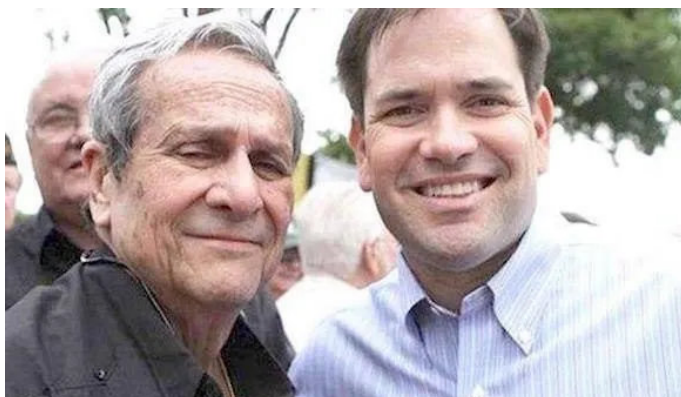


# Rubio and international blackmail

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Marco Rubio (right) and Félix Rodríguez, the assassin who claims responsibility for Che's death in La Higuera.

Marco Rubio has unleashed an aggressive campaign of falsehoods and bullying to secure votes against Cuba in the United Nations General Assembly. With one week to go before the annual vote on the blockade of Cuba, the Secretary of State has launched a diplomatic offensive to try to shift the balance: not so much to add "no" votes as to transform affirmative votes into abstentions or absences.

A State Department cable, leaked to Reuters and dated October 2, reveals the strategy: to link the resolution on the blockade to the war in Ukraine and present

Cuba as a threat to regional peace.

The document, distributed to dozens of embassies, instructs U.S. diplomats to pressure governments to oppose the resolution, based on the accusation that between 1,000 and 5,000 Cubans are fighting alongside Russian forces. “After North Korea, Cuba would be the largest contributor of foreign fighters,” the text states.

The objective is explicit: to significantly reduce the number of affirmative votes in the UN; “no” votes are “preferred,” but abstentions or non-participation also serve the purpose. Speaking to the press on Wednesday in Havana, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla showed a facsimile copy of the State Department document and stated that Cuban-born congressmen had sent additional letters in which, in a threatening tone, they made the vote conditional on other aspects of the bilateral relationship. These are unmistakable gestures of neighborhood bullies.

The offensive comes in a context of tougher sanctions following Trump’s return to the White House, which does not tolerate the fact that last year the resolution was approved by 187 votes in favor, with the United States and Israel against and Moldova abstaining. This precedent highlights the countercurrent nature of the current maneuver.

Havana’s response has been categorical: Cuba is not part of the armed conflict in Ukraine nor does it participate with military personnel “there or in any other country.” The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has published details of criminal proceedings for mercenary activities related to this front: nine cases (2023-2025) against 40 defendants; eight trials and five convictions involving 26 people, with sentences ranging from five to 14 years; three cases pending sentencing and another in progress. The Foreign Ministry maintains a policy of “zero tolerance” against mercenary activity, trafficking, and the participation of nationals in conflicts abroad.

Meanwhile, the Caribbean is being militarized under the pretext of the “war on drugs.” Washington extrajudicially kills crew members on board ships, reinforces its naval presence, and tests rules of engagement that increase the intensity of the use of force. The campaign to blackmail governments into rejecting the Cuban resolution is not a separate chapter, but rather the narrative cover for this escalation, which also opportunistically takes advantage of a diplomatic operation to divert attention from the profound suffering caused by the blockade of the Cuban people.

Confirmed as Secretary of State in January, Marco Rubio has placed Cuba at the center of his hemispheric agenda. Among his measures is the repeated use of visa restrictions against foreign officials whom he accuses of participating in the alleged “coercive labor export scheme” of Cuban medical missions. Rubio has done everything possible to criminalize one of the island’s most recognized cooperation programs.

The Secretary of State has also amplified controversial narratives from the past—such as hypotheses about the external causes of the so-called “Havana syndrome”—which the U.S. intelligence community considers “highly improbable” following interagency assessments in 2023 and 2025. The contrast between that evidence and political rhetoric illustrates the method: loading the media climate with fallacious national security allegations to weaken support for the resolution.

But historical arithmetic is stubborn. Since 1992, the General Assembly has overwhelmingly approved calls to end the blockade, and in 2024, the score was 187-2-1.

With that precedent, the most likely scenario is that the resolution will again pass by a very large majority, even if Washington manages to scrape together a few abstentions or absences.

If history is any guide, the overwhelming pronouncement of the assembly will be

repeated once again.

Source: [La Jornada](#), translation [Resumen Latinoamericano - English](#)

