
We Are That Place

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It is us, Mister Trump. Perhaps, in your infinite arrogance, you haven't had time to study the history of the country you threaten. But Cuba is not a piece of land anchored just below your imperial palace. When you threaten to come in and wreck the place, I hope you're ready to kill and die. Because Cuba is us, and we know how to wield a machete if the bullets run out.

We are people of peace, of dominoes after work and a drink with friends. We are boys and girls who walk to school alone, without fear. We are men and women who don't have much, almost nothing, but we have neighbors, family, parks, beaches, jokes about 'Pepito' to laugh even at misfortunes. That joy that might seem incomprehensible, and a priceless humanism.

Let me explain, so that if you are going to come—well, if you are going to send your soldiers—you know where you're putting them... What am I going to explain... I don't even need to remind you about the Bay of Pigs. You saw it recently. Multiply 32 by millions, sir. We don't have an AK at home, but we know where they are and they have been ours for 67 years: the weapons, all of them, belong to the people. And we will not hesitate to use them to the last drop of blood. Because this infinite love for the homeland *"is not a ridiculous love for the land, nor for the grass our feet tread; it is the invincible hatred for those who oppress it, it is the eternal rancor towards those who attack it."*

I swear to you this is not about *"tough talk."* You yourself admitted we are tough, that no pressure has been enough. Check your own archives and you will discover, conceited sir, that you are not the first to threaten us from the sadly notorious Oval Office, where they believe they can rule the world. From there they have signed laws and decrees left and right to take away even our skateboard, as a friend wrote on Facebook recently. Demand that your advisor speak clearly to you and tell you the history from the beginning, because he has been there a long time, like a bird of prey, waiting for the tiger to tear us apart, and he has seen us sail on after every storm.

Psychopathic President, I repeat, it's not about tough talk. But yes, the truth is we are as tough as Maceo. And do you know what the *mambí* said when that Pancho came to propose a deal to him? *"We don't understand each*

other!" We don't understand pacts without dignity. Here, as I heard the *mulato* from the fields say, "*we're not looking for trouble, no sir,*" but "*if they mess with us, it's all the way, no fear.*"

Or yes, my little girl is afraid. She has tearfully asked Oshun for there not to be a war. Oshun is a goddess of honey and fresh water. She came from Africa in the hearts of enslaved Black people and she put down roots here. We call her Cachita, for the Caridad del Cobre, and she is the patron saint of Cuba. She wins her battles by dancing, as her children also prefer to do. However, when she had to go to the jungle, she went and became a *mambisa*. Later she went up to the Sierra and from there fought with us. My little girl knows she will try to ward off those warlike vibes that obsess you, but she is afraid because she also knows the courage and strength with which we could rise up against the invader.

In short, Mister Trump, that was it. So you know what you're saying when you talk about "*wrecking the place.*" We are that place. Cuba is not land and sea, but flesh and bone, veins through which *mambisa*, rebel, and militia blood flows. A diverse people, where each one thinks and feels for themselves, but when the going gets tough, it beats with one heart, more in tune than an orchestra.

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff
