

What's Happening with Cuba's Energy Crises?

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OR IT WILL SURELY OBLITERATE US

By Gustavo A Maranges

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RESUMEN
LATINOAMERICANO AND THE THIRD WORLD

Dateline: Havana

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Most of these small protests took place in isolated neighborhoods, which had been without electricity for over 6 hours, generating a lot of discomfort in the middle of the tropical summer the island is experiencing. Groups of citizens took to the streets

banging on pots and pans demanding the restoration of electricity. Unfortunately, this is not a problem of someone's will, as some haters of Cuba have alleged. It is rather about the real impossibility of satisfying the country's electricity demand.

Many people might question the action of those Cubans who protested, although it is a genuine claim understood by the country's authorities at all levels. Our hands on President Miguel Diaz-Canel himself recently stated that it is understandable that people get upset and irritated amid so many adversities, and assured the population that everyone is working tirelessly to alleviate the problem given the conditions at hand.

It is important to clarify that these are not politically motivated protests, as many have tried to misrepresent, but rather the legitimate expression of hundreds of Cubans whose lives have been disrupted by the situation.

Unlike many places in today's world, not a single image of violence has been recorded in Cuba during these events. On the contrary, footage of governors and mayors explaining to people the situation is the most common image. This is the most immediate thing that a government can do after being subjected to the longest-lasting and complete system of sanctions ever imposed on a country, namely the US blockade.

Undoubtedly, the situation is desperate for those who have to suffer the power cuts, but it is comforting to see the Cubans tenacity in the struggle to overcome this crisis. From the president himself to the last engineer and worker, they work tirelessly to reestablish every single megawatt of power. However, these efforts clash against the harsh reality of a country going through one of the most severe economic crises in its history.

Cuba is a country that imports 50% of the fuels it consumes, which puts it at a tremendous disadvantage when the price of a barrel of oil is above US\$100. The current generation deficit is around 20%, which has been clearly explained to all citizens while asking for people's understanding.

But what is so special about this situation? Is Cuba the only country facing an energy crisis? The answer of course is no. You just have to look around to see that not only countries in the region, such as Panama and Ecuador, but even Europe and the United States themselves are experiencing energy crises, of course, in a different way.

These details are deliberately ignored in Florida and Madrid, where the Cuban opposition claims that the protests are also against communism or that the political system is the cause of the blackouts. This line of thinking leads us to two possible scenarios. The first is that Germany, the United States, Spain, and Belgium, just to quote a few examples, are communist too, since people are protesting the high cost of fuel and electricity there.

Second, if we assume that the energy crisis is the fault of the prevailing political system, we can say that the cause of the energy crisis in Europe is the capitalist system. This is much closer to reality, the explanation is much more complex, but it shows that this current crisis cannot be blamed on Cuba being socialist.

There is no doubt that the blockade severely affects the income of the Cuban economy. On the other hand, the collapse of Cuba's tourist market and the decrease in the export of medical services during the pandemic have caused a hard currency deficit that is pulling down the Cuban Economy's recovery, as well as its capacity to face US sanctions.

The Cuban energy panorama is complex, and the recent accident in Matanzas only makes it all worse. The explosion of two 50,000m³ oil tanks means less storage capacity, which is essential for Cuba in the current context.

The protests of the Cuban people is undeniable, but it is not coming from wanting to remove a government but is the only way they have found to express their frustration. Indeed, much can still be done in Cuba to ease this situation, but so far, no action can guarantee sufficient electricity generation. The provincial governments have improved the planning of power cuts to allow people to better organize their daily activities. However, more efforts are necessary in this regard.

Taking advance of this delicate landscape, the hostile media has tried to show Cuba as an inefficient state which cannot satisfy its citizens' most basic needs. Why don't they ever question the efficiency of European governments, which have taken several measures to face the threat of running out of Russian gas? This is a duplicitous and manipulative game that seeks to demonize the image of a government for the simple fact of it being socialist. They never miss an opportunity to attack Cuba on this basis.

Once again, they have bet on channeling the uneasiness of Cubans against their government, although this time, they have not succeeded despite making huge efforts. Cuba is not the same country after July 11, 2021, not because it is better or worse, but because Cubans have understood that being displeased is one thing and quite another to allow themselves

to be used to harm their own country.

Source: Resumen Latinoamericano – US

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

An expert in Latin American history, Gustavo A Maranges frequently writes about Cuba and other nations standing up to the Anglo-American empire.

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