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**Statement by the Revolutionary Government of Cuba**

19/06/2017



On June 16, 2017, US President Donald Trump delivered a speech full of hostile anti-Cuban rhetoric reminiscent of the times of open confrontation with our country in a Miami theater. He announced his government's Cuba policy, which rolls back the progress achieved over the last two years since December 17, 2014, when Presidents Raúl Castro and Barack Obama announced the decision to re-establish diplomatic relations and engage in a process towards the normalization of bilateral relations.

In what constitutes a setback in the relations between both countries, President Trump, gave a speech and signed a policy directive titled "National Security Presidential Memorandum", which provides the elimination of private educational "people-to-people" exchanges and greater control over all travelers to Cuba, as well as the prohibition of business, trade and financial transactions between US companies and certain Cuban companies linked to the Armed Revolutionary Forces and the intelligence and security services, under the alleged objective of depriving us from income. The US president justified this policy with alleged concerns over the human rights situation in Cuba and the need to rigorously enforce the US blockade laws, conditioning its lifting, as well as any improvements in US-Cuba bilateral relations to our country's making changes inherent to its constitutional order.

Trump also abrogated Presidential Policy Directive "Normalization of Relations between the United States and Cuba", issued by President Obama on October 14, 2016. Although said Directive did not conceal the interventionist character of the US policy nor the fact that its main purpose was to advance US interests in order to bring about changes in the economic, political and social systems of our country, it did recognize Cuba's independence, sovereignty and self-determination and the Cuban government as a legitimate and equal interlocutor, as well as the benefits that a civilized coexistence would have for both countries and peoples despite the great differences that exist between both governments. The Directive also conceded that the blockade is an obsolete policy and that it should be lifted.

Once again, the US Government resorts to coercive methods of the past when it adopts measures aimed at stepping up the blockade, effective since February 1962, which not only causes harm and deprivations to the

Cuban people and is the main obstacle to our economic development, but also affects the sovereignty and interests of other countries, which arouses international rejection.

The measures announced impose additional obstacles to the already very limited opportunities that the US business sector had in order to trade with and invest in Cuba.

Likewise, those measures restrict even more the right of US citizens to visit our country, which was already limited due to the obligation of using discriminatory licenses, at a moment when the US Congress, echoing the feelings of broad sectors of that society, calls not only for an end to the travel ban, but also for the elimination of the restrictions on the trade with Cuba.

The measures announced by President Trump run counter to the majority support of the US public opinion, including the Cuban emigration in that country, to the total lifting of the blockade and the establishment of normal relations between Cuba and the United States.

Instead, the US President, who has been once again ill-advised, is taking decisions that favor the political interests of an irrational minority of Cuban origin in the state of Florida which, out of petty motivations, does not give up its intent to punish Cuba and its people for exercising the legitimate and sovereign right of being free and having taken the reins of their own destiny.

Later on, we shall make a deeper analysis of the scope and implications of the announcement.

The Government of Cuba condemns the new measures to tighten the blockade, which are doomed to failure, as has been repeatedly evidenced in the past, for they will not succeed in their purpose to weaken the Revolution or bend the Cuban people, whose resistance against aggressions of all sorts and origins has been put to the test throughout almost six decades.

The Government of Cuba rejects political manipulation and double standards in human rights. The Cuban people enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms and can proudly show some achievements that are still a chimera for many countries of the world, including the United States, such as the right to health, education and social security; equal pay for equal work, children's rights as well as the rights to food, peace and development. Cuba, with its modest resources, has also contributed to the improvement of the human rights situation in many countries of the world, despite the limitations inherent to its condition as a blockaded country.

The United States are not in the position to teach us lessons. We have serious concerns about the respect for and guarantees of human rights in that country, where there are numerous cases of murders, brutality and abuses by the police, particularly against the African-American population; the right to life is violated as a result of the deaths caused by fire arms; child labor is exploited and there are serious manifestations of racial discrimination; there is a threat to impose more restrictions on medical services, which will leave 23 million persons without health insurance; there is unequal pay between men and women; migrants and refugees, particularly those who come from Islamic countries, are marginalized; there is an attempt to put up walls that discriminate against and denigrate neighbor countries; and international commitments to preserve the environment and address climate change are abandoned.

Also a source of concern are the human rights violations by the United States in other countries, such as the arbitrary detention of tens of prisoners in the territory illegally occupied by the US Naval Base in Guantánamo, Cuba, where even torture has been applied; extrajudicial executions and the death of civilians caused by drones; as well as the wars unleashed against countries like Iraq, under false pretenses like the possession of weapons of mass destruction, with disastrous consequences for the peace, security and stability in the Middle East.

It should be recalled that Cuba is a State Party to 44 international human rights instruments, while the US is only a State Party to 18. Therefore, we have much to show, say and defend.

Upon confirming the decision to re-establish diplomatic relations, Cuba and the United States ratified their intention to develop respectful and cooperative relations between both peoples and governments, based on the principles and purposes enshrined in the UN Charter. In its Declaration issued on July 1, 2015, the Revolutionary Government of Cuba reaffirmed that "these relations must be founded on absolute respect for our independence and sovereignty; the inalienable right of every State to choose its political, economic, social and cultural system, without interference in any form; and sovereign equality and reciprocity, which constitute inalienable principles of

International Law", as was established in the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, signed by the Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (CELAC), at its second summit held in Havana. Cuba has not renounced these principles, nor will it ever do so.

The Government of Cuba reiterates its will to continue a respectful and cooperative dialogue on topics of mutual interest, as well as the negotiation of outstanding issues with the US Government. During the last two years it has been evidenced that both countries, as was repeatedly expressed by the President of the Councils of State and of Ministers, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, can cooperate and coexist in a civilized manner, respecting the differences and promoting everything that benefits both nations and peoples, but it should not be expected that, in order to achieve that, Cuba would make concessions inherent to its sovereignty and independence, or accept preconditions of any sort.

Any strategy aimed at changing the political, economic and social system in Cuba, either through pressures and impositions or by using more subtle methods, shall be doomed to failure.

The changes that need to be made in Cuba, as those that have been made since 1959 and the ones that we are introducing now as part of the process to update our economic and social system, will continue to be sovereignly determined by the Cuban people.

Just as we have been doing since the triumph of the Revolution on January 1st, 1959, we will take on every risk and shall continue to advance steadfastly and confidently in the construction of a sovereign, independent, socialist, democratic, prosperous and sustainable nation.

Havana, June 16, 2017.

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