

Press Conference offered by Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba

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Alejandro González (Moderator) .- Good morning. I thank the colleagues of the national and foreign press who accompany us today in this press conference of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, to discuss topics of interest and current affairs.

There are 62 journalists from 36 media outlets from 19 countries, as well as a broad representation of the national press. This press conference is being broadcast live by Cuban Television, Cubavisión Internacional and via Internet through the official website of the Cuban Chancellery against the blockade.

The Minister will make a brief initial intervention and subsequently be able to answer some questions.

Bruno Rodríguez.- Good morning.

Our country is ready, our people await the arrival of Pope Francis. We have worked to make the visit memorable, to be a visit like the one that Pope Francis deserves for his pontificate, for his positions that arouse admiration in Latin America and the Caribbean and in our people, and for being the first Latin American Pope .

The Cuban government is convinced that the visit will be an extraordinary event, for which it has worked in a fluid, harmonious way with the Vatican State, with its Nunciature in Havana and with the Catholic Church in Cuba.

The Cuban people will welcome Pope Francis with respect, appreciation and hospitality, and will have, in real time, an extensive information on the events of their program. A special portal has been established for this and various accounts in social networks and hypermedia to arrive in real time, directly, to the largest possible audience.

There has recently been a pardon for persons sanctioned to deprivation of liberty within the Cuban legal system and the humanist tradition of our judicial system.

The visit of the Pope will surely have the massive participation of believers, of non-believers and will be a momentous event for all our people, for our culture, for the Cuban nation.

The visit also takes place in a particular international, hemispheric and regional context. The Cuban government has expressed appreciation and gratitude to the Holy Father for his support for the dialogue process between the governments of the United States and Cuba.

Secondly, the President of the Republic of Cuba, Raul Castro Ruz, will attend the United Nations events convened for the coming days. He will attend the session of the General Assembly that will listen to His Holiness Francisco on September 25, and that day and the subsequent ones will participate in the Summit that will consider the Post 2015 Development Agenda and will commemorate the 70th anniversary of the United Nations. In this Summit he will speak on the 26th in the morning session.

Our Head of State will also attend the General Debate of the General Assembly of the United Nations, that is, the high level segment and will make his speech on the afternoon of September 28.

The Cuban President also plans to attend a conference on empowerment and equality for women, which follows the tradition of the World Conference on Women, the Beijing Conference, and processes that are of the highest priority for our society, starting with the convocation of the President of the People's Republic of China, Comrade Xi Jinping and the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon.

The Cuban President will also carry out an ample multilateral program, will hold numerous bilateral meetings with other Heads of State and Government attending these events; and his program will also include meetings with different sectors of American society, including personalities from that country, representatives of solidarity and Cuban emigration.

The Post 2015 Development Agenda, which has already been the result of a long and extensive intergovernmental process that will surely be adopted at the summit conference, sets out positive and ambitious goals. In our country's opinion, it is a step forward on a global scale in relation to the so-called Millennium Development Goals, which the General Assembly of

the United Nations adopted in 2000 with the presence of the Historical Leader of the Cuban Revolution, the Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz.

We consider that the Agenda in draft contains indispensable, unavoidable goals, given the economic and social situation of the world and the very serious risks for the existence of the human species, which means, for example, climate change, and contains comprehensive purposes, in some even specific cases, , concrete, which are praiseworthy.

Our concern is the insufficient correspondence of the purposes proposed by the Post-2015 Development Agenda in relation to the means of implementation that it is proposed to agree, related to the transfer of financial resources, of appropriate technologies given the reality that we are victims of an order international inequitable, unjust, excluding; We are victims of a predatory, exploitative economic order that plunders the natural resources and riches of the countries of the South, and with the real fact that political will is lacking in the governments of the industrialized countries to undertake the urgent and indispensable actions that would allow us to advance in social development, solve the problem of poverty, hunger, diseases without attention, on a global scale and create basic conditions for this Agenda, which will be adopted in the coming weeks, to be viable and not be a mere declaration of good intentions.

So, in our opinion, it will be necessary to acquire conscience, mobilize international public opinion and work hard to build another international order, to build another economic order, to demolish the current one and build another international financial architecture that allows us to make the miracle of the Agenda that will be adopted in the next few days will be carried out.

At the same time, we will commemorate the 70th anniversary of the United Nations. The opinion of Cuba is that the United Nations must be defended from attacks, manipulations, attempts to distort its objectives that it suffers; that it is necessary to reiterate the concept that the Charter of the United Nations and its Purposes and Principles have absolute validity and that they constitute the essential framework of International Law that can guarantee peaceful coexistence, in the interests of the development of all and the exercise of rights humans for everyone on our planet.

Considers that, at the same time, the United Nations is in need of a profound reform, to democratize it, so that the General Assembly can exercise the powers that the Charter gives it, to contain the interference, the voracity, in relation to the Assembly's agenda , of the Security Council, to democratize this in its scarce representation of the countries of the South and its non-democratic methods, including the need to eliminate the obsolete privilege of the veto.

Cuba is inspired, in its position in relation to these issues, in the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, signed by the Heads of State and Government of our region in January 2014 at the CELAC Summit in Havana, which raises not only principles and rules of relations between the countries of our region, but also the aspiration that these be observed by all States in their relations with those belonging to our region.

We are seriously concerned about the growing threats to international peace and security. It is a fact that the 70th anniversary of the criminal nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is commemorated without having taken any step forward in nuclear disarmament and there are record, inexplicable, unsustainable levels of military spending.

We attend extraordinarily complex international conditions. It is a call to human conscience what is happening with the waves of migrants in Europe, people fleeing from conflicts, from unconventional wars, from the consequences of actions alien to International Law, which have led to the destruction of States. , of the social fabric of several nations; fleeing from poverty and underdevelopment. And we are deeply concerned that the European Union is not moving forward in relation to the solution of the root causes of these migratory waves or the use of military or repressive means against migrants.

We were all dismayed by the image of the little boy drowned on the beach, as a symbol that moved all humanity. Hopefully there will be political will in the governments of the industrialized countries, which are historically responsible for the conditions of underdevelopment and poverty that exist in the countries of the South, particularly those that are responsible for the recent conflicts that led to the current situation.

Thirdly, I would like to announce that the Resolution condemning the economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States against Cuba has been circulated to the Member States of the United Nations. It will be considered in a debate at the National Assembly on the 27th. October and will be put to a vote.

The text of the Resolution - and I will comment it because it contains some novel elements - is part of an update of the traditional text that has been adopted for more than 20 years, with a vote of 188 states in favor, overwhelming majority support, and only two votes against.

The Resolution states that:

"The general assembly,

"Determined to promote strict respect for the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations," that is, has an International Law approach.

"The general assembly,

"Reaffirming, among other principles, the sovereign equality of States, nonintervention and non-interference in their internal affairs and the freedom of international trade and navigation, enshrined in numerous international legal instruments,

"Recalling the statements made by the Heads of State or Government of Latin America and the Caribbean at the summits of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), regarding the need to put an end to the economic,

commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba,

"Concerned that the enactment and application by member states of laws and regulations continues, such as that promulgated on March 12, 1996, known as the 'Helms-Burton Act', whose extraterritorial effects affect the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under its jurisdiction and the freedom of trade and navigation ... "

It is well known that the United States Congress is currently debating not just a dozen legislative initiatives aimed at modifying aspects of the blockade, or even lifting it, but also dozens of legislative initiatives, and has adopted some amendments aimed at preventing the President of the United States of America can modify its application.

"The general assembly,

"Noting the declarations and resolutions of different intergovernmental forums, bodies and governments that express the rejection of the international community and public opinion to the promulgation and application of measures of the indicated type,

"Recalling its resolutions" -and lists the resolutions-, the first of November 24, 1992.

The Resolution has two new paragraphs that say:

"The general assembly,

"Welcoming the restoration of diplomatic relations between the governments of the Republic of Cuba and the United States of America,

"Recognizing the will expressed by the President of the United States of America to work for the elimination of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba,

"Concerned that, after the approval of its resolutions" - and lists a number of them - "the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba continues, and also concerned about the negative effects of these measures on the Cuban population and the Cuban nationals residing in other countries, in particular Cuban emigration residing in the United States,

"The general assembly:

"one. Takes note of the report of the Secretary General on compliance with Resolution 69/5 "; that is, from last year.

"two. Reiterates its appeal to all States to refrain from promulgating and applying laws and measures of the type indicated in the preamble to this Resolution, in compliance with their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and International Law, which, between other things, reaffirm the freedom of trade and navigation ... "

That is, the Resolution reaffirms that the blockade is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

"3. Urges once again the States in which laws and measures of this kind exist and continue to be applied, so that, as soon as possible and in accordance with its legal system, they take the necessary measures to repeal them or to render them ineffective;

"4. Requests the Secretary General, in consultation with the relevant bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, to prepare a report on compliance with this Resolution, "that is, the one to be adopted," in light of the purposes and principles of the Charter and international law and submit it to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session "; that is, in the year 2016.

"5. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-first session the item entitled "Need to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba ' . "

The Republic of Cuba appreciates and recognizes the statements of the president of the United States, Barack Obama, in the sense that the blockade must be lifted, his recognition that the blockade has only brought isolation to the United States and does not meet the objectives for which It was established.

The President of the United States has also recognized that the blockade causes humanitarian damage, that is, damage to our people.

Also his decision to get involved in a debate with the United States Congress, with the objective of lifting the blockade and his declaration that he will use his executive powers to modify its application.

The reality is that the blockade persists and that the measures that the US government has adopted until this minute only modify the application of a few aspects of the blockade. It is known that the President of the United States retains executive powers that would allow him to substantially modify its application.

We hope that it will be the object of discussion in the General Debate of the General Assembly, that is, in the high-level segment of the General Assembly, where last year several dozen Heads of State and numerous heads of delegations referred to the issue.

The reality is that, until now, the blockade does not allow Cuba to export or freely import products and services to or from the United States, does not allow the use of the dollar in international financial transactions with third States, does not allow access to private credits in the United States. United neither in the international financial institutions. Until now, the prohibition on vessels that touch a Cuban port docking in an American port before 180 days remains in force.

In these years, even in the period of dialogue and confidential conversations with the United States government, that is, in the years 2014 and 2015, the blockade continued to strengthen with a marked and growing extraterritorial nature, particularly in the financial sphere, through of the persecution of our international financial transactions and the extraordinary, unusual fines imposed on fundamentally European banks and companies for their economic relations with Cuba.

Until April 2015, by means of conservative calculations and based on a very rigorous methodology, which has been known, even, of control bodies of the United States itself, and has recognized it as rigorous and exact; I can affirm that the accumulated damages of the blockade in these more than five decades amount, according to the value of gold in the international market and, therefore, fluctuate the figure in relation to the fluctuations of gold, which in the last period has lost value; amounts to 833 755 million dollars. That is to say, it continues to move in the environment of one million million dollars, one trillion dollars.

At current prices the blockade, in these decades, has caused damages for 121 192 million dollars, which is an exorbitant figure for a small economy like ours.

But, in addition to the blockade causing serious economic damage and is the main obstacle to our development, causes deprivation and deprivation to all Cuban families, affects Cubans residing outside Cuba, in addition to the fact that 77% of the Cuban population has been born and lived all their lives under the cruel effects of the blockade and that can not be counted. The impact, the humanitarian damage caused every day, every hour the US blockade against Cuba is extreme and can not be expressed in figures either. The blockade is a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of all Cubans.

I will give only examples of what happened in the last period, after the beginning of conversations with the US government on these issues and the announcements of December 17, which led to the reestablishment of diplomatic relations and the recent opening of embassies, with the productive visit of Mr. Secretary of State, John Kerry to our country; that is, I'm going to use recent examples.

Cuban hospitals responsible for the care of oncological patients, that is, cancer patients, have brachytherapy equipment, for whose normal operation the Iridium-192 is required, they are essential equipment for the treatment of cancer patients. These equipment was supplied by the company ELEKTA, which is a company registered and registered in Brazil, it is not North American. This company received, in turn, from the North American company MALLIMCKRODT the sources, that is, elements of Iridium-192, indispensable for its operation. In the recent period, this company has informed its Cuban counterparts that the US company, due to the blockade rules, has decided to stop supplying these sources, because the United States Treasury Department has not granted the corresponding license.

That is to say, it is an effect of the blockade and it is an example that an exception to the blockade has not been made, by license, in this area. This denial has prevented the National Institute of Oncology and Radiosurgery and that the oncological hospitals of Santiago de Cuba and Camagüey have been able to provide radiation to thousands of cancer patients as often and at the required time. They have received the treatments, but not in the required way, which is an act of terrible humanitarian impact.

You have to be very realistic, and it seems to me that you have to judge by the facts, by the data, not by statements, not by expressions of goodwill.

In 2014 and so far in 2015, the German company Bayer, by changing the regional office that served its relations with Cuba to the United States (previously it was in Mexico), has not supplied Lopramide-300 and Lopramide-370, which are contrast media for the diagnosis and treatment of serious pathologies. He has requested, from his new headquarters, licenses to the Treasury Department, which have not been granted.

On November 13, 2014, the Office of Control of Foreign Assets - the infamous OFAC - imposed a fine of USD 2 057 000 on the US company ESCO Corporation, based in Portland, Oregon, because a subsidiary of that company, which should be governed by the laws of the country where it is registered and not by US laws, whose extraterritorial application is a violation of International Law and international trade rules, prevents you from buying nickel briquettes made with Cuban nickel derivatives.

On March 12, 2015, the German bank - a large European bank - Commerzbank was fined 1 710 million dollars, among other reasons, for economic relations with Cuba.

Before, but not much before, but in June 2014, the French bank BNP-Paribas received an extraordinary fine from a New York court that sanctioned it to pay 8 900 million dollars, which was unprecedented in the history of financial transactions and banking relationships on the planet.

On February 11, 2015, the subsidiary of Banco Santander in Mexico refused to make a small transaction of 68,000 euros, not dollars, issued by the Central Bank of Cuba, not to acquire something, not to trade, but for Cuba to pay his membership to the Center for Latin American Monetary Studies.

On March 25, 2015, OFAC imposed a \$ 7,658,000 fine on the US company Pay Pal for carrying out transactions involving goods allegedly of Cuban origin or of Cuban national interest. We are talking about the property of Cuban citizens, property of people, even, who reside outside of Cuba.

The 1st June 2015, the American company SIGMA Aldrich, world leader in chemical production and biochemistry, refused to supply the Cuban company QUIMIMPEX with chemical products indispensable for the development of the industry. He claimed that he could not provide products, services, or even technical information, because Cuba is a country subject to blockade.

On June 2, 2015, the Columbiana Boiler Company, specialized in the manufacture of pressurized containers, ie leak-proof

containers, leaking containers, safe containers, refused to supply the Cuban company QUIMIMPEX with the necessary cylinders to to pack the chlorine that is used in the purification of the water of the aqueduct system, of the water consumed in Cuba, of the water that our children drink, that the Cuban population drinks, indicating that the Department of Commerce had not given the corresponding authorization to do what.

You will receive in a few minutes the report of the blockade - here it is in several languages ??- but this year is a brief report and is a report focused not on the past, but on the events that occurred during the last year, in the most recent period. Above all, I invite you to look at pages 24 and 25, which have numerous other examples of humanitarian damage as a result of the application of the blockade.

Therefore, it is essential to renew, adhering to international law, respectful, but energetic claim of the international community for the unconditional, immediate and complete lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States government against Cuba.

President Obama declared that the blockade does not comply and had not met any of its objectives.

Other times I have cited that the best description of the objectives of the blockade is in the memorandum of April 6, 1960, which was only declassified several decades later, sent by Undersecretary of State Lester Mallory describing it as an official position of the United States government. The following objectives.

He wrote: "The majority of Cubans support Castro [...] There is no effective political opposition [...] The only possible means to make him lose internal support [to the government] is to provoke disappointment and discouragement through economic dissatisfaction and hardship [...] All possible means must be put into practice quickly to weaken economic life [...] by denying Cuba money and supplies in order to reduce nominal and real wages, with the goal of causing hunger, despair and the overthrow of the government. "

I am surprised when some spokesmen of the State Department declare that what has taken place now, as a result of the respectful and constructive dialogue between both governments, is a change of methods, but that the same objectives of the old, obsolete, anchored persist in the Cold War, cruel, inhuman, violator of human rights, US policy against Cuba, that President Barack Obama has declared his decision to change.

These spokesmen could be asked what are the current objectives of the United States government in relation to Cuba. It would be important for them to declare that it is not the change of government, which is not to change the political, economic and social system, that in the exercise of self-determination our people have freely and sovereignly been given.

We recognize and appreciate the progress that has been made in the relations between the United States and Cuba, the process that demonstrated that respectful dialogue on the basis of sovereign equality is productive, leads to results, is the only way; that showed that the United States and Cuba, their governments, can learn and it is essential that they learn to live, to live with their differences; that it is essential that the relationship between both governments serve the interests of both nations, serve the interests of American and Cuban citizens.

For this reason, we emphasize that, once the embassy establishment and opening stage has been completed in both countries, we are in a position to enter the process towards the normalization of bilateral relations. But, as has been said, it is not possible for there to be normalization of bilateral relations as long as there is an economic, commercial and financial blockade against our country.

What will determine the pace of the normalization process will be, precisely, the state of lifting of the blockade, the measures adopted in relation to the modification and lifting of the blockade against Cuba, the decisions taken by the United States Congress, to which President Barack Obama has called not to stand in the interest of the American people.

And what he will say if this process has made sense, and I hope he has it, will be precisely the complete, unconditional lifting of the blockade.

The blockade is a strictly unilateral policy and, therefore, is a policy that must be resolved unilaterally. It can not be expected to be the result of a negotiation process between governments; It is not a two-way street, it is a one-way street. That's how it started, that's how it has been for five decades and that's how it ends, and it has to end because it's what suits the interests of the American nation, of the American Union, it's what suits the people of the United States, it's what they demand their citizens in exercise of their liberties; like the freedom to travel; in exercise of the rights that are exercised in a democratic society. As all the surveys show, there is widespread support in US society, markedly majority in Cuban emigration, markedly majority in Florida, in favor of lifting the blockade.

However, the importance of the dialogue carried out, the progress made, the diplomatic results achieved and the fact that, as reported, from the recent meeting of the Bilateral Cuba-United States Commission, which we consider, could not be underestimated. constructive, respectful, which was carried out in a professional environment, has not only clarified Cuba's positions in relation to the process towards the normalization of relations, which obviously also includes the return of the territory occupied illegally by the Guantanamo Naval Base, the suspension of hostile radio and television broadcasts against Cuba, which are in violation of International Law, according to the decisions of the International Telecommunications Union; and the elimination of programs designed to alter the constitutional order in Cuba.

It was very important that this meeting agreed to advance medical cooperation between the United States and Cuba in

relation to third countries, particularly in the sister Republic of Haiti that deserves and needs it so much.

We have agreed with the United States government to move forward with cooperation actions in Haiti. You learned that there were some exchanges between Cuban and American medical specialists in that country in recent days, and we will present to the US government a proposal for substantial cooperation that will have real impact and scope on the health system and the health indicators of the Haitian people.

We are fully prepared to cooperate with the United States, as we did in relation to Ebola, with the terrible Ebola epidemic in West Africa. We have that provision

However, there are also obstacles to solve. For example, the blockade is omnipresent, it is not a mania, it is that it is in fact. When we sent our medical brigades for Ebola to West Africa, in the case of Liberia, even having had contacts with the government of the United States in this regard, transfers from the World Health Organization to the work of these medical brigades were cut in banking institutions in third countries as a result of the blockade, and the Treasury Department had to issue a special license that allowed Cuban doctors, who were gambling, who were practically the only ones who were directly attending, in the so-called zone red, to the patients infected with Ebola, they received the indispensable supplies for their work.

In the same way, we should expect the United States government to remove other obstacles to cooperation, related to the theft of brains or acts that undermine, that hinder, that damage Cuban cooperation in third countries, such as the Parole Program for Cuban medical professionals in third countries, which has a clear political intention, established by the government of W. Bush.

We have also advanced in the discussion on issues related to other areas of bilateral relations, such as compensations for human and economic damages caused to the Cuban people, during all these five decades, by the policies that preceded President Obama.

The Cuban provision to negotiate, in a common context, in relation to North American claims for compensation by Cuban nationalizations in the 1960s, provided for in our laws and in political decisions, which were not implemented as a result of the blockade, was also reiterated.

We have also advanced in the discussion on aspects related to trademarks and patents, and, in particular, cooperation mechanisms in areas of mutual benefit, such as environmental protection, prevention of natural disasters, health, civil aviation, the application and enforcement of the Law, including the confrontation with drug trafficking, human trafficking and transnational crimes.

And, of course, we have had dialogues on areas where there are very large differences in political issues, but at the same time, aspects in which it is also possible to hold a respectful, serious, results-oriented dialogue. There are also areas such as human trafficking, human rights, climate change, the confrontation with epidemics and other threats to global health.

The last issue I want to discuss is the campaign that is being carried out against the sister Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as part of a crusade, as part of a campaign against progressive governments, from the left, in Latin America that have advanced in terms of demands to their peoples, who have exercised their sovereignty and who are today under direct attack from speculative funds, from institutions of different nature, from right-wing destabilizing sectors encouraged from abroad, from media empires, from large oil transnationals or from other sectors interested in plunder their natural resources.

In this context, I wish to reiterate our absolute support for the government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in its adherence to the principles of independence, self-determination of peoples, sovereignty and legal equality of States, which is what the Proclamation of the Peace Zone claims for Venezuela, for Cuba and for everyone.

It is not possible to accept interferences or interference in the internal affairs of Venezuela, and even less in the decisions that it adopts on the basis of all the procedural guarantees and due process on the part of its judicial system, decisions that it adopts sovereignly within the framework of its rights and sovereign competencies.

It is not possible to wait at times when it is discussed, in spite of double standards, in relation to what happens in the matter of human rights in other places, or what is silent; or in relation to the confrontation to terrorism, or in relation to the confrontation to violence, that impunity be given to acts of an illegal, violent nature, coup against the government of Venezuela, elected constitutional government in a democracy that has an election record, In a country that has a true civic-military union headed by President Nicolás Maduro Moros.

Nor can it be allowed, on the basis of double standards, that the rights of victims of violence and coup attempts be ignored.

These are the issues I wanted to address. Excuse me that it was long.

Moderator.- We now turn to the questions.

Andrea Rodríguez (AP) .- Good morning, sir.

As you said, the Pope will leave Cuba and go to the United States and there he will have the possibility of participating in the Congress before the North American legislators.

Is there any expectation in the Cuban government that he speaks frontally of the sanctions, of the embargo, before the congressmen and manages to dissuade the legislators, some republicans, other democrats, but really very very strong against

the lifting of these sanctions, that the Pope have this dissuasive capacity in some way?

Also in this sense you just presented, you just did, the report on the conviction - and used the word "condemnation" of the embargo. It is not new, this report; In addition, it does not have a binding character either, that is, the countries that are there do not have to comply with it. So, why at a time when there is a rapprochement between Cuba and the United States to use the word "condemnation" against the new friend, beyond the campaign for the lifting of sanctions?

Bruno Rodríguez.- Yes, thank you very much.

Well, you mentioned some words as if I had said them, of which I did not mention any exactly, because I did not refer to anything that was not in the presence of the Pope in Cuba.

But, in fact, the spokesman of the Vatican has considered that this is a very special trip, precisely to begin in Cuba and conclude in the United States.

We listen with admiration and respect, we follow the pronouncements of His Holiness in relation to numerous international issues, in relation to the international order, in relation to justice, in relation to the way in which some nations and others must coexist and be treated, in relationship with the role of States and governments.

The question is something hypothetical, but I can say that we will listen to the Pope with great attention in his visit to our country, we will undoubtedly hear everything he has to say in the United States, as we systematically do, and we will do it with profound respect, knowing that The Holy Father has an extraordinary authority, not only religious, but also ethics on a world scale.

The resolution of Cuba against the blockade, adopted by the General Assembly with 188 votes in favor, reflects the reality of the existence of the blockade. To the extent that the reality of the blockade is modified, it may be thought that the international community, the General Assembly, will pronounce itself in another way.

I reiterate our willingness to engage in productive, serious, and respectful dialogue with the United States government to discuss all pending issues between our countries.

I have expressed our appreciation and appreciation for the position taken by President Barack Obama in relation to the blockade, but I think it is natural for the international community to pronounce, as it has done in the past, regarding the state of the implementation of the blockade against Cuba.

This Resolution recognizes these positive aspects related to the progress that has been made in relations, particularly diplomatic, between the United States and Cuba and the pronouncement, which raises hope and recognition on a world scale, of President Barack Obama's willingness to lift the block and engage in a debate with Congress to do it.

It is a Resolution that mentions the United States only in the phrase that says: "Need to end the economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States against Cuba", so that, as in the past, it is a very respectful resolution, very careful. And when in his text he mentions only the government of the United States, it is to recognize the results of the dialogue and the disposition of President Barack Obama, which Cuba appreciates.

Laura Bécquer (Granma) .- We would like to know the impact that the executive measures taken by Obama have had on the blockade, if one can speak of a reduction in the scope of this policy in other areas than the financial one.

Thank you.

Bruno Rodríguez.- We appreciate that President Barack Obama has taken executive decisions that modify some aspects of bilateral relations; but it could not be said, with attachment to the facts, that the application of the blockade has been modified. The measures that he has taken are going in the right direction, they are positive measures, but extremely limited, not only from the bilateral point of view, but from the point of view also of the opinion of the American society.

In the telecommunications sector, some executive decisions have been taken. Regrettably, some US spokesmen preach that for political purposes, but we must say that they will be assumed by our country also within the politics of computerization of Cuban society, adopted by the Cuban Parliament that is well known and within the Connect 2020 program of the International Telecommunications Union; but it would have to be said that it will, obviously, be based on our national priorities; but, at the same time, what has been done in this sector shows how much could be done in others.

Soledad Álvarez (EFE) .- Good morning, Minister.

A couple of questions: You mentioned in your speech the support, the contribution that Pope Francis has made in the process of dialogue between Cuba and the United States. I would like to know your opinion on what role the Pontiff can continue to have in the transition towards full normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States.

On the other hand, you have also mentioned that the issue of the blockade is a unilateral policy, which must be resolved by a unilateral decision of the United States. Should we understand then that Cuba is not going to change its strategy towards the blockade? Will you simply wait for that unilateral decision of the United States to take place?

Thank you.

Bruno Rodríguez.- Cuba expressed recognition and support, President Raúl Castro Ruz did so from the first moment, and he has reiterated it, to the support of Pope Francisco to the process of dialogue between the governments of the United States and Cuba. The Pope has an immense moral authority on the entire planet, in Cuba and in the United States. At the same

time, the Pope has also referred to these matters. I can say that we are very grateful and recognized for the role he has played in this process and I am sure that his encouragement to progress in the relations between the United States and Cuba will be fundamental for the peoples of both shores of the Straits of Florida.

In relation to the blockade strategy, our people work intensively and actively to develop our economy. In fact, there have been encouraging results in the midst of the many difficulties that we have and, despite the fact that the economic results are still not reflected in the population's consumption, that is, directly in the level of life or consumption of Cuban families. ; But the fact that our people have built an economy like the one they have, that is the basis of social policies of the most advanced in the world, that has made the historic change from being a sugar exporter to being the world's leading exporter of sugar. medical services, associated with an important export of high technology products in the field of biotechnology and genetic engineering; the fact that it has become a service economy, in which its second most important income sector is tourism, implies that our State, our people, our government are actively working and have overcome the blockade.

The blockade does a lot of damage in the economic field and does a lot of damage in terms of deprivation and deprivation, but, as the President of the United States has said, the blockade has not worked, has not fulfilled any objective; it did not manage to suffocate Cuba in the first years of the Revolution, it did not manage to suffocate Cuba after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries, and the Cuban economy is there.

Secondly, the international community has increasingly expressed support for Cuba in relation to this issue, and Cuba now has extensive and diverse economic relations, although they are affected by the extraterritorial application of US laws.

The blockade against Cuba not only hurts a lot because of the lack of economic relations with Cuba, which is a gigantic and the main economy of the world and the hemisphere, but also because it prevents, hinders Cuba's economic relations with third countries, especially in the financial sphere. So that no one is standing idly by, every day we work actively to overcome the blockade, every day we feel the company of numerous governments, parliaments, personalities, representatives, sectors, organizations, companies, US citizens that every day oppose the blockade.

That is what has brought us here, the ability not only to have resisted, but to have advanced and to continue advancing. It is clear that the blockade against Cuba will not cause a collapse of the Cuban economy, nor will it cause, much less, that Cuba abandon its sovereign path.

What I was specifically referring to is that the blockade, as it is unilateral, must be unilaterally lifted. Cuba does not have any blocking measures against the United States, Cuba does not discriminate against US companies, it invites them to trade and to invest in Cuba. Cuba does not discriminate or sanction American tourists, on the contrary, it invites them to visit our country, where they receive warm hospitality just like tourists from the rest of the world. So the cessation of these measures has to be adopted by decision of the United States government and can not be, in any way, a result of negotiation.

As has been said, Cuba is not going to make internal changes or put on the negotiating table issues that are of the exclusive sovereignty of the Cuban people, for which it has fought since 1868, for which it has run the greatest risks, and it is a sovereignty that has been defended, a conquered sovereignty and a sovereignty that is effective for the nation to advance towards its development objectives.

Carlos Batista (France Presse) .- Good morning, Minister.

I have two questions:

As for the visit of President Raúl Castro to the United Nations, I understand that President Obama will also speak on the 28th before the General Assembly. Can we expect a second meeting between the two Presidents in the framework of the United Nations?

And as for the Cuban resolution against the blockade, some analysts think that because of the same position of President Obama that you have quoted, the United States could vary its vote regarding the Resolution, in favor or simply abstaining. How would Cuba consider a change of voting on the Resolution?

Thank you.

Bruno Rodríguez.- President Barack Obama and President Raúl Castro will obviously coincide in several events, according to the programs that have been made public of the Summit of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the General Debate. President Obama's speech is traditional, after the speech of the President of Brazil, in the initial session of the high-level debate in the General Assembly. So I guess there will be interactions between the Presidents, but I can say that a meeting between them is not fixed.

In relation to the possible vote of the United States in relation to this Resolution, it is a decision that, of course, belongs to the Department of State, to the government of the United States. The question is hypothetical: Could you ask the representatives of the United States? I will wait until October 27, of course, to see what will happen.

Any other question?

Moderator.- Well, one last question, Cristina.

Cristina Escobar (Information System of Cuban Television) .- Good morning, Chancellor.

Regardless of the fact that it has been affirmed that the measures taken after December 17 by President Obama, by the United States government, and then approved by the Treasury Department, all those that President Obama said are being applied effectively, or are the blockade laws in some way hindering this? on the one hand.

On the other hand, it has been said, the Cuban Government and the Foreign Ministry have said several times that President Obama has more executive powers to do more with respect to the modifications and the possibilities of licensing companies and, for example, issues that may solve many of the things that are reported in this report of the blockade, what are those prerogatives that Obama still has that he is not using and that he could use to advance further in this process of modifying the blockade in some way and moving towards standardization?

Bruno Rodríguez.- Yes, thank you.

The implementation of the executive decisions adopted by President Obama, which were later subject to successive regulations of the different departments, that is, different ministries of the United States government, has begun. A few months have passed, practically a semester since the announcement of these measures. According to one or the other, there are different application levels. The bottom line is that these measures are oriented in a positive direction that we appreciate, but they are extremely limited in scope.

Of course, the relations between two States, between two nations are subject to synergies, to interactions in which it is not possible to strictly separate some areas from others, some areas from others. That is why I have argued that the existence of the blockade affects everything; that is, it is a present reality, which affects, even, the application of the measures that are taken because, for example, if you allow there to be some minimum operations of purchases or sales directed to a specific sector of Cuban society, it is complex, because the commerce generally on a world scale is made between companies that are involved in exports and imports; that is, a small producer of honey usually does not export honey to a third country, nor does a country usually export certain inputs or materials directly to a small producer of honey in the next country; that is, they are transactions that take place at the level of commercial companies.

On the other hand, the situation of the Cuban economy as a whole can not be ignored, and the fact that there is no bidirectional trade, that there are no private credits, etc., makes the whole of economic relations, of course, difficult. Some limited exception may apply. But I feel that these measures were positive in the right direction, even if they do not have the necessary scope.

Of course, as I said, President Obama retains executive powers, to which I referred earlier.

Moderator.- Well, thanking everyone again, we conclude the press conference.

Thank you.

Bruno Rodríguez.- Thank you very much.

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