

Declaration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba

On Monday January 4, press reports indicated that as from that day, the US Transport Security Administration was applying additional security measures, at every airport in the world, to any passenger carrying a passport from the countries the State Department has listed as “sponsors of international terrorism.” Among the countries unfairly and arbitrarily included in that list are Cuba, Iran, Syria and Sudan as well as other countries “of interest” such as: Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Yemen. The measures also apply to any person making a stopover in any of these 14 nations.

It has been reported that the decision to impose these new measures was adopted after an attempted terrorist action against an American Northwest Airlines aircraft aimed for Detroit city last December 25.

According to statements from unidentified American officials ran by the press, the passengers that qualify in these categories will be subjected to body search and their hand luggage will be thoroughly checked using sophisticated explosive-detection techniques or imaging scanners.

In the evening of January 5, after a meeting with members of his National Security staff, President Barack Obama confirmed the adoption of the abovementioned regulations, in effect since the previous day, affecting “passengers traveling to the United States from or through the nations in our list of states sponsors of terrorism or other countries of interest.”

That same evening, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba and its Interests Section in Washington presented a Note of protest to the US Interests Section in Havana and the State Department, respectively.

In the Note, the MINREX categorically rebuffs this new hostile action by the US administration arising from the unjustified inclusion of Cuba in the so-called list of 'States sponsors of terrorism' for purely political reasons and with the single purpose of justifying the blockade policy that the international community has so overwhelmingly condemned.

The Note contests the elaboration of such lists and underlines facts that prove Cuba's impeccable record in the fight on terrorism, an evil of which it has historically been the victim. It also reaffirms that the arguments used by the US administration to justify our country's inclusion in its list of "States sponsors of terrorism" are absolutely baseless, and demands its immediate removal from that arbitrary list.

That same day, in response to an AFP question on the MINREX Note of protest, a State Department spokesman said that "Cuba is a country that supports terrorist activities, therefore, its citizens and travelers in air transit should be subjected to additional controls for security reasons."

Following the public announcement of this new measure, columnists of major US newspapers like the Washington Post have referred to Cuba's designation as a "terrorist State" as something "ridiculous" and "unwarranted," and have recalled that our country poses no threat to the security of the United States, adding that looking for terrorists in flights coming from Cuba "is a waste of time."

Again on January 5, 2010, State Department spokesman Philip Crowley stated that Cuba's designation as a "State sponsor of terrorism" is "well-earned." Next day, January 6, another spokesman repeated to AFP the worn out pretexts that supposedly justify keeping Cuba in the terrorist list.

As one more element of its policy of hostility and its propaganda campaigns aimed at discrediting the Revolution, in 1982, long

before the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City, the Ronald Reagan administration unjustly included Cuba in the annual State Department list of “States sponsors of international terrorism.”

The insertion of Cuba in that list led to the implementation of new economic sanctions that included freezing financial transactions, preventing technology transfer and executing restrictive and isolationist actions against the country and its citizens. These sanctions would be added to the already Draconian regulations derived from the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed since the beginning of the Revolution.

Every year, the US administration has kept Cuba on that list resorting to different pretexts, all of them unsustainable, while unable to offer any evidence of our country’s involvement in any terrorist action.

On April 30, 2009, Obama’s administration ratified the absurd inclusion of Cuba in that list while insisting that “the Cuban government continues to provide safe haven to various terrorists,” that “members of ETA, the FARC and the ELN have remained in Cuba during 2008” and that “it continues to allow some US fugitives to have legal residence in Cuba.” This was strongly denied by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and motivated a *Reflection* by comrade Fidel challenging the United States to discuss the issue.

Cuba has revealed the past sufficient information to prove the falsity of such pretexts and their manipulative nature. This was also extensively described in the Declaration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs entitled “Cuba has nothing to hide and nothing to be ashamed of,” published on May 2, 2003.

The presence of various exiled members of the Basque organization ETA was not initiated by Cuba; it originated in a request from the Spanish governments concerned with the issue, with which an agreement was reached, more than one-fourth of a

century ago, allowing a small group of members of that organization to travel to Cuba. Our country then established the strict rule that if any member of that group ever left the country they would be unable to return to Cuban territory.

The members of ETA living in Cuba have never used our territory to conduct actions of that organization against Spain or any other country. Cuba has scrupulously abided by that agreement. The presence of ETA members in Cuba is a bilateral issue discussed with the Spanish government in various contacts. The US administration has no right or authority to interfere in these affairs which do not involve or affect in any way its national security or that of any other country.

As to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) of Colombia, it is widely known that, at a certain point, both the Colombian government and these guerrilla forces converged in asking Cuba to participate in the peace process. In that framework, Cuba has been a member of the Group of Countries Facilitators of the dialogue and of the Group of Friendly Countries to the Peace Talks and has hosted several rounds of negotiations.

The transparent position of the Cuban government and its contribution to the peace process has been publicly recognized not only by the FARC and the ELN but also by the United Nations and the Colombian government.

As to the presence in Cuba of fugitives of the US justice, it would be worthwhile repeating that no terrorist from any country has ever found save haven or residence in our territory. Cuba has legitimately offered protection and political asylum to some American civil right fighters.

Also living in Cuba are other American citizens who have broken the law, mainly aircraft hijackers. These people were tried in court and severely punished and after serving their sentences requested to remain in the country. It was the Cuban government

that adopted the necessary measures that during Carter's government definitely put an end to plane hijackings, a scourge that had originated in the United States.

In contrast, since the triumph of the Revolution the US administration has welcomed to its territory hundreds of criminals, murderers and terrorists, ignoring the formal requests for their return filed by the Cuban government in every case, in accordance with the Extradition Accords that were then in effect. Many of these individuals still walk free and undisturbed the streets of that country, even when they have been involved in other terrorist actions against citizens and interests of the United States, Cuba and other nations. The most notorious and appalling case was the blasting of a Cubana Airlines passengers' plane on October 6, 1976, that took the lives of 73 people; this was the first terrorist action against a commercial airliner in mid flight in the Western Hemisphere. The authors --Orlando Bosch Avila and Luis Posada Carriles-- have lived and still live unpunished in Miami. The former received a presidential pardon from George H.W.Bush while the latter awaits a protracted trial under charges of deceit and obstruction of justice in a migratory case but not for international terrorism as his actions warrant.

Those same State Department reports that designate Cuba as a "State sponsor of terrorism" have been unable to overlook some of these truths.

Cuba refuses to accept the illegitimate mechanism used by the US administration to take upon itself the right of certifying the behavior of other nations with respect to terrorism and to issue politically motivated, discriminatory and selective lists while assuming a double-standard position and failing to take to trial the confessed culprits of horrible terrorist actions against Cuba who are instead allowed to go free.

An example of this is provided by our Five Heroes -- Gerardo, Fernando, Ramón, Antonio and René—who are serving arbitrary and unfair sentences in American prisons for protecting Cuba, --

3478 of whose citizens were killed and 2099 maimed by terrorist actions-- and also for defending the integrity of citizens from the United States and other countries.

Cuba has always behaved in an exemplary manner in the fight on terrorism:

- Cuba condemns every act of terrorism, in all forms and manifestations;
- The Cuban territory has never been used nor will it ever be used to arrange, finance or implement terrorist actions against any other country, including the United States;
- Cuba is a Party to the 13 international conventions on terrorism and it strictly observes the obligations set forth in UN Security Council Resolutions 1267, 1373 and 1540 on this matter;
- Cuba does not have, nor does it intend to have, any kind of weapon of mass destruction and it abides by its obligations stemming from the international instruments it has signed related to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons;
- The National Assembly of People's Power of the Republic of Cuba adopted on December 20, 2001, the Act 93 'Against Terrorist Actions,' defining every act of international terrorism as a serious crimes and establishing very severe sentences;
- Additionally, Cuba has adopted measures to prevent and suppress every act of terrorism and every action related to them, including financing terrorism. Likewise, it has increased surveillance along its borders and promoted actions to thwart the trafficking of weapons and to intensify juridical cooperation with other countries. To this end, it has signed 35 agreements for juridical assistance and repeatedly expressed its continued willingness to cooperate with every State in this area;
- In this spirit, Cuba has cooperated, even actively, with the US administration. On three occasions, --November 2001, December 2001 and March 2002-- Cuba proposed to the US authorities a draft program of bilateral cooperation to

- combat terrorism; and on July 2009, Cuba reiterated its willingness to cooperate in this area;
- On various occasions, the Cuban authorities have let the US administration know of its willingness to exchange information on plans to carry out attacks and/or terrorist actions on targets located in either one of the two countries. It is also known that in 1984 Cuba alerted on a plan to attempt against the life of President Ronald Reagan which led to the neutralization of those involved by the US authorities. In 1998, information was transferred to the William F. Clinton administration on plans to blow up planes from Cuban airlines or from other countries traveling to Cuba;
 - Likewise, the Cuban authorities have provided the US government with plenty of information on terrorist actions carried out against Cuba. In 1997, 1998, 2005 and 2006, Cuba handed over to the FBI numerous evidence on a string of bombs set up in various Cuban tourist resorts, and even gave them access to those responsible for such actions detained in Cuba and to some witnesses;
 - It should not be forgotten that Cuba was one of the first countries to publicly condemn the criminal terrorist attacks of 9/11-2001 in the United States; that it expressed its willingness to provide medical and humanitarian assistance to the victims and that it immediately opened its air space and airports to passenger planes flying towards American territory. Despite the numerous terrorist actions against Cuba originated in the US territory, our country has observed a clean and flawless conduct with regards to any event that could affect US citizens because Cuba is a nation guided by political principles and ethical standards.

The government of Cuba, loyal to its honor and dignity, condemns the arbitrary inclusion of Cuba in the list of 14 countries whose citizens will be the subject of new restrictive measures determined by the US Administration.

The government of Cuba also demands the immediate removal of Cuba from the list of “States sponsors of international terrorism,” since it is an unfair, arbitrary and politically motivated designation that contradicts the exemplary conduct of our country in the struggle against terrorism and calls into question the seriousness of the United States in the fight against that scourge.

Similarly, it urges the US administration to act firmly and without double standards, --as an expression of its commitment to the antiterrorist struggle-- against those that have carried out terrorist actions on Cuba from the US territory; and to free the Five Heroes who are Cuban antiterrorists unjustly incarcerated in that country.

Havana, January 7, 2010
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba