

‘Ending blockade of Cuba would strengthen world science and health’

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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Graduates from Cuba's University of Medical Sciences. *The following letter was sent to H. Holden Thorp, editor-in-chief of Science magazine, by marine biologist and Cuba solidarity activist Mark Friedman.*

Hello editor Thorp,

I write to you as a subscriber for 15+ years of Science magazine and a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). I have appreciated the high quality and professionalism of the magazine and use it regularly in my honors Biology and Physio-anatomy classes. I urge you to print this — think outside the box from your “traditional” letters.

I call attention to an omission in your comprehensive editorial [“Do Us a Favor.”](#)

We know that this Washington administration, as well as others past, operates on the basis of politics, often religion and not science. As scientists, we must become more active in politics, using our knowledge to inform the public and galvanize ourselves into action beyond legislation and lobbying. This is particularly true as the world enters a new stage with the coronavirus.

Although a vaccine does not yet exist, Cuban scientists and physicians developed Interferon Alpha 2B, which is now being produced and distributed in millions of doses in China due to its effectiveness in reducing the duration of and mortality of the coronavirus. The success is widely known among medical professionals.

Initially developed in response to the U.S.-CIA introduction into Cuba of the swine flu to kill thousands of pigs — an effort to starve the Cuban people — they developed this medicine, which is also effective against other diseases.

An omission in your editorial was not only the existence of this medicine that mediates Covid-19, but the fact that Cuban doctors have been requested and sent to more than 50 countries, including Italy, France and throughout the Caribbean, to

assist their often-meager health care systems in responding to the virus.

Why Cuba? They have a robust pharmaceutical industry and they sent hundreds of doctors to West Africa to defeat the Ebola virus (the only country to do so). The U.S. government should end the Cuban blockade so we have access to this medicine and others that the Cubans have developed to substantially reduce lung cancer and leg amputations resulting from late stage diabetes.

World science and health would be stronger with normalized relations between the two countries.

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