that list automatically activates a set of coercive measures that, in the case of Cuba, are added to the existing blockade. Among them, the ability to intimidate financial institutions in other countries that fear reprisals from the United States if they interact with Cuba stands out.

Since the beginning of President Biden's term, 1,064 foreign banks have refused to provide services to Cuban entities due to fear of US fines.

Banking services are denied to our nationals in multiple countries, simply because they are Cuban citizens, which is deeply discriminatory.

Citizens of countries that enjoy this privilege are also deprived of the benefit of an expedited electronic visa (ESTA) to enter the United States, simply because they are traveling to Cuba.

In the last year, these expedited visas have been denied to more than 300,000 European citizens who visited Cuba. To increase the intimidating effect, the lists of those denied are made public.

The United States seeks, by all means, to prevent Cuba's recovery by hitting tourism, a main source of income. It feels it has the right to impose on people from other nations which countries they cannot visit, at the risk of reprisals.

It violates the freedom of travel of its citizens and those of other nations as a political weapon. The United States government knows very well that Cuba does not sponsor, nor has any link with, terrorism. The presence of our country on that list, in addition to being totally unjustified, is testimony to the lack of political or ethical arguments to justify the economic war that is being imposed on us.

The current President of the United States inherited this disastrous decision taken by his predecessor 9 days before leaving the White House. But President Biden has every prerogative to sign at any time a document leaving Cuba off that spurious list, where it should never have appeared. It would be the moral and legally correct thing to do.

The international community widely recognizes that Cuba is not a terrorist country. There have been various statements by governments, parties, parliaments, solidarity movements, associations of Cubans living abroad, international organizations and initiatives signed by former presidents, US congressmen, journalists and intellectuals demanding that Cuba be removed from the list of alleged state sponsors of

terrorism. Likewise, we recall the declaration signed by 123 countries with a similar purpose within the framework of the Human Rights Council.

Mr. President:

Over the past year, the US government has announced measures that it presents to the public as supposed relief from the economic blockade. No one should be confused. They are not. With an obvious political objective, it proclaimed exceptions within the broad set of prohibitions and reprisals to supposedly provide opportunities to the private sector of the Cuban economy.

This is a sterile and deceptive move. None of these measures are really in force and they are inapplicable.

Small private entrepreneurs in Cuba also suffer the consequences of the blockade, like the entire population. Supposed opportunities are thwarted by regulations and prohibitions that are designed to paralyze the Cuban economy.

Our government promotes the harmonious development of all forms of management, including small and medium-sized private and state-owned companies. Cuba is one and so is its business system. The United States has no right to interfere in our constitutional order and economic model in transformation, nor to intervene in the internal affairs of our country, or in those of any other.

The economic blockade is not the only instrument of aggression of the United States against Cuba. It is accompanied and complemented by a powerful, toxic and generously financed machinery of cognitive or unconventional warfare, systematic disinformation, fomenting confusion, instigating violence and promoting apathy, pessimism and distrust.

With this communication operation of permanent discredit, they cynically try to hold the Cuban government responsible for the impact that the US siege against our population intentionally causes, with the aim of regime change, domination, economic collapse, and social explosion, following the same pattern of the infamous memorandum of the Undersecretary of State Lester Mallory, of April 12, 1960, from which I will quote a fragment:

“The majority of Cubans support Castro. There is no effective political opposition...The only foreseeable means of alienating domestic support is through disenchantment and discontent based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship... All possible means must be adopted promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba... A line of action which, while being as skillful and discreet as possible, will make the greatest possible inroads to deny money and supplies to Cuba, reduce monetary and real wages, provoke hunger, desperation and the overthrow of the government.”

How long, ladies and gentlemen? Let Cuba live! Let Cuba live in peace!

Mr. President:

In a few days, there will be presidential elections in the United States. The winning government will have the opportunity to decide whether to continue the failed approach and inhumane siege measures of the past six decades or whether it will finally listen, democratically, to its own people and also to the overwhelming majority of the international community and allow our country to develop to its full potential and real capacity.

In any case, it will find on the part of Cuba the firm determination to defend its sovereign right to build its own future, independent, socialist, free of foreign interference and committed to peace, sustainable development, social justice and solidarity.



It will also find the willingness to engage in serious and responsible dialogue, to advance towards a constructive and civilized relationship, based on sovereign equality, mutual respect, reciprocal benefit for both peoples, while being aware of the profound political differences between our governments.

Our people and government deeply appreciate and thank all the valuable expressions of support and solidarity. The denunciation of the blockade was one of the most mentioned topics in the debate during the recent high-level segment of the UN General Assembly. Not a single country spoke in favor of the criminal policy imposed against Cuba.

They exclaimed: Cuba is not alone!

This is also increasingly expressed within the United States, including the Cubans who live here and their descendants.

Mr. President:

Distinguished Permanent Representatives:

Dear Delegates:

Since 1992, this Assembly has unequivocally declared itself in favor of ending the blockade. The reasons that support this demand are as valid today, or more so, than then.

Soon, the electronic screens in this room will be lit up and you, representing your nations, will once again register your position regarding the blockade against Cuba.

With your votes in favor, you will reaffirm the right of our people and of all peoples to defend their independence, sovereignty and self-determination, without foreign interference or intervention.

By pressing the green button on your desk, you will confirm, as has happened on 31 previous occasions, that the blockade against Cuba is a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and International Law and must cease.

Support for our resolution will send a strong message and a clear call to the current President of this country and the next one, to use their executive prerogatives and repair the grave injustice committed against our people.

What the resolution demands of the United States is not a concession to Cuba; it is not asking for a generous act or preferential treatment. It is simply that the abuse and injustice cease.

Cuba has the right to live without a blockade! Cubans tell President Biden: Tear down the blockade!

The colossal challenges do not discourage us. As Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz said: "We will continue to resist the consequences of the blockade, which will one day be defeated by the dignity of the Cuban people, the solidarity of the people and the almost absolute opposition of the governments of the world, and also by the growing rejection of the American people."

Support for the resolution will also be a fair recognition of the heroic resistance of the noble, dignified and supportive Cuban people. On their behalf, I respectfully ask you to vote in favor of project L.6, entitled "Need to end the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba."

Thank you very much.



**Radio Habana Cuba**