

Yes, Daddy, Yes

By: Arnaldo Musa
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It all began when a man from Jatibonico, now living in New Jersey, elevated Marco Rubio to star status because, in London, he happened to sit at a banquet to the left of a royal figure. What was not mentioned is that the Trump-aligned official subsequently traveled to Israel, after which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu launched a campaign of extermination against the Palestinian population in Gaza City.

This detail might seem odd, if not for the fact that, alongside the praise for Rubio, social media also circulated stories about his ties to the former Camagüey municipality—today part of Sancti Spiritus—when, in truth, it was his late mother, Odrialys, who was born there. She came from humble origins, later moved to Havana, married, and during the Batista dictatorship the couple emigrated to Miami. It was there that “little Marco” was born.

This is worth underscoring, because Rubio has tried to create the impression that he was born in Cuba and that his family was forced to flee “Castro-communism.” Today, he continues his rise in U.S. politics, a system driven by money, patronage, and lobbying—not by genuine participatory democracy. He has become a strong voice on foreign policy, security, and crackdowns on freedom of expression, pleasing Donald Trump entirely, whom he repeatedly calls “daddy.”

Not Always That Way

Rubio is now a devoted and fervent supporter of Trump. But he was once among his fiercest critics when he unsuccessfully ran against him in the 2016 Republican presidential primaries.

At that time, the Florida legislator compared the former reality television personality to “a *Third World strongman*” and warned: “*In the coming years, many people on the right, in the media, and among voters in general will have to explain and justify how they fell into this trap of supporting Donald Trump, because this will not end well.*”

Rubio also said: “*Donald Trump, a con man, will never have control of this party,*” and, “*We cannot allow a con*

man to have access to the nuclear codes of the United States of America.”

At that point, Rubio even mocked Trump about the size of his hands—an insinuation about his rival’s manhood—which led Trump, during a primary debate, to assure that *“there’s no problem”* down there.

Trump struck back with full force, branding Rubio *“Little Marco”* and calling him *“a lightweight”* whom he *“wouldn’t hire to run one of [his] smaller companies, a highly overrated politician!”*

Kryptonite

Parents of small children often rely on a powerful tool when their authority is questioned or when difficult questions arise: *“Because I said so.”* Pure kryptonite. The same principle appears to guide the current U.S. government: if Donald Trump says it, then it must be true. And Marco Rubio is the one who interprets this principle most faithfully.

He demonstrated it recently when explaining a military attack on a speedboat in the Caribbean, about which very few details are known beyond Trump’s social media posts. Trump claimed the vessel was being used by the criminal organization Tren de Aragua to transport narcotics.

“He designated these groups as terrorist organizations, which is what they are, and yesterday he had the opportunity in international waters to eliminate a direct threat to the security of the American people. That’s what he did, and he is prepared to do it again, because this is a president who has been very clear: he was elected on that promise and he is going to fulfill it,” said the Secretary of State.

Veteran political journalist Roberto Rodríguez Tejera, who has covered Rubio since he began his political career in 1996 on the West Miami City Commission, says he is not surprised by Rubio’s ascent. From there, Rubio moved to the Florida legislature, the U.S. Senate, and now the Department of State, thanks largely to his ability to adapt to circumstances.

The Great Hater

Marco Rubio is the only former senator in Trump’s current cabinet, arriving there after serving on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It was there that his political evolution was also evident. In 2012, during a speech at the conservative Brookings Institution, he warned of the risks of authoritarianism but acknowledged that the leaders of Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and Ecuador—then under President Rafael Correa—had been democratically elected.

In April 2015, when launching his campaign for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination, he demanded that the United States reclaim global leadership and denounced what he called the *“erosion of democracy and human rights around the world, especially in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua.”*

Thus, his rhetoric as Secretary of State about Nicolás Maduro is hardly surprising. In Ecuador, he labeled Maduro *“a narco-terrorist.”* Rubio added: *“And I’m not the one saying it, a grand jury in the state of New York is.”*

In March 2020, the U.S. Department of Justice announced that charges had been filed against Maduro and other officials in his government for narco trafficking. But the same statement emphasized that these were *“accusations”*—a formal indictment—meaning the presumption of innocence still applied. In other words, pure falsehood.

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