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Cuba in times of coronavirus and its media impact

By: Omar Pérez Salomón  
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In recent weeks, major capitalist mass media have addressed in a positive way — something weird actually — Cuba’s strategy and action plan regarding the fighting of Covid-19.

When reading foreign media and news agencies early on March, attacks to demonize Cuba multiplied in social networks in the field of culture, freedom of expression and creation, and human rights in general. They tried to set a pattern of opinion that accused Cuba of “increased repression” to “silence criticism,” and “arbitrary detentions as well as movement restriction.”

However, the announcement of Cuban authorities concerning the policies and action plans the island would follow to prevent the Covid-19 pandemic, called the attention of international media and they had no choice but to tell the truth.

The truth is that the international media impact on Cuba’s treatment on Covid-19 buried other subjects, niches of attacks against our country

and left behind Miami mayor office's call to ban flights between Cuba and Florida, silencing the campaigns against Cuban medical missions abroad.

Over the last week, Cuba has been praised in news, comments, or tags in more than 400 headlines from 50 mass media globally, averaging 15-plus countries.

These media released the action plan adopted by the island, especially preventive and universal measures. They also referred to the calmness of people and their trust, not to mention the strength of our healthcare system. Indeed, these media began promoting our pharmaceutical drugs to treat the ailment.

Some addressed the solidarity and Cuba's stance on the British cruise ship MS Braemar, its positive impact on the public opinion and the gratitude of British authorities; not to mention the solidarity, collaboration, and the dispatching of medical brigades to several countries, especially in Lombardy, Italy's most affected region.

Very well-positioned media have posted daring headlines such as: Why is the U.S. opposed to the fact affected nations may ask Cuba for help? (CNN, English); "Cuban citizens deal with pandemic amid shortage and tight U.S. embargo" (NBC), and "Cuba understands it better than us" (Rabble, Canada).

Other progressive and leftist media have highlighted that everything done in Cuba shows a high level of governance amid the increased, relentless pursuit and economic war led by the U.S.; which is compared to the capitalist's healthcare "disaster" experienced by other countries in Europe or the U.S. itself — now the epicenter of the disease.

On the other hand, Cuba's behavior in times of this pandemic has been exemplary and recognized in social networks. For instance, despite *Twitter* banned lots of pro-revolution profiles, the hashtag **#CubaSalvaVidas** was trending topic worldwide — top 15 — from March 11-26. It tops the list in nations like Argentina and Ecuador, and top 5 in Venezuela, Mexico; while ranks top 15 in Peru and Colombia. Hashtags related to the Revolution have had greater impact than those linked to opposition.

In the span, users with more retweets were **@CubaMINREX**

@cubavsbloqueo, and @dominiocuba.

Most retweets messages were:

**#CubaSalvaVidas** Cuba is great! Despite the criminal U.S. blockade on Cuba, this sister nation proves its solidarity with the world by dispatching medical personnel to 38 nations to fight the virus.

**#GanamosConLaPrevencion @NicolasMaduro**

**#CubaSalvaVidas.** While some countries send bombs, Cuba sends doctors worldwide fighting terrible diseases and saving lives.

**#GanamosConLaPrevencion**

Cuban doctors are always vigilant with individuals' health and integrity, wherever they may be. **#CubaSalvaVidas**

From March 11-26, #Cuba was tagged 889,267 times from 161,528 users with a potential reach of 433,801,815 followers — averaging 57,493 tweets, 17,296 users, with potential reach of 56,466,708 followers in 24 hours.

Nonetheless, some websites responding to the interests of the opposition in Cuba still insist, unsuccessfully, on discrediting the measures adopted by the revolutionary government and the actions taken by state-own enterprises and the police.

Cuba's image and prestige have strengthened. Headlines demanding the lifting of the U.S. blockade and its unilateral siege against Cuba have increased.

If I had to sum up this time, I would say that both the U.S. government and the opposition in Cuba are isolated and without a noticeable impact in times of coronavirus.

**Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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