

Our own definition of "blockade"



Besiege, preventing the functioning of something. This is the meaning that the Dictionary of the Spanish Language provides for the verb "to block." A consensual interpretation for the word, offered from the perspective of linguists and scholars of our language.

Nonetheless, as respectable as these definitions may be, the subjective insight of human beings could considerably broaden the Academy's definition, in fact all the scientific power of this linguistic arena could not gather all the interpretations the Cuban people could contribute to understanding the term.

Not to mention what U.S. citizens - also victimized by their government's policies - could contribute.

The truth is that, for the inhabitants of this island, "blocking" is not a common term that can go unnoticed. There are too many implications in all areas in which we function, for the mere act of hearing the word not have an effect. No one doubts that the blockade negatively impacts the country in the broadest sense, and every individual achievements and personal goals.

We could choose sphere of society as an example. Any, yes, this is said with full intentionality, because although some are closer to us than others, in the end all contribute to economic and social development, and all bear irrefutable scars inflicted by the incomprehensible siege over almost 60 years.

It is true that no one can help but be moved when, to cite just one example, we hear about the refusal of medicine for Cuban patients, the obstacles to importing medical equipment, the millions that it costs

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Cuba to acquire these products in third countries, but the reality is much harsher.

If we itemize these constraints, if we bring them into the family setting, we see in a cruder and more painful way the impact of these arbitrary restrictions. We see them manifested in the desperation of a parent, because a foreign government denies their child a cure for a terrible disease.

And if we continue this hypothetical journey through Cuban homes, institutions, and workplaces, we will surely hear anecdotes such as that of a scientist who was unable to share his studies with colleagues in other nations because a visa was refused.

We are likely to hear from artists who, just because they are Cuban, have been banned from attending a prestigious festival, or an athlete who, after an intense year of preparation, does not understand the justification for denying him access to an international competition.

And what about the shared sacrifice of public officials and the population facing the attempt to strangle our economy by denying the arrival of essential fuel to the island, without which no nation can function at full capacity.

Millions, without exaggerating, millions could be the experiences recounted, the experiences of a hard-working, self-sacrificing, honest, altruistic people, who have been made the target of the world's greatest empire's scorn, for not bowing to demands that would compromise our principles.

Our daily lives would allow us to expand on the basic meaning of terms like genocide, violation of human rights, persecution, extraterritoriality and many others that ultimately speak of a direct attack on the sovereignty of an independent state.

Cubans are indignant that the U.S. government euphemistically calls the blockade an embargo, claiming that its objective is to overthrow the country's leadership, which they call a "dictatorship," and use the hypocritical argument over and over again to present themselves as the saviors of Cuban men and women.

But this is by no means a story of exhaustion or pessimism. Know that over all these years, we have held onto our own antonyms for the term "blockade," which have meanings for this people that go beyond structural and formal issues of language.

Antonyms of our choice include: work, fight, grow, develop, unite, create, think. Conjugated in the first person, plus "you, he, she, they," but above all, "we," yes, because collective thinking and action have been and will be our main weapon against this failed policy.

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