11-25-1992

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Category/Department: General
Published: Wednesday, November 25, 1992

On Nov. 21, the Foreign Ministry directed subsidiaries of US companies operating in Mexico to ignore US legislation that bans commercial deals with Cuba. The US measure is aimed at closing a loophole in the 30-year-old embargo against Havana by banning foreign subsidiaries of US companies from dealing with Cuba. Until last month, such companies were exempt from a US trade embargo against Cuba. Mexico, along with numerous Latin American and European nations, has denounced the law as an affront to its sovereignty. The Mexican government directive, published in several newspapers, said the government does not accept the premise that companies operating on Mexican territory operate under the primacy of foreign legislation. The reports said the government would adopt measures to block compliance with foreign rules on national territory. In other developments: Nov. 19: John Negroponte, US ambassador to Mexico, told participants at a business seminar at Universidad del Noroeste in Hermosillo, Sonora state, that the Toricelli law would apply in very few cases. He added that only a small number of US company subsidiaries actually conduct commerce with Cuba. Negroponte emphasized the law is aimed only at Cuba and is not intended to harm relations with other US trading partners. Nov. 20: US Customs officials prevented a group of activists from exporting a shipment of donated medical and school supplies, powdered milk, bicycles and Bibles to Cuba via Mexico. Activists trying to circumvent the required licensing procedure were blocked at the international bridge in Laredo, Texas, by agents who scuffled over possession of the goods. The shipment was bound for the coastal city of Tampico, where the goods were to be loaded onto a Cuban freighter. A small group of activists was able to transport 16 tons of school and medical supplies and powdered milk across the international bridge following an initial confrontation with US Customs officials, said Tom Hansen, a coordinator of Minneapolis-based Pastors for Peace, which organized the caravan. Nov. 22: About 100 members of Pastors for Peace arrived in Havana on a chartered Cuban flight on Nov. 22 from Tampico. The Associated Press, quoting the Cuban news service Prensa Latina, said the visiting delegation was expected to return Dec. 1 to Tampico after a weeklong stay to supervise delivery of the aid. Nov. 24: Mexico led the Latin American nations supporting a UN resolution seeking the repeal of the recently expanded US economic embargo against Cuba. The resolution passed 59-3, with 71 countries abstaining. Jorge Montano, Mexico's UN ambassador, said his country was particularly angry that the US would tell Latin American neighbors how to conduct trade. "The government of Mexico will always firmly reject any attempt to apply in its territory the legislation of any other state," said Montano. (Sources: Notimex, 11/19/92; Associated Press, 11/21/92, 11/22/92, 11/23/92, 11/24/92)

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