

BLOCKADE OBSTRUCTS CUBA-US RELATIONS

The blockade continues to be a pending issue hanging over the normalization of Cuba-US relations. The term normalization is often used by the international media and even by White House spokesmen, which was analyzed by the MIN-REX Director General of the United States Division, in an exclusive interview published on CubaVSBloqueo website.

"There are still many pending issues whose solution will take time," said the official who stressed that "among other issues, the blockade must be lifted, the Naval Base in Guant-namo must be returned, the preferential treatment given to Cubans by the wet-foot dry foot policy must be modified, together with the Cuban Adjustment Act and the Parole Program for Professional Cuban Physicians. The illegal radio and TV broadcasting and the use of technologies politically motivated against Cuba, as well as the subversive programs aimed at promoting a change of regime in the island must be eliminated."

Asked about what the governments of Cuba and the United States had to do to dismantle that policy of siege, Vidal recalled that in Cuba there is no discrimination against US companies. They can benefit from business opportunities offered by our country in equal conditions with companies from other countries, and she asserted that Cuba has taken advantage of the limited spaces offered by President Barack Obama's measures: positive steps but still insufficient, she reiterated. "The blockade and dozens of restrictions derived from this policy remain in force and even slow down the implementation of the measures already approved, she stated.

The Cuban official recalled that the US President can still exercise his prerogatives more extensively to modify other regulations of the blockade, which would be an important step toward its dismantling. And, of course, it will be necessary for the Congress vote for its elimination.

Later Josefina Vidal added that to have normal economic ties, other steps should be made by the US, like a preferential treatment given to Cuba for trade: for example, the status of more favored nation, and the review of the law establishing the high taxes for the entry of Cuban products into the US market.

About Barack Obama's possible actions before leaving the White House, way beyond the announcements and the limited steps adopted since December 17, 2014, Josefina Vidal talked about new measures for which he is empowered which can modify other aspects of the blockade. Among them, she referred to the authorization of more exports from the US, as well as Cuban exports to that country, authorization of US investments in Cuba and the adoption of steps to normalize financial relations between the two countries, as well as the authorization to open accounts in US banks by Cuban financial entities. "He could also put an end

to the preferential immigration policy for Cubans and take effective action to eliminate subversive programs against Cuba", she stressed.

In response to a question about the period after Obama, Vidal announced the expectations that whoever the next president will be they should adopt a policy that reflects the consensus of American public opinion, including the Cuban emigrants in that country, who overwhelmingly favor the improvement of relations with Cuba.

"Independent of what happens in the US after the presidential elections on November 8, Cuba will continue with its plans, with the support of the immense majority of its people and of other nations of the world, who reject the unilateral and coercive actions like the blockade, and recognize the prestige gained by our country, as a result of its resistance, dignity and contribution to peace, and the stability and development of many nations." - Courtesy of Cuban Embassy Kuwait.

HAITI MOURNS HURRICANE DEAD AS MATTHEW DWINDLES

PORT-AU-PRINCE: Haiti began three days of mourning yesterday for victims of Hurricane Matthew as relief officials grappled with the unfolding devastation in the Caribbean country's hard-hit south. Matthew, meanwhile, lost its hurricane status, subsiding to a "post-tropical cyclone" after cutting a swath from Florida to South Carolina that left nine dead.

At 1200 GMT, the storm was still packing winds that gusted to hurricane strength as it moved away from the US coastline. But attention was shifting back to Haiti, the Americas' poorest country and one shattered by a 2010 earthquake and ravaged by a cholera epidemic.

Matthew crashed ashore on Haiti's southern coast on Tuesday as a monster Category 4 storm, packing 145 mile (230 kilometer) winds. Aerial footage from the hardest-hit towns in southern Haiti showed a ruined landscape of metal shanties with roofs blown away, downed trees everywhere and mud from overflowing rivers covering the ground.

Civil defense officials put the death toll at 336, although some officials said it topped 400. Interim President Jocelerme Privert declared three days of national mourning for the dead. As the death toll climbed, pledges of aid flooded in, with the United States announcing it was sending a Navy ship, the USS Mesa Verde, whose 300 Marines will add to the 250 personnel and nine helicopters already ordered to deploy to Haiti.

France announced it was sending 60 troops, with 32 tons of humanitarian supplies and water purification equipment. California-based charity International Relief Teams said it was donating \$7 mil-

lion in medical supplies with international organizations MAP International and Hope for Haiti.

Flooding

In the United States, coastal flooding from the storm surge posed the biggest threat to life and property. "The combination of a dangerous storm surge, the tide, and large and destructive waves will cause normally dry areas near the coast to be flooded by rising waters moving inland from the shoreline," the NHC said.

Matthew made landfall southeast of McClellanville, South Carolina, on Saturday as a weakened Category 1 storm, but it triggered serious inland flooding. Millions of Americans were subject to evacuation orders and curfews were slapped on cities as the lethal storm barreled north after storming through Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Cuba and the Bahamas.

President Barack Obama had declared federal states of emergency in Florida, Georgia, and North and South Carolina. More than a million people were left without power, which was slowly being restored. In Jacksonville Beach, Sam Vond, a 68-year-old retiree, calmly rode his bike along the shore Saturday.

"It wasn't that bad. I didn't go outside. We stayed in the house until we were told it was OK to get out. Luckily, no damage to my house, so I'm happy," he said.

Matthew damaged roofs at the Kennedy Space Center but spared Florida's heavily populated south-central coast a direct hit. Cities including Savannah, Georgia, and Charleston ordered dusk-to-dawn curfews to keep people off the streets and guard against looting. — AFP



HEMPSTEAD, NEW YORK: This combination of file photos taken on September 26, 2016 shows Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump and Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton facing off during the first presidential debate at Hofstra University. — AFP

TRUMP FACES UPHILL BATTLE IN SECOND DEBATE WITH CLINTON

STAKES SKY-HIGH

WASHINGTON: White House candidate Donald Trump desperately needs a strong debate performance against Hillary Clinton, with stakes sky-high following intense scrutiny of his treatment of women and damaging footage of him making lewd remarks.

His unprecedented, outside-the-establishment presidential bid, and the embattled Republican Party with it, was thrown into disarray by his misogynistic comments, with growing calls from top Republicans for him to step aside. Even before the latest fallout, Trump was already in need of a moment of political magic to reverse his slide in the polls barely four weeks from Election Day on November 8.

Now his campaign has been rocked by its worst crisis, with his crude comments echoing in voters' ears, day in and day out. National media have dug up evidence of some of his bad and bizarre behavior, including agreeing with an interviewer that his daughter Ivanka was a "piece of ass". In a 2002 interview with Howard Stern, Trump also said he preferred leaving women over a certain age.

"What is it at 35? It's called check-out time," he quips. At 9:00 pm (0200 GMT Monday), the real estate magnate will face the former secretary of state in their second presidential debate which will take place at Washington University in St Louis. The format poses its own difficulties for Trump: half of the questions will be asked by undecided voters. He will want to build a personal connection with these everyday Americans and show his capacity for empathy, a quality that often has been absent in his large, raucous campaign rallies.

'Alpha-male boasting'

Despite an angry backlash over Trump's

remarks boasting about his ability to grope women as he pleases without impunity, he insisted there is "zero chance I'll quit". Late Saturday, the defiant Republican stepped outside of his Trump Tower skyscraper in New York, brandishing his fist to cheers from dozens of supporters.

Asked if he was staying in the race, he responded: "100 percent". Trump's own wife Melania said she was offended by her husband's "unacceptable and offensive" comments, caught on a hot mic just months after the two married. But she urged voters to support him. "I hope people will accept his apology, as I have, and focus on the important issues facing our nation and the world," she said in a statement.

In the footage, released Friday by The Washington Post, Trump can be heard using vulgar and predatory language as he describes hitting on a married woman and grabbing women's crotches. It forced a rare apology from a campaign already peppered by controversies over Trump's treatment of women, roiling his Republican Party. The Republican National Committee appeared to have halted part of its "Victory" program to elect Trump, asking for a mail production to be "put a hold", the Politico news website reported.

CNN said the RNC was considering ending a joint fundraising agreement with the Trump campaign. But Trump called the disclosure a "distraction", defiantly hitting back at the Clintons over husband Bill's past infidelities, and hinting he would say more during Sunday's debate.

Britain's Nigel Farage, who co-founded the UK Independence Party that led this year's shock campaign to leave the European Union, dismissed Trump's remarks as little more than

"alpha male boasting" and "the kind of thing men do."

'Enough!'

Republican reaction to the videotape came fast and furious, with some calling on him to step aside or allow running mate Mike Pence to take over, while others simply withdrew their endorsement. Pence, the governor of Indiana, said he was "offended" by Trump's remarks. But Trump's campaign released a schedule showing the bombastic billionaire would be back on the trail for rallies starting Monday. House Speaker Paul Ryan, the top Republican officeholder, said he was "sickened" by Trump's comments, and withdrew an invitation for him to attend a political event in Wisconsin. By Saturday, about a dozen senators, a dozen members of the House of Representatives and three governors-all Republicans-had withdrawn their support. Among them was former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice, who said: "Enough! Donald Trump should not be president. He should withdraw."

Senator John McCain, the 2008 presidential nominee with whom Trump has sparred repeatedly, said "Donald Trump's behavior... make(s) it impossible to continue to offer even conditional support for his candidacy."

Governor John Kasich of Ohio said Trump's comments were "disgusting" and Illinois Senator Mark Kirk called for an "emergency replacement". Actor-director Robert de Niro also weighed in, saying: "I'd like to punch him in the face." But top Trump surrogate Rudy Giuliani, a former New York mayor, insisted that there was "nothing that would cause his dropping out." "That is wishful thinking of the Clinton campaign and those people who have opposed him for a long time. He is in the race to win," Giuliani added. — AFP



JEREMIE, HAITI: A young man carries water to remove the mud of his house destroyed by Hurricane Matthew on October 8, 2016. — AFP

SUSPECT IN 2 FATAL POLICE SHOOTINGS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY

PALM SPRINGS: Police have apprehended the man suspected of fatally shooting two officers and wounding another in Palm Springs, California, authorities announced yesterday. The Riverside County Sheriff's Department made the announcement overnight on Twitter. No further information was immediately available.

Two officers trying to resolve a family dispute were killed Saturday when a man they had been speaking with suddenly pulled out a gun and opened fire, Palm Springs police Chief Bryan Reyes said. A third officer was wounded and remained hospitalized. The chief identified the slain officers as Jose "Gil" Gilbert Vega and Lesley Zerebny.

Zerebny, 27, had been with the department for about 18 months and only recently returned from maternity leave after giving birth to a daughter four months ago. Vega, the father of eight, was a 35-year veteran who planned to retire in December. He had been working overtime on his day off Saturday. The wounded officer's name was not released. Riverside County SWAT officers quickly sealed off the normally quiet residential neighbor-

hood in this desert resort town as police evacuated some residents. They told others to stay inside their homes, keep their doors locked and not to open them for anyone until further notice.

Although Reyes didn't identify the shooting suspect, he indicated police had had previous dealings with him. He declined to elab-

rate, adding that Riverside County sheriff's deputies were now in charge of the investigation. As the lockdown continued, scores of police officers gathered at Palm Springs Desert Regional Medical Center to offer a somber salute as the bodies of Zerebny and Vega were loaded into white hearses for transport to a coroner's office. — AP



PALM SPRINGS: Riverside County Sheriff's Deputies stand near the scene of a shooting on Saturday. — AP



**I Smile Dental Clinic...
Now Recruiting**

MARKETING OFFICER

Job Description:

- Ambitious and proactive ready for market challenges & good knowledge of Kuwait market.
- Marketing planner and willing to share revenue responsibility.
- CRM planning and managing the execution (new targeting and optimising our customer base, customer segmentation, promotional planning & implementation etc.).
- Sound knowledge of relevant online, social media & offline marketing channels.
- Customer acquisition via online, social media and offline marketing channels.
- Minimum of 3 years marketing experience, preferably in online, social media & offline marketing in a similar health care business.
- Good knowledge in English & Arabic languages.

**Interested candidates, send your cv to:
marketing@ismilekw.com**