

What Notimex Didn't Say

Early on Tuesday March 31st, I read a Notimex news cable dated the 30th; it stated, verbatim:

"Alan Garcia, the president of Peru, today described as 'prudent' the withdrawal of his country from the humanitarian project 'Mission Miracle' that is sponsored by the governments of Venezuela and Cuba to care for ophthalmologic patients.

"After emphasizing the efficiency with which the state-run Essalud runs cataract operations, the Peruvian president told journalists that 'the Mission no longer had any justification for its being used', staffed by foreign medical doctors.

"The head of state informed that 'Mission Miracle' saw to the operations of 1,500 people in two years, while Essalud cared for 25,000 patients in one year in Peru."

Further along, the cable continued attributing Garcia other similar arguments.

In the first place, I didn't know why Notimex was including Venezuela in that mission initiated by Cuba in July of 2004 after the sizeable earthquake that devastated the region of Pisco in Peru. Venezuela is Cuba's tried and tested friend and has shown great solidarity with our people, but it has no connection with the actions of our country in Peru following a tradition of solidarity in the medical services field that was begun in Algeria in 1960 when that people was struggling for its independence from French colonialism.

Chavez was born in 1954 and was not even 6 years old then. A similar action with Peru took place in 1970 when another earthquake took the lives of 70,000 Peruvians and there were not even any relations between the two countries. Our noble people provided 100,000 blood donations on that occasion.

Accustomed as I am to hearing false information about Cuba and amazed by this strange news cable, I asked for some information from our Cuban ambassador in Lima, regarding to the situation of our doctors:

"Since the year 2006, Operation Miracle has restored or improved the sight of 19,496 Peruvians, 16,907 at the Cuban Ophthalmologic Centre in Bolivia and 2,589 at the Cuban Ophthalmologic Centre in Cuzco which started its work on December 15, 2008.

"Neither in these or any other statements has the Head of State mentioned Cuba or our Operation Miracle Clinic in Cuzco.

"Coinciding with this statement, Yehude Simon, the president of the Council of Ministers, made statements to the Health Ministers of South America gathered together in Lima, praising the Cuban collaboration in the health sector. Simon expressed the appreciation of his government and of the Peruvian people to Cuba and sincerely hoped that these connections between our two countries would become more extensive.

"We also have direct information that Garcia himself has recently made both public and private respectful references to Cuba and expressed thanks for the decisive support made by our medical teams in Peru."

I won't charge a single penny for filling in for the news cable service Notimex for all it didn't say. Lima's general press services and the other public information media have echoed such assertions.

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