

Cuba

Havana. October 6, 2011

We will never cease in our struggle against terrorism

35 years ago, 73 lives were cut short in the mid-flight explosion of a Cuban airliner, a monstrous act of terrorism, organized and committed with the knowledge of the United States government. The martyrs of Barbados, as they are known by our people, are among the many victims for whom we continue to demand justice.

The United States government, still today refuses to prosecute one of those responsible for the criminal act, Luis Posada Carriles, a confessed murderer and active terrorist.

Cuba is one of the world's countries upon which the scourge of terrorism has been unleashed most brutally and ruthlessly. For more than 50 years, it has faced a criminal, systematic policy of state terrorism.

All of the variants attempted against the Cuban people – from military aggression, bombings, fires, hijackings of airplanes and boats, kidnapping citizens of our country, to attacks on embassies, including the murder of diplomatic personnel, as well as the strafing of dozens of Cuban facilities and the implementation of vile plans to compromise the population's health through biological warfare, the introduction of agricultural pests to damage the country's principal crops – have resorted to the most contemptible tactics to destroy the social and economic life of the country.

Along with this, Cuban men and women of several generations have had to face the genocidal U.S. economic, commercial and financial blockade.

Lies disseminated by the transnational corporate media, meant to vilify Cuba and create pretexts to justify international sanctions, were and are an important component of this policy. Its objective is to stage situations which presume to show discontent, misgovernment and civil disobedience, in order to legitimize requests for "aid to civilians" which, as has been seen, is the latest political strategy of intervention.

To this criminal behavior, can be added hundreds of attempts on the lives of Cuba's revolutionary leadership, in particular Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro and other central leaders.

It is more than enough to simply recall that since the implementation of Operation Mongoose by the Kennedy administration, between 1962 and 1963, more than 5,700 acts of terrorism have been committed in Cuba – among them, 700 directed at industrial installations.

As a result of this policy of state terrorism, Cuba has lost precious lives: 3,478 Cubans have died as victims of these cowardly acts and 2,099 have been permanently disabled.

Most spurious has been the U.S. government's shameless inclusion of Cuba on its notorious list of countries which sponsor terrorism, in an attempt to justify before world opinion its policy of criminal aggression against Cuba.

Cuba and its Revolution have exhibited and maintained upstanding behavior in the face of terrorism. Our country has not only faced these attacks over the course of 11 U.S. administrations, but has also consistently offered an example of principled behavior confronting this barbarous policy of aggression. Examples abound.

As early as February of 1973, Cuba signed an agreement with the U.S. government on air and maritime piracy, which the leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, described three years later during the wake for the victims of the Barbados crime. "It was an important contribution made by our country to the solution of the serious international problem of airplane hijackings."

During one of the most tense periods for bilateral relations, during the Reagan administration with its Santa Fe Program, based on the principle that "Havana must pay dearly for its defiance," Cuban authorities obtained evidence of plans for an attempt on the life of President Ronald Reagan and did not hesitate an instant before making the decision to inform the United States government.

In his speech of May 20, 2005, titled Different Conduct, Fidel explained that the Cuban government alerted the Clinton administration – through Nobel Prize winner and writer Gabriel García Márquez – to terrorist plans in preparation for attacking commercial airlines traveling to Cuba from Central America.

At the beginning of June 2005, an FBI delegation came to Havana and its officials were given extensive and detailed documentary and testimonial evidence concerning terrorist activities in U.S. territory, with ramifications in Central America. The FBI confirmed the invaluable information contained in the close to 200 folios the delegation was given.

Nevertheless, not one terrorist was arrested, and there was no sign of any action. The response, in less than three months, was the arrest of the five Cuban heroes, the principal source of that valuable information. With their courageous, humane and ethical conduct in a just and necessary cause, they averted many more crimes similar to the sabotage of the Cubana airliner, saving the lives of hundreds of Cuban and American citizens and people of other nationalities.

Their unjust imprisonment, the rigged and arbitrary trials, the inhumane way in which they have been treated, and the dangers and tension in the prisons in which they have been held, are cruel evidence of the double standards of U.S. policy concerning the so-called war on terror. The most recent reflection of that is the treatment of René González, who is to be released October 7 after 13 years in prison, by forcing him to remain in the United States for another three years on probation.

This government is showing very little respect for itself, very little respect for its own dead of September 11, by keeping these men incarcerated, when the only action they took was to prevent events like those which occurred that day, and imposing on René González, as the sentencing text of the Miami judge reads: "...as a special additional condition of his probation, the accused is prohibited from associating with or visiting specific places where individuals where individuals or groups such as terrorists, members of organizations advocating violence or organized crime figures are known to frequent." Thus a legal authority recognizes that extremely violent individuals are living

and conspiring without any major impediment in a city (Miami) within the country which launched a crusade against terrorism.

We Cubans have pride in our solidarity. Cuban cooperation with the United States in relation to terrorism has been constant. When the monstrous crime of September 11, 2001 took place, Cuba was one of the first countries to condemn the barbarity and offer the American people its immediate cooperation, by volunteering facilities in all its airports, given the grave problem of air traffic control at that moment, as well as to send blood plasma and medical specialists.

By law, October 6 in Cuba is the Day of the Victims of State Terrorism, in honor of and to the eternal memory of those who died, and the day to reaffirm the unyielding and steadfast position of this little piece of the Caribbean: "The Cuban government and people reaffirm their decision to continue condemning and confronting terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, in particular state terrorism, wherever it is committed and whatever the reasons put forward by its perpetrators." Our country has signed the 13 existing international agreements on terrorism and strictly fulfills the commitments and obligations arising from resolutions approved in the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council. In 2001, the National Assembly of People's Power approved the Law against Acts of Terrorism; it has followed the same line of cooperating with the United States in this context, reaffirmed in November and December of 2001, March of 2002, and July of 2009 and reiterated in a number of speeches by the President of the Councils of State and Ministers, and by the Cuban Foreign Minister before the United Nations General Assembly. Cuba has not received any response whatsoever on the part of the U.S. government. For that reason, the way in which the United States government has acted toward the assassins at liberty in the streets of Miami provokes profound indignation in us. Particularly so in the case of Luis Posada Carriles, in the wake of the scandalous proceedings which culminated in his pardon and refuge, as happened previously with Orlando Bosh Avila, granted a presidential pardon by George Bush Sr. despite the weight of evidence of his terrorist activities. The pain of our people is further increased in the face of impunity. Today, we still weep with the loved ones of the victims of that abominable crime, but we have and will continue to reassert Fidel's sentence at the funeral of the dead: "When a powerful and determined people weeps, injustice trembles!"

Translated by Granma International