

STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF CUBA

Press reports yesterday quoted statements by US Assistant Secretary of State Otto Reich claiming "**we have information that four Cuban planes landed at Maiquetía International Airport, Venezuela, on the morning of April 12, when the result of the change in constitutional order was still in doubt**". According to AFP, Mr. Reich wondered "**what they were doing there, what they were carrying, we do not know**".

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs categorically denies these false statements, which are typical of the Assistant Secretary of State.

These statements show that Mr. Reich is an unscrupulous and cynical official who is trying to blot out a sinister past, with links to the dirty war in Nicaragua, as an associate of Oliver North and Luis Posada Carriles, and to the scandal of illegal arms supply to the Contras in defiance of a congressional ban. Moreover, he protected and sought asylum in the US for terrorist Orlando Bosh, who together with Luis Posada Carriles was responsible for the blasting of a Cuban civil aircraft with 73 passengers on board.

If it had been necessary to land a Cuban civil aircraft in Venezuela to pick up Cuban diplomatic personnel besieged by Mr. Reich's friends, or for any other humanitarian, peaceful purpose, we would have done so and would have had no reason for secrecy. However, since Mr. Otto Reich's assertion is a downright lie, it serves merely to demonstrate his mendaciousness and ineptitude.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also wishes to place on record that, on Saturday April 13, the Cuban government gave instructions for Cuban civil workers other than medical personnel to assemble at specified locations and initiated the relevant procedures for their evacuation, which proved unnecessary, given that the fascist coup instigated by Mr. Reich was over shortly after it began.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba challenges the US Assistant Secretary of State to provide the international public opinion with the least shred of evidence that a single Cuban plane landed in Caracas on the morning of April 12.

The only real event of this nature was on April 16, four days after the attempted coup, when a Cubana de Aviación IL-62 landed at the Venezuelan capital's international airport, bringing the Cuban Foreign Affairs Minister, whose mission was to decorate Cuba's diplomats for their heroism when, on April 12, the fascist hordes tried to storm our embassy in Caracas.

We hope Mr. Reich will not try to dodge the issue, but will rather offer a substantive response to this challenge regarding the alleged landing of Cuban aircraft in Venezuela on April 12.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba
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Information Office
Cuban Interests Section