

Cuba, Cuban-Americans and Trump



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By Charles McKelvey

On February 29 at the weekly event Sabatina of the Cultural Center Fresa y Chocolate in the Vedado section of the City of Havana, Dr. Jesús Arboleya gave a talk, “Cuba and the Cuban-Americans confront the Trump Administration: To where will the pendulum swing?” Arboleya is a well-known Cuban intellectual and former diplomat who served Cuban diplomatic missions in the United States.

Arboleya maintained that immigration in the world today is driven by the ideological belief that the advanced capitalist economies provide the best opportunities for the satisfaction of personal material ambitions. This ideology is especially strong among the young.

Cuba is a manufacturer of immigrants, Arboleya noted, because Cuban immigrants are well received in the countries of the North, in comparison with immigrants from other countries of the South. In the case of the United States, policy has been designed to stimulate emigration from Cuba.

Arboleya observed that emigration has negative consequences for Cuba. It is an important factor in the aging of the population and the insufficient percentage of workers in the life stage of productive labor. And

Cuban emigration will continue to grow. However, Cuba cannot control migration in a repressive form, by imposing sanctions or constructing regulatory and physical barriers. No country can stop emigration or immigration, inasmuch as it is rooted in economic and ideological factors. The construction of a wall on the frontier by the Trump administration is absurd.

In 1978, Fidel issued a call for dialogue between the Cuban government and the Cuban émigré community. Since that time, Cuba has sought dialogue with the Cuban emigration and negotiations with the U.S. government, based on recognition that emigration cannot be stopped, and with the intention of seeking to regulate it, so that there would be a level of knowledge and control of the phenomenon. Cooperation among governments in creating an environment for a safe, legal, and orderly migration has been the policy of the Cuban government since 1978.

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