

THE EMPIRE AND ITS LIES

It was Reagan who created the Cuban American National Foundation, whose sinister involvement in the blockade and in terrorist actions against Cuba would be revealed years later, when the United States declassified secret documents, albeit full of information that had been shamefully crossed out. Had these documents come to light earlier, our conduct would not have been different.

When, on March 30, 1981, we received news in Cuba that Reagan had been shot with a low-caliber weapon in an assassination attempt, we sent him a message condemning the act. The 22-caliber lead bullet lodged in one of his lungs was causing him pain and putting his life at risk. The message is contained in the conversation that, following precise instructions, our then minister of foreign affairs, Isidoro Malmierca, had with Wayne Smith, former head of the US Interests Section in Havana.

What follow are excerpts, quoted verbatim, of the conversation between the two:

“ISIDORO MALMIERCA: We summoned you to this meeting on the express request of President Fidel Castro. He asked me to begin by expressing our appreciation for the information on the assassination attempt on President Reagan that you provided us with through director Joaquín Más. On behalf of President Fidel Castro, we also wish to express how deeply we regret this event and our sincere hope that President Reagan will recover from this attack as quickly as possible.

“WAYNE SMITH: Thank you, very much.

“ISIDORO MALMIERCA: We have been receiving information about the medical attention the President is receiving. Initially, you had also received information that the consequences of the attack did not appear to be that severe, but it seems the situation is more complicated and he is undergoing surgery.

“WAYNE SMITH: Yes. Our impression is that he has been operated on already, but over the radio they are now saying that the operation is to begin now. It is likely to be over in, say, an hour. A 3-hour surgery, I mean, is nothing simple, especially for a 70-year-old man. They say there's no danger. My interpretation of this is that there's no immediate danger. But, for a 70-year-old man, a 3-hour surgery is a serious matter. They say he is not in serious condition, that his condition is stable. We hope everything goes well. I thank you for your best wishes, your concern and President Fidel Castro's message.

“ISIDORO MALMIERCA: In Washington, Mr. Frechette also approached the Cuban Interests Section and conveyed us information on this situation. He explained that you had also received information on this. Again, President Fidel Castro personally asked me to meet with you and to express our sincere hope that President Reagan recover promptly from the consequences of the attack.

“WAYNE SMITH: Thank you, very much. My God! This is a difficult situation. President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas and it looks as though the person responsible for the assassination attempt on Reagan is from Dallas. He currently lives in Colorado, but he's from Dallas. I don't know...

“ISIDORO MALMIERCA: In some cables, I read that he was born near Denver, 30 kilometers from Denver.

“WAYNE SMITH: I don't know. One of my consuls here in the Interests Section told me he had heard on the radio that it's a guy who studied in the same school he did. I don't know, he may have lived a number of years in Dallas. I don't know what's in the air people breath in Dallas.

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"ISIDORO MALMIERCA: They say they're three brothers, the sons of a man who's in the oil business.

"WAYNE SMITH: His dad, yes. He's 22 years old. He was a student at Yale University, but he had recently abandoned his studies. He may feel bitter, a young man who has failed, who acted out of resentment. To be completely frank, I'm glad it's a guy like that and not, say, a Puerto Rican or something like that, which could have political implications.

"ISIDORO MALMIERCA: You mean speculations about the political motivations behind that.

"WAYNE SMITH: Yes, that could, undeniably, prompt, encourage political readings. An attack by a white man from Colorado, Texas does not lend itself easily to political interpretations.

"ISIDORO MALMIERCA: There have even been a number of police reports which say that he acted alone, that he has no ties to any groups...

"WAYNE SMITH: Yes, it must have been an insane or fanatical person. He got so close to the President...He was captured immediately. He took out his weapon and fired...

"ISIDORO MALMIERCA: Brady died?

"WAYNE SMITH: No.

"ISIDORO MALMIERCA: They were saying he died.

"WAYNE SMITH: Yes. There were reports to that effect, that he had died. But the latest news is that he didn't, that he's in very serious condition, but that he hasn't died. I imagine that that a 45-calibre round would have been deadly, but a 22-calibre certainly gives him possibilities... It seems the shot hit him on the head, apparently in the head...That's not good news, there isn't much hope.

"ISIDORO MALMIERCA: A shot to the head, no matter what the caliber, is something very serious.

"WAYNE SMITH: Brady is in critical condition. He may survive, but he'd be a vegetable.

"ISIDORO MALMIERCA: I do regret that we should meet because of such an unfortunate event.

"WAYNE SMITH: I thank you for your best wishes. I will immediately send out a cable telling my government of our conversation. I kindly ask that you express my gratitude to President Fidel Castro.

No comments are needed. Malmierca's version, written immediately after the meeting, speaks for itself. Wayne Smith is today a staunch opponent of the blockade and aggressions against Cuba.

But this is not the only example of our conduct towards the President of a country which, since the days of Eisenhower, has hatched hundreds of plots to physically eliminate me.

A highly confidential report submitted in the summer of 1984 to an agent responsible for the security of Cuban representatives in the UN warned of a possible assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan by a far-right group in North Carolina. Upon receiving it, we immediately informed US authorities. Our official suggested that we deliver the information via Robert C. Muller, head of security of the US mission to the United Nations, with whom we maintained contact to ensure the protection of Cuban delegations visiting the international organization.

The assassination was planned for an imminent date, for Reagan's visit to North Carolina, as part of his re-election campaign.

We had all of the information at our disposal. We had the names of those implicated in the plot; the day,

time and place where the assassination was to take place; the types of weapons the terrorists had and where they were being kept. In addition to all this, we knew where the elements who were plotting this were meeting and had a brief account of what had been said at a meeting.

The information was given Muller at a meeting in a building located in 37 and 3rd Avenue, two blocks away from the Cuban mission.

We provided him with all the information, making sure the most important details, such as the names of those involved, the place, time and type of weapons to be used, were clear.

At the end of the conversation, our official informed Muller he had received instructions from the Cuban government to report the matter urgently and that we had selected him because we knew he was an expert on security matters.

Muller read out what he had written down to ensure he had not changed anything and that all of the important information was there.

He asked about the source and was told it was reliable. He said that the Secret Service would need to meet with the Cuban officials. He was told this would not be a problem.

At around four thirty in the afternoon that day, Secret Service agents met with the Cuban representatives.

The meeting was held in apartment 34-F, in the 34th floor of the Ruppert Towers building located in 92, between Third and Second Avenue, in uptown Manhattan.

The agents were two young, white men with brush haircuts wearing suits. Their chief aim was to verify what Muller had reported, as evidenced by the copy of the cable he had sent them they brought with them. When the contents of the cable were read, they were told no information was missing.

The Secret Service agents wanted to know who had provided the information and how it had come into our possession. They were told what Muller was told. They were also interested in knowing if we could elaborate on the information, and they were told that, if any new information were to arrive, they would be immediately informed.

They left their cards and asked to be contacted directly if any additional information was received, saying there was no need to use Muller as an intermediary.

The following Monday, we received news that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had detained a group of people in North Carolina, against whom a number of charges had been brought, none, as is logical to assume, related to the plan to assassinate President Reagan, who traveled to that State shortly afterwards as part of his presidential re-election campaign.

Four or five days following the arrests, at the end of the week, Muller phoned the Cuban mission to invite the Cuban official to lunch. They had lunch at the UN delegates' lounge. The first thing Muller did was ask that the official convey the United States' gratitude to the Cuban government for the information provided, confirming that an operation against those involved had been carried out. A Cuban anti-terrorist activist had saved the life of a US President!

Some US press reports mention an intimate diary, over 700 pages long, kept by Reagan— from the time he entered office to the day he handed the presidency over to Bush Sr.— which tries to suggest that his government was not that aggressive towards Cuba.

However, according to some accounts, in his memoirs, Robert McFarlane, then Undersecretary of State under Alexander Haig, wrote that, of all the governments that had had dealings with Fidel Castro since

1959, Reagan's seemed the least indicated to hold talks with Cuba's communist regime.

Perhaps Reagan was grateful for our concern, when he was nearly assassinated in 1981, and for the warning that saved his life from imminent danger, and he expressed this gratitude through Robert C. Muller.

Reagan signed the first migratory accord with Cuba, but he could not rise above his milieu, for there were others, further to the right than he was, who would have physically eliminated him, as they did Kennedy after he faced the terrible risk of a thermonuclear war. To be sure, Reagan did change his policy towards Cuba in an electoral year, did not honor the accord he signed which guaranteed the granting of up to 20 thousand visas a year for safe trips by granting less than a thousand, and kept in effect the Cuban Adjustment Act, which has cost Cuba many lives.

On September 11, 2001, true chaos reigned in this neighboring country. For long, planes were forbidden to land at airports. A countless number of passenger planes were mid-flight somewhere. These were the news spread by the media in the United States. There were reports of thousands of victims in New York, including Twin Tower staff, firefighters and visitors. There were also reports of people on a passenger plane which was flown into the Pentagon. We offered to supply the United States with clean blood from regular donors if it was needed for any eventuality. Blood donations have long constituted a tradition of the Revolution.

These events happened to coincide with the day in which we had convened nearly 15,000 higher education students and university graduates for a 6:00 pm gathering, on the occasion of the re-opening of the Salvador Allende School, where 3,599 young people would begin higher studies and avail themselves of new and tried methods to become primary school teachers.

That painful incident occurred six years ago today. Today, we know that the public was deliberately misinformed. I don't recall any talk, that day, of the fact that, in the basements of those towers, whose higher floors housed the banks of multinational corporations and other offices, lay nearly 200 tons in gold bars. An order to shoot to death anyone who attempted to get to the gold had been issued. The calculations with respect to the steel structures, plane impacts, the black boxes recovered and what they revealed do not coincide with the opinions of mathematicians, seismologists, information, demolition experts and others. What is most shocking is the claim that we may never know what actually happened. It is known, however, that a number of people en route to San Francisco from New Jersey, had conversations with their relatives when the air vessels were already under the control of individuals who were not members of the crew.

An analysis of the impact of planes similar to those against the towers, following accidental plane crashes in densely-populated cities, concludes that no plane crashed against the Pentagon and that only a projectile could have created the geometrically round hole that the alleged plane created. No passenger that perished there has turned up, either. No one in the world questioned the news about the attack on the Pentagon building. We were deceived, as were the rest of the planet's inhabitants.

When I spoke at the Ciudad Deportiva sports complex that September 11th, I spoke of the tragedy that had hit the United States. In the interests of conciseness, I am reproducing the following excerpts from that speech:

(...) We did not even consider postponing the ceremony. It could not be postponed, despite the international tension created by such events. I would imagine that almost everyone knows about them, but to briefly summarize, at approximately 9:00 this morning, a Boeing airplane, a really big one, crashed straight into one of the two New York famous towers which make up one of the highest buildings in the world. Naturally, the tower caught on fire because of all the fuel from such a big airplane, and some horrific scenes began. And then, 18 minutes later, another plane, also from an U.S. airline, crashed straight into the second tower.

A few minutes later, another plane crashed into the Pentagon. News arrived, in the midst of a certain amount of confusion, of a bomb outside the State Department, and other alarming events, although I have mentioned the most important.

Obviously, the country had fallen victim to a violent surprise attack, unexpected, unimaginable, something truly unheard of. And the scenes that ensued were appalling, especially when the two towers were burning, and foremost when they both collapsed, all 100 floors, spilling over onto neighboring buildings, when it was known that there were tens of thousands of people working there, in offices representing many companies from various countries.

It was only logical that this would be a shock for the United States and the rest of the world. The stock markets started to collapse, and because of the political, economic and technological importance and the power of the United States, the whole world was shaken up today by those events. So, we had to follow the events throughout the day, but at the same time, we also had to continue thinking about the conditions and circumstances in which this ceremony would take place.

Therefore, there were two issues: the school and the extremely important course it will offer, and the political and human catastrophe that had taken place over there, especially in New York.

(...) Today is a day of tragedy for the United States. You know very well that hatred against the American people has never been sown here. Perhaps, precisely because of its culture, its lack of prejudice, its sense of full freedom –with a homeland and without a master-- Cuba is the country where Americans are treated with the greatest respect. We have never preached any kind of national hatred, or anything similar to fanaticism, and that is the reason for our strength, because our conduct is based on principles and ideas. We treat all Americans who visit us with great respect, and they have noticed this and said so themselves.

Furthermore, we cannot forget the American people who put an end to the Vietnam War with their overwhelming opposition to that genocidal war. We cannot forget the American people who –in numbers that exceeded 80% of the population-- supported the return of Elián González to his homeland. We cannot forget their idealism, although it is often undermined by deception, because –as we have said often times– in order to mislead Americans to support an unjust cause, or an unjust war, they must first be deceived. The classic method used by that huge country in international politics is that of deceiving the people first, to count on their support later. When it is the other way around, and the people realize that something is unjust, then based on their traditional idealism they oppose what they have been supporting. Often these are extremely unjust causes, which they had supported convinced that they were doing the right thing.

Therefore, although unaware of the exact number of victims but seeing those moving scenes of suffering, we have felt profound grief and sadness for the American people.

We do not go around flattering any government, or asking for forgiveness or favors. We neither harbor in our hearts a single atom of fear. The history of our Revolution has proven its capacity to stand up to challenges, its capacity to fight and its capacity to resist whatever it has to; that is what has turned us into an invincible people. These are our principles. Our Revolution is based on ideas and persuasion, and not on the use of force.

(...) That has been our reaction, and we wanted our people to see the scenes and watch the tragedy. We have not hesitated to express our sentiments publicly, and right here I have a statement, which was drafted as soon as the facts were known and handed out to the international media around 3:00 p.m. In the meantime, our television networks were broadcasting news of the events. This statement was scheduled to be read to the Cuban public tonight during the evening TV newscast.

I am going to move the time up a few minutes by reading to you here and now the Official Statement from the Government of Cuba on the events that took place in the United States:

"The Government of the Republic of Cuba has learned with grief and sadness of the violent surprise attacks carried out this morning against civilian and official facilities in the cities of New York and Washington, which have caused numerous deaths.

(...) "It is not possible to forget that for over four decades our country has been the target of such actions fostered from within the United States territory.

"Both for historical reasons and ethical principles, the Government of our country strongly repudiates and condemns the attacks against the aforementioned facilities and hereby expresses its most heartfelt sympathies to the American people for the painful, unjustifiable loss of human lives resulting from these attacks.

"In this bitter hour for all Americans, our people express their solidarity with the American people and their full willingness to cooperate, to the extent of their modest possibilities, with the health care institutions and any other medical or humanitarian organization in that country in the treatment, care and rehabilitation of the victims of this morning's events."

Although it is not known whether the casualties are 5000, 10,000, 15,000 or 20,000, it is known that the planes that crashed into the Twin Towers and into the Pentagon were carrying hundreds of passengers, and we have offered to provide whatever we can, if necessary.

That is a country with great scientific and medical development and resources, but at some point in time it could need blood of a specific type or plasma --any other product that we could donate, we would be most willing to give-- or medical support or paramedics. We know many hospitals are short of specific technicians and professionals. In other words, we want to express our disposition and readiness to be helpful in relation to these tragic events.

(...) The hijacking of planes --a method used against Cuba-- became a universal plague, and it was Cuba that solved this problem when, after repeated warnings, we sent two hijackers back to the United States. It is painful because they were Cubans but we had issued public warnings, so they came and we returned them. We complied with our public pledge, yet they never again provided us with any information about them to give to their relatives. They have their own ways of doing things. No one knows. I know they were sentenced to 40 years imprisonment, and that put an end to those hijackings".

(...) None of the problems affecting today's world can be solved with the use of force; there is no global, technological or military power that can guarantee immunity against such acts, because they can be organized by small groups [which are] difficult to detect.

(...) It is very important to know what the reaction of the U.S. Government might be. Possibly the world will be living dangerous days, and I am not talking about Cuba. Cuba is the most peaceful country in the world, for several reasons: our policies, our forms of struggle, our doctrine, our ethics, and also, comrades, and due to an absolute absence of fear.

Nothing troubles us. Nothing intimidates us. It would be very difficult to concoct a slanderous accusation against Cuba; not even its inventor and the patent holder would believe it. It would be very difficult. And Cuba means something in the world today. It has a very high moral position, and a very sound political position in the world.

The days to come will be tense inside the United States. A number of people will start putting forward opinions.

(...) We would advise the leaders of that powerful empire to remain calm, to act with a cool head, to avoid getting carried away by a fit of rage or hatred, and not to start trying to hunt people down by throwing bombs just anywhere.

I reiterate that none of the world's problems, not even terrorism, can be solved with the use of force, and every act of force, every imprudent action that entails the use of force anywhere, is going to seriously aggravate the world problems.

The way is neither the use of force nor the war. I say this with the full authority of someone who has always talked honestly, of someone with sound convictions and the experience of surviving the years of struggle that Cuba has lived through. Only reason, and the intelligent policy of seeking strength through consensus and international public opinion, can definitely eradicate this problem. I think this unexpected episode should be used to undertake an international effort against terrorism. However, this international struggle against terrorism cannot be won by eliminating a terrorist here and another one there, by killing people here and there, using similar methods to theirs and sacrificing innocent lives. It can only be won, among other ways, by putting an end to State terrorism and other repulsive forms of killing, by putting an end to genocide, and by seriously pursuing a policy of peace and respect for moral and legal standards. The world cannot be saved unless a path of international peace and cooperation is pursued.

(...) We have proven that we can survive, live and make progress, and everything seen here today is an expression of unprecedented progress in all of human history. Progress is not achieved only through the manufacturing of automobiles; developing people's minds, providing knowledge, promoting culture, and looking after human beings the way they should be looked after makes progress. That is the secret of the tremendous strength of our Revolution.

The world cannot be saved in any other way, and by that I mean the situations of violence. Let us seek peace everywhere and protect all the people from that plague of terrorism. There is another horrible plague today, which is called AIDS, for instance. There is another plague, which kills tens of millions of children, teenagers and adults in the world, that is, hunger, disease and a lack of health care and medicines.

In the political arena, there are absolutist ideas, and attempts to impose a single way of thinking on the world; this fosters rebellious attitudes and irritation everywhere.

This world cannot be saved –and this does not have anything to do with terrorism-- if this unfair economic and social order continues to be developed and applied; an order that is leading the world to disaster, along a path from which there is no escape for the 6.2 billion people living today and the future inhabitants of this planet, suffering ever greater destruction and plunged further into poverty, unemployment, hunger and despair. This has been proven by the masses in places that have already gone down in history, like Seattle, Quebec, Washington and Genoa.

The world's most powerful economic and political leaders now find it almost impossible to meet; everywhere we can see that people are less and less afraid, and are rising up. I was recently in Durban, a province in South Africa, and there I saw thousands and thousands of people members of non-governmental organizations; discontent is spreading like wildfire around the globe (...).

How enormously different is the conduct of the Cuban government from that of the government of the United States! The Revolution, based on truth, and the empire, based on lies!

Fidel Castro Ruz

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