

Clippings :

## **Attufits of Biden Failed to Overthrow Rights in Cuba**

On July 22, U.S. President Joe Biden and his Vice President Kamala Harris released a “fact sheet” on U.S. “measures” against Cuba. The release from the White House said that Cuba was a “top priority for the Biden–Harris administration.” On March 9, Biden’s Press Secretary Jen Psaki said, “A Cuba policy shift is not currently among President Biden’s top priorities.” On July 12, NBC News reporter Kelly O’Donnell asked Psaki if Biden had reassessed his priorities regarding Cuba after the protests on the island the previous day. “In terms of where it ranks in a priority order,” Psaki replied, “I’m not in a position to offer that, but I can tell you that we will be closely engaged.”

Not a priority, closely engaged, top priority: Matters have moved rapidly from March 9 to July 22. What moved the Biden–Harris administration to focus so quickly on Cuba? On the morning of July 11, some people in Cuba—notably in the town of San Antonio de los Banos—took to the streets to express their dissatisfaction with the social and economic problems created by the U.S.-imposed blockade and by the global pandemic. The reaction to these events in Havana and in Washington, D.C., is instructive: Cuba’s President Miguel Diaz–Canel heard the news of the protests, got into a car, and drove the 40 miles to San Antonio de los Banos, where he met with the people; while in Washington, Biden used the protest to call for the overthrow of the Cuban government. U.S. government-funded nongovernmental organizations and Cuban American groups hastened to take advantage of the frenzy, excited by the possibility of regime change in Cuba.

On the evening of July 11, tens of thousands of Cubans rallied across Cuba to defend their revolutionary process. Since that Sunday evening, Cuba has been calm.

### **Let Cuba Live**

On July 23, a full-page statement appeared on page 5 of the New York Times under the headline, “Let Cuba Live.” The advertisement, paid for by the Peoples Forum, was signed by more than 400 prominent people including Susan Sarandon, Emma Thompson, Noam Chomsky, Mark Ruffalo, Jane Fonda, and Danny Glover. It was an open letter to Biden asking him to end Trump’s “coercive measures” and “begin the process of ending the embargo.” Most of the 193 member states of the United Nations made public statements to defend Cuba against the “maximum pressure” campaign. In a statement, the 120 members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) “strongly condemn[ed] the international campaign organized... with the purpose of destabilizing the Republic of Cuba.” The NAM called for an end to the U.S. blockade.

The White House has so far responded neither to the open letter nor to the NAM statement.

– Courtesy : **News Click**, 28-07-2021,  
Editors **Monolo De Los** and **Vijay Prashad**

## Disputes on Pollution Control

The J&K Pollution Control Board (PCB) through its Order Number: 45- PCB of 2021 on February 9, 2021, directed the Executive Officer, Municipal Council, Bandipora, to deposit Rs 64,12,000 to the Environmental Compensation Fund (ECF), within 45 days. But even after five months, the concerned executive officer hasn't deposited the money. It is learned that he has gone to court and got relief. Pollution control committee officers told me that they are fighting the case legally and soon the compensation will be realised from Bandipora municipality.

### **More Illegal Activity**

In another case, an environmental compensation of more than Rs 1.30 crore was imposed on Municipal Council, Sopore, on November 24, 2020. The municipality was dumping its MSW at Ninglee area, which is also located on the banks of Wullar Lake. The illegal activity came to a halt after the intervention of the J&K High Court as locals, through the Central Auqaf Committee, filed a PIL on the issue.

*Unfortunately, the Municipal Council, Sopore, started dumping MSW in another area that was only one km away from the old site. The new site is a demarcated forest land under Ninglee forest range of Baramulla.*

This area is also a wetland catchment. The local panchayat land has also been encroached on by the municipality without any consent from the panchayat committee.

- From **Raja Muzaffar Bhat,**  
**News Click, 28-07-2021**

## Arms of USA and China

Republican Congressman Mike Turner, ranking member of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, said China's nuclear build-up was "unprecedented" and made clear it was "deploying nuclear weapons to threaten the United States and our allies."

He said China's refusal to negotiate arms control "should be a cause for concern and condemned by all responsible nations."

Another Republican, Mike Rogers, ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, said the Chinese build-up showed the need to rapidly modernise the U.S. nuclear deterrent.

A 2020 Pentagon report estimated China's nuclear warhead stockpile in "the low 200s" and said it was projected to at least double in size as Beijing expands and modernises its forces. Analysts say the United States has around 3,800 warheads, and according to a State Department factsheet, 1,357 of those were deployed as of March 1.

Washington has repeatedly called on China to join it and Russia in a new arms control treaty.

The report on the new silos comes as Assistant Secretary of State Wendy Sherman is due to hold arms control talks with Russia in Geneva on Wednesday.

Ms. Sherman was in China earlier this week for talks at which Beijing accused Washington of creating an “imaginary enemy” to divert attention from domestic problems and suppress China.

Beijing says its arsenal is dwarfed by those of the United States and Russia and it is ready to conduct bilateral dialogues on strategic security “on the basis of equality and mutual respect.”

- From **The Hindu**, 28-07-2021