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Culture of peace

Information and communications technologies for sustainable development

Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

Letter dated 19 July 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to address you on a matter of the utmost importance. In recent days, we have witnessed the intensification of an international campaign to destabilize Cuba, discredit its Government and undermine the constitutional order in the country.

This campaign has been orchestrated, financed and executed by the Government of the United States, with federal funds and the support of radical groups based in Florida, some of which have very well-known and documented ties to terrorist activities and incitement to violence in Cuba. The overall purpose is to promote violence and social unrest and to present a country in chaos and in need of a foreign intervention. However, the real intention is to overthrow the constitutional order freely chosen by the Cuban people.

The disturbances and incidents that took place in some localities in Cuba on 11 July are the result of the plan designed by the Government of the United States to exert the greatest possible pressure against our people at a time when we are facing a complex situation in confronting the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as well as the severe tightening of the economic, commercial and financial blockade criminally imposed by the United States on Cuba. This has seriously affected the normal functioning of our economy by critically reducing income from exports and access to fuel, medicines and medical supplies and has generated shortages and scarcities that directly affect the Cuban population.

The participation of the United States has been demonstrated. The financing granted by federal or local agencies of the United States to foment internal disorder, provoke and carry out acts against institutions and commit terrorist acts in Cuba is public.



Furthermore, we are witnessing a political and communications operation against Cuba that is not spontaneous. This operation was designed and has been executed from cyberspace under the jurisdiction of the United States Government by companies and groups in Florida that receive federal funds to finance these activities. Some of these groups have financed, executed or are related to terrorist acts against Cuba. Social media and media outlets have also been used to deliberately spread lies and misinformation about the Cuban reality. Highly expensive automatic tools and devices within social media platforms, including artificial intelligence tools, were used to generate a fictional reality and show a country in chaos, so as to contribute to social unrest, call for a general uprising and incite violence and vandalism in Cuba. The Cuban Government has presented ample evidence of the responsibility of the United States Government in this regard.

A significant part of this international campaign against Cuba has been to discredit the Government's response to COVID-19, to manipulate the epidemiological indicators related to the pandemic and to promote the idea of a collapse of the health system. In a very hypocritical narrative, the United States intends to place upon the Cuban Government the responsibility for the shortages of medicines and medical supplies, when the current situation is a direct result of the tightening of the United States blockade to unprecedented levels, especially in the context of this global pandemic.

Today's situation in Cuba regarding the pandemic is not the result of the failure of the Government or the collapse of the health system, but derived from 16 months of confronting the pandemic and its current resurgence, in addition to the severe tightening of the blockade and the brutal restrictions imposed on the Cuban people. Actually, it has been the extraordinary efforts of the Cuban Government and national health system that allow the country, despite the current situation, to show a COVID-19 mortality rate of 0.67, which is quite below the rate of our region or the world. Cuba is also the only Latin American country that has been able to develop a vaccine of its own and has another four vaccine candidates. We were also able to send 57 medical brigades to support the response to COVID-19 in 40 countries and territories. Yet, the United States Government is cynically trying to present Cuba as a failure in responding to the pandemic.

The incidents of 11 July are not the consequence of a social outburst. Cuba has been a victim of a political and communications operation of the Government of the United States, orchestrated and financed from its territory and using the cyberspace under its control. This operation resulted in disturbances on a limited scale, and they did not gain the support of the majority of the Cuban people. There were vandalism and violent attacks against public institutions, including hospitals, police precincts and stores, and against employees who were safeguarding their places of work, law enforcement officers and police patrols.

However, the plan against Cuba that provoked these incidents failed, thanks to the combined action of the Government and the people of Cuba, whose overwhelming majority continues to defend the Revolution and the constitutional order. The normal functioning of the public institutions is maintained, under the conditions imposed by the health emergency.

Legitimate concerns were manipulated as part of the calls to violence and vandalism. The Cuban Government remains fully committed to addressing those concerns, as it has always done for the benefit of the entire Cuban population.

We denounce, in the strongest terms, the violent acts promoted and executed by criminal elements, including attacks on law enforcement bodies and public institutions, as well as the incitement to violence, mostly from abroad. At no time, as some have maliciously claimed, have the Cuban authorities called for confrontation

and violence among fellow citizens. We have turned to our people who, as always, are the protagonists in the defence of the homeland against mercenary aggressions, terrorist attacks, economic sabotage, coercive economic measures and other destabilization plans. The instigation to divide Cubans comes from abroad. We are and will continue to be a country of peace.

We also reject the false allegations of human rights violations by law enforcement bodies in responding to the incidents of 11 July. Law enforcement authorities have responded to violence and incitement to violence, vandalism and other criminal activities in full conformity with the Cuban Constitution and laws and international obligations. Criminal investigations are under way to determine the level of participation and responsibility of all those in custody and other persons involved in the incidents of 11 July. All guarantees of due process are and will continue to be observed, under the rule of law.

Although the Government is in full control of the situation, the international campaign against Cuba is still ongoing. After 11 July, further actions to promote violence, criminal behaviour, vandalism, social unrest and confrontation in Cuba have been registered and documented. For that reason, we urge the United Nations and all countries not to echo or support these actions against Cuba, which amount to interference in Cuban internal affairs and violate Cuba's sovereignty. We also call upon the United Nations and all countries to assess the situation in Cuba on the basis of objective, non-politicized and confirmed information and to avoid falling into the trap of fake news and the huge misinformation campaign.

Furthermore, if anyone wants to support Cuba, and all well-intended help is welcome, the first thing to do is to denounce the United States blockade and call for its immediate end. Nothing has a heavier toll and impact on the daily life of the Cuban people than the blockade.

The Cuban Government and people will not tolerate any criminal activity or agenda against the constitutional order that we have freely chosen, in exercise of our right to self-determination. Against all odds, we will continue to pursue the construction of an inclusive, democratic, prosperous and sustainable society for all, and to strengthen the unity of the Cuban people, as the most important shield to the appetite of the United States Government for domination over our country.

I kindly request the circulation of the present letter as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 15, 16 and 42.

(Signed) Pedro L. **Pedroso Cuesta**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative