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English Only

By: Vladia Rubio / CubaSi

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On the first day of March, President Donald Trump signed an executive order designating English as the official language of the United States.

"Establishing English as the official language will not only streamline communication, but will also reinforce shared national values and create a more cohesive and efficient society," the order states. And this statement is a great paradox because how can communication be streamlined in this way in a nation where some 350 languages are spoken today?



Around 68 million of the 340 million inhabitants of that country speak a language other than English, with Spanish, several Chinese languages, Tagalog (from Philippines), Vietnamese and Arabic predominating, according to the Census Bureau.

But with his chauvinistic zeal, which is already turning into a boomerang, Trump has dictated this new provision, the first of its kind in 250 years of American history.

With this mandate, he leaves it to the discretion of government agencies and organizations that receive federal funds to choose whether or not to continue offering documents and services in languages other than English.

The order also revokes a mandate from former President Bill Clinton that required the government and organizations that receive federal funds to provide linguistic assistance to those who do not speak English.



There are quite a few who have expressed their indignation at such provisions, which represent further evidence of the anti-immigrant posture of a president who, since his election campaign, claimed that “immigrants poison the country’s blood.”

Among his first measures, he had already pointed out the closing of both the website and the social networks of the White House in Spanish; and now, he signs this text that attacks the immigrant community, already terrified by possible deportations and raids.



It's not enough for the United States to launch a cultural war against our country and other sovereign nations. Now Trump is also unleashing a cultural war against his own land, because multiculturalism, the plurality of languages, have always been part of the roots of that country.





This executive order would seem almost absurd if, in addition, one takes into account that the first language spoken in that country was not English, but Spanish. Only a century later, with the arrival of the first English settlers in 1607, was when Shakespeare's language began to make its way into those lands of North America.

But Trump, in addition to attacking diversity, immigrants,... common sense, is even trying to subvert the American essence.

**Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSí Translation Staff**