

## The Blockade Remains

Obama may represent the sole superpower on the planet earth but he looks simply powerless when it is the question of changing obnoxious US foreign policy. Since his election to the US presidency there has not been any change in the implementation of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba. The blockade remains intact and Obama has no option but to continue the age-old American legacy of sabotaging Cuban revolution. The decades-long embargo of Cuba is neither ethical or beneficial to the United States. In essence it is a mass, flagrant and systematic violation of human rights. Strictly speaking as per the Geneva convention of 1948 it may be classified as an act of genocide.

The majority of UN member states continued to vote in favour of an end to US embargo against Cuba. Of the 192 member states, an overwhelming 187 voted on 28 October, 2009 in favour of the resolution (as against 185 last year) with only three against (the United States, Israel and Palau), and two abstentions (Marshall Islands and Micronesia). What a pity!

In fact this was the 18th consecutive year the United States remained largely isolated in a General Assembly vote on one of “the most enduring trade embargoes in history” imposed on Cuba way back in 1962.

The annual UN vote is routinely viewed as a political and moral victory for Cuba. Even the die-hard allies of America no longer support its policy of crippling Cuban economy.

For the people of Cuba this blockade has been a continuous source of stress and difficulty. While speaking during the UN debate China’s representative Zhang Yesui was candid enough to describe US embargo as an act of violation of UN charter. More scathing remark, however, came from Dayan Jayatilleka, until recently Sri Lanka’s permanent representative to the office of the UN in Geneva : ‘every year since the resolution saw the light of day, the United States has suffered a diplomatic Bay of Pigs in full view of the world’.

But Washington is not listening. Without the abolition of criminal blockade of Cuba there will be no actual transformation of US foreign policy in the years to come, Obama or no Obama. But UN vote is a kind of diplomatic win for Cuban people. Also, that the Cuban people have been able to withstand the almost 5-decade-old blockade is a tribute to them. People who have been fighting against US hegemony and domination across the world for long, have a lot to learn from Cuban resistance.□□□