

U.S. to thoroughly search ships from Cuba



By Roberto Morejon

The very limited, but beneficial, maritime relationship between Cuba and the United States will face greater obstacles in the face of new measures by the Donald Trump administration in its escalation against its Caribbean neighbor.

Washington will impose restrictions on vessels from Cuba beginning April 2nd, under the hackneyed argument of protecting its territory from what it calls "terrorist threats."

As is known, among the first decrees signed by the magnate during his current term, Cuba's return to the falsified list of those the White House calls sponsors of terrorism stands out.

The United States knows there is no real basis for including the Caribbean nation in the illegitimate inventory, but they resort to pretexts and fabrications to tighten the screws on the blockade.

The Coast Guard's warning, under pressure from the State Department headed by Marco Rubio, could increase the complications of loading and unloading maneuvers and affect the movement of goods.

Under strict regulations governing licenses granted since 2000, it is possible to export agricultural products to Cuba, although purchases from neighboring territory are not eligible for credit and goods must be paid for in advance.

From an international perspective, the decision would generate uncertainty among fleet operators and maritime companies, given the possibility of being affected.

The impediments to vessels will join other hostile steps by the northern power, including the intensification of Coast Guard operations in the Florida Straits, under the pretext of the anti-drug fight, with the increased presence of naval and air resources in the region. In his short term, the Republican has accumulated disputes with other regions and countries, including Cuba, by reactivating Title III of the extraterritorial Helms-Burton Act.

The U.S. president also revoked humanitarian parole for Cubans, Venezuelans, Nicaraguans, and Haitians, which means that starting April 24th, hundreds of thousands of people will be left in a worrying immigration limbo and could be expelled.

Previously, the U.S. State Department denied visas to Cuban and third-country officials involved in contracting medical missions from Havana, despite the fact that the recipients emphasize the benefits of these services.

Amid this string of penalties and threats from congressmen of alleged Cuban origin regarding "biblical measures" against the Caribbean nation, Washington still had to undermine official cooperation with its neighbor on security matters. But it remains a testament to the fact that even under siege, the Coast Guard Service and the Border Guard Troops of the land of José Martí have maintained ties, especially in combating the illicit trafficking of migrants and narcotics.

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