

Delegates at the UN General Assembly blast blockade and criticize Trump Administration



United Nations, November 7 (RHC)-- Diplomats from around the world called on Wednesday for an end to the United States long-standing economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, with many States criticizing the Administration of Donald Trump for intensifying sanctions and restrictions against the Caribbean island nation over the past year.

During the debate at the General Assembly prior to the vote of a draft resolution calling for the end of the measure, representatives lamented that the blockade, now in its fifty-seventh year, was strengthened in 2018 and 2019 following steps toward normalization undertaken between Cuba and the United States in 2015 and 2016.

Member States from Latin America and elsewhere called the embargo an illegal affront to the international community that jeopardizes not just the health and welfare of the people of Cuba but the entire region's development.

Some speakers accused the United States

of deliberately employing sanctions as a political tool to overthrow the Cuban Government, violating international law concerning the non-interference in the affairs of sovereign nations.

Alexander Pankin, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, characterized the embargo as the main barrier against the full-fledged enjoyment of human rights in Cuba.

"This cynical United States pressure has hampered Cuban doctors and health workers to access medicines, and by doing this, the United States is "introducing a genocide" against the Cuban people," he said.

The speaker from Nicaragua, Jaime Hermida Castillo, said that the purpose of the blockade is to damage critical sectors of the Cuban economy, while his counterpart from Belarus asserted that the United States is engaged in “economic terrorism.”

Viet Nam’s representative, Dang Dinh Quy, said that, as a country that experienced and suffered under a United States trade embargo for 19 years, it fully understands the difficulties and the damage sanctions can wreak upon a nation.

“The reality of the relations between Viet Nam and the United States shows that only constructive dialogue and engagement can foster mutual trust and bring positive change,” he added.

Speakers from Latin American countries suggested that the policy of the United States was an obsolete anachronism that dates to the height of the cold war.

Jamaica’s representative, Earle Courtenay Rattray, noted that the blockade, which was imposed in a bygone era, is being applied with an even higher level of intensity and rigor than when it was first instituted.

China agreed, with its representative, Zhang Jun, expressing hope that the United States and Cuba will normalize relations and “move with the historical trend of our times.” Doing so also serves the common interest of the two countries and promotes peace and prosperity in the region, he added.

Several representatives supported Cuba as a brotherly nation, citing the country’s assistance to States in the region and elsewhere, with the speaker for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines observing that Cuba’s contribution to healthcare and humanitarian aid in underserved areas of the world is unparalleled, typified in the fight against the Ebola epidemic in Africa.

The speaker for Syria, Ambassador Bashar Ja’Afari, noted that Cuba’s doctors had trained health workers from around the world.

Grenada’s representative, Keisha Aniya McGuire, speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), observed that Cuba was one of the first countries to come to the aid of the Bahamas in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian.

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