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Earlier, when I wrote the Reflection published today in Cubadebate and the National TV News, I had not read a report issued in Mexico by Mark Stevenson and David Koop and ran by AP, the main U.S. cable press agency.

Of course, it was not intended to prove me right when it repeated several times that I had accused Mexico of hiding the epidemic until Obama's visit to Mexico had concluded.

I went on to read the press dispatch thanks to the bulletins that bring news from the international press which were not included in the 326 pages published yesterday by the press agencies accredited in Cuba.

It is an AP article of particular interest at this moment. What does it say exactly?

"Obama's April 16 visit came a week before Mexican health officials announced swine flu was spreading, prompting an eventual mass shutdown that brought many parts of the country to a virtual halt.

"A study published Monday in the journal Science estimated Mexico alone may have had 23,000 cases of swine flu by April 23, the day it announced the epidemic. The study estimates swine flu kills between 0.4 percent and 1.4 percent of its victims, but lead author Neil Ferguson of Imperial College, London, said the data remain incomplete.

"It's very difficult to quantify the human health impact at this stage," he said.

"The analysis in Science suggests there are many more cases than those confirmed by laboratories -- anywhere from 6,000 to 32,000 cases in Mexico as of April 23. The flu has since spread around the world, and the study said it appears to be substantially more contagious than normal, seasonal flu.

"Researchers also compared the DNA of the viruses in 23 confirmed cases, and came up with an estimate of Jan. 12 for their earliest common ancestor -- presumably when person-to-person transmission began. But they said it could have been anywhere from Nov. 3 to March 2.

"The researchers said the 2009 H1N1 flu appears to be about equal in severity to the flu of 1957 and less severe than the deadly 1918 version.

"In Mexico, Monday's reopening of kindergartens and primary and middle schools shut since April 24 was the latest step in efforts to restore a sense of normality. Businesses, government services, high schools and universities reopened last week.

"But six of Mexico's 31 states put off reopening schools for a week because of local rises in the number of flu cases, and a seventh pushed it back a day to Tuesday. The Education Department said it will tack an extra seven days onto the school calendar to make up for the lost time.

"But while officials praised the health and education systems for their response to the crisis, there were signs that Mexico's overburdened health system was under strain.

"Dozens of government health care workers, including doctors and nurses, marched and blocked streets in the Gulf coast city of Jalapa to demand higher pay and better working conditions.

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"The government asked our help in combatting the influenza epidemic, now we are asking the government to do us justice," said nurse Mariana Cortes, one of the protest organizers."

I made such an effort to prove that there were symptoms from the end of March, five weeks before the official announcement of the epidemic! The Science magazine offers its view that the disease possibly emerged in Mexico between January and March.

I did not write that report or the article in Science. As it reports 10 times the number of patients I mentioned, and it is supported by one of the most prestigious scientific magazines in the world, I wonder if the President or his Party leaders have visited the U.S. ambassador to Mexico and threatened to sever diplomatic relations with that country.

Not long ago I observed with concern that the honorable President of Mexico was upset about a Reflection where I criticized his distinguished predecessor. How foolish of me to mention that vestal virgin of the Mexican oligarchy! He felt forced to protest in a public comment.

Some seem to wonder in what capacity I speak. I have said it very clearly: as "Comrade Fidel." I am a proud member of the Communist Party of Cuba. The title of the Reflection that so embittered President Calderon was "What Occurred To Me." It was really what occurred to me as I read his statement against Cuba. I did not breach any rule of ethics; I simply said what I thought very honestly and not insultingly. I have been trained by 10 U.S. presidents. One of them I deeply respect: Carter. One of the others gave sometimes the best and others the worst of him. Some of them only gave their worst for it was all they had to offer. The number 11, I am watching carefully. I am thankful to them all for having taught me well how to deal with the powerful.

I have nothing else to say today.

Fidel Castro Ruz

May 14, 2009

7:14 pm.

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