

Cuba and the world struggle against the US blockade



2019 was marked by a further tightening of Washington's economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba with the imposition on new sanctions by the Donald Trump Administration, though all of the hostile measures by the US crashed against the firm resistance of the Cuban people and the rejection by most nations of the world.

It was not by chance that Cuba garnered a new, resounding victory at the UN General Assembly, where, for the 28th consecutive year, 187 out of 193 UN members voted in favor of a Cuba-sponsored resolution that urges the lifting of Washington's coercive, unilateral policy against its Caribbean neighbor.

According to official statistics, between April 2018 and March 2019, the US blockade caused Cuba material damage surpassing 4 billion dollars.

As usual, US pressures and blackmail tactics did not pay off, as it had the support only of its traditional, unconditional ally, Israel, and that of the Brazilian ultra-right-wing government, headed by Jair Bolsonaro.

Dozens of representatives from Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia and Africa took the floor at the UN General Assembly and declared Washington's Cuba policy as irrational and obsolete. They contrasted Washington's continued attempt to isolate Cuba with the Caribbean island's foreign policy over the past nearly 60 years of Revolution marked by solidarity and cooperation with other nations around the

world, particularly in areas such as health and education.

In his remarks at the UNGA, the representative of Bolivia thanked Cuba for its selfless solidarity and support.

“This UN General Assembly session has served to more than just express our solidarity with Cuba. It has served to also express the world’s appreciation for Cuba’s selfless solidarity with other peoples.”

The jarring note was the speech by the US representative, who tried in vain to justify the unjustifiable. US ambassador Kelly Craft presented false arguments, showing Washington’s total contempt for international law and the will of the vast majority of the international community represented there, who year after year condemn the coercive, unilateral anti-Cuba policy and urge Washington to lift it, once and for all.

The US representative even categorically affirmed that the US government was not to be blamed for whatever goes on in Cuba.

Cuban foreign minister Bruno Rodríguez replied that the US government was in deed responsible for the economic hardships and the human suffering that the Cuban people have had to endure over the past nearly 60 years of Washington’s hostile policy against the Caribbean nation.

“For nearly six decades, Cuba has been the victim of the longest, most severe and unfair system of sanctions ever imposed on any nation. The government of the United States is in deed to be blamed for this.”

The top Cuban diplomat then challenged the US ambassador to explain before the UN General Assembly why Washington’s policy hampers Cuba’s development, the country’s purchases of food and medicine, and its normal trade and economic relations with third parties and countries.

Last May, the Trump Administration activated title III of the controversial Helms-Burton Law. The piece of legislation, whose activation had been suspended by all previous US administrations, allows parties whose property was nationalized in Cuba after 1959 to sue companies and individuals in U.S. courts whom they say "traffic" in the property in question.

All nationalizations by the Cuban Revolution were conducted in compliance with international law. This decision by the Trump Administration triggered the opposition of the international community, including the US’s own trading partners, who condemned the extraterritorial application of unilateral Cuba-related measures.

The European Union immediately issued a statement saying it would consider all options at its disposal to protect its legitimate interests, including in relation to its WTO’s rights and through the use of the EU Blocking Statute.

Several governments expressed equal concern, pledging to defend the interests of their nationals conducting legitimate investment in and trade with Cuba.

The long list of coercive measures imposed by the United States over the past twelve months also targeted family remittances to Cuba, further restricted travel by US citizens to the the Caribbean state by abruptly canceling group tours and cruises, and imposed sanctions on companies and oil tankers transporting fuel to Cuba, specially those carrying Venezuelan crude.

The United Nations was not the only forum, where world leaders and their representatives condemned the US blockade against Cuba. The 18th Summit of Heads of States and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, or NAM, held last October in Baku, Azerbaijan, passed a resolution condemning the imposition of coercive, unilateral measures by any state against another.

Furthermore, the visit here of world personalities like the King of Spain; the outgoing and incoming EU High Representatives for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini and Joseph Borrell, respectively; Prime Minister Mswati III of the Kingdom of Swatini; the Prime Ministers of Russia, Dmitri Medvedev, and Fiji, Josaia Voreque Bainimarama all attest to those countries' interest in further strengthening relations with Cuba.

Growing foreign participation in the Havana International Trade Fair, Cuba's Book and Tourism Fairs also show the world rejection of a policy that negatively impacts daily life on the island.

In the United States, surveys conducted regularly show that the majority of the US people support the lifting of the blockade and the establishment of normal relations between our two nations. There are even solidarity with Cuba groups inside the US Congress working towards policy shift.

As Cuban president Miguel Diaz-Canel affirmed on October 10th past before the National Assembly of People's Power, the Cuban Parliament: "intense and challenging days await us,.... », but Cuba is not alone. Millions around the world are accompanying us in our struggle against Washington's genocidal, inhumane policy, and with our people's aspiration to build a better, more just and prosperous socialist society.

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