
Mr. President:

The Department of Commerce of the United States has established as a precondition for the issuance of a license authorizing the supply of any equipment, devices or medicines to Havana’s Pediatric Cardio-Center “William Soler”, that these items are exclusively used to treat Cuban patients; that the final destination of these items is monitored; that they are not used to commit acts of torture or human rights violations; and that they are not used in biotechnological productions or are re-exported. Appendix E of the license questionnaire requires the inclusion of abundant data to make certain that the Cardio-Center is in no way linked to the production of chemical or biological weapons, missile technologies or nuclear weapons.

Tens of prestigious specialists as well as at least five renowned US hospitals and many others in the planet know very well this institution which specializes in pediatric cardiology and cardiological surgery and which since 2010 has performed heart surgeries on 1,101 children and assisted tens of thousands of little patients.

However, the Cardio-Center continues to be classified by the U.S. Department of Commerce as “Denied Hospital”.

Consequently, Cuban boys and girls can not be treated with a device called ‘Amplatzer’, which is used to cure inter-auricular communication or eliminate the vascular short-circuit inside the artery; or with the devices commonly used for invasive catheterization; or receive better quality medicines for the treatment of heart failure or last generation antiarrhythmic and antibiotic drugs.

For that reason, tens of minors had to undergo thoracic surgeries that could have otherwise been avoided. Another 102 children suffering from pulmonary hypertension could not be treated with nitric oxide, which is one of the best therapies available.

Likewise, the Cardiovascular Surgery Institute lacks spare parts, contrast media and software to perform echocardiographies.
The Orthopedic Hospital 'Frank País' can not replace the SOPHA Gamma Camera, which is required for the diagnosis of malignant tumors and bones and joints infections.

The Tropical Medicine Institute “Pedro Kouri” is not allowed to purchase ‘Kalestra’, an anti-viral oral solution for children, since it has no license from the Treasury Department to import it. This medicine inhibits the replication of the HIV virus in children who are born with AIDS, enhances their immunological system and prevents the occurrence of opportunistic diseases.

The human damages caused by the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba are incalculable. It provokes hardships and is a mass, flagrant and systematic violation of human rights. Seventy six per cent of Cubans have lived under its devastating effects since the day they are born.

The blockade has been classified as an act of genocide pursuant to Article II of the Geneva Convention of 1948 on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; and also as an act of economic warfare pursuant to the Declaration on the Right to Maritime Warfare adopted in 1909.

The State Department lies about and manipulates the data on remittances sent by émigrés and the small donations made by non-governmental organizations which it also hampers, with the purpose of portraying its government as a donor of humanitarian assistance to our nation.

The Memorandum written by the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Lester Mallory, on April 6, 1960, which was declassified thirty years later, states, and I quote: “The majority of Cubans support Castro [...] The only foreseeable means of alienating internal support is through disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship [...] Every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life [...] denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government”, end of quote.

The fact that fifty three years later the same policy still prevails is something extraordinary and barbaric.

Mr. President:

The economic damages accumulated after half a century as a result of the implementation of the blockade amount to 1 trillion 126 billion dollars.

We have achieved undeniable results in the eradication of hunger and poverty, as well as health and education indicators that have become a world’s referent. The same applies to the promotion of gender equality, equitable freedom and
wellbeing, social consensus, democratic participation of citizens in governmental decisions, the reversion of environmental deterioration and the development of international cooperation with one hundred countries of the Third World. How much more could we have done without this colossal obstacle to our development and the enormous human and financial costs it has imposed on us?

The blockade has been further tightened under President Obama’s administration, particularly in the financial sector.

The United States have historically used the enormous technological power of its recently denounced mass espionage system to persecute and monitor our financial transactions and economic relations.

From January, 2009 to September, 2013, the fines imposed on thirty US and foreign entities for their relations with Cuba and other countries have amounted to more than 2.446 billion dollars.

In December, 2012, the British bank HSBC was fined with 375 million US dollars for the same reason and the Japanese bank Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ was fined with 8.6 million US dollars.

In March, 2013, ‘Reuters’ agency suspended the banking and financial information services.

The economic siege has been further tightened and its impact can be seen in the scarcities and difficulties suffered by Cuban families in every aspect of their lives.

The United States is not a trading partner of Cuba, as it has been shamelessly asserted by their representatives, because a trading partner can not be a State where it is impossible to export products to or buy services or products from; or a State with which it is not possible to use US dollars in any transaction; or a State whose subsidiaries in third countries refuse to sell foodstuffs or medicines to our country by virtue of the Torricelli Act, which also bans the entry to US ports of any ship in the world that may touch a Cuban for a term of 180 days; or a State which prevents other nations from selling to Cuba any merchandise containing more than 10 per cent of US components or exporting to the US any product that contains Cuban raw materials. Cuba’s trading partner can not be a State that implements the Helms Burton Act, or the one which expanded, in an unprecedented way, the extraterritorial scope of the blockade and entirely codified the “change of regime” and the ultimate intervention in Cuba. Cuba’s trading partner can not be the State that invokes the “Trade with the Enemy Act” of 1917, which is only applicable to war situations and is only valid for Cuba.

Our small island poses no threat to the national security of the superpower. Then, why can't Americans have access to first quality Cuban products or Cuban last generation medicines? Why are their business people loosing opportunities?
Why is it not possible to open businesses that would create new jobs in times of crisis? Why can’t American companies have access to Mariel’s New Special Development Zone?

Sanctions remain intact and are being fully implemented. This is not a bilateral issue. The blockade is aggressively extraterritorial and a violation of International Law, which lacerates the sovereignty of other States.

It is a transgression of the international rules that govern trade and freedom of navigation. The cruel inclusion of medicines and foodstuffs is a violation of International Humanitarian Law. It is a hostile and unilateral act that should cease unilaterally.

Mr. President:

The blockade is the main obstacle to a broader access to the Internet and the information and communication technologies, since it restricts the band width of the Island, increases the cost of connectivity and prevents our connection to nearby submarine cables.

The sanctions seriously restrict the contacts between both peoples, and those which are authorized are subject to certain conditions with the purpose of bringing about a “change of regime” and promoting internal destabilization.

Despite the fact that Washington, in a very selective way, has authorized some cultural, academic and scientific exchanges, these continue to be subject to severe restrictions. A number of projects of this type did not materialize due to the denial of licenses, visas and other bureaucratic authorizations.

Cuba is the only destination in the planet that is banned for US citizens. The fact that citizens are not equal before the law in these matters, depending on whether they are of Cuban origin or not, becomes a relevant constitutional issue.

Cuba’s national baseball team has not been able to collect the payments owed to them for its participation in the Second and Third World Baseball Classics held on 2009 and 2013 respectively. The visas of 300 US runners who intended to participate in the “Marabana” marathon race in 2012 were denied.

More than 300 musicians who participated in tens of artistic projects in this country have not been able to receive their remunerations.

The Cuban emigration is suffering as a result of the implementation of discriminatory measures. The response to the reform of Cuba’s migration law of January, 2013, has been the persistent implementation of the Cuban Adjustment Act and the “wet foot-dry foot” policy that encourage illegal and unsafe emigration and human smuggling, which lead to the loss of human lives.
Curiously enough, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) confiscated the funds of a British non-governmental organization, destined to purchase and distribute in the United Kingdom the book entitled “The Economic War against Cuba”, which was written by a European author and published by the publishing house “Monthly Review Press” which is headquartered in New York.

The funds of the Latin American Council of Churches, intended to cover the costs of its Sixth General Assembly in Havana, were withheld for three months.

Humanitarian cooperation, particularly the medical and educational cooperation that we offer to tens of peoples, is also subject to repression.

The blockade is an uncivilized act that prevents the free circulation of persons, the free flow of information, the exchange of ideas and the development of cultural, sport and scientific relations.

The US policy against Cuba is suffering from an absolute international isolation and discredit and lacks every ethical or legal ground. So has been demonstrated by the 180 votes in this General Assembly, the statements made by tens of Heads of State and Government at the General Debate and the opinions contributed by member States and international organizations to the UN Secretary-General’s Report.

Mr. President:

President Obama could make use of his ample constitutional powers, even without requiring the support of the Congress, to generate a dynamic that could lead to a change of the present status. After all, Americans have said he was elected to bring about change. What is to be gained from the inertia of an old, obsolete policy, inherent to the bipolar, sick and ethically unacceptable confrontation that has not worked during fifty years? Why not listening to the increasingly majority opinion among the US society and the Cuban emigration, even in Florida, which support the normalization of bilateral relations and are opposed to the blockade and the travel ban?

Why not accepting that we are an equally sovereign and independent Nation and State? Wouldn’t it be better to pragmatically renounce to the ideological obsession, inherited from two previous generations of US politicians, which has not worked, and stop spending the taxpayers’ money to try, unsuccessfully, to change the Cuban government?

The State Department’s persistence in classifying Cuba, in an arbitrary and unfounded way, as a State that sponsors international terrorism, mars the credibility of the United States, since it has been precisely from its territory that the terrorist actions that caused the death of 3478 persons and disabilities to 2099 were perpetrated. The notorious international terrorist Luis Posada Carriles
has found comfortable refuge in Miami, while four of the five Cuban anti-terrorists are serving long and unjust imprisonment sentences. What is that which prevents the US government to set them free as a humanitarian or a justice act?

Mr. President:

The Government of Cuba with the support of the overwhelming majority and the active participation of the people continues to be involved in a profound process of economic transformations aimed at making our socialist economy all the more efficient, improving the living standards of the population and preserving the social achievements of the Revolution.

These transformations enjoy broad international recognition and rely on an ever growing cooperation of many nations, particularly from Latin America and the Caribbean, with which different forms of integration are consolidating.

The essence of the US Cuba policy remains unaltered and anchored in the Cold War.

Mr. President:

The dangers that threaten the existence of our species are grave and imminent. We must safeguard peace in order to preserve the human life and that necessarily requires a profound change in the way to address and resolve world's problems and conflicts, by resorting to dialogue and cooperation, without the selfishness and the philosophy of dispossession that lead to wars, the use of force and the implementation of coercive economic measures that also hurt and kill in silence.

It is true that there are big differences between both governments, but the only productive way to proceed would be to find a civilized way to relate to one another, recognizing that we are neighboring but different States and that each and every people is entitled to decide upon its own matters, its political system and its economic model, according to its legitimate interests. Therefore, to the extent that is possible and convenient, we must see to it that dialogue, negotiation, and even cooperation prevail for the benefit of both peoples and hemispheric relations.

The recent resumption of talks on migration and the reestablishment of direct postal services, as well as the development of contacts on other issues of mutual interest, such as the operations to combat oil spills, the maritime and air search and rescue operations and air and aviation safety, show that this is both possible and useful.

The Government of Cuba, as an expression of its aspirations of peace and respectful coexistence, reiterates its determination to move on towards the
normalization of bilateral relations and reiterates its willingness to establish a serious and constructive dialogue on an equal footing and with full respect for our independence.

Mr. President:

Once again, on behalf of the self-sacrificing, heroic and fraternal people of Cuba, I ask the representatives of the UN member States to vote in favor of the draft resolution entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.”

Thank you, very much.