

Six Decades of Aggression Toward Cuba

New Treasury Department regulations to tighten the blockade are intended to disrupt the daily lives of Cubans, including essential health care

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On his bed in the intensive care unit of Pepe Portilla Pediatric Hospital, where he has lived the last two years and seven months, King Dennys Santiesteban shows me his collection of toy dinosaurs.

He assures me that the fiercest is the Tyrannosaurus Rex, and that there are really big ones that they only eat grass.

At six, he tells me that he already knows how to read and write, thanks to the dedication of his grandmother and the doctors who care for him day and night, but admits that his greatest wish is to return home.

The disease he suffers requires him to remain attached to a mechanical ventilator, so without one at home, he stays here.

Dr. Liliana María Cueto explains that these are very expensive devices, only manufactured by capitalist corporations.

“If the equipment has any component from the United States, it isn’t sold to our country,” she says.

Liliana points out that, if there is one area which the U.S. blockade impacts every day, it is public health.

“We feel the lack of medications, such as first-generation antibiotics and equipment with some component of U.S. origin. The firms that produce them are afraid to sell to us, or if they do, they don’t supply us with spare parts.”

Nonetheless, Cuban doctors are committed to defending life and fighting disease. After more than half a century of resistance, it has almost become normal for a country in which most of its inhabitants were born under the effects of the blockade.

But nothing more cruel and anachronistic than this genocidal policy, supported by more than a dozen administrations in the White House.

Beyond the enormous figures describing the damage done to our economy and the negative impact on development, each and every Cuban has had a personal experience with the blockade - be it an unavailable medicine, a closed plant, equipment that could no longer be

repaired because a U.S. firm bought the factory where it was produced...

The examples have multiplied recently, with the obsessive aggressiveness of the Trump administration.

The drastic reduction of services offered at the U.S. embassy in Havana, greatly complicating procedures Cubans must follow to travel to the United States; the activation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act; further restrictions on travel to the island by U.S. citizens; limits on remittances; fines on companies that allegedly violate the blockade; increased subversive projects; sanctions to prevent the arrival of fuel to the country, meant to generate chaos and discontent, are just some of the measures adopted by the President and his minions.

With incredible cynicism, they have said that these actions are intended to “free the Cuban people from suffering,” as if each and every measure is meant to cause exactly the opposite.

A statement released by the U.S. embassy in Havana, this past September 6, shamelessly states that the escalation in Treasury Department regulations to tighten the blockade will deny Cuba access to foreign currency “as part of our support for the Cuban people.”

But life goes on in Cuba, with the conviction that there are peoples who do not surrender, and sacred principles, like human dignity and love for the homeland, that will always be worth fighting for.

Hostile US Measures Imposed on Cuba Since June of 2017

June 16, 2017

Principal changes in U.S. policy toward Cuba made by Donald Trump:

- Increased restrictions on travel to Cuba for U.S. citizens, by reducing the number of categories of travel permitted with a general license, as opposed to a specific permit from the Treasury Department.
- Reinforcement of the blockade via the Helms-Burton Act of 1996.
- Repeal of Presidential Policy Directive issued by President Barack Obama in 2016, which stated that the blockade was an obsolete burden for the Cuban people and an impediment to U.S. interests.^{3 de e 2018}

September 29, 2017

Then Secretary of State Rex Tillerson announced a significant reduction of diplomatic staff at the U.S. embassy in Havana and withdrew all family members, on the grounds that there had been “attacks” on U.S. officials in Cuba, which had impacted their health.

October 3, 2017

The U.S. government, in an unjustified move, ordered 15 officials at the Cuban embassy in Washington to leave the country, allegedly since U.S. diplomatic personnel in Havana had been reduced and the Cuban government had not taken the necessary steps to prevent further “attacks.”

November 9, 2017

The State Department published a list of 179 Cuban entities with which U.S. citizens were not allowed to conduct direct financial transactions. The list includes the ministries of Armed Forces and the Interior; the National Revolutionary Police; state enterprises; the Mariel Special Development Zone and Havana container terminals; dozens of hotels throughout Cuba; travel agencies; and stores.

December 22, 2017

Washington moves its immigration office in Cuba to Mexico.

January 10, 2018

The United States issues travel advisory instructing its citizens to reconsider trips to Cuba.

January 23, 2018

The United States creates a Cuba Internet Task Force, announced on January 23 by the State Department, opening the doors to a return to failed Cold War policy.

March 2018

Washington releases funds for subversion in Cuba and the border wall with Mexico. The budget approved by the United States Congress includes 20 million dollars for subversion in Cuba.

March 29, 2018

The United States announces that, beginning April 1, the immigrant visa process for Cubans will once again change, to be conducted now at the U.S. embassy in Georgetown, Guyana. Due to these unilateral measures, since September of 2017, the U.S. consul in Havana is virtually paralyzed and only offers emergency services.

September 10, 2018

President Donald Trump extends the Trading with the Enemy Act's application against Cuba for another year.

May 2, 2019

The Trump administration activates Title III of the Helms-Burton Act.

June 5, 2019

The Treasury Department will no longer permit group educational and cultural trips known as "people to people."

September 2019

The United States Department of the Treasury modified the Asset Control Regulations for Cuba to impose new sanctions on our country, basically, adding further restrictions on remittances and bank transactions. U.S. President Donald Trump again renews the

application of the Trading with the Enemy Law to Cuba, for another year.

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