

# *The United Nations and the blockade of Cuba*

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by Gustavo Espinoza M.

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Few remember, however, that since the independence of the northern power, the presence of the largest of the Antilles appeared as a tasty treat that wanted to devour the Stars and Stripes.

In 1808, Thomas Jefferson proposed the purchase of the island. And he proposed it to the Spanish government, which did not accept the idea. "I saw Cuba as the most interesting acquisition ever made to the system of states," he later said.

In 1823, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams bluntly proposed "the annexation" of Cuba as a natural requirement. The island "will inevitably gravitate toward the American Union," he said.

Since then, the issue was a fever in U.S. politics and loomed as a significant threat to the small island of the Mambises, fighters in the struggles for independence.

For Washington, Cuba was something like "the window" to the Caribbean and therefore a key piece in view of the domination of the territories located south of the Bravo River up to Patagonia.

José Martí, the Cuban hero, always knew it. That is why he said, before falling in combat, in 1895: "my duty is to prevent in time, with the independence of Cuba, the United States from spreading through the Antilles and to prevent them from falling with that force over our lands in America. What I have done until today, and will do, is for that purpose".

Perhaps the White House had the best opportunity in 1898, when in the heat of the struggle of Cuba against Spain, the American government decided to occupy the island militarily.

This was preceded by the provocation of the Maine, an American warship destroyed by an explosion in Havana Bay, with a painful toll of destruction and death.

Things did not turn out as expected by the Marines, and they had to withdraw before the massive repudiation of the island, but not without leaving two knots: the Guantanamo naval base, and the Platt Amendment, which subjected the Cuban State to the United States. While the former survives, the latter was buried in oblivion in 1925.

After a few years came the dictator Fulgencio Batista and then January 1, 1959. And the triumph of an unbeatable Revolution that freed Cuba from dictatorship and drove the rulers of the Empire out of their minds. They sought a way to put an end to what they considered "an intolerable threat".

#### IMMENSE MATERIAL DAMAGE

They devised several actions, such as the unsuccessful mercenary invasion of Playa Giron in April 1961, but the most monstrous was the blockade, which has been in place for more than 60 years, causing immense material damage to the island and leaving a painful trail of suffering and death.

If we wish to locate the most remote origin of this barbarity, we may well recall the now famous memorandum by Undersecretary of State Lester D. Mallory, who in 1960 made a mischievous suggestion for its implementation. Let us recall what he said:

"Most Cubans support Castro...the only foreseeable way to detract from his domestic support is through disenchantment and dissatisfaction arising from economic malaise and material difficulties...every possible means must be quickly employed to weaken the economic life of Cuba....

"...a course of action which, being as skillful and discreet as possible, will achieve the greatest advances in depriving Cuba of money and supplies, to reduce its financial resources and real wages, to bring about hunger, despair and the overthrow of the Government."

Throughout human history there have been several episodes in which a stronger country subjected its adversary to a blockade in order to surrender it.

From the siege of Troy to the Siege of Leningrad between 1941 and 1944, the life of countries has known episodes of this kind.

But none reached the magnitude of the one the world is contemplating today. The others occurred in wartime. This one, in peacetime, which makes it unprecedented. The most horrendous of the 20th century -Leningrad by Nazi Germany- lasted a little more than 900 days, but this one is going on for more than

30,000, and Washington seeks not only to extend it, but even to perpetuate it.

## THE GENOCIDAL MEASURE MUST COME TO AN END

The world watches in horror at this unchecked savagery. That is why, for the past 31 years, it has been discussing and approving an annual motion condemning the blockade imposed against Cuba.

As time goes by, more countries join this legitimate initiative. In recent years, only the United States and Israel have voted against it. But even the latter is careful to say that it does so out of "loyalty" to its "best ally", not because it shares the measure.

This year, when the UN General Assembly decides on the motion, the same thing will surely happen. The vast majority of countries will choose to support the proposal, and only the same old ones will vote against it. Once again, humanity will have its say.

But the issue is different: it is not enough to pass an annual motion condemning the blockade for it to end. U.S. policy is not guided by the will of the world, but only by the interests of Washington.

And these are not even its interests. They are those of small financial and warmongering cliques that have turned the regime they support into a gendarme of capital and monopolies.

That is why they are turning their backs on the whole of humanity. Today it is said that the world will be better off without a blockade. And that is true. But it would also be better without empire. This is confirmed by history and underlined by the evolution of world politics in our times.

Cuba is a guarantee of peace, of solidarity, of scientific advances and of outstretched hands. We Peruvians can give living testimony of this, because we perceive the blood and the outstretched arm of Fidel Castro and his people. Everyone knows it, just as we do.

The vote in the UN General Assembly this 2022 should be the last one. The genocidal blockade must come to an end.

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