

Spain rejects escalation of US blockade against Cuba

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Several media outlets today highlighted the rejection expressed by Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Josep Borrell, to the strengthening of the US economic blockade on Cuba during a visit to Washington.

News agencies EFE and Europa Press, newspapers such as El País and 20 minutes, as well as state-owned Televisión Española echoed the meeting Borrell had with U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, the day before.

In that meeting, according to those sources, the foreign minister of this country made clear his opposition to the hardening of the prolonged siege the United States keeps on the Caribbean island, in particular the possible activation of title III of the extraterritorial Helms-Burton law.

'We have talked about the possibility U.S. applies Chapter 3 of the Helms-Burton law to Cuba, and the United States already knows Europeans and Spain, in particular, would be radically in disagreement', said the head of Spanish diplomacy.

Since its approval in 1996, Title 3 of the aforementioned legislation was suspended by all US administrations every six months, so that it never came into full force.

In January, when it was time to renew this postponement, President Donald Trump fired all the alarms to do so for just 45 days and, subsequently, in March, he renewed the suspension for 30 days, a measure that expires on April 17.

Speaking to journalists after his meeting with Pompeo, Borrell explained that Spain is opposed to the application of that chapter of the Helms-Burton as a 'matter of principle', but also because it could harm Iberian companies settled in Cuba.

At the beginning of March, Cuban authorities denounced that, since its enactment, the controversial norm sought to universalize the economic, commercial and financial blockade through brutal and illegal Washington pressure against third countries, their governments and companies.

An official note then released said that through the Helms-Burton, the United States seeks to suffocate the Cuban economy and promote or increase the shortcomings of the population, with the purpose of imposing on the island a government that responds to their interests. The Caribbean nation also defended that 'Cuban nationalizations were carried out under laws, with strict adherence to the Constitution and in accordance with International Law.'

The text stated that 'all nationalizations contemplated fair and adequate compensation processes that the government of the United States refused to consider'.

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