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Cuba-U.S.: Between candy and salty water

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His announcement took place through the Treasury and Commerce Departments, as well as the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), and other agencies.

El Nuevo Herald / Miami Herald journalist Nora Gamez Torres said on Friday that as a whole those measures “ease” restrictions on remittances, travels and exports to Cuba.

In that context, she explained that North Americans who travel to Havana, covered in 12 categories authorized by the government, may spend a limited amount of dollars in food and other items of personal consumption, lodging and transportation.

She specified this will allow more Americans to travel to the island to visit their family, carry out professional, educational, religious or artistic activities, without applying for a special license”.

Observers noted that the announcement is a positive advance, but in the light of global practice, it discriminates the alleged beneficiaries.

The aforementioned 12 categories also cover imports, exports and the so-called “humanitarian projects”.

It was also announced that the Treasury Department will allow remittance transfer through US banks without needing to apply for a special license.

At the same time, the new regulations remove the limits to “remittances for humanitarian projects” and “development of private businesses”.

State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf explained what “humanitarian projects” are for them.

Among them she mentioned those linked to construction sector that benefit “legitimately independent” civil society groups.

And then, she listed some of the issues the government will grant preference inside and outside the island:

Entrepreneurial and business training, civic education, journalism, adult literacy, small-scale private enterprise and agriculture.

In spokeswoman Harf’s opinion, these are the issues that correspond to the sphere of “humanitarian projects”.

And according to the Miami Herald, sent to the Treasury Department, that category also includes remittances that support human and civil rights, and “transition to democracy”.

Moreover, US government officials specified that most barriers to the transactions between U.S. and Cuba remain in place “due to the embargo (blockade)”.

Everything is not on the table but there are enough elements to lay down some ideas.

The first of them is to continue underlining the courageous and lucid step taken by President Barack Obama regarding Cuba.

Now, what can we expect from what happened? Who supports the decision in general and who plots to hinder it? Does it have a future or was it born dead?

It’s necessary to note, without ignoring nuances, the two main opposing trends over the subject.

One moves in the Congress, where a fiercely extreme right-wing Republican sector proclaims it will prevent the funds to establish a diplomatic mission in Havana.

This group of aged enemies of Cuba is led by doubly small Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Marco Rubio and Mario Díaz-Balart.

Once again, they represent the outmoded promoters of bitter hatred against independent Havana.

But they are confronted by those who dismiss such behavior and prefer to achieve their goal without aggressiveness.

This last group has advocated influencing Cuban youth and intellectuals for years, under the belief that they are the most vulnerable ones.

Where have they directed, aim or will aim most of their ideological cannons? Towards the naïve and uninformed.

Both reiterate possible economic and trade benefits that may result from this new historical chapter, but do not mention its challenges, as a disservice to their country.

Those who have been announcing it with fanfare will try to take advantage of the new bilateral circumstances to ride their “Trojan Horse” on the Caribbean island.

In other words, relations between Havana and Washington now vary between candy and salty

water.

But the collective intelligence in the world acknowledges, amidst so many hardships shaking mankind, the wisdom of these American neighbors.

Cubasi Translation Staff

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