

Anti-Imperialist News Service

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179 Countries Vote Against U.S. Blockade of Cuba

For the 13th consecutive time, the UN General Assembly has passed a resolution calling for an end to the U.S. blockade of Cuba.

The voting on the resolution was 179 countries in favor and four against (United States, Israel, the Marshall Islands and Palau), while Micronesia abstained. During the debate at the 59th session of the UN General Assembly, several heads of state and government condemned Washington's policy of aggression.

For more than 40 years, the U.S. government has blockaded Cuba with the aim of overthrowing the government and social system of that country and imposing U.S. colonial rule.

Through the blockade, the U.S. government has not only prohibited U. S. companies from importing or exporting goods to Cuba including even food, medicine, energy, spare parts, etc. The U.S. has also tried to force other countries to break economic relations with Cuba.

It is estimated that the blockade has cost Cuba \$80 billion.

In addition to the economic blockade, the U.S. government has spent 40 years organizing destabilization campaigns against the Cuban government, financing counter-revolutionary bands inside and outside of the country, employing biological and chemical warfare, etc.

In recent months the Bush administration has tightened the blockade, practically eliminating all travel between the U.S. and Cuba, and adopting new measures aimed at the financial strangulation of Cuba. The Bush administration has even published a battle plan for a U.S. invasion and the setting up of a U.S. puppet regime. This battle plan calls for privatization of the Cuban economy and its takeover by U.S. capitalism and the destruction of such social services as health care, education and social security which the current system guarantees for every Cuban.

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U. S. May Increase Troop Strength in Iraq

According to USA Today on October 26, Pentagon officials are drawing up plans to increase the number of troops in Iraq, by delaying the departures of some U.S. troops now in Iraq and accelerating the deployment of others scheduled to go there next year.

The plans could possibly raise the number of U.S. troops in Iraq from the current 138,000 to almost 160,000. One plan calls for delaying the departure from Iraq of the 1st Cavalry Division, which is set to begin leaving in January. At the same time, the Pentagon would move up the deployment of some elements of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division.

Other options include using U.S. troops now being held in reserve in Kuwait or deploying elements of the Army's 82nd Airborne, currently in Afghanistan.

U. S. Seeks \$70 Billion for Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan

On October 26, the Washington Post reported that the White House will seek another \$70 billion in "emergency funding" for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This will bring the total cost during the past year and a half to \$225 billion.

The latest request comes on top of three earlier emergency spending bills approved by Congress in support of the war. In August, Congress approved \$25 billion for the war as a bridge to the larger request the president promised for early 2005. Last October, lawmakers passed an \$87.5 billion emergency spending measure that included \$65 billion for combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Another \$18.6 billion of those funds went to Iraqi "reconstruction."

Report Condemns U.S. Torture in Iraq

In a 200-page report issued on October 27, Amnesty International denounced the U.S. government for its use of torture in Iraq.

The group's report, entitled "Human Dignity Denied. Torture and Accountability in the 'War on Terror'," accuses the United States of a two-faced policy saying it abused prisoners of war while violating standards it routinely applies in criticizing other governments.

According to the report, "The photographs of torture and ill-treatment of detainees in Abu Ghraib prison did not come out of the blue, but followed numerous allegations of abuse in Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay raised with the U.S. authorities over the previous two years...When it suited the U.S. government's aims in its buildup to the invasion of Iraq, the administration cited Amnesty International's reports on torture in that country, [but] when the alleged abuse involved U.S. agents, its response was denial and disregard for the organization's concerns."

It also states:

"The US administration's condemnation [of torture] has been paper thin, as shown by the series of government memorandums that have come into the public domain since the Abu Ghraib scandal broke. These documents suggest that far from ensuring that the "war on terror" would be conducted without resort to human rights violations, the administration was discussing ways in which its agents might avoid the international prohibition on torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment...

"In the "war on terror", the USA has itself undermined the rule of law. Its selective disregard for the Geneva Conventions and international human rights law has contributed to torture and ill-treatment...It is clear that the decision to reject the protections of the Geneva Conventions in the "war

on terror" outside Iraq has infected official thinking in the USA....

"Allegations of abuse by US forces in Afghanistan have been persistent...from December 2002 (there are also allegations of abuse from before then), [US] interrogators in Afghanistan were removing clothing, isolating people for long periods of time, using stress positions, exploiting fear of dogs and implementing sleep and light deprivation."

"In Iraq, the allegations of abuse have not been restricted to Abu Ghraib. For example, three Iraqi nationals working for Reuters news agency have alleged that they were subjected to torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment by US soldiers while held in military detention near Fallujah...

Amnesty said military investigations have proven that alleged U.S. abuses have not been confined either to Abu Ghraib or to a few soldiers. In September, the report points out, eight former U.S. generals and admirals admitted in a letter to U.S. President George W. Bush that "there are now dozens of well-documented allegations of torture, abuse and otherwise questionable detention practices" in prisons in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay.

The report criticizes U.S. policy as hypocritical, pointing out that George Bush and other U.S. officials repeatedly proclaim their "respect for human dignity," but "The USA's detention and interrogation policies in the "war on terror" have left such words ringing hollow."

Another section of the report states: "Throughout the 'war on terror', the US administration has repeatedly stated that it is committed to the rule of law as one of the 'non-negotiable demands of human dignity'. This is clearly far from the case if it believes that there is no legal limit to what the President can instruct the armed forces to do, including blatant violations of international law."

Vote Against U.S. Blockade of Cuba (continued from page 1)

But Cuba has not given way under the pressure of U.S. imperialism. It continues to defend its independence and build its economic and political system according to the will of its people.

For this reason, Cuba stands as an inspiration to the peoples everywhere who are struggling to win and preserve their national independence and to advance along the path of social progress.

The duty of the American people is to continue to join with peoples throughout the world who are demanding an end to the U.S. blockade of Cuba.

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