

April 15, 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20522

Dear Secretary Blinken:

I write to request an update on the U.S. Department of State's ongoing assessment of the damage done to U.S. national security by former Ambassador Manuel Rocha, and his work as an undercover agent of Cuba's General Directorate of Intelligence. It is of the utmost importance to Congress, and the American people, that the counterintelligence gaps that enabled Rocha's 40-year long career as a Cuban spy are identified and addressed to prevent future espionage threats that could endanger American lives and interests.

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) December 4, 2023 indictment, Rocha's actions constituted "one of the highest-reaching and longest-lasting infiltrations of the United States government by a foreign government." During his career, Rocha served in senior diplomatic posts in half a dozen Latin American countries, including as the Political Military Officer in Nicaragua, National Security Council (NSC) Director for Latin America, Principal Deputy for the American Interests section in Havana, Ambassador to Bolivia, and as an advisor to U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM). He was in a position to use his government access to undermine American assistance to Nicaragua's fight against Cuban-backed Sandinista rebels, steer American policy towards Latin America to benefit Cuba, reveal details of U.S. assistance to human rights defenders in Cuba, assist in electing a pro-Cuban leader in Bolivia, and divulge American military planning. As will certainly be revealed by any damage assessment, Rocha's actions had detrimental effects on the United States that cannot be understated.

What is most shocking about the Rocha case is the apparent myriad of red flags indicating Rocha's Cuba ties were ignored by the State Department and other federal agencies. Public reporting catalogs several instances when federal officials were alerted to Rocha's ties to Cuba but still allowed him access to sensitive national security information, including: suspicion of being an alleged "super mole" by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA); identification as a spy in 2006 by a defected Cuban Army lieutenant colonel; and inclusion on an FBI shortlist of possible Cuban spies in 2010. Two of these instances overlapped with Rocha's service as Advisor to SOUTHCOM from 2006 to 2012. Reports also detail troubling details that should have alerted officials at the State Department responsible for vetting Rocha over the course of his career, including his travel to Chile when it was under the control of the Cuban-backed government of socialist Salvador Allende, authorship of an NSC memo advocating for the complete dismantling of U.S. sanctions on the Cuban regime, and attempting to purchase outstanding property claims against the Cuban regime. At a minimum, these details indicate a

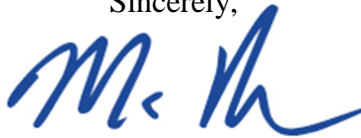
systemic failure of the State Department's counterintelligence mitigations that urgently need to be addressed.

As the State Department continues to conduct the damage assessment, I request that it provide answers to the following questions:

1. What counterintelligence gaps allowed Rocha to work undetected as a Cuban spy for the entirety of his State Department career?
2. Since Rocha's 2002 departure from the State Department, what counterintelligence mitigations and security measures have been put in place that would prevent future infiltrations?
3. What explains the failure of interagency processes to share critical information about Rocha possessed by the CIA and FBI with the State Department?
4. How will the State Department improve counterintelligence and security measures going forward?
5. Are you aware if the State Department, or any other U.S. agency, made any queries on Rocha's post- foreign service reported ventures at purchasing property claims confiscated by the communist regime? If so, what exactly was done?

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator