Nikki Haley tells United Nations: You're not the boss of U.S.

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Ambassador Nikki Haley blasted the United Nations Wednesday in a defiant speech to the 193-member General Assembly before it adopted a resolution calling for an end to the U.S. economic embargo on Cuba.

Haley called the long-standing debate “political theater.”

“Let’s be honest about what we really see going on here,” Haley said. “This assembly does not have the power to end the U.S. embargo. It is based in U.S. law, which only the United States Congress can change.”

The United States voted Wednesday against the U.N. resolution condemning the American trade embargo against Cuba after abstaining last year, during the administration of Barack Obama, for the first time in 25 years.

The vote served as just the latest sign of a renewed chill between Washington and Havana since a string of bizarre sonic attacks against American diplomats in Cuba. Earlier this month, President Donald Trump’s administration kicked nearly two-thirds of Cuba’s embassy personnel out of the United States after pulling many U.S. diplomats from the American embassy in Havana out of concern for their health and safety.

While the State Department has not accused Cuba of being behind the incidents, many Latin America experts and Cuban-American officials in government see no way that the government in Havana is not at least complicit. In any event, U.S. officials say Havana is responsible for the safety of foreign diplomats on its soil under the Vienna convention on diplomatic relations.

Haley said the United States is opposing the resolution in solidarity with the Cuban people “and in the hope that they will one day be free to choose their own destiny.”

“Each year, this Assembly’s time is wasted considering this resolution,” Haley told the assembly. “And the United States is subjected to all manner of ridiculous claims – anything to deflect attention from the regime that is actually responsible for the suffering of the Cuban people.”

Cuban officials called Haley’s remarks “disrespectful” and charged that she didn’t have the moral authority to criticize the island nation.

She also said she wanted to clear up any questions about why the United States would change its vote on the same resolution just a year later. She acknowledged some will not understand how the United States “could passively accept this resolution last year and energetically oppose it this year.”

“To those who are confused as to where the United States stands, let me be clear: as is their right under our Constitution, the American people have spoken,” Haley said. “They have chosen a new president, and he has chosen a new ambassador to the United Nations.”