
Truths and Lies of the Cuban Medical Missions

30/08/2019



The campaign of Donald Trump's government against Cuba reached levels verging on absurdity.

Now, Washington accuses Havana of earning money by "exploiting" and "enslaving" the Cuban doctors who work abroad. Paradoxes of politics: those who invented labor exploitation and founded their country on the pillars of pro-slavery laws, accusing others of practicing their methods. Therefore, it's unknown if the United States accuses Cuba for the exploitation as such, or for apparent plagiarism of its government system.

But, it's neither one nor the other.

What really happens is that the Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, tweeted that they would reduce visas to Cuban officials related to the worldwide famous Cuban medical missions, on the grounds of the North American Law of Immigration and Nationality. Pompeo said that the Cuban President, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, benefits with money by exploiting the professionals of the Cuban medicine.

Pompeo's narrative begins from the exit of more than fourteen thousand professionals Cuban doctors from Brazil, after the arrival of Jair Bolsonaro. The United States affirms that Cuba keeps more than the 80% of the salaries dedicated to the doctors, on behalf of the countries benefitted with the missions. The Brazilian president blackmailed with the story that the Cuban medical mission could remain in Brazilian territory provided they gave its members 100% of the

earnings and they equalize their studies with the norm of that country.

On top of that a demand on Miami courtrooms (of course, it had to be in Miami) of two supposed Cuban doctors against the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) accusing it of facilitating the creation of a "human traffic network" and "slavery" on behalf of the Cuban State. But PAHO – a branch of WHO -, it's bewildered because this accusation was placed on the capital of Florida and not in Washington where the organization has its headquarters.

What lies in the background is the intention of using the system in motion by those against Cuba in that city dominated by senator Marco Rubio, to reply the accusations against the medical missions of Cuba, in harmony with the narrative of Donald Trump's government.

But, then does Cuba exploit its doctors? Do the Cuban government keeps more than half of their salary?

The first thing to be noticed is that the United States uses concepts like "exploitation" or "slavery" without really fully understanding their meaning.

For example, professional exploitation is, anywhere in the world, the promise of obtaining economic success studying an university majoring, paying hundreds of thousands of dollars in exchange, with the threat that, if you don't pay that money, the bank will keep your house and all your assets. That is a type of exploitation that suffer millions of young people in the United States who don't have access to University because, if they do so, they would have to take two or three jobs with a lousy pay the bills. That, furthermore, is slavery.

In Cuba, anyone can study whatever they wish free of charge. All graduates from the School of Medical Sciences or from the Latin American School of Medicine had to starve in order to study in the best medical classrooms in the American continent.

How is this possible, being Cuba a poor country?

The answer is simple. Health services provided by the company Cuban Medical Services S.A., branch of the Ministry of Health, pay for the dreams of thousands.

Everybody knows that the Cuban medicine is quite prestigious, and that is because health in Cuba is seen as a right, and not as a commodity. For that reason for Mike Pompeo is really hard to believe that those Cuban doctors lend their services without expecting any profits. They are heroes in their country, and both them as their families have everything they need. The wealth they earn stays with them, with their relatives and to keep the dream of thousands of Cubans who support them, and hundreds of youngsters coming from third-world nations who study for free in Cuban universities.

On the other hand, in Mexico, the cost for a university diploma can reach up to a thousand monthly dollars. What about in the United States?...

But let's Return to Cuba.

Cuba has kept for fifty years more than six hundred thousand medical missions in a hundred and sixty four countries, in which more than four hundred thousand health workers have

collaborated. If two doctors recently occupy the anti-Cuban structure of Miami to try to throw dirt on the system that gave them school and healthcare, it's not for free, but surely for some payment in return.

Cuban medical missions have fought the Ebola outbreak in Africa, the blindness in Latin America and the Caribbean; cholera in Haiti and twenty-six Groups of Specialized Doctors in Disasters and large outbreaks have been created to fight natural disasters in Pakistan, Mexico, Indonesia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Venezuela and so many others.

How much would it cost the United States to pay for that service?

Today, thousands of indigenous in the Brazilian Amazon die of curable illnesses due to the departure of Cuban doctors; of course, to those faraway places never want to go those who only study medicine to become millionaires with the medicines and the business of death.

Cuban medical missions have always gone to remote places and of difficult access; they are moved by a solidary calling and they would assist even the children of Trump and Bolsonaro.

Some similar happened to the Chilean ultra-conservative politician, Andrés Allamand, related to Cuba and its health system when his little son, of only four years old, suffered a neurological accident after falling in a pool:

"My wife and I receive a direct call from Fidel Castro where he offered us help in the treatment and recovery of our boy", said Allamand to the newspaper **Cooperativa**. The offer of help on behalf of the Cuban Commander in Chief "impressed me a lot."

The Chilean politician said: "The first time I spoke to him I told him that if he knew who I was, I told him that I was a leader from the opposition and he replied: 'I have everything absolutely clear and this has nothing to do with that' ".

Fidel "took my boy's recovery as something personal and he dedicated him some time for many years" (...) "My family and I have but the greatest human appreciation", said Allamand.

Hence, when in year 2003 Andrés' son Allamand died, the family decided "as a token of appreciation, to take his ashes to Cuba."

That is, of course, the true impression of the Cuban medicine. Not the one that wants to sell Pompeo, and the propaganda machine at his service.
