

Anti-Imperialist News Service

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U. N. Condemns U.S. Blockade Against Cuba

The following is excerpted from Granma International.

The UN General Assembly today (October 29) approved by an overwhelming majority the resolution demanding an end of the U.S. blockade of Cuba, a vote passed by the Assembly over 17 years, the news agencies report.

Of the 192 UN member states, 185 voted in favor of the resolution, while three voted against (the United States, Israel and Palau) and two

abstained (Marshall Islands and Micronesia). With this result, Cuba has gained another vote this year in relation to 2007, when 184 voted in favor, four against (the United States, Israel, Palau and the Marshall Islands), and Micronesia abstained.

The resolution calling for an end to the blockade has been approved on 16 occasions with a backing that has grown from 59 votes in 1992 to the 185 of today.

Cuba Will Never Be Defeated

The following is excerpted from Granma International.

Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque affirmed before the United Nations on October 29 that the U.S. blockade, maintained for close to 50 years, will never defeat the Cuban people.

"From this forum I reiterate; they can never defeat the Cuban people. Neither blockades nor hurricanes can dishearten us. There will be no human or natural force capable of subjecting the Cuban people," he affirmed.

"If an example is needed, there are the five Cuban heroes, fighters against terrorism, who have already served 10 years of unjust and cruel incarceration in U.S. prisons, and who are a symbol of our people's determination to defend with dignity their freedom and independence."

Pérez Roque likewise condemned increased U.S. financial and material support for the actions of mercenary groups to defeat Cuba's constitutional order. He said that, to this end, the Bush government has approved an additional \$46 million for internal subversion on the island.

It has also channeled a further \$39 million into maintaining illegal radio and television broadcasts against our country, the minister informed the General Assembly.

Pérez Roque noted that those funds are eight times the total of supposed U.S. donations offered to the Cuban people in the wake of two recent hurricanes.

The foreign minister mentioned a November 2007 report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) which recognizes that, out of the 20 sanctions programs imposed on different countries, the blockade of Cuba constitutes the most all-encompassing combination of sanctions ever imposed by the United States.

The minister said that every aspect of Cuba's economic and social life is affected by the blockade, as is reflected in the extensive report from the UN secretary general on the issue, to which 118 countries and 22 international bodies and agencies contributed.

This ranges from the impossibility of having access to supplies and machines for cardiovascular surgery for infants or CAT scans that are essential for modern oncology, to the prosecution of U.S. citizens, with fines and prison terms, for traveling to Cuba, and even of the tourist agencies promoting such visits.

The U.S. government should explain to this Assembly why it considers Cuban children suffering from heart disease to be enemies, he stressed.

"The U.S. representatives lie to this Assembly every year when they repeat that such a blockade does not exist, that its measures are not the principal cause of the shortages and suffering that the Cuban people have had to endure over all these years and are still enduring,"

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Tens of Thousands Protest U.S. Attack on Syria

On October 30 in Syria, tens of thousands of people from all walks of life – including workers, students, women's, civic, and religious organization – demonstrated against U.S. aggression on their country.

The protests were organized in response to an October 26th raid in which soldiers from an American helicopter opened fire on workers inside a building under construction inside of Syria. Eight civilians were killed, including one woman and four children.

The U.S. military has refused to confirm the attack, while an unnamed U.S. military official disclosed to the Associated Press that American special forces had been used.

The raid is an attack on Syrian sovereignty and a reminder of the real danger of the U.S. further spreading the war into Syria.

Syrian foreign minister Walid Muallem denounced the U.S. raid saying, "We consider this criminal and terrorist action." Syria issued a formal complaint to the United Nations (UN) on October 28. A letter from the Syrian cabinet to the UN included the following statements, "Syria condemns this act of aggression perpetrated by the U.S. occupation forces... This act of aggression represents a dangerous violation of the Syrian sovereignty and the UN principles and conventions."

Cuba Will Never Be Defeated

he added.

In that context, Pérez Roque explained that the blockade is not an exclusively bilateral issue between Cuba and the United States. The extraterritorial application of U.S. laws and the persecution of the legitimate interests of companies and citizens of third countries who try to invest and trade with Cuba is a matter that concerns all the states meeting here, he said.

He observed that the blockade is also in flagrant violation of the rights of the U.S. people. It destroys their right to travel, enshrined in the U.S. Constitution itself.

In the last few years, he continued, the Treasury Department has intensified its strict policy of refusing licenses for religious, professional, cultural and student exchanges between the U.S. and Cuban people.

He also affirmed that the blockade impedes normal relations between Cubans resident in the United States and their families in Cuba.

After thanking on behalf of his government all those who, in one form or another, demonstrated their solidarity and support to Cuba in the wake of hurricanes Gustav and Ike, he said that, in contrast, the Washington administration responded with its habitual cynicism and hypocrisy.

He noted that the United States refused a Cuban request to purchase, via private credits, food and building materials from U.S. companies, at least for six months, in order to recover from the damages caused by the two hurricanes.

At the same time, it has attempted to orchestrate a crude propaganda campaign charging our government with not taking care of its people, he stated.

For its part, Cuba has acted in line with its traditional positions of principle. "We cannot accept supposed aid from those who have intensified the blockade, sanctions and hostilities against our people," he affirmed.

He added that despite the tremendous damage and devastation wreaked by the hurricanes, no sick person in Cuba

(continued from page 1)

has lacked medical care and all Cuban children and the 30,000 young people from 125 countries studying in our universities are attending classes.

The Cuban minister of foreign affairs affirmed that the blockade is the principal obstacle to the island's economic and social development. These measures, in force for close to 50 years, are likewise obstacles to the recovery process of the Cuban people in the wake of the hurricanes.

"Like every year since 1992, we appear before the General Assembly to demand the lifting of the illegal and unjust blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba for close to 50 years.

"Seven out of every 10 Cubans have spent their entire lives under this irrational and useless policy, which is unsuccessfully attempting to bring our people to their knees," he stated.

"Highly conservative estimates reveal that the direct accumulated damage provoked by the blockade of Cuba is in excess of \$93 billion. "At the current value of the dollar, that sum is equivalent to no less than \$224.6 billion. It is not hard to imagine what Cuba would have achieved if we had not been subjected to this brutal economic warfare on an international scale for all these years," he added.

During the UN General Assembly debate, Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of the Group of 77 plus China; Egypt, representing the Non-Aligned Movement; and Guyana, for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), spoke in support of the Cuban resolution, as did Venezuela, Mexico, Vietnam, China, Iran, South Africa and France.

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