Cuba says U.S. policy unchanged, embargo tougher under Obama administration

HAVANA, — U.S. President Barack Obama has not changed its policy toward Cubans promised while enforcement of its 48-year trade embargo has got even stricter, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez said Wednesday.

“The embargo policy in the past two years under the government of President Obama has not changed at all...It has been hardened. It has been strengthened,” Rodriguez said in a report to be presented on Oct. 26 at the United Nations General Assembly.

“The embargo is a piece from the Cold War Museum,” Rodriguez said.

“The U.S. president has remained below the expectations concerning to the change of policy toward Cuba and the embargo, expectations that had been created in the international community and the American public itself,” Rodriguez added.

According to Rodriguez, Obama could have used his executive authority to cease the embargo, but instead during his two years in office, Obama had punished more companies for trading with Cuba than his Republican predecessor George W. Bush.

“He spoke of a new beginning with Cuba, of a change in relations...However there is an abyss, a contradiction between his words and his actions,” Rodriguez said.

“The U.S. blockade against Cuba is a unilateral act, and should be lifted unconditionally,” Rodriguez added.

“President Obama has eased travel of scholars, artists and religious people as Democrat president Bill Clinton did, but he did not allow Americans to travel freely to Cuba yet,” Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez said the embargo was the main obstacle to Cuba’s development, adding that it had left about 100 billion U.S. dollars in losses since it was established in 1962.

The Cuban government believes the U.S. economic blockade is aimed at causing “hunger, desperation and suffering” to the Cuban people so as to provoke an internal instability that would result in the overthrow of the socialist system on the island.

Havana has repeatedly reiterated its determination to normalize relations with Washington that must be linked to the end of the embargo and the release of the five Cubans imprisoned in the United States on spying charges.

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