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Cuba

In defence of Cuba against the neocolonial blockade and starvation imposed by Trump

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The neo-fascist in the White House is attempting to bring the Caribbean island and its government to its knees, strangling it economically once and for all, killing its people with darkness and scarcity. But this is not “just” a war against Cuba and its revolutionary tradition. It is the continuation of the war against the sovereignty of all Latin American countries and Latino peoples within the United States. In particular, Lula, Petro, Orsini and the foreign governments of social democracy must emphatically oppose this crime in all international forums and organizations.

Following the de facto “takeover” of Venezuela by the United States, with the kidnapping of Maduro and Flores on 3 January, the main target of the far-right strategists around Trump is the Caribbean island, which has been the scene of resistance against two empires since the 19th century and the scene of the world's last victorious anti-capitalist revolution, between 1959 and 1961, led by the 26 July Movement (Fidel Castro's movement) and the working masses of the sugar cane fields and factories.

From Washington and from a Caracas transformed – by force of arms and sanctions – into a kind of capital of a viceroyalty in the 21st century, the Yankee hawks have declared war on Cuba, a small country, isolated by nature and geopolitics, whose development has been limited by decades of US blockade and energy and food dependence on the outside world. (Many will say, as we do, combined with the mistakes of its own successive governments.)

The first step in the ongoing attack was to cut off the supply of Venezuelan oil, which since Hugo Chávez's first government (1998) had guaranteed the functioning of Cuba's economy. An order quickly carried out by Delcy Rodríguez. Cuba needs 100,000 barrels of oil per day and produces 40,000. The current phase of the attack involves intense pressure on Cuba's last oil supplier, Mexico, to stop sending oil tankers, which Claudia Sheinbaum has so far refused to do.

At the same time, in a festival of media provocations typical of a genocidal showman, Trump calls on Cuban leader Díaz-Canel to “negotiate” nothing less than the end of the country's sovereignty. He says that Cuba will surrender, thanks to the fact that he is starving Cubans, just as, with the support of Israel and its bombings, he starved the inhabitants of Gaza. (For now, there is no equivalence between one and the other, but the inhumane method is the same.) Everything indicates that the Yankee government expects one of two things: the capitulation of Havana or an internal popular rebellion.

At an international press conference on 6 February, Díaz-Canel described the suffering of his people and denounced what is happening as an attempt at genocide. Unfortunately, although China and Russia, considered by many to be “alternative powers”, have issued formal statements criticising Washington, they have so far not contributed even a gallon of petrol to prevent the worst in Cuba. Delcy Rodríguez's cut-off of oil supplies to Cuba should also give pause to those who continue to repeat the “mantra” that the Venezuelan government still has something to do with the “revolution”, when in reality it has become the administrator of the protectorate. As for Lula and the PT, it is regrettable that they do not order the wealthy Petrobras to break the energy blockade on Cuba, as the National Federation of Oil Workers (FNP) rightly demands.

Fascist revenge

Why is a weakened David like little brave Cuba the object of so much hatred from the neo-fascist Goliath? Unlike what was correctly observed about Venezuela, that the immediate objective was to secure oil — to the point that imperialism discarded its long-time friend María Corina Machado and kept a Maduro-style regime without Maduro in power — in the Cuban case, the explanation is pure neo-fascist geopolitics, with an overdose of ideological and class revenge. Trump and his Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, a descendant of Cuban counterrevolutionaries, need to defeat the country that dared, in the past, to fight capitalism 150 km from Miami, and which was a symbol and inspiration for generations of fighters for national sovereignty and, in the first decades after 1961, for social transformation.

Cuba was the only Latin American country in which the bourgeoisie was expropriated, more specifically with Fidel's proclamation of the socialist character of the revolution in 1961. It is worth remembering that in the early years of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, at certain moments during the governments of Hugo Chávez (particularly after the defeat of the pro-US coup in 2002), during the first government of Rafael Correa in Ecuador, local and international capitalists were displaced from power, and governments were temporarily formed without the bourgeoisie. In another stage of imperialism, they were also the target of imperial hatred — particularly Nicaragua, with the US-financed Contras. But the radicalism of the Cuban revolution was never completely imitated.

It is true that decades ago, decisively influenced by the then Soviet bureaucracy (from 1961 to 1991) and harassed by US economic persecution, the Cuban leadership abandoned the only path that would remove the country from its isolation and economic fragility: it worked hard to ensure that the mass struggles in Nicaragua and El Salvador between the 1970s and early 1990s, and in this century among the peoples of Venezuela and Bolivia, did not advance towards a course similar to its own, of direct confrontation with capitalism through the expropriation of bourgeois groups. In any case, the island continued, with great difficulty, as a sovereign country. And it is this autonomous nature that imperialism cannot tolerate.

The current situation in Cuba must be addressed as an unprecedented humanitarian crisis and a threat of a new military operation by Trump's imperialism against another sovereign Latin American nation. These two elements are more than enough to warrant a strong and unified national and international campaign in defense of Cuba. At a time when the US government is facing growing internal opposition, mobilizations against ICE, and a feeling of solidarity with immigrants, particularly Latinos, it is necessary to prevent Trump from winning again, as in Venezuela.

Regardless of the balance sheet of the Cuban revolution, what is at stake is the sovereignty and independence of a historically oppressed Latin American country. It is urgently necessary to press for the resumption of oil supplies to Cuba and for food and medicine to be sent to the island. All those who support the idea of sovereignty, the principle of non-interference and the right of peoples to decide their own destiny must be called upon to speak out, take a stand and mobilize against the blockade!

- Trump and Rubio, hands off Cuba!
- For an immediate end to the energy and food blockade against the island! Lula, Petro, Orsini, mobilize with force. Notes of condemnation are not enough. Work for a front of governments opposed to the blockade and siege of Cuba.
- For a continental humanitarian campaign of solidarity with the Cuban people.

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The authors are members of the Executive Bureau of the Fourth International.

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