

## THE CUBAN REGIME IS A THREAT AND MUST END

*December 29, 2024.*

We, former officers of the Armed Forces, Ministry of the Interior, Communist Party, and government of Cuba, left our posts, risking our lives, to reject the corrupt tyranny subjugating and impoverishing the Cuban people. Knowing its objectives and methodologies from the inside, we are compelled to warn of the threat it represents to the security of the Cuban people, the United States, the Western Hemisphere, and the world.

Cuba's intelligence services currently have a large number of agents in the Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe. Numerous citizens of many countries —many whose seeming loyalties do not arouse suspicion— are spies and agents of influence recruited to serve the interests of the Cuban dictatorship. They operate within their governments, parliaments, media, universities, churches, cultural institutions, businesses, and other sectors of society, some at the highest levels. Some spy and send information clandestinely, others just identify people to study for their potential recruitment, and all exert influence to favor the Cuban government

In the United States, the recent indictment of former diplomat Victor Manuel Rocha and the long prison sentences of the Pentagon's top Cuba analyst Ana Belén Montes in 2002 and senior State Department official Kendall Myers in 2009 are just the tip of the iceberg. These are not isolated cases or Cold War "relics," as some have claimed, but the result of decades of work with exponential returns that are hard to imagine.

Cuba's intelligence services direct and induce the narrative seeking to minimize the regime's international influence and the damage caused by its agents. Spying for ideological motivations is exalted, obscuring that it supports a totalitarian military regime responsible for egregious human rights violations and countless deaths in Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Angola, Ethiopia and many other countries. Defending the Cuban revolution is extolled, disregarding that it's been hijacked for decades by a duplicitous and privileged elite that has destroyed the nation with increasingly ludicrous political-ideological justifications. Claims of their "moral principles" fail to mention that none of these agents have, from their advantageous positions, shouldered the absence of rights, the apartheid, or the shortages imposed on the Cuban people.

Cuba's Intelligence Directorate conducts aggressive work directed overseas, primarily tasked against the United States and with overthrowing democracies and their values. They collaborate with autocratic governments and criminal cartels that share these goals. Supported by a gigantic State apparatus dedicated to disinformation, propaganda, and influence, they also count on cooperation from virtually every government official, including diplomats, journalists, academics, and artists. Together with the apparatus dedicated to internal police-state control, they enjoy a priority allocation of resources despite the great needs of the people.

As a result of the above, we urge democratic governments to not support the Cuban regime with legitimacy or resources of any kind and to take measures that:

1. allocate adequate counterintelligence resources to effectively neutralize the Cuban intelligence services;
2. control the number of Cuban diplomats accredited in their national territory, as well as their access and geographical projection;
3. optimize the security clearance review process for government officials and take into account predispositions favoring the Cuban regime;
4. establish appropriate controls to deny high-ranking Cuban officials and repressors visas or border entries;
5. adequately train on the historical and security context diplomats, government officials, and legislators who have to do with Cuban foreign policy, especially those who travel to Cuba officially or unofficially; and
6. alert media, businesses, scientific, academic, cultural, and other institutions on the methodology of surveillance, blackmail, and recruitment of Cuba's intelligence services, especially used on visitors to Cuba.

We urge educational institutions to objectively teach the history of communism and the Cuban revolution, the impact of Cuban internationalism, and the spread of Marxism.

We urge the U.S. government to carefully assess the impact of Rocha's long career as an agent of Cuba.

On the 65th anniversary of the "revolution" this coming January 1<sup>st</sup>, we call on Cuba's Armed Forces, Ministry of the Interior, Communist Party, and government officials to overcome fear and end the dictatorship that crushes our people in complicity with other enemies of freedom. We know firsthand how the regime surveils, humiliates, and blackmails you. Break the chains, as we did, and assume the historic duty of forging a rule of law that guarantees freedom for your own families and generations of Cubans. Do not allow fraudulent mutations seeking to maintain privileges for the oligarchy under different facades. The essential change to be promoted and defended is towards a multiparty democracy that structurally reforms the economy and the State. The people must recover their sovereignty to build the prosperous society they deserve.

*Orlando Brito*

*José Cohen*

*Rafael del Pino*

*Enrique García*

*Alcibíades Hidalgo*

*Máximo Omar Ruíz*

## Biographical data on the signatories in alphabetical order

### **Orlando Brito**

Former operative officer of the General Directorate of Intelligence, U.S. and Canada Department, and former official of the Americas Department of the Ministry of Foreign Relations. He was operating as Commercial Attaché in Cuba's Embassy in Panama when he cut his ties to the dictatorship in March 2002.

### **José Cohen**

Former operative officer of the General Directorate of Intelligence, of the Scientific-Technical and United States-Canada departments. He escaped from Cuba on a raft in August 1994 after having collaborated with the CIA for several years.

### **Rafael del Pino**

Brigadier General, pilot and former Deputy Chief of Air Defense of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces. He escaped in a small plane to Key West, Florida, in 1987.

### **Enrique García**

Former operational officer of the General Directorate of Intelligence, Latin America and Caribbean Division, having worked with seven countries. He was exfiltrated from Quito, Ecuador, by the CIA in January 1989, where he was operating in the Cuban embassy under diplomatic cover.

### **Alcibíades Hidalgo**

Former member of the Central Committee of Cuba's Communist Party, Chief of the Staff for ten years of Raúl Castro, Minister of Defense, First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Cuba's ambassador to the United Nations. He escaped from Cuba in a boat in 2002.

### **Máximo Omar Ruiz**

Lieutenant Colonel of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and Ministry of the Interior in charge of Technical Issues. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison for calling for Fidel Castro's resignation in 1990. Having served 17 years of his sentence, he went into exile in April 2011 with the support of the government of Spain.