

US Allocates ‘Democracy Funds’ for Cuba

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The US Committee on Appropriations approved on Friday US\$30 million for “programs to promote democracy and strengthen civil society in Cuba, of which not less than US\$8,000,000 shall be for NED,” as quoted from the committee report.

The NED is the National Endowment for Democracy, a fund used by the U.S. to undermine left-wing and socialist governments and support opposition groups by supposedly promoting “democracy.”

“The Committee directs that funds shall only be used for programs and activities pursuant to section 109(a) of the Cuban Liberty and Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 and section 1705 of the Cuban Democracy Act (CDA) of 1992, and shall not be used for business promotion, economic reform, entrepreneurship or any other assistance that is not democracy-building,” the report states.

The committee also stipulated that any locally awarded grants of over US\$1 million should be to groups in Cuba that have “experience promoting democracy” there.

If the project for 2016 funding is approved by congress, it will be in addition to US\$20 million already assigned for this year.

The measure comes as the U.S. said last year that it wanted to normalize relations with Cuba, and the two countries have since held a number of talks. Last month the U.S. removed Cuba from its list of so-called terrorist countries, but it has not yet put an end to its decades-long economic blockade on the island.

Further, yesterday the Appropriations Committee also did not approve funding for opening a U.S. embassy in Cuba.

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