

Twice the same lie

Reading the cables will suffice.

In the reflection I wrote the day before yesterday I expressed that Cuba would not accept any donation from the government that imposes a blockade against it, and that in the Note Verbale sent to the Interest Section of the United States we had requested authorization so that the US companies could sell to us construction material. Said Note did not make any reference whatsoever to foodstuffs. There was an additional request for the trade in those materials to take place under normal conditions, with credits included, something that is only logical considering that for eight years our country has been paying in cash for the few commodities that the US companies are authorized to export to Cuba.

Such request was all the more justified in the face of the emergency situation that was created as a result of the passing of the hurricanes.

It was precisely George W. Bush who, after hurricane Michelle violently hit the Island on November 4, 2001, authorized the sale of agricultural products to Cuba, which included wood as a crop deriving from silviculture, which is quite developed in that nation. He did not insist on the in situ inspection when, as it is the case now, we responded that we had already completed such inspection.

We mostly imported foodstuffs. In a few weeks we imported 4.4 million dollars worth of goods, once all the relevant arrangements were quickly finalized.

In 2002 we purchased 173.6 million dollars worth in goods; in 2003, 327 million dollars; in 2004, 434.1 million; in 2005, 473 million; in 2006, 483.3 million; in 2007, 515.8 million, and during the first semester of the year 2008, 425 million. As can be seen, figures increased year after year, and quite likely this year, after the devastating impact caused by two hurricanes, the country would be forced to import a much higher volume only from the United States, particularly considering that prices have significantly increased and taking into account the colossal blow dealt to agriculture.

The government of that country informed the world's public opinion that it had authorized the sale of foodstuffs and wood, as if this were a new decision associated to both hurricanes, Gustav and Ike. A full and complete mockery.

What did the speaker of the State Department say?

On Sunday September 14 he declared that from the moment when hurricane Gustav started to batter Cuba, the United States authorized 250 million US dollars worth in agricultural sales to the Island, including wood. Before that, the Secretary of Commerce of that country had refused to grant any commercial credit.

Again on September 16, the State Department declared that the United States authorized some licenses as part of the assistance after the catastrophe caused by the two hurricanes, and those agricultural licenses included "wood, an important material for reconstruction."

In addition to the lies, what were the arguments with which they tried to justify the ban on US companies to grant credits to trade with Cuba in a normal way? "The government of the United States must abide by Congress laws". The blockade is supposedly a Congressional law by virtue of a perfidious amendment of convenience, similar to the Platt Amendment. The President of the United States can declare war without consulting the Congress -something unheard of in the history of that country- and

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can not, however, authorize a US company to trade with Cuba under normal conditions.

In the message I sent to Hugo Chávez, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which described some of the experiences of our Revolution, I wrote: as a result of “the ruthless and absolute economic blockade, we would not be allowed to purchase a single kilogram of food. This slightly changed thirty years after, due to the pressure exerted by farmers, but this policy was accompanied by leonine financial and monetary barriers”. The Venezuelan revolutionary leader himself has disclosed part of that message.

Everything is crystal clear.

By resorting to the same lie twice, the State Department has had no qualms to deceive the world’s public opinion, and they do it in a cynical way.

Fidel Castro Ruz

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