Blue Book

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***Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase its constructive engagement with Cuba.***

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1. History of Cuba

The Colonial Period

Christopher Columbus landed on the island of Cuba on October 28, 1492 in his fateful search for a passage to the Indies. Upon this visit, as well as a second, Columbus found the native tribes friendly and welcoming. However, harsh treatment by the Spanish soon changed the aborigines' attitude. Diego Velazquez, a Spanish soldier under directions from the appointed governor-general of Cuba to conquer the natives and settle the island, and his men faced resistance from the indigenous tribes when they arrived in 1511. However, the natives were unable to hold out long, and by 1515, Velazquez had founded several Spanish settlements in Cuba. Disease, abuse, and deliberate extermination whittled the native population down until it was nearly nonexistent by the mid-1500s. Faced with a labor shortage, settlers began to import slaves from Africa. Cuba thrived upon the slave system, attaining incredible wealth through both slaves' labor and their sales. Slavery remained an integral part of Cuban society until it was abolished in 1886.

Cuba was enormously important to the Spanish. It was the first time Spain had true control in the New World. The colony also provided Spain with a base from which they could expand their territory and their influence, especially into Mexico and Florida. In addition to geographic importance, Cuba held economic significance for the Spanish. As with the North American colonies, Cuba existed solely for the benefit of the Mother Country. Farmers and plantation owners did well raising cattle, coffee, tobacco, and sugarcane. Havana, made the colony's capital in 1607, soon became the main port for all of Hispanic America. Known as the "Key to the New World and Bastion of the West Indies," Havana became the central harbor for Spanish ships transporting wealth and goods from the Orient as well as from South America. Vessels from numerous nations put in at the port to restock their supplies before making the long and arduous journey across the Atlantic Ocean. However, trade with any country other than Spain was forbidden and only Spanish ships were allowed to transport goods from Cuba.

The island’s location and resources made it a desirable conquest for the European powers. In 1762, as an extension of the Seven Years War raging on the European continent, the English attacked and were successful in capturing Havana. They retained control of the harbor city until 1763, when they traded it back to Spain in return for Florida. Resenting English authority, many Spanish settlers migrated from Florida to Cuba. Later, many Spaniards fled to Cuba when Santo Domingo became a French colony, as did Spanish settlers from Haiti during the slave uprising there.

Following the restoration of Spanish authority over Havana, the government relaxed many of its restrictions on trade. The remaining restrictions remained in place until 1818, when free trade was officially established. This period of relative freedom was followed by excessive repression in the 1830s. As a result, the small independence movement that had existed since the beginning of the 19th century grew in popularity, strength, and organization. Like the English colonists in North America, Cubans resented the way Spain refused to give them full rights as citizens. In 1849, Narcisso Lopez, once an officer in the Royal Spanish Army, escaped to the United States after being accused of conspiring against the Spanish government. In the United States, Lopez began a movement to annex Cuba. He garnered much support from Americans, but his two invasions of Cuba failed. In the end, Lopez was captured and executed. Over the subsequent years, the American government repeatedly offered to purchase the island from Spain, but were always refused. Revolts and conspiracies continued to rock the colony, but they were suppressed, often violently.

The Struggle For Independence

Finally, hostilities reached a boiling point and war broke out. The first Cuban war for independence, known as the Ten Years' War, began on October 10, 1868, when Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, a landowner, emancipated his slaves and declared Cuba to be a sovereign nation. Revolutionary forces waged guerilla warfare for ten years, but were unable to prevail against the Spaniards' superior strength. In 1878, peace was restored after the Spanish government pledged to implement wide reforms and to outlaw slavery. Though the Ten Years' War failed to secure Cuban independence, it provided the rebels with valuable experience that would aid them in future efforts.

Spain did abolish slavery and carried out some reformation, but failed to fulfill completely the promises made to the Cuban freedom fighters. Once again, anger and bitterness among the Cubans mounted and eventually burst into open war in 1895. Led by Jose Marti, known as the Father of the Cuban Revolution, and some of the leaders of the Ten Years' War, Cuban rebels once again confronted an overwhelming number of Spanish troops. In an attempt to control the Cuban population, the Spanish-appointed governor constructed concentration camps and forced thousands of Cuban civilians within them. News of the detention camps circulated around the world, sparking international indignation and protest, forcing the Spanish government to release their prisoners.

American Interests

When reports of the concentration camps in Cuba reached the American populace, they raised a cry for American intervention. With a culture and history built upon the belief in freedom and self-rule, many Americans identified with their Cuban neighbors. Some historians believe that the United States' interest in Cuba was largely humanitarian, based upon a feeling of moral obligation and sympathy.

Other historians, however, stress the importance of Cuba to the United States' economy and security. Not only was Cuba right on the United States' doorstep, but it was an island with a strategic position and rich resources. In addition, Americans were heavily invested in Cuban industries and the island was a major market for American goods. It is also important to remember the intense competition among European powers and the United States for influence and control around the world. The United States had earlier declared the Western Hemisphere off-limits to European nations. Eager for world power status, stable markets, and governments that would make good allies, the United States was intent on dominating the Western Hemisphere, especially Latin America.

Some historians point out that the United States actually feared revolution. They were experiencing their own domestic problems with labor strikes and other social upheaval. Having seen the chaos and destruction of the French Revolution, Americans were wary of social unrest. They knew how easily a revolution could get out of hand. Neither did they trust the Cubans to set up a secure or democratic government. Though the United States wished to see the Spanish ousted from Cuba, the Cuban revolution seemed a threat to American interests and needed to be stopped.

The Spanish-American War

The Americans finally had their excuse for entering the conflict between Cuba and Spain when the U.S.S. Maine, an American battleship sent to Havana to protect American citizens and interests in Cuba, exploded on February 15, 1898. The United States accused Spain and formally declared war in April. The two nations fought battle after battle that ranged from Cuba all the way to the Philippines. Ultimately, the Spanish were forced to sign the Treaty of Paris that surrendered Cuba to the United States. The island nation remained under American military rule until 1902, during which time the United States poured enormous amounts of money into the Cuban economy. Even after relinquishing control of the island, the United States still expected close cooperation and certain privileges. Article III of the Platt Amendment, passed in 1903, stated, "The Government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty ..." Article IV continued by asserting, "To enable the United States to maintain the independence of Cuba and to protect the people thereof, as well as for its own defense, the Government of Cuba will sell or lease to the United States lands necessary for coaling or naval stations, at certain specified points, to be agreed upon with the President of the United States."

Twentieth-Century Cuba

Unfortunately, corruption within the government plagued the people of Cuba. In 1906, the United States once again took control of Cuba after American forces put down an uprising that threatened to overthrow the government. They remained on the island until 1909, but returned in 1912 to intervene in yet another rebellion.

During World War I, Cuba fought with the Allies. After the war, financial hardship beset the country. Looking for a leader who promised change, the Cuban people elected Gerardo Machado y Morales as President in 1924 and again in 1928. Machado did bring change, but it came in the form of a dictatorship. In his second term, Machado imposed martial law and eliminated many basic civil rights. Once more, the island found itself shaken by an uprising. With the support of the Cuban army, insurgents forced the dictator to flee into exile. In the years following the uprising, many governments rose and fell. Turmoil and disorder reigned. Eventually, Fulgencio Batista Zaldivar, an officer in the Cuban army, emerged as the main wielder of power. At first, he controlled behind the scenes, but finally became president in 1940. Under his rule, Cuba joined the Allies in World War II.

In 1944, Batista was defeated and replaced by Grau San Martin. Cuba joined the United Nations in 1945 and the Organization of American States in 1948. In 1952, Batista returned and once again seized control of the Cuban government. He promptly abolished the constitution, disbanded the congress, and set up a provisional government. Batista's despotic rule provoked the Cuban people into revolt yet again.

Fidel Castro

At the head of one of the resistance movements stood a lawyer named Fidel Castro and his brother Raul. The brothers twice attempted to overthrow Batista, but both efforts failed. After the first in 1953, Fidel and Raul were imprisoned and held until 1955. Upon their release, the brothers went to the United States and then to Mexico before invading Cuba in December 1956. The invasion was not successful and they were forced to flee into the mountains. There Fidel Castro organized the 26th of July Movement (named after the 1953 insurrection). Using guerilla warfare, Castro and his men forced Batista to resign and escape into exile in 1959. Castro set up his own government with himself as its leader.

Under Castro, Cuba took measures that harmed American interests, especially in regard to sugar production. Companies owned by foreigners were barred from running sugar plantations and most of Cuba's resources went toward crops other than sugar. Cuba's Communist leanings also concerned the United States.

In an attempt to equalize Cuban society, Castro implemented many socialist measures, nationalizing medicine and education, seizing private property for the state, controlling salaries and prices, and rationing food and commodities. Nearly all the middle- and upper-class professions left Cuba, which further equalized the society, but at the same time, seriously impaired it.

By 1961, Castro had created the Cuban Communist Party with himself as its leader. In 1976, the regime inaugurated a new constitution that officially set up a communist system. The constitution also set up various agencies and associations, all controlled by the state, that gave the people some participation and input into the government. However, any political organizations outside of these were strictly prohibited. Castro regulated the press and repressed expressions of dissent.

As the years passed and Cuba’s economy weakened, Castro was forced to make concessions and implement capitalistic measures. For instance, in the 1990s, he opened the country to tourism, which is now Cuba's largest revenue source. In 1993, Castro permitted the Cuban people to use dollars and invited foreign businesses into Cuba. Periodically Castro allowed free markets to boost a struggling economy. However, such reforms were generally short-lived. In 2004, Castro revoked his dollar policy and once again allowed only the government to use dollars.

International Relations

Tensions between the United States and Cuba rose to a peak in the early 1960s. In 1960, Castro's regime confiscated American property that was estimated to be worth $1 billion. In return, the United States implemented a trade embargo. Relations could not be repaired and in 1961, Cuba and the United States broke off all diplomatic dealings. Cuba instead turned to the Soviet Union. Fearful that Castro would set up a Communist government, the United States sought ways to remove Castro from power.

The conflict climbed to a new level in April 1961 with the Bay of Pigs incident. Cuban exiles opposed to Castro, trained and aided by the United States, staged an invasion intended to overthrow Castro's government. The plan depended upon the Cuban population's participation and help in the invasion, which did not occur. This miscalculation, along with other mistakes made by the American military and government, caused the offensive to end in disaster. While some rebels escaped, most of them were either killed or captured. Angered by the United States' involvement in the attack, Castro moved closer in his relations with the Soviet Union, quickly becoming more dependent upon his ally for financial support.

The world moved to the brink of nuclear war in October 1962 when the United States learned of Soviet missile placements in Cuba. Washington rushed to set up a naval blockade to keep Cuba from attaining further missiles. Cold War rhetoric stepped up and war seemed imminent until the Soviet Union agreed to remove the weapons in return for the United States' promise not to invade Cuba.

Bad feelings between Cuba and the United States continued throughout the 1960s and into the next decade. 1962 saw Cuba expelled from the Organization of American States due to pressure from the United States. However, one positive event did occur in 1965 when the American and Cuban governments reached an accord that allowed any Cuban who so chose to leave their home country and move to the United States. Between 1965 and 1973, hundreds of thousands accepted the offer and were airlifted out of Cuba in what has become known as the freedom flights.

The 1970s saw Cuba strengthening its ties with the Soviet Union, but it also saw a gradual improvement in relations with the United States. In 1977, both nations reopened offices in the other country‘s capital. However, the United States warned Cuba that relations would not be completely friendly until Cuban forces pulled out of Africa, the Middle East, and South America.

In 1975, Cuba had sent troops to bolster the Marxist forces in Angola. They also became involved in Ethiopia, where a Marxist government battled Somalia over territory. In addition, Castro sent aid and military support to Yemen and Nicaragua. The United States believed Cuba to be acting on behalf of the Soviet Union, and indeed, Cuba received prodigious amounts of Soviet aid for their efforts.

Cuba and the Soviet Union signed a 25-year treaty in 1989, but with the collapse of the Soviet Union, all Soviet aid disappeared. The early 1990s were marked by economic hardship and Cuba began to attempt to garner trade relations with capitalist nations it had formerly shunned. It also softened its attitude toward the United States, agreeing to pay reparations to those Americans whose property had been seized and allowing American news agencies into Cuba. Washington, however, refused to be placated and economic sanctions stayed in place.

An incident in February 1996 manifested just how rocky relations between Cuba and the United States remained. The Cuban air force shot down two civilian airplanes they claimed had violated Cuban airspace. The planes were manned by pilots from Brothers to the Rescue, a group of Cuban exiles living in the United States whose mission was to search for refugees attempting to escape from the island and to contact the United States Coast Guard with their positions. However, Castro asserted that aircraft from the group had earlier violated Cuban airspace and dropped antigovernment pamphlets. The incident influenced the passing of the Helms-Burton Act, which will be discussed in more detail later.

The United States did relax its stance a little in 1998. Washington decided to permit food and medicine to be sent to Cuba, as well as money sent from individuals in the United States to Cuban civilians. Sports teams were also allowed to travel between the two countries.

International relations between the two neighbors again became somewhat strained when Elian Gonzalez, a five-year-old Cuban boy, was rescued by American fishermen from a wrecked ship in 1999. The boy's relatives in the United States wanted Elian to remain in the States, but the boy’s father demanded he be returned home. A heated custody battle ensued. Castro claimed the boy had been kidnapped by the United States and anti-American rallies took place in Havana. The case was finally settled in 2000 and the boy was sent back to Cuba.

Searching for relief from its economic and political isolation, Cuba began to establish ties with Venezuela, ties that have grown stronger with each passing year. The two countries signed the Integral Cooperation Accord in October 2000, in which Castro agreed to provide Cuban goods and services in exchange for oil from Venezuela. In recent years, Cuba has also garnered a close relationship with China. Both Venezuela and China give Cuba not only economic aid, but also political and ideological support in Cuba's opposition to the United States.

Cuba came under international censure in 2003 when Castro's regime arrested roughly eighty dissident press members, political activists, and opposition party leaders who had been pushing for a more democratic, open society. Castro's government accused them of conspiring with the United States to destabilize the government. After closed trials, the dissenters were sentenced to varying prison terms, the longest for twenty-eight years.

Raul Castro

In recent years, Fidel Castro's health has steadily declined. In 2006, when he required intestinal surgery, Castro temporarily handed the reins to his brother Raul. Even after recovery, however, Castro found himself no longer able to handle the responsibilities of the presidency; in February 2008, he resigned and his brother Raul Castro became the new leader.

2. Current US-Cuban Relations

Ever since Fidel Castro's take-over in Cuba, the goal of United States foreign policy toward Cuba has been to bring about a democratic government on the island, one that respects human rights and is friendly toward its northern neighbor. The different administrations throughout recent American history have been relatively similar in their approach to this goal, all of them relying primarily upon diplomatic isolation and economic sanctions, though some have seen fit to reduce the sanctions. However, the Cuban policy has changed significantly under the Bush administration.

A Hard Line

Near the end of his term of office, President Clinton eased some aspects of the sanctions against Cuba, allowing and expanding direct flights into Cuba and permitting all American citizens to send remittances to the Cuban people. He also broadened the opportunities for travel to the island nation. In 2000, Clinton signed the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000, which allows American businesses to export food to Cuba.

Conversely, President Bush came into office determined to take a more forceful stance toward Cuba. In 2002, in his Initiative for a New Cuba, Bush maintained that Cuba would have to have open elections, implement major reforms, and establish a more capitalistic economy before he would even consider collaborating with Congress to loosen the economic sanctions. In 2003, the President set up the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba. The commission’s purpose was to report on ways the United States government could undermine Castro’s dictatorship and help the Cuban people transition to democracy. The recommendations made by the commission in its first report set up a basic plan that suggested that the government pursue six objectives: empowering Cuban civilians, shattering the information blockade placed upon Cuban society, starving Castro’s regime of resources, enlightening the world in regard to the true nature of Castro’s regime, enlisting international cooperation in aiding Cuban dissidents and in opposing Castro, and subverting Castro’s “succession strategy.” President Bush's successive actions proved that he intended to follow the commission's recommendations.

Acting upon the commission’s second report, President Bush restricted visits of family members to Cuba to one visit every three years and drastically lowered the amount of money the travelers were allowed to carry with them. Furthermore, he tightened restrictions upon remittances and other assistance given to the Cuban people.

In 2005, the Bush administration ruled that the phrase “payment of cash in advance” contained in the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 meant that “payment is received by the seller or the seller’s agent prior to shipment of the goods from the port at which they are loaded.” This strict interpretation complicated business transactions between the two countries and discouraged many Cuban businesses from using American companies. They instead sought out companies from other countries.

When Fidel Castro temporarily appointed his brother Raul as Cuban President in his place in July 2006, the Bush administration never blinked. They reiterated their resolve to aid the Cuban people in their struggle for democracy, but refused to make any kind of diplomatic contact with the new leader or lift the economic sanctions in any way. The administration again asserted that Cuba must make the first move by beginning the transition to a democracy and an open society. Over the next year, Raul Castro made several speeches in which he proclaimed Cuba ready to heal the breach with the United States, asking only that they be allowed to maintain their independence and that they be treated with equality and respect. However, the Bush administration remained stoic, even coldly replying to one such speech by saying that "the only real dialogue that's needed is with the Cuban people." Many within the government - and outside as well - thought that the transfer of power would create instability within Cuba, that the Cuban population would see its chance, rise up, and dispose of the communist regime. However, all remained quiet and the transfer of power became permanent in February 2008.

A New Cold War

In July 2008, tensions between the United States and Cuba soared after the Moscow newspaper Izvestia reported that high-ranking Russian military officials had said they were considering putting long-range bombers on Cuba again. The report sparked outrage in the United States and fear of a new Cold War around the world. Raul Castro never mentioned the report, but the Russian Defense Minister later said the Russian presence in Cuba would "most likely" be limited to fueling stops rather than air force bases.

The American Reputation

The United States' commitment to democracy in Cuba and its support of Cuban dissidents may be well-intentioned, but has led to international disapproval. In October 2007, the United Nations passed a resolution calling on the United States to end its sanctions against Cuba, signaling its agreement - at least partially - with the Cuban foreign minister who addressed the General Assembly, saying the American sanctions are vicious and "bordering on madness and fanaticism." He accused the United States of breaking international law, hurting innocent Cubans, and hindering Cuba's relations with other countries.

The leader of the Organization of American States earlier indicated his disapproval of the United States' heavy-handed dealings with Cuba by telling the press that he felt the organization should engage in a dialogue with the island nation. Many of the members of the Organization of American States refuse to follow the United States' lead and maintain diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Even some Cuban dissidents resent the United States' involvement in their national affairs. Many feel that it is their business to solve their own problems and do not welcome Americans "meddling" in their country. Others are offended by the fact that the United States feels it can dictate what sort of government Cuba must have before the United States will provide help and acknowledgement.

Terrorism

The United States added Cuba's name to its list of states that sponsor terrorism in 1982 and it remains there to this day. In its 2006 Country Reports on Terrorism, the United States' Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism accused Cuba of continuing to "publicly oppose the U.S.-led Coalition prosecuting the War on Terror" and not attempting "to track, block, or seize terrorist assets." Furthermore, the report states, the island nation allows American fugitives to reside legally within its borders and often refuses to comply with the United States' requests for extradition, even when the requests involved terrorists. It also charged Cuba with providing sanctuary for members of terrorist groups such as the Basque ETA and the Colombian FARC and ELN, and establishing strong ties with other terrorist states such as Iran. Cuba is known to have ties to North Korea, Syria, and Libya as well, though it is admittedly unclear how far their cooperation extends. All of this, combined with Cuba's history of supporting insurgent and terrorist activity in Latin America and Africa, gives the United States ample justification for keeping Cuba on its "blacklist" of terrorist states, according to those who support the policy.

Others, however, argue that keeping Cuba on the list is simply an outdated Cold War tactic used today because of domestic political pressure. Keeping Cuba on the list only distracts the United States from dealing with the true terrorist states, they argue. Though the United States chafes at Cuba's harboring of terrorists, they cannot find evidence that Cuba is supplying terrorist groups with weapons or training. Moreover, the 2006 Country Reports on Terrorism acknowledged that Cuba pledged not to provide sanctuary to United States fugitives any longer. It also admitted that, just as Cuba has refused to return American fugitives, the United States refused to extradite a Cuban national accused by the Cuban government of bombing a Cuban airplane and plotting to assassinate Fidel Castro. It also acknowledged the return by Cuban officials of an American man who stole an airplane and took his son to Cuba.

Wet Foot, Dry Foot Policy

In 1994, Cubans began migrating in alarming numbers. In an attempt to prevent a migration crisis, President Clinton and the Cuban government hurriedly reached an agreement about immigration policy, which became known as the Cuban Migration Act of 1994. Under this agreement, the United States agreed to refuse entrance to Cubans intercepted at sea, to grant 20,000 visas every year, and to cooperate with Cuba on the return of Cubans who make it to the United States or are picked up at sea.

Since this agreement was signed, however, an informal policy has emerged known as the "wet foot, dry foot" policy. Under this policy, Cubans intercepted at sea are sent back to Cuba; Cubans who make it to American soil are not only permitted to stay, but are given permanent resident status.

According to Marc Lacey of the New York Times, 2007 saw the largest influx of immigrants into the United States in over ten years. Instead of attempting the nearly-impossible ocean crossing straight to Florida, a majority of these immigrants are taking a new route: first west to Mexico by boat and then north on foot into the United States. Once they reach the American border, they simply go up to the border station and ask for political asylum. The border agents usually interview the fleeing Cubans, examination their documentation, and listen for a Cuban accent. As long as the immigrants have no criminal record, the agents usually permit them to enter the country and after a year, the Cubans obtain permanent resident status.

The Cuban government has made only small efforts to halt the new wave of immigrants heading for Mexico and ultimately the United States, but there is simply too much coastline to guard. They blame the United States for the mass exodus, saying the "wet foot, dry foot" policy encourages the people to risk their lives to reach American soil. By rewarding Cubans for immigrating, the United States only ensures that more come. They also accuse the United States of not fulfilling its promise to issue 20,000 visas a year, saying only 15,000 have actually been issued. The United States counters such claims by arguing that Cubans are leaving because they no longer believe Raul Castro will implement reforms to improve their lives. Repression and suffering drive them to the United States. They also contend that the Cuban government has not allowed the United States to hire enough people to deal with all the paperwork required for visas, thus making it impossible for meeting the 20,000-visa quota. They also argue that Cuban officials have held shipping containers full of supplies and equipment necessary for the function of the diplomatic facility, and that they have refused to give American technical personnel temporary visas to allow them to repair systems in the diplomatic offices.

Opponents of the "wet foot, dry foot" policy argue that it breaks international laws; even if Cuban refugees are intercepted at sea, they contend, they ought to be granted asylum if the immigrants express fear of persecution if returned to their homeland. They also maintain that the policy is discriminatory and goes against American values and laws. No other immigrants are covered by the "wet foot, dry foot" policy, only Cubans. Mexicans and other Central and South Americans caught in the US illegally are subject to deportation in most cases, while Cubans get special treatment.

Some agree that the policy has encouraged Cuban immigration. Thus it can be argued that the policy has played a large part in the growth of the human smuggling business. The smuggling operation has recently become more sophisticated, with smugglers using satellite telephones and safe houses, and giving specific instructions about where to go and what to say. Most smugglers charge over $10,000 for their services. A black market business in making Cuban identification papers for Mexican immigrants wanting to pose as Cubans has also developed. Some Mexicans are beginning to use these, along with a fake accent and a made-up story about life in Cuba, to gain entrance into the United States. Thus, it can be argued that not only does the "wet foot, dry foot" policy stimulate illegal activities, but it is also contributing to the United States' illegal immigration problem (assuming that excessive amounts of immigration are, in fact, a problem – something debaters can certainly argue in their debate rounds).

A New Leader

Ever since Raul Castro took the helm from his brother in February 2008, he has been promising change for Cuba. Most experts consider Raul slightly more moderate and practical than his older brother, and many expected sweeping reforms to come with his ascension to power. Change has come. In March, Raul gave the Cuban people permission to own cell phones, saying he wanted to rid the country of its "excess of prohibitions." Along with cell phones, Raul said computers, televisions, and other modern appliances would be made accessible to normal citizens. In addition, Raul decreed that Cubans be allowed to rent cars and have access to tourist hotels, and withdrew state salary restrictions, allowing for more linkage between production and reward. He also said he supported open debate about Cuba's socialist system. Then in April, the president made an announcement that caused a stir - both nationally and internationally. While addressing the Cuban Communist Party's Central Committee, Raul declared the convening of a party congress in the second half of 2009. A Communist party congress usually gives the government an opportunity to boast of its accomplishments; therefore many experts believe that larger economic reforms are in store. In July, in an attempt to enhance the nation's food supply, Raul launched a plan allowing farmers to use up to 99 acres of fallow land owned by the state. Under the plan, farmers can sign leases that last for up to a decade, with the option to renew as long as they paid their taxes and met certain conditions. Later, in a speech to the National Assembly, the Cuban president announced the end of the Cuban socialist system as it has been known on the island nation. He did not, however, announce a move toward democracy or capitalism; rather, he declared a shift to what one writer for the Christian Science Monitor called a postmodern version of socialism. Raul told the assembly, "Socialism means social justice and equality, but equality of rights, of opportunities, not of income." He went on to say that, "egalitarian is in itself a form of exploitation; exploitation of the good workers by those who are less productive and lazy."

The United States has expressed disappointment concerning the economic changes taking place on the island. They believe major flaws exist in Cuba's system and that these need to be addressed. The United States Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez commented, "I see it as somewhat sad that after 49 years of shortage and suffering and repression people are now allowed to buy a rice cooker. Our read is that these are tactical moves designed to buy some time."

Despite the changes taking place on the economic scene, there has been little to no political change taking place in Cuba. Though Raul verbally encouraged debate about the governmental system, dissension is repressed as sharply as ever. In April, a group of women known as the ladies in white held a rally outside of the president's office, protesting the imprisonment of their relatives. The police came and forced the women to leave. However, Raul did announce that same month that his government would replace most death sentences with prison terms of thirty years to life. Some see this as a significant move, while others have simply written it off as a "half measure" and in that what is needed is a cessation of political repression.

There are numerous interpretations of the changes taking place in Cuba. Writer for the New York Times Marc Lacey called it "a flurry of changes" that is "shaking up this stoic, time-warped place." However, Lacey acknowledged that political life remains basically the same and that many of the economic reforms are not quite what they seem. For instance, even though average Cuban citizens are now allowed to purchase cell phones and use the hotels once reserved for foreign tourists, only a rare few can actually afford any of it.

Writer and professor at the University of Central Florida Luis Martinez-Fernandez said that all the changes "signal a dramatic ideological shift." Cuba is actually moving away from true communism, he wrote. However, it is not a shift for the better. Instead, "it amounts to the worst of both worlds: a state-controlled economy in which the government shirks its social responsibilities."

Tim Padgett, writer for Time magazine, declared that President Castro has fulfilled his promise for economic and political change, calling his reforms "small but noteworthy doses." Taking an optimistic view, Padgett wrote that "by the time Party '09 arrives in Cuba, 'the continuity of the Revolution' could mean something very different than what it's meant for the past half century."

The Senior Policy Analyst for Latin America at the Heritage Foundation, Ray Walser, almost sneered at the changes, saying Raul's regime has "slightly loosened some of its most onerous restrictions" and calling them "cosmetic changes." Another Heritage Foundation writer, Helle Dale, who is the director of the Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies, confines the changes to the "edges of the Cuban economy," claiming that Raul "is taking tentative steps in the direction of glasnost, ... hoping that minor economic changes will placate the ... Cuban population."

Julia Sweig, director of Latin America Studies at the Council of Foreign Relations, went further than the rest, suggesting that Fidel Castro is actually behind the changes the new regime is making. She claimed that Fidel trained the men responsible for the reforms. According to Sweig, Fidel has helped them consolidate their power and keep Cuba's identity amidst reform. In this way, it is "one final victory for the ultimate Latin American survivor."

3. The Trade Embargo

The Helms-Burton Act

On March 12, 1996, President Clinton signed the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act, more commonly known as the Helms-Burton Act after its sponsors Senator Jesse Helms and Representative Dan Burton. Though there had been a trade embargo leveled against Cuba by presidential order since President Kennedy was in office, the Helms-Burton Act made the embargo an act of Congress, thereby formalizing it and adding some additional (and controversial) stipulations.

There are many rules and regulations contained within the Helms-Burton Act, but some of the most important are:

* Anyone convicted of trading with Cuba can be fined up to $50,000.
* No loan, credit, or any other type of financing is to be given to a person who intends to use it in a transaction that involves property belonging to an American citizen but confiscated by the Cuban government.
* If an international financial institution gives assistance to the Cuban government in spite of American disapproval, the United States will refuse to pay that institution an amount equal to the loan or assistance.
* Imports that are from Cuba, have passed through Cuba, or are made from anything produced in Cuba are prohibited.
* The President may lift the embargo at the time that a transition government or a democratic government is established in Cuba.
* Some of the conditions that must be met in order for Cuba to be considered under a transition government are: all political activity is legal, all political prisoners have been released, free and fair elections that include multiple independent political parties have been promised, the government respects human rights and no longer has Fidel or Raul Castro participating in any of its organizations.
* Some of the conditions that must be met in order for Cuba to be considered a democratic nation are: the government was chosen in free and fair elections, the government respects human rights and civil liberties, and the government has begun to return confiscated property to American citizens or is compensating them for their losses.
* The resolution of property confiscated by the Cuban government must take place before diplomatic relations can fully resume.
* Anyone who invests in or otherwise traffics in American property seized by the Cuban government shall be liable to the claimant for money damages.
* The President may suspend the above provision for six-month periods at a time if he determines that the suspension is necessary to the national interests of the United States or would help bring about the transition of Cuba into a democracy. However, Congress may pass a joint resolution against the suspension of the embargo.
* Visas and entrance into the United States are refused to anyone who confiscated American property, anyone involved in trafficking confiscated property, and anyone who is a shareholder, corporate officer, or principal of any entity that is involved in confiscating or trafficking that property. This rule extends to the person's children, spouse, and agents.

Before the act went into effect in August 1996, President Clinton exercised his prerogative to suspend the provision that allows anyone, even foreign companies and investors, to be sued for investing or dealing with American businesses confiscated by the Cuban government. He continued to renew the suspension every six months until he left office. The suspension was a response to Canada and the European Union's protest over the provision. They claimed that by penalizing foreign companies for investments and transactions taking place beyond American borders, the provision infringed upon international trade treaties.

When President Clinton's final waiver expired in July 2001, President Bush renewed it in a move some saw as an attempt to placate the European Union, who had threatened to take the case to the World Trade Organization if the President did not waive the provision. At least as of 2007, Bush has continued to waive the provision.

Changes

Since the passing of the Helms-Burton Act, certain aspects of the trade embargo have been loosened and some have been tightened. The Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 called on the President to "terminate any unilateral agricultural sanction or unilateral medical sanction," but required "payment of cash in advance" or financing through a third country bank. Clinton signed the act on October 28, 2000. Though Cuba could now purchase agricultural and medical goods and products, the restrictions on payment meant they were extremely limited in how much they could buy. They were not a country with much capital or good credit with other countries. In 2005, the Bush administration made it even more difficult when they ruled that "cash in advance" meant that the American companies had to receive cash payments from their Cuban buyers before they could ship the goods. Congress passed several bills under the Bush administration that would have eased the sanctions, even one that would have allowed travel to Cuba. Their efforts were wasted, however; President Bush threatened to veto the bills and "the House leadership under Tom DeLay stripped the bills in midnight meetings."

The Opposition

As long as the trade embargo has existed, it has inspired controversy. Now, with a new leader in power and economic reforms - however slight or significant one may view them - taking place in Cuba, the debate over whether the United States should lift the sanctions has heated up.

The most common argument used against the embargo is that it has not achieved its goal of forcing Cuba to turn to democracy and toppling Fidel Castro and his cronies. Retired General James T. Hill, co-Chair of the CFR Independent Task Force on U.S.-Latin America Relations, put it bluntly, saying, "If our policy has been to bring democracy to Cuba, it has failed on its face. Castro has outlived ten U.S. presidents. What have we accomplished with it? The answer is nothing." Roger Johnson, the North Dakota Agricultural Commissioner, observed, "American policy toward Cuba is an abject failure. ... Fidel Castro has just resigned, yet his closest supporters remain in power." Director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies and writer for the publication Global Forecast: The Top Security Challenges of 2008 Peter DeShazo maintains that the fact that the embargo has "had no effect on improving the condition of human and civil rights in Cuba is manifestly clear."

Another charge brought against the trade embargo is that it is detrimental to the innocent Cuban people because it deprives them of consumer goods. Roger Johnson argued that the "real victims" of the sanctions are the Cubans because of this deprivation. Associate professor of economics at the Naval Postgraduate School, David Henderson accused the United States government trying to make the Cubans poor enough and desperate enough that they will rise up against Castro. He called it the "'make the victims hurt more' strategy" and argued that it is not only immoral but also obviously ineffective.

There is not much point to the United States' embargo, others claim, because other countries are trading with Cuba and have become increasingly involved in the Cuban economy. The Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami reported that in 2007, the Canadian company Sherritt International Corporation committed $1.25 billion over a two-year period for the expansion of the company's investments in Cuba's electricity, mining, and oil and gas industries. It also reported that France's Bouygues Group was building a number of hotels in Cuba. Roger Johnson contended that "embargoes are almost meaningless when the rest of the world ignores them." David Henderson said something similar, pointing out that for an embargo to be successful, people in the country at which it is aimed must not be allowed access to goods. However, Henderson pointed out, companies from other nations have stepped in and provided Cubans with good substitutes for American goods they cannot obtain. Even if there are no substitutes, American goods often find their way to Cuba through foreign countries, though they are usually more expensive.

Because other countries have a presence in Cuba, many opponents of the trade embargo argue, they are helping shape the island nation. By standing by with a hands-off policy, the United States is giving up any opportunity it might have to help Cuba develop. In a speech given in May 2008, Senator Barack Obama claimed that Bush's policy has been "negligent ... ineffective ... disinterested" and has left a vacuum filled by "others from Europe and Asia - notably China-" who have "stepped up their own engagement." "We are failing to join the battle for hearts and minds," Obama said. Roger Johnson maintained that the embargo is forcing the United States to watch while other countries "play an active role in the development of the island." Only when the sanctions are lifted, he said, will "we have the leverage to press the new Cuban leadership to restore human rights, establish a free market-based economy, and move to democracy."

Many people see the trade embargo against Cuba as hypocritical. The United States has no problem with trading with other undemocratic countries. David Henderson called it a double standard, pointing out that other countries, such as China, repress their people; yet, there is no trade embargo against China. General James Hill made the same point, saying, "We talk with China every day and what happens is that our Latin American friends and allies look at us as hypocritical and they are correct."

Because of this apparent double standard and because of the perceived American attitude behind the sanctions, the trade embargo against Cuba hurts the United States' reputation and strains relations with other nations. General Hill stated that initiating trade relations with Cuba would help rebuild the United States' image in Latin America. Repealing the embargo would eliminate “major irritants” in our interaction with other countries, according to Senator Chris Dodd. By ending the trade embargo, Julia Sweig wrote, President Bush could "begin to salvage his and America's tattered foreign policy legacy with a few strokes of the pen." Peter DeShazo expressed a similar belief when he wrote, "A more open-minded U.S. policy will ... broaden the effectiveness of other U.S. policy initiatives in the Americas."

Some opponents of the trade embargo claim that it has actually played into Castro’s hands by allowing Castro to blame the embargo for Cuba’s economic problems and promote anti-American sentiment among the people. Moreover, the economic sanctions also give Cubans a sense of unity and an identity as an opponent of the United States. Julia Sweig argued that “[P]recisely because the United States plays such a large role in Cuba’s national psyche, lifting the shadow of the Goliath of the North that hangs over the island’s domestic politics would increase the potential for a more open debate about what kind of country Cubans want and how to get there.” The embargo actually makes Cubans more loyal to Castro, or at least less against him, according to David Henderson.

Another favorite argument against the trade embargo is that it deprives the United States of a valuable market for American goods. Even with the embargo in place, the United States was Cuba’s fifth leading trading partner in 2007, thanks to the exemptions in the embargo that are allowed today. Imagine what lifting the economic sanctions would do for American trade. USA Today’s Sue Kirchoff and Chris Woodyard listed potential trade industries, which included cruise ships, resorts, automotive, and construction and development. The opening of trade with Cuba would also create jobs in the United States; a 2005 study estimated that 60,000 new jobs would be created in the South.

The Defense

There are still some who support the trade embargo against Cuba. Jose Azel, a senior research associate at the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami, argued that opponents of the embargo base their arguments upon several false assumptions: Castro’s regime is actually interested in having close ties with the United States, and they are willing to sacrifice its absolute power and its identity as the United States’ adversary in order to provide economic progress for their people. He went on to say that American trade with Cuba is good enough with the embargo in place. Furthermore, Azel contended, allowing trade with state-owned businesses would only strengthen the communist government, thus ensuring its continuation.

The United States Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez made similar arguments, calling those who believe lifting the embargo will cause the collapse of the communist government “naive.” He also dismissed the idea that Cuba represents a significant market. As long as a communist regime rules the island, trade will not thrive, according to Gutierrez. He attempted to ward off accusations of hypocrisy by saying Cuba and China are very different countries. While Cubans have no opportunity of bettering their lives, the Chinese people live in an entrepreneurial society in which they can advance themselves.

Senator John McCain reasoned against lifting the embargo, saying it “would send the worst possible signal to Cuba’s dictators - there is no need to undertake fundamental reforms, they can simply wait for a unilateral change in US policy. ... The embargo must stay in place until [the] basic elements of democratic society are met.”

The embargo is important as leverage over Cuba, Barack Obama maintained, calling it “strong, smart and principled diplomacy.” Only after Cuba frees its political prisoners and moves toward democracy will the United States consider repealing the sanctions, Obama said.

4. Offshore Oil Drilling

Cuba And Offshore Drilling

In 1999, Cuba allowed foreign oil companies to participate in drilling for oil in its share of the Gulf of Mexico. However, it was not until after the discovery of oil off of its northwestern coast in 2003 that foreign companies began to seriously negotiate with Cuba for cooperation in accessing the oil reserves and exploring for more oil beyond the island's shores. In 2004, the Spanish oil company Repsol devoted $53 million to exploring for Cuban oil and gas. Canada's Sherritt was also a significant investor in Cuba's off-shore drilling program. In December 2004, Fidel Castro publicized the finding of oil reserves off the shore of Santa Cruz del Norte, roughly thirty miles from Havana. By 2005, the Brazilian oil firm Petrobras and the Chinese company Sinopec were involved in Cuba's oil exploration, as well as Canada's Pebercan Incorporated, Venezuela's Petroleos de Venezuela, Norway's Norsk Hydro, and India's ONGC Videsh Ltd. The companies contributed technology and machinery, provided repair services, and invested heavily in the industry.

In February 2006, a group of American government officials and oil executives met with Cuban representatives in Mexico in order to ascertain how important Cuba's offshore oil reserves might be. In March, members of Congress expressed concern over the location of Cuban oil rigs, protesting that they would be closer to American shores than United States law allows. Iran signed an agreement with Cuba in April, in which Iran agreed to help Cuba with oil exploration. Throughout the following months, the United States government stepped up attempts to block Cuban oil drilling off the coast of Florida and the Keys. At the same time, discussion began about whether American oil companies ought to be allowed to explore and drill for oil in Cuban waters. In May, Castro publicly invited American oil companies to join in the drilling venture.

By 2007, twenty of Cuba's fifty-nine blocks for foreign oil exploration and drilling in the Gulf of Mexico had been claimed, and Malaysia and Vietnam had joined the list of countries participating in the search. Actual drilling, however, would not begin until 2008, according to Cuban officials. In December, Cuba invited Russia to join in its oil explorations.

2008 saw Turkey joining the ranks of those foreign companies cooperating with Cuba in its exploration for oil. In April, the Cuban government announced that the date for the commencement of drilling in the Gulf of Mexico had been pushed back to 2009, saying that they were currently doing seismic studies in the area. Twenty-eight of the fifty-nine partitioned blocks in the Gulf of Mexico had been taken by the middle of the year.

Cuba's oil exploration has been hampered somewhat by the scarcity of drilling rigs. In 2007, the daily rates on leases for oil rigs had increased by over sixty percent compared to the rates in 2005. One former oil executive estimated that an offshore oil rig would cost about $40 to $50 million.

The United States And Cuban Oil

Since its initiation, the United States' economic embargo against Cuba has kept American oil companies from becoming involved in the Cuban oil industry. At the same time, it acts as an impediment to the Cuban oil program. The United States would be the closest, most convenient supplier of parts, repairs, and skill for Cuba. Due to the sanctions, however, Cuba must turn to countries that are further away, costing Cuba time and money. Moreover, they must settle for less advanced technology.

A 2004 assessment conducted by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) estimated that approximately 4.6 billion barrels of oil lie beneath northern Cuban waters. For years, American oil companies have been pressing Congress to exempt them from the embargo and allow them to have a part in accessing this potential oil. As more discoveries have been made and Cuba's program has grown, support for American involvement has increased. As has already been mentioned, Cuba has welcomed United States participation. The head of the Cuban interest sections in Washington, Dagoberto Rodriguez, repeated the invitation in early 2007, saying Cuba remains open to the United States' industry's involvement.

Those who favor American involvement in Cuba's oil exploits argue that it would help alleviate the United States' energy supply problems by not only increasingly the supply, but also adding another source. In 2005, the impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on the oil industry caused many to realize the necessity of varying the United States' oil sources. By permitting American companies to participate in Cuba's off-shore exploration and drilling, many argue, the government would be taking an important step toward establishing the energy security of the United States. It would also go a long way toward halting the relentless rise of gasoline prices, some contend.

Others maintain that American involvement would help ensure the environmental safety of Cuba's drilling endeavors. American companies have much knowledge and skill in oil exploitation, as well as experience with extensive safety regulations. With this expertise and the latest technology, American oil companies would be able to help minimize the environmental impact of Cuba's ventures and lessen the chance of a spill occurring.

Others advocate becoming involved because they dislike the United States standing by while other countries invest in Cuba's oil industry. They argue that the United States needs to be able to compete with these other countries and have a share in the profits. Others note that Cuba and its partners will have access to oil that would actually belong to the United States. Oil reserves cross national borders and there is no doubt that some of what Cuba will drill will come from United States territory.

There is some support in Congress for providing American oil companies with an exemption from the economic embargo. Senators Dorgan and Craig, as well as Representatives Udall and Pickering initiated legislation that would permit American firms to cooperate with Cuba in its offshore exploration and drilling.

Opponents of allowing Americans to join in Cuba's offshore oil drilling argue that it would send the wrong message to Cuba's Communist regime. In essence, the United States would be backing down from its hard-line stance toward Cuba. Thus, the government would lose face.

Other critics oppose United States involvement, citing the danger offshore drilling would pose to the environment, especially that off the Key West. Some are concerned about the potential harm to the tourist industry in the Key West, as well as in Florida. Oil-saturated beaches, dead marine life, and a massive clean-up effort are their nightmare.

Several initiatives meant to stop or impede Cuba's oil ventures were introduced in Congress recently. Representative Ros-Lehtinen, Senator Martinez, and Senators Nelson and Bill all introduced legislation that would impose sanctions that are specific to Cuba's offshore oil drilling program. Two of the initiatives included provisions that would deny entrance to the United States to any aliens who had invested in Cuba's off-shore oil exploits and would impose sanctions on people and entities that had contributed $1 million or more to the program.

The United States And Offshore Drilling

Cuba's recent development of its offshore drilling program has also sparked a broader debate over whether the United States ought to allow oil drilling off its own coasts. The ban has been in place since 1981, forbidding any drilling off the United States' shores, except for portions of the Gulf of Mexico and small areas off Alaska. The off-shore drilling ban was passed after several widely-publicized disasters involving the oil industry occurred, particularly the 1969 oil spill off of Santa Barbara, California. This ban, enacted by Congress, was followed by an executive order signed by President Bush in 1990, which reinforced the prohibition. President George W. Bush lifted that executive order in July 2008 and called on Congress to repeal its ban. The Congressional moratorium is part of each year's Interior Department appropriation and must be included each year for it to remain law. On September 24, the House passed a spending bill that did not include an extension of the oil drilling ban. The Senate passed the bill on September 28, thus allowing the ban to expire two days later. Though the ban has expired, there is still the possibility that next year, Congress will pass new restrictions and regulations on off-shore drilling.

Besides using the same arguments as for involvement in Cuba's offshore drilling, proponents of opening American shores to drilling make the case that it is actually environmentally safer for the United States to drill than for other countries to drill for oil. Banning offshore drilling only ensures that the drilling is carried out by less-responsible nations with dated technology and fewer safety regulations. Charles Krauthammer of the Washington Post compared Nigeria, an oil-producing nation which is plagued by "chronic corruption, environmental neglect, ... pipeline explosions, oil spills and illegal siphoning," and leaks caused by militant bombings, to the United States, which "has the highest technology to ensure the safest drilling" and "one of the most extensive and least corrupt regulatory systems on the planet." Krauthammer pointed out that American deep-sea oil rigs held out under Hurricanes Katrina and Rita "without a single undersea well suffering a significant spill."

Others contend that alternative energy sources alone are not enough to keep the United States' economy going. The United States must accept that oil is a necessity and do more to ensure that it has enough of it. An editorial in the Washington Post maintained, "[W]ith the roaring economies of China and India gobbling up oil in the two countries' latter-day industrial revolutions, the United States can no longer afford to turn its back on finding all the sources of fuel necessary to maintain its economy and its standard of living. What's required is a long-term, comprehensive plan that includes wind, solar, geothermal, biofuels and nuclear -- and that acknowledges that oil and gas will be instrumental to the U.S. economy for many years to come." Not only that, others say, but some alternate energy sources are actually harmful to the environment and to the global economy. Charles Krauthammer accused biofuels of being responsible for large swaths of important rainforests being cut down to allow for the planting and harvesting of palms and sugar cane. Ethanol production, he further maintained, has caused food shortages in foreign countries and high prices in the United States. For Krauthammer, offshore drilling is the lesser of the evils.

The loudest cry against offshore oil drilling comes from those who fear what it could do to the environment and the tourist industries of coastal states. However, there are other arguments made against the practice. Some believe it is not worth the undertaking because, according to a report by the United States Energy Information Administration, "access to the Pacific, Atlantic, and eastern Gulf regions would not have a significant impact on domestic crude oil and natural gas production or prices before 2030." The same report estimated that there are 18 billion barrels of crude oil available for development in areas previously protected by the drilling ban, an amount that would have only an "insignificant" impact on average wellhead prices. (Supporters for off-shore drilling challenge that report, claiming the data was dated and had been collected using outdated seismic technology.)

Offshore drilling will take too much time and money, others contend. Current regulations make it such that new drilling leases cannot be given out until the middle of 2010. Beyond that, the process for bidding on those leases takes a long time. Then, lengthy environmental studies must be made in the drilling areas. The oil must be found and rigs set up - a process that could take several years. Furthermore, as already noted, one deep-sea oil rig has been estimated to cost between $40 million to $50 million, on top of the money it would take to fund the oil exploration and environmental studies.

Some also argue that opening American waters to offshore drilling does not mean that there will be less drilling going on in other, more unstable and less environmentally-minded countries. The Christian Science Monitor's Eoin O'Carroll suggested that it was naive to believe that, "with oil trading at over $100 per barrel, an increase in US production would prompt drillers in Kazakhstan to ease off." "The only way that we would really get any significant amount of production to shift from the developing world to the United States," he continued, "would be if it were cheaper to drill here. And that's not going to happen, partly because of ... environmental regulations ..., but mostly because the stuff is way down there at the bottom of the ocean."

Neither will the oil drilled from under American water belong to the American people, or even necessarily be available to us. The oil will be the property of Shell, BP, or any other company that drills it. These companies may very well turn around and sell the oil in another country instead of within the United States.

Another argument against offshore drilling is that it will divert focus and resources from developing alternative sources of energy. Time, money, and energy that would have gone toward solar power or biofuels or other energy sources will instead go toward drilling for oil off the shores of the United States. Oil is not the answer, many believe; thus, it should take a backseat in priority behind other energy sources.

5. Restrictions on Travel and Remittances

Limiting travel to Cuba and remittances to Cuban citizens has been an important element in the United States' policy toward the island nation ever since sanctions were put in place. The strength of the restrictions has waxed and waned over the years, just as it has with other components of the embargo against Cuba. As with the other sanctions, because the restrictions on remittances and travel affect Americans and Cubans alike, they have sparked an intense debate over whether they ought to be used or not.

The History Of Travel Restrictions

In 1963, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) released its Cuban Assets Control Regulations (CACR). These regulations, which were amended throughout the years, put such tight limits upon financial transactions essential for traveling to Cuba that it rendered travel to the island extremely difficult. The CACR forbade dealings with goods made in Cuba or made with anything originating from Cuba; it also tied up any loopholes by roundly banning any transactions that involved property in which Cuba or "any national thereof, has ... had any interest of any nature whatsoever, direct or indirect."

However, under President Carter, the OFAC amended the regulations, granting a general license for transactions related to travel to Cuba. This lasted until 1982, when President Reagan's administration tightened the sanctions, once again limiting travel. Though travel for pleasure or business was not allowed, the government did permit government officials, news personnel, researchers, and those visiting family to journey to the island.

The Clinton Administration likewise made changes to the CACR; in 1993, the OFAC made available specific licenses for travel for religious and educational activities, as well as for undertakings of human rights organizations. However, in 1994, the government yet again clamped down upon travel to Cuba. The United States no longer allowed travel for family visits under a general license; instead, they required a specific license, which they issued only as long as the applicant could demonstrate that their case was an emergency. The next year, Clinton's government took a step back. They decided to allow travel-related transactions under a general license for those visiting family in Cuba. However, those wanting to visit family more than once a year had to apply for a specific license. 1999 saw the continuation of easing travel restrictions. The OFAC expanded the opportunities for travel through specific licenses for sports, religious, and academic activities. The government also granted licenses to those wanting to visit family in Cuba as long as they could demonstrate a need, instead of a pressing emergency. With the passing of the Trade Sanctions Reform and Exportation Enhancement Act of 2000, however, travel restrictions were once more tightened. The act defined any travel for purposes not covered by the regulations as "tourist activities" and took away the OFAC's ability to decide on a case-by-case basis whether to grant a specific license on travel not falling under the categories listed in the regulations.

The Bush Administration

Overall, the Bush Administration has intensified the enforcement of travel restrictions and has tightened the restrictions as well. In 2003, the government no longer allowed travel for "people-to-people educational exchanges unrelated to academic coursework." On the other hand, it eased restrictions on family visits, allowing travelers to visit relatives within three degrees of relationship and not requiring proof of humanitarian need. The new regulations also allowed travelers to carry up to $3,000 with them.

In 2004, under President Bush's guidance, the OFAC amended the CACR, stiffening travel restrictions yet again. Amateur and semi-professional sports teams were no longer granted a general license for travel to Cuba. The revised regulations reduced the amount of money that a traveler visiting family spent for "living expenses and the acquisition in Cuba of goods for personal consumption" to "$50 per day plus up to an additional $50 per trip, if needed, to cover within-Cuba transportation related expenses." They also limited the visit to immediate family, specifically, "any spouse, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, or sibling of that person or that person's spouse, as well as any spouse, widow, or widower of any of the foregoing." Visits were reduced to a fourteen-day duration every three years. The regulations even extended to the amount of baggage a traveler could take with them; the weight was cut to forty-four pounds.

The OFAC further restricted travel to Cuba when, in 2005, it amended the guidelines for application for specific license for transactions related to travel for the religious activities of larger national religious organizations. Under the license, only twenty-five people were permitted to go to Cuba and they were allowed to travel to the island once a calendar quarter. The license expired after one year. The OFAC made the changes after they realized that after the regulations for travel for family visits had been tightened in 2004, some of the large religious organizations had begun to misuse their licenses, taking on travelers from beyond their own ranks.

Current Travel Restrictions

Thus, the travel restrictions currently allow Americans to travel to Cuba under a specific license in order to visit immediate family only. The trip can be made only once every three years. Few general licenses are available. Currently they are extend to:

United States government officials or members of select intergovernmental organizations traveling on official business

Journalists hired by news organizations or by supporting broadcast or technical personnel

Professionals performing research in their fields (as long as that research is strictly academic, is conducted full-time while in Cuba, and is likely to be disseminated to the public) or attending business meetings or conferences held by an international association that usually holds such gatherings in other countries.

Specific licenses, most of them granted only as long as applicants meet a long list of requirements and stipulations, are currently available to:

People wishing to visit immediate family who are Cuban nationals, as already discussed

Those wanting to visit immediate family who are not Cuban nationals

Free-lance journalists

Professionals conducting research or attending meetings who do not meet the criteria for a general license

Students and fulltime employees of undergraduate and graduate academic institutions undertaking who wish to study in Cuba for academic research or to earn credit for a degree, or who are hired to teach or conduct other scholarly activity at a licensed institution

Religious organizations

People traveling to Cuba in order to provide support to the Cuban people, such as activities intended to advance a transition to democracy or activities conducted by human rights organizations

Amateur or semi-professional athletes and public performers

Persons participating in humanitarian projects

Those who are engaged in the activities of private foundations or educational or research institutions that have a recognized interest in international relations, who are gathering information about Cuba for noncommercial purposes

People dealing in informational materials

Persons involved in exporting goods and products to Cuba as authorized by the Department of Commerce or by foreign companies owned or controlled by the United States.

Everyone who journeys to Cuba is required to keep records for five years of any transactions they conducted for or upon their travel.

Anyone who violates the travel regulations may be fined up to $55,000 for every violation. However, the fines are rarely that large, according to the OFAC. Most are around $3,000 to $7,500 for individual violators. Companies, on the other hand, generally incur much steeper fines.

The History Of Remittances

The Cuban Assets Control Regulations cover remittances as well as travel. Just as with the travel ban, remittances have undergone various changes over time. However, most of those changes have occurred within the last few years.

Under the 2003 revision of the CACR, travelers to Cuba were permitted to carry up to $3,000 in cash remittances with them. However, only $300 could go to one household. These remittances, as well as remittances mailed from the United States, could go to anyone in Cuba, so long as the household did not contain a high-ranking government official or Communist Party official.

The OFAC's amendment of the CACR in 2004, however, included tighter restrictions for remittances, as well as for travel, to Cuba. It allowed people to make remittances only to "members of the remitter's immediate family," and limited the amount to "$300 per recipient household in any consecutive 3-month period, regardless of the number of members of the remitter's immediate family comprising that household." Travelers to Cuba could only carry $300 in remittances with them. Nevertheless, the OFAC did make provision for specific licenses for people wanting to make remittances to nongovernmental organizations and groups in Cuba, as well as remittances to Cuban nationals who need to travel (not immigrate) to the United States for "humanitarian need," such as "illness or other medical emergency."

The OFAC also took away the general license permitting banks to send remittances to individuals in Cuba. Instead, banks were made to apply for specific licenses in order to be authorized to be remittance-forwarding service providers. In 2008, there are only 103 banks licensed to send remittances to Cuba.

The Opposition

Many of the same arguments and criticisms that are leveled against the United States' trade embargo against Cuba are also leveled against the restrictions on travel and remittances. Just as critics of the trade embargo point out, the restrictions have not brought about the desired effect. Elsa Falkenburger, a program officer for the Washington Office on Latin America, argued that travel and remittance restrictions have "been in place for nearly 50 years and [have] achieved nothing." Representative Jim McGovern called the restrictions, "a relic from the Cold War" that "makes no sense, and quite frankly it's an embarrassment." Some have contended that the government's claim that the restrictions deny Castro's regime of hard currency is unfounded. Indeed, a report filed by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) seems to substantiate this claim. The GAO found that "the impact of tighter restrictions on travel, cash transfers, and gifts is unknown." The report stated that the office could not find reliable data and thus could not determine the effect of the restrictions.

The same report also stated that enforcement of these tighter restrictions has strained the Customs and Border Protection's ability "to carry out its mission of keeping terrorists, criminals, and other inadmissible aliens from entering the country." Furthermore, it found that the enforcement of travel and remittance restrictions encroached upon government agencies' capability to enforce sanctions on other countries.

Many people feel that the embargo against travel and remittances violates their rights as American citizens, and indeed, as human beings. Barack Obama maintained that "Cuban-American connections to family in Cuba" are a "basic right in humanitarian terms." Elsa Falkenburger of the WOLA argued that the sanctions restrict the rights of U.S. citizens and that, because they allow a visit only once every three years with no exceptions for death or illness, they are inhumane. In May 2008, three Cuban-Americans and one's American spouse took the United States government to court in Vermont, claiming that the travel restrictions violate their constitutional rights. They argued that the sanctions violate the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment and the right of equal protection under the law. One of the plaintiffs, Jared Carter, argued that the restrictions also violate the "fundamental right" to maintain family relationships.

Other critics of the travel and remittances restrictions point out its uselessness because of the hypocrisy of its most ardent supporters, the Cuban-American community. Though the immigrants from Cuba endorse a tough policy toward Castro's regime, they do not abide by the rules they want to impose on others. Daniel Griswold, director of the Center for Trade Policy Studies at the Cato Institute, wrote that the same Cuban-Americans who are the strongest supporters of the sanctions "routinely and massively violate the spirit if not the letter of the embargo. Each year, they send $800 million in hard-dollar remittances to their friends and families back in Cuba; another 100,000 Cuban-Americans actually visit their homeland each year through a special program for 'emergency' visits (most of which occur around the Christmas holiday). In the name of politics, Cuban-American leaders want to restrict the freedom of other Americans to visit Cuba while retaining that freedom for themselves."

Another argument made against the restrictions is that free travel and remittances would help Cuba transition into a freer, more open society. According to Senator Mike Enzi, with the sanctions in place, Cubans are not being exposed to freedom. What is needed is open communication between Americans and Cubans. Elsa Falkenburger agreed with such an assessment, writing that allowing Americans to travel to Cuba would result in "engagement and dialogue," which "are more likely to promote openness and change." Writing for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Peter DeShazo listed travel between the United States and Cuba as a "soft-power" tool that would help bring gradual change to Cuba. Proponents of lifting the restrictions often use the examples of Eastern European nations to prove that interaction, not isolation, will bring about democracy. It was personal contact between people that helped bring down the Soviet bloc, they contend. By isolating Cuba, the United States is ultimately aiding the Communist regime in Cuba. Unrestricted travel would help break down the regime's stranglehold on news and information, many argue.

Restrictions on remittances harms the Cuban people, some say. Since Hurricanes Gustav and Ike battered the island, the call for easing or repealing the restrictions has strengthened. Keeping them in place only increases the suffering of innocent civilians. Philip Peters, the vice president of the Lexington Institute, argued that the restrictions "unreasonably limit a source of direct, effective aid for millions of Cubans." He continued, "Sanctions such as these, targeted at needy individuals, are at odds with our humanitarian interests."

Opponents of travel restrictions point the finger at the government and cry "Hypocrisy," just as opponents of the trade embargo do. The example of China is forever a thorn in the side of supporters of sanctions against Cuba. The United States allows tourists to go to China, even though it is a repressive Communist country. What is the difference between China and Cuba, the critics question. Indeed, Roger Johnson, North Dakota's Agriculture Commissioner wrote, "Cuba's government is much like those of China and Vietnam, Communist nations that enjoy trade, tourism, and even the friendship of the U.S. Yet we treat Cuba ... as a pariah."

Many recognize the trade benefits that would result from lifting travel restrictions. Freer travel to Cuba would lead to more opportunities for trade and would make business arrangements much less complicated. This is why the effort to ease travel restrictions has been lead by states and groups with agricultural and economic interests. The Washington Office on Latin America recognized the same thing, writing that normalizing relations with Cuba would lead to more agricultural trade with Cuba. The American economy would benefit all around if travel restrictions were lifted, others maintain. Businesses providing air and cruise travel would get a boost. One report made for the Center for International Policy estimated that the United States' economic output would expand by $1.18-1.61 billion and that roughly 16,888 to 23,020 jobs would be created if unrestricted travel were permitted.

Others believe lifting the restrictions would give the United States and its foreign policy more credibility. Colonel Larry Wilkerson of the College of William and Mary lamented that the United States' "foreign policy is broken and in many situations it is being written off as irrelevant." According to Wilkerson, lifting travel restrictions would show the world that the United States is ready to once again operate under a sensible foreign policy.

Support for lifting travel and remittances restrictions is growing among the Cuban-American community, which has traditionally advocated a hard-line approach to Cuba. According to a 2007 poll conducted by the Florida International University, 55.2 percent of the Cuban-Americans in South Florida polled supported unrestricted travel to Cuba. Many members of Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, are also behind lifting the sanctions, including Senator Christopher Dodd, Representative Jim McGovern, Senator Mike Enzi, Senator Max Baucus, and Senator Bill Nelson.

The Defense

Advocates of the sanctions against Cuba vigorously defend the policy, saying that travel and remittance restrictions are valuable tools that take power away from Castro's regime. President Bush claimed that the restrictions keep hard currency out of the government's hands, weakening their ability to repress the Cuban people. Allowing unrestricted travel would only aid the Communist government by building up Cuba's tourist industry, allowing more money to flow into Cuba. Others argued that licenses for family visits and educational travel had been abused, used instead for tourism. By limiting travel for family visits, the government can make sure that travel is truly for emergencies. Remittance restrictions, they also maintain, are necessary in order to keep money out of the hands of the Cuban government and members of the Communist Party. These restrictions are responsible, defenders of the sanctions maintain, for the economic reforms taking place in Cuba. They also argue that the restrictions were a factor in Castro's decision to reduce the size of the Cuban military and to cut the budget in half since 1989.

Answering claims that the restrictions violate Americans' rights, advocates of the restrictions argue that the right to travel is not a constitutional right. In the court case involving the four Vermont plaintiffs and the United States government, both the Deputy Attorney General and the plaintiff's lawyer agreed on this point. The Deputy Attorney General in turn maintained that ending the travel ban would undermine United States foreign policy.

Jose Azel of the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami wrote that it is illogical to think that allowing American tourists into Cuba will somehow bring about democracy. "For years," he argued, "hundreds of thousands of tourists from Canada, Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere have visited the island. Cuba is no more democratic today. On what mystical grounds do opponents of the embargo offer that American tourists will do the trick?" In reality, others say, even if American tourists were allowed into Cuba, they would be isolated from normal Cuban citizens, just as the Europeans, Canadians, and other tourists have been all along. Nothing would be accomplished by lifting the travel restrictions because the Americans would stay in tourist hotels that are largely off-limits to ordinary citizens. There would be no contact or interaction.

1. MORE HARM THAN GOOD: THE CASE FOR ENDING THE TRADE EMBARGO

The long-running US trade embargo was supposed to pressure Cuba's dictatorship into reform. A long time ago, we should have seen that it wasn't working and was causing more harm than good. The failure of current policy and the comparative advantages of change should compel us to affirm that: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase its constructive engagement with Cuba.

OBSERVATION 1. The DEFINITIONS for clarifying the round and establishing the topicality of my position in today's debate.

**Substantial:** “considerable in quantity**:** significantly great “ (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, 2008, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantial)

**Increase:** “to make greater“ (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, 2008, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantial)

**Constructive Engagement:** “the policy of maintaining limited political and business links with a country while continuing to demand political or social reform in that country” *(Encarta World English Dictionary,* 2007,[*http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary\_701705239/constructive\_engagement.html*](http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_701705239/constructive_engagement.html)*)*

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY: US-Cuba constructive engagement is limited by current policies

A. The US embargo chokes off nearly all trade

Associated Press, 25 July 2007, Eight Americans graduate from free Cuban medical school, USA TODAY, <http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2007-07-25-cuba_N.htm>

Washington's 45-year-old embargo prohibits most Americans from traveling to Cuba and chokes off nearly all trade between the countries.

B. The embargo will not be lifted any time soon

Associated Press, 19 Feb 2008, State Dept. US unlikely to lift Cuba embargo 'soon', BOSTON HERALD, <http://news.bostonherald.com/news/national/politics/general/view.bg?articleid=1074590&srvc=home&position=recent>

Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte said today the United States will not soon lift its embargo on Cuba despite Fidel Castro's resignation. Asked by reporters at the State Department if Washington planned to change its Cuba policy now that Castro has stepped down, Negroponte replied: "I can't imagine that happening anytime soon."

OBSERVATION 3. The embargo causes MISSED OPPORTUNITIES or FAILURES in the Status Quo:

FAILURE 1: $300 million in lost agricultural trade.

Sue Kirchhoff and Chris Woodyard Chris Woodyard (journalists) 19 Feb 2008, USA TODAY, “Cuba trade gets 'new opportunity'” [www.usatoday.com/money/world/2008-02-19-cuba-economy\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/money/world/2008-02-19-cuba-economy_N.htm)

American farmers now export hundreds of millions of dollars in commodities to Cuba each year, thanks to a 2000 law. But they still face travel restrictions and a complex payment system. "Fidel Castro's welcome resignation provides a new opportunity to revisit our failed Cuba policies," said [Senate Finance Committee Chairman, Montana Senator Max] Baucus, citing a federal study that said ending export restrictions could increase farm sales to Cuba by about $300 million a year.

FAILURE 2: Harm to the Cuban people

Dan Griswold (Director of the Center for Trade Policy Studies at the Cato Institute in Washington, DC; has authored or co-authored major studies on globalization, trade and immigration; has authored articles for the Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times, the Financial Times, and other major publications and has appeared on C-SPAN, CNN, PBS, the BBC, and Fox News; has testified before congressional committees and federal agencies on a range of trade and immigration issues.) 12 Oct 2005, Four Decades of Failure: The U.S. Embargo against Cuba, At the James A. Baker III Institute Program, Cuba and the United States in the 21st Century, Rice University, Houston, Texas, [www.freetrade.org/bios/griswold.html](http://www.freetrade.org/bios/griswold.html)

If the goal of U.S. policy toward Cuba is to help its people achieve freedom and a better life, the economic embargo has completely failed. Its economic effect is to make the people of Cuba worse off by depriving them of lower-cost food and other goods that could be bought from the United States. It means less independence for Cuban workers and entrepreneurs, who could be earning dollars from American tourists and fueling private-sector growth. Meanwhile, Castro and his ruling elite enjoy a comfortable, insulated lifestyle by extracting any meager surplus produced by their captive subjects.

FAILURE 3: Slower pace of political change in Cuba.

Vicki Huddleston, (Visiting Fellow, Foreign Policy; expert on Latin America and Africa. A career member of the Foreign Service, she served as U.S. Ambassador to Mali and Madagascar, acting U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia and Chief of the American Interests section in Cuba) 10 March 2008 “Cuba Embargo's Usefulness Has Run Its Course,” BROOKINGS INSTITUTION, <http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0310_cuba_huddleston.aspx>

But the Bush administration is standing by its policy that Cuba must change first, tying any modification in our unilateral embargo to the end of the Castro regime. This does us and the Cuban people a disservice because it ties our policy to that of Raúl Castro's. By waiting for the Cuban regime to act, we make policy initiatives that would bring about change, dependent on the actions of the Cuban government. The longer we wait the more likely that Cuba's new leaders will manage without us. In three to five years, Cuba, with help from foreign investors, will have exploited deep-sea oil and its sugar cane ethanol, adding billions to its annual revenues and making the island a net exporter of energy. Worse, the longer we wait, the slower the process of change. If we want to play a role in Cuba's future, we must act now to encourage change in Cuba, by the Cuban people.

OBSERVATION 4. Let's do exactly what Huddleston recommends and implement the following PLAN:

1. Agency: Congress and the President.

2. Mandate: US trade sanctions and travel restrictions on Cuba will be repealed.

3. Enforcement: Through the same means as existing trade policies, through the State Department and all other normal federal agencies.

4. Funding: Existing budgets of existing federal agencies, with funds saved through elimination of enforcement of the current embargo.

5. Timeline: This plan takes effect immediately upon an Affirmative ballot.

6. The Affirmative may clarify the plan in future speeches.

ADVANTAGE 1. Agricultural exports to Cuba create jobs in the US

Paul Schattenberg, 21 Aug 2008, Texas A&M University, AgNews, “Texas Agriculture Forging Financial Friendship with Cuba,” <http://agnews.tamu.edu/showstory.php?id=661>

Exporting food and other agricultural products to Cuba could bring some $57 million to Texas farmers and result in 1,500 new jobs, according to representatives of the Texas-Cuba Trade Alliance. Members of the alliance, including ranchers, farmers, Texas Department of Agriculture representatives and experts on international trade met in San Antonio on Aug. 15 for the “Exporting to Cuba” conference. Topics during this conference, which was co-sponsored by the Free Trade Alliance and Texas AgriLife Extension Service, included changes in the Cuban political system, opportunities for food and agricultural trade, and how the export process works.

ADVANTAGE 2. Economic improvement of the Cuban people

Prof. David R. Henderson (research fellow with the Hoover Institution and an associate professor of economics in the Graduate School of Business and Public Policy at the Naval Postgraduate School) 21 Feb 2008, “End the Cuban Embargo,” http://www.antiwar.com/henderson/?articleid=12395

The more open trade is between Cuba and the rest of the world, the more experience Cubans will have with foreigners and foreign goods. They will learn that they don't have to be poor, that meat once a day doesn't have to be a luxury, and that they don't have to die from socialized medicine. The "dollarization" of the Cuban economy, under which Castro allowed people to exchange dollars for goods, has already started this process. The more dollars that flow into Cuba, even with the nasty government taking a big cut, the less dependent Cubans are on the Cuban government for their daily bread.

ADVANTAGE 3. Encouraging human rights and political reform

Dan Griswold (Director of the Center for Trade Policy Studies at the Cato Institute in Washington, DC; has authored or co-authored major studies on globalization, trade and immigration; has authored articles for the Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times, the Financial Times, and other major publications and has appeared on C-SPAN, CNN, PBS, the BBC, and Fox News; has testified before congressional committees and federal agencies on a range of trade and immigration issues.) 12 Oct 2005, Four Decades of Failure: The U.S. Embargo against Cuba, At the James A. Baker III Institute Program, Cuba and the United States in the 21st Century, Rice University, Houston, Texas, [www.freetrade.org/bios/griswold.html](http://www.freetrade.org/bios/griswold.html)

The president has rightly opposed efforts in Congress to impose trade sanctions against China because of its poor human rights record. In sheer numbers, the Chinese government has jailed and killed far more political and religious dissenters than has the Cuban government. And China is arguably more of a national security concern today than Castro's pathetic little workers' paradise. Yet China has become our third largest trading partner while we maintain a blanket embargo on commercial relations with Cuba. President Bush understands that economic engagement with China offers the best hope for encouraging human rights and political reforms in that country, yet he has failed to apply that same, sound thinking to Cuba.

2A EVIDENCE: END TRADE EMBARGO

INHERENCY

McCain will continue current policy on Cuba

Joshua Kurlantzick (visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) 24 Feb 2008, “It's Time to End the Cuban Embargo,” [www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=19931&prog=zgp&proj=zusr](http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=19931&prog=zgp&proj=zusr)

John McCain has indicated he would continue the current policy. And as Washington policy analyst Steve Clemons notes, Mike Huckabee, who backed greater engagement with Cuba when he was governor of Arkansas, now says he wants to put still more pressure on Havana.

Obama opposed Cuban embargo but more recently he favors it

Michael Dobbs, Feb 2008, WASHINGTON POST, “Top Ten Democratic Flip Flops,” <http://blog.washingtonpost.com/fact-checker/2008/02/dem_flipflops.html>

In January 2004, Obama said flatly that it was time "to end the embargo with Cuba," because it had "utterly failed in the effort to overthrow Castro." Speaking to a Cuban-American audience in Miami in August 2007, he said he would not "take off the embargo" as president because it was "an important inducement for change."

Congress rejected easing embargo restrictions

Associated Press, 18 Oct 2007, "US Agricultural sales to Cuba trailing off" <http://havanajournal.com/business/entry/us-agricultural-sales-to-cuba-trailing-off/>

The U.S. House voted 245-182 this year to reject easing restrictions on farm sales to Cuba, including a proposal to allow Cuba to pay for goods after they are shipped from a U.S. port instead of ahead of time as the law now requires. While Cuba once preferred to buy U.S. food products in hopes of normalizing relations with the United States, it has been diversifying its base of suppliers in hopes of pressuring the Bush administration to ease trade restrictions, Kavulich said.

HARMS/SIGNIFICANCE

Embargo has failed: Regime remains in power, other nations trade with Cuba and we miss out on opportunities

Roger Johnson (North Dakota Commissioner of Agriculture), 3 Mar 2008, "Cuba: Snuff Out the Embargo (Pro Versus Con Debate)" <http://www.govcentral.com/news/1535-cuba-snuff-out-the-embargo-pro-versus-con-debate>

American policy toward Cuba is an abject failure. Nine U.S. Presidents have come and gone (and a 10th is about to depart); Fidel Castro has just resigned, yet his closest supporters remain in power. The real victims of this misguided policy are the two generations of Cubans who have grown up under the U.S. embargo that has deprived them of access to U.S. consumer products. More important, it has isolated them from the ideals of democracy and freedom, the very things we most want for them. In the meantime, other nations, including most of our closest allies, are openly trading with and sending tourists to Cuba. There is a substantial market there, especially for our agricultural products, and we are missing out on much of it. Embargoes are almost meaningless when the rest of the world ignores them.

Millions of US citizens denied benefits of Cuban medical research

Patricia Grogg, Interpress Service News Agency, 3 Oct 2006, CUBA-US: Embargo's Boomerang Effect <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=34976>

Washington's embargo against Cuba also has an impact on the United States economy and prevents millions of U.S. citizens from benefiting from Cuban medical progress, according to a report released by the Cuban foreign ministry. The text of the report will be presented at the United Nations General Assembly, which on Nov. 8 will be examining for the fifteenth consecutive year the need to end the embargo imposed by Washington on Havana more than four decades ago. The document states that "because of the blockade regulations" it has been impossible to begin clinical trials in the U.S. with TheraCIM, a Cuban pharmaceutical product for treating brain tumours in children.

US loses $700 million to $1.2 billion/year in trade

Dan Griswold (Director of the Center for Trade Policy Studies at the Cato Institute in Washington, DC; Griswold has authored or co-authored major studies on globalization, trade and immigration; has testified before congressional committees and federal agencies on trade and immigration issues.) 12 Oct 2005, Four Decades of Failure: The U.S. Embargo against Cuba, At the James A. Baker III Institute Program, Cuba and the United States in the 21st Century, Rice University, Houston, Texas, [www.freetrade.org/bios/griswold.html](http://www.freetrade.org/bios/griswold.html)

Cuban families are not the only victims of the embargo. Many of the dollars Cubans could earn from U.S. tourists would come back to the United States to buy American products, especially farm goods. In 2000, Congress approved a modest opening of the embargo. The Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 allows cash-only sales to Cuba of U.S. farm products and medical supplies. The results of this opening have been quite amazing. Since 2000, total sales of farm products to Cuba have increased from virtually zero to $380 million last year. From dead last in U.S. farm export markets, Cuba ranked 25th last year out of 228 countries in total purchases of U.S. farm products. Cuba is now the fifth largest export market in Latin America for U.S. farm exports. American farmers sold more to Cuba last year than to Brazil. Our leading exports to Cuba are meat and poultry, rice, wheat, corn, and soybeans. The American Farm Bureau estimates that Cuba could eventually become a $1 billion agricultural export market for products of U.S. farmers and ranchers. The embargo stifles another $250 million in potential annual exports of fertilizer, herbicides, pesticides and tractors. According to a study by the U.S. International Trade Commission, the embargo costs American firms a total of $700 million to $1.2 billion per year.

ADVANTAGES

Lifting the embargo would increase agricultural trade

Roger Johnson (North Dakota Commissioner of Agriculture), 3 Mar 2008, "Cuba: Snuff Out the Embargo (Pro Versus Con Debate)" <http://www.govcentral.com/news/1535-cuba-snuff-out-the-embargo-pro-versus-con-debate>

Since 2002, North Dakota has exported nearly $40 million in agricultural commodities—mostly pulse crops (peas, chickpeas, lentils, etc.)—to Cuba, despite the competitive disadvantage imposed on us by our own government restrictions. Lifting those restrictions would mean greater trade opportunities.

Cancer and diabetes treatments would become available if embargo were lifted

Patricia Grogg, Interpress Service News Agency, 3 Oct 2006, CUBA-US: Embargo's Boomerang Effect <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=34976>

TheraCIM is produced by the Molecular Immunology Centre, which in 2004 made a deal with U.S. company CancerVax to develop and produce therapeutic vaccines against cancer. This medication is registered in Cuba and other countries for treating cancer of the head and neck, and has been proved to reduce tumour mass. It could benefit children in the United States and other countries with this type of cancer, the report points out. It also adds that were it not for the embargo, millions of people in the United States suffering from diabetes could benefit from Citoprot P, a unique product and treatment method that accelerates healing of diabetic foot ulcers, reducing the risk of lower extremity amputations. Citoprot P was developed by the Cuban Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology. According to the foreign ministry report, about 20.8 million people in the United States suffer from diabetes, a chronic incurable disease.

Lifting trade restrictions is best way to help Cuba reform its economy

Prof. Raj M. Desai, (Georgetown Univ. School of Foreign Service, Visiting Fellow, Global Economy and Development, Wolfensohn Center for Development, The Brookings Institution) March 2008, Can Raúl Castro Revive Cuba's Private Sector? <http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2008/03_cuba_desai.aspx>

Without rapidly reforming its inefficient state enterprises, Cuba may face the prospect of becoming trapped in a low-wage, low-productivity cycle. To avoid this, Cuba should embrace some of the lessons from successful Eastern European reformers. No single U.S. move would have a greater impact on the direction of Cuban reform than the lifting of travel, trade and financial restrictions. Although Washington's options are severely limited by the current political-economic mood in Latin America, the United States can clear a path for a reformist Cuba to seek its own solutions and to understand the tradeoffs involved in different reform strategies.

US policy should recognize and encourage the beginnings of capitalism in Cuba today

Vicki Huddleston, (Visiting Fellow, Foreign Policy; expert on Latin America and Africa. A career member of the Foreign Service, she served as U.S. Ambassador to Mali and Madagascar, acting U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia and Chief of the American Interests section in Cuba) 10 March 2008 “Cuba Embargo's Usefulness Has Run Its Course,” BROOKINGS INSTITUTION, <http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0310_cuba_huddleston.aspx>

Cuban farmers can now buy land, sell directly to large purchasers such as hotels and hospitals, and acquire farm tools of their choice. As this continues, Cuba's farmers could become its first capitalists. The administration's comments on the reform process remind me of the movie 'Eyes Wide Shut,' in which dreams and reality are intertwined. Are these reforms the stuff of dreams? It is much too early to say. But if we look at the facts—at reality—we must acknowledge that this is the beginning of a process that if continued will lead to considerably more personal freedom and better lives for Cubans. To the extent that this is true, then US policy should not only acknowledge these reforms but seek to encourage their continuation and expansion."

US agricultural exports to Cuba would go up by millions of dollars if restrictions were lifted

John Reeder (project leader), July 2007, U.S. International Trade Commission report, U.S. Agricultural Sales to Cuba: Certain Economic Effects of U.S. Restrictions, published by Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (non-profit and non-political professional organization affiliated with the American Economic Association and the Allied Social Sciences Association of the United States; maintains professional contacts with social scientists throughout the world interested in engaging in scholarly discussion and research on Cuba and its comparative development) <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/asce/pdfs/volume17/pdfs/reeder.pdf>

If restrictions on financing of U.S. agricultural and on travel of U.S. citizens to Cuba were both lifted, the largest gains in U.S. exports to Cuba among the sixteen commodity groups examined were for other food products (including fresh fruits and vegetables) (a rise of $37 million to $68 million annually), milk powder ($15 million to $42 million), processed foods ($26 million to $41 million), wheat ($17 million to $34 million), and dry beans ($9 million to $22 million).

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES

DIA Report: Cuba is no military threat to the U.S. or others

Dan Griswold (Director of the Center for Trade Policy Studies at the Cato Institute in Washington, DC. Since joining Cato in 1997, Mr. Griswold has authored or co-authored major studies on globalization, trade and immigration; has authored articles for the Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times, the Financial Times, and other major publications and has appeared on C-SPAN, CNN, PBS, the BBC, and Fox News; has testified before congressional committees and federal agencies on a range of trade and immigration issues.) 12 Oct 2005, Four Decades of Failure: The U.S. Embargo against Cuba, At the James A. Baker III Institute Program, Cuba and the United States in the 21st Century, Rice University, Houston, Texas, [www.freetrade.org/bios/griswold.html](http://www.freetrade.org/bios/griswold.html)

A 1998 report by the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency concluded that, "Cuba does not pose a significant military threat to the U.S. or to other countries in the region." The report declared Cuba's military forces "residual" and "defensive." Some officials in the Bush administration have charged that Castro's government may be supporting terrorists abroad, but the evidence is pretty shaky. And even if true, maintaining a comprehensive trade embargo would be a blunt and ineffective lever for change.

Embargo's effectiveness blocked by lack of international support

US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 30 Nov 2007, “Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” GAO-08-80, [www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf)

Although most countries recognize the right of the United States to determine its own foreign policy and security concerns, the embargo’s unilateral nature and a lack of multilateral cooperation with the embargo impede U.S. efforts to isolate the Cuban regime diplomatically and deny it hard currency resources. Although State officials have testified that sanctions are best implemented within a diplomatic framework based on broad multilateral consensus, the department has been unable to obtain such foreign support for the United States’ Cuba embargo policy.

2. BLACK GOLD: THE CASE FOR OIL DEVELOPMENT

Cuba has something the US needs: billions of barrels of oil. And the US has something Cuba needs: the technology to retrieve it. Today I'll make the case for the comparative advantages of US-Cuba cooperation on oil development as I affirm that: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase its constructive engagement with Cuba.

OBSERVATION 1. The DEFINITIONS for clarifying the round and establishing the topicality of my position in today's debate.

**Substantial:** “considerable in quantity**:** significantly great “ (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008, [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantial](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantial) )

**Increase:** “to make greater“ (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008, [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantial](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantial) )

**Constructive Engagement:** “the policy of maintaining limited political and business links with a country while continuing to demand political or social reform in that country” *(Encarta World English Dictionary, 2007,* [*http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary\_701705239/constructive\_engagement.html*](http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_701705239/constructive_engagement.html) *)*

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY: The Status Quo blocks US-Cuba cooperation on oil development

A. The embargo puts billions of dollars of oil business off limits to US companies

Jeff Franks (journalist), 12 June 2008, REUTERS NEWS SERVICE, Cuban oil production could be a catalyst for a change in relations with U.S., International Herald Tribune, <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/06/12/business/cubaoil.php>

In a rare confluence of circumstances, oil could grease the wheels for the two bitter enemies to come together in the middle of the Florida Straits out of mutual need, experts say. Getting there would require a sea change in US policy -- namely putting a major hole in the US trade embargo imposed against Cuba in 1962 to topple Fidel Castro's communist government. If the embargo stays as is, a nearby source of oil will be off-limits to the energy-thirsty United States and the American oil industry will miss out on billions of dollars of business.

B. US technology is needed to recover Cuban deep-sea oil

Jeff Franks (journalist), 12 June 2008, REUTERS NEWS SERVICE, “Cuban oil production could be a catalyst for a change in relations with U.S.,” International Herald Tribune, <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/06/12/business/cubaoil.php>

The Cuban field lies as much as six miles, or 9.7 kilometers, below the sea surface, depths at which U.S. production technology is superior, said a Cuban oil expert, Jonathan Benjamin-Alvarado, at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. "Cuba and none of the present partners have that capability without accessing American technology, and therein lies the rub," he said. "U.S. export controls forbid them to transfer that technology to Cuba."

OBSERVATION 3. The PLAN

1. Agency: Congress and the President.

2. Mandate: Congress will pass a law creating an exception to the US-Cuba trade embargo, to allow trade in petroleum and natural gas and any necessary equipment related to their exploration and development, and travel to Cuba for business purposes by US citizens engaged in oil-related business.

3. Enforcement: Through existing means of enforcing the Status Quo embargo.

4. Funding: General Federal Revenues already allocated for enforcement of the existing embargo.

5. Timeline: This plan takes effect immediately upon an Affirmative ballot.

6. The Affirmative may clarify the plan as needed in future speeches.

OBSERVATION 4. SOLVENCY: Cuba would welcome US investment

Michael Janofsky (journalist), 9 May 2006, “Cuba irks U.S. with plans for oil drilling,” INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/05/09/news/cuba.php>

At a recent trade conference in Mexico City arranged by [founder of the U.S. Cuba Trade Association, Kirby] Jones, Cuban officials invited U.S. oil companies to bid for the other leases on the Cuban side of the Florida Strait even though drilling in Cuban waters would violate the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba.

OBSERVATION 5. The Plan produces several COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES over the Status Quo

ADVANTAGE 1. We help the US economy by fighting rising oil prices

A. Link: Cuban drilling would would help reduce oil prices

Vicki Huddleston, (Visiting Fellow, Foreign Policy, Brookings Institution; expert on Latin America and Africa. A career member of the Foreign Service, she served as U.S. Ambassador to Mali and Madagascar, acting U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia and Chief of the American Interests section in Cuba) June 2008, Who Will Help Cuba Exploit its Offshore Oil Wealth? <http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0616_cuba_oil_huddleston.aspx>

Citing rising oil prices, President Bush called for repealing the ban on drilling for oil along our continental shelf. Vice President Cheney, in an effort to justify US drilling in offshore waters, claimed that China was drilling for Cuban oil 60 miles from the Florida coast. Ironically, neither Bush nor Cheney have any intention of allowing American companies to exploit any of the 4.6 billion barrels of unproven oil reserves or the 9.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas off of Cuba's coast. Yet, allowing US petroleum companies to do so would go a long way toward resolving both their concerns. If we had access to Cuba's offshore oil, it would diversify our sources—Venezuela is now our fifth largest supplier—and help dampen the upward price spiral at the pump.

B. Impact: Oil prices hurt the US economy

Prof. Jeremy Siegel PhD (Professor of Finance at the Wharton School of the Univ of Pennsylvania; Ph.D. in Economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1971) 2 June 2008, “Oil's Not Well in the U.S.,” http://finance.yahoo.com/expert/article/futureinvest/85317

Since the US is a net importer of oil, higher oil prices hurt our economy. The United States produces about 8 million barrels of oil a day, but we consume over 20 million barrels. That means that we are net importers of 12 million barrels of oil a day, which, at $130 a barrel, comes to about $1.5 billion. This is the amount that we fork over to foreign oil producers every day. At current prices our yearly oil purchases will total $570 billion this year and account for the lion's share of our trade deficit. Because US GDP, the total value of what we produce in a year, is about $14 trillion, the cost of importing oil at current prices is just over 4% of our total output. Since a year ago oil was about $70 a barrel, the extra amount we pay for oil will eat up an extra 2% of our GDP. To put this in perspective, the long term rate of productivity growth in the US is just over 2% a year, so rising oil prices will negate a whole year's improvement in our standard of living.

ADVANTAGE 2. Reduced environmental harm through reduced risk of oil spills

Vicki Huddleston, (Visiting Fellow, Foreign Policy, Brookings Institution; expert on Latin America and Africa. A career member of the Foreign Service, she served as U.S. Ambassador to Mali and Madagascar, acting U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia and Chief of the American Interests section in Cuba) June 2008, Who Will Help Cuba Exploit its Offshore Oil Wealth? [www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0616\_cuba\_oil\_huddleston.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0616_cuba_oil_huddleston.aspx)

If American companies with expertise in oil exploitation and protection of the environment were able to cooperate with the six oil companies that have contracts to search for Cuba's offshore resources, we would have considerably greater confidence that the latest and safest technology would reduce the environmental impact and diminish the possibility of a spill that might impact states along the Gulf of Mexico.

ADVANTAGE 3. Commercial engagement is the best way to encourage a more open Cuban society

Dan Griswold (Director of the Center for Trade Policy Studies at the Cato Institute in Washington, DC; has authored or co-authored major studies on globalization, trade and immigration; has authored articles for the Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times, the Financial Times; has testified before congressional committees and federal agencies on trade and immigration issues.) 12 Oct 2005, Four Decades of Failure: The U.S. Embargo against Cuba, At the James A. Baker III Institute Program, Cuba and the United States in the 21st Century, Rice University, Houston, Texas, [www.freetrade.org/bios/griswold.html](http://www.freetrade.org/bios/griswold.html)

Lifting or modifying the embargo would not be a victory for Fidel Castro or his oppressive regime. It would be an overdue acknowledgement that the four-and-a-half decade embargo has failed, and that commercial engagement is the best way to encourage more open societies abroad. The U.S. government can and should continue to criticize the Cuban government's abuse of human rights in the U.N. and elsewhere, while allowing expanding trade and tourism to undermine Castro's authority from below.

2A EVIDENCE: OIL DEVELOPMENT

INHERENCY

Inherency: Cuba needs help to access oil resources

Solvency: Oil reserves look promising

Carolyn Whelan (business journalist), 7 March 2007, FORTUNE magazine, “Castro's revenge: The Cuban oil rush,” <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2007/03/19/8402339/index.htm>

Oil experts say production is at least three years away. "The potential for ultra-deep-water reserves looks quite promising," says International Energy Agency analyst David Fyfe. "If oil prices stay high, it keeps the frontier areas in play. But Cuba needs help to access those resources."

HARMS/SIGNIFICANCE

Embargo hurts the US: We need oil from Cuba

Jeff Franks (journalist), 12 June 2008, REUTERS NEWS SERVICE, “Cuban oil production could be a catalyst for a change in relations with U.S.,” International Herald Tribune, [www.iht.com/articles/2008/06/12/business/cubaoil.php](http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/06/12/business/cubaoil.php)

But Kirby Jones, a consultant on Cuban business and founder of the U.S.-Cuba Trade Association in Washington, and who is against the embargo, said a big Cuba oil find would change the political equation. "This is the first time that maintaining the embargo actually costs the United States something," he said. "And we need oil. We need it from wherever we can get it, and in this case it's 50 miles off our coast." An odd fact is that Cuba will be drilling 50 miles from the Florida Keys, or more than twice as close as U.S. companies can get because of regulations protecting Florida's coast. Representative Jeff Flake, an Arizona Republican who has introduced bills in Congress to lift the embargo for oil companies, said the environmental argument might be crucial because there was much concern in Florida about potential oil spills.

High oil prices hurt workers and businesses

Prof. Jeremy Siegel PhD (Professor of Finance at the Wharton School of the Univ of Pennsylvania; Ph.D. in Economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1971) 2 July 2008, “Oil's Increasing Threat to the US Economy,” <http://finance.yahoo.com/expert/article/futureinvest/91644>

If current oil prices remain high, American will be spending almost $300 billion in extra oil costs over last year. These higher oil prices will hurt workers and well as firms. About three quarters of our national income is paid to workers in the form of wages, salaries and bonuses, and one quarter is paid to shareowners in the form of dividends and profits. If one quarter of the increased cost of oil fell on corporate equity, this would reduce corporate profits by about $75 billion dollars per year. Since before-tax corporate profits are about $1.5 trillion, these higher prices will cause a 5% reduction in profits.

Oil prices threaten the US economy

Peter G. Gosselin (journalist), 24 May 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES, Relentless rise in oil prices tests economy’s resilience, <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/may/24/business/fi-econ24>

But instead of clearing, the skies over the economy have ominously darkened in recent days. The chief reason is oil. And there are signs the nation may have reached an economic tipping point after years of shrugging off the petroleum problem. “We may finally have crossed the line where the price of crude actually matters for most companies,” said Peter Boockvar, equity strategist at New York financial firm Miller Tabak & Co. “The stock market has been in la-la land when it comes to oil, but they got a pretty good dose of reality the last few days.” The ill effects of the latest price hikes would not be so surprising if it were not for the fact that the nation’s economy and financial markets remained blissfully unruffled by oil’s upward march during most of the last five years. Until this week. “The economic outlook has been taken hostage by the relentless surge in oil prices,” said Robert V. DiClemente, chief U.S. economist at Citigroup in New York.

SOLVENCY

Cuban officials welcome US energy investment

Carolyn Whelan (business journalist), 7 March 2007, FORTUNE magazine, “Castro's revenge: The Cuban oil rush,” <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2007/03/19/8402339/index.htm>

And Cuban officials say U.S. companies would receive the same treatment as others. "American energy companies and investment are welcome in our country," says Ernesto Plasencia, Cuba's commercial attaché in Washington, D.C.

Cuba has 5 billion barrels of oil, first wells will be in production in 2009

Jeff Franks (journalist), 12 June 2008, REUTERS NEWS SERVICE, “Cuban oil production could be a catalyst for a change in relations with U.S.,” International Herald Tribune, [www.iht.com/articles/2008/06/12/business/cubaoil.php](http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/06/12/business/cubaoil.php)

The U.S. Geological Survey has estimated the Cuban field holds at least five billion barrels of recoverable oil and 10 trillion cubic feet, or 280 billion cubic meters, of natural gas. In a few years, Cuba could be producing 525,000 barrels of oil a day, enough to make it energy independent and perhaps even an oil exporter, said Jorge Piñón, a former oil company executive who is now a researcher at the University of Miami. Cuba currently consumes 145,000 barrels of oil daily, of which 92,000 barrels come from Venezuela, though that would most certainly rise if the embargo were lifted. The government has sold oil concessions to seven companies and has said a consortium of Spanish, Indian and Norwegian companies will drill the first production well in the first half of 2009.

Billions of barrels of oil available if restrictions are lifted

Patricia Grogg, Interpress Service News Agency, 3 Oct 2006, CUBA-US: Embargo's Boomerang Effect <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=34976>

Energy is another good business that Havana says U.S. companies are missing out on, because they are forbidden to participate in prospecting for oil on Cuba's undersea platform in the Gulf of Mexico, only 137 kilometres from Florida. The platform to the north of Cuba has an estimated potential of between one billion and 9.3 billion barrels of crude and between 1.9 trillion and 22 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. These estimates in the Cuban foreign ministry's report are attributed to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), which said "the possibilities of success are of the order of 95 percent." In 1999 Cuba opened up to tender 112,000 square kilometres of its waters in the Gulf of Mexico, divided into 51 blocks, for foreign exploration aimed at eventual exploitation. The Spanish-Argentine company Repsol YPF currently has a contract to drill in six of these blocks, with a total surface area of 10,700 square kilometres. This year, however it decided to spread the risk and has sold a 30 percent share in the venture to each of two other companies, from India and Norway, retaining 40 percent itself. The Canadian firm Sherritt International has also signed a contract for four blocks in this deep water drilling area.

Opportunities still exist for US companies if we lift the restrictions

Carolyn Whelan (business journalist), 7 March 2007, FORTUNE magazine, “Castro's revenge: The Cuban oil rush,” http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune\_archive/2007/03/19/8402339/index.htm

In 2004, Spain's Repsol YPF found signs of oil in deep water offshore. Last year India's ONGC Videsh and Norsk Hydro of Norway joined Repsol to explore its six blocks. Separately, Malaysia's Petronas won concessions for four blocks, reportedly after seeing fresh data from the Repsol-led consortium. ONGC also secured concessions for two more blocks. In January, Venezuela's state-owned PDVSA picked up rights to four blocks. China also has an exploration agreement with Cuba, and Chinese oil giant Sinopec has been leasing rigs to Sherritt and others. Even if the choicest blocks have been taken, there would still be opportunity for U.S. companies if the embargo were lifted tomorrow.

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES

Net Benefit: Not-doing oil development hurts U.S. more than Cuban government

Vicki Huddleston, (Visiting Fellow, Foreign Policy, Brookings Institution; expert on Latin America and Africa. A career member of the Foreign Service, she served as U.S. Ambassador to Mali and Madagascar, acting U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia and Chief of the American Interests section in Cuba) June 2008, Who Will Help Cuba Exploit its Offshore Oil Wealth? [www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0616\_cuba\_oil\_huddleston.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0616_cuba_oil_huddleston.aspx)

Critics will argue that allowing American companies to become involved in exploiting Cuba's oil is a concession to an autocratic government. But excluding American companies will not prevent others from doing so nor change the Cuban leadership. Rather, it will simply exclude us from a new source of oil and possibly heighten the risk to the environment. As the competition for oil grows, our isolationist policy may become more costly to us than to Cuba.

3. LET MY PEOPLE GO: THE CASE FOR TRAVEL AND REMITTANCES

The US government currently has severe restrictions on the flow of people and money from the US to Cuba. But opening up the freedom for American citizens to travel to Cuba and to send money there would benefit both our country and that troubled island nation with several significant comparative advantages. That's why I'm happy to affirm that: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase its constructive engagement with Cuba.

OBSERVATION 1. I offer the following DEFINITIONS

**Substantial:** “considerable in quantity**:** significantly great “ (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantial)

**Increase:** “to make greater“ (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008, [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantial](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantial))

**Constructive Engagement:** “the policy of maintaining limited political and business links with a country while continuing to demand political or social reform in that country” *(Encarta World English Dictionary, 2007,* [*http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary\_701705239/constructive\_engagement.html*](http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_701705239/constructive_engagement.html)*)*

**Remittances:** "transmittal of money (as to a distant place)" ((Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary)

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY: Status Quo policies block engagement with Cuba

A. Travel to Cuba is tightly restricted

US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 30 Nov 2007, “Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” GAO-08-80, <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-08-80> (brackets added)

In 2004, responding to new administration policy, OFAC [Office of Foreign Assets Control] tightened rules on travel to Cuba, for example, by requiring that all family travelers obtain specific Treasury licenses and reducing the permitted frequency of family visits from once a year to once every 3 years, and it also tightened rules for sending cash transfers and gift parcels.

B. Tight limit on money sent to Cubans. The GAO in the same November 2007 publication also published its chart entitled "US Sanctions on Cuba and other countries," listing "Restrictions on senders" in the column for Cuba as "Limited remittances to immediate family only (no more than $300 per household in any 3-month period)"

US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 30 Nov 2007, “Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” Appendix III: US Sanctions on Cuba and other countries, GAO-08-80, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf>

Restrictions on senders Cuba Limited remittances to immediate family only (no more than $300 per household in any 3-month period)

OBSERVATION 3. We should adopt the following PLAN by any necessary constitutional means:

1. Congress will pass legislation eliminating the Cuban travel, gift and remittance restrictions.

2. Law enforcement agencies will discontinue enforcement of the special Cuban restrictions upon their repeal. All other normal travel and financial laws will continue to be enforced through normal means.

3. All funding dedicated to enforcement of Cuban travel, gift and remittance restrictions will be eliminated from the federal budget.

4. This plan takes effect the day after an Affirmative ballot.

5. The plan may be clarified in future speeches.

OBSERVATION 4. The Plan achieves SOLVENCY because Americans want to travel to Cuba

John Reeder (project leader), July 2007, U.S. International Trade Commission report, U.S. Agricultural Sales to Cuba: Certain Economic Effects of U.S. Restrictions, published by Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (non-profit and non-political professional organization affiliated with the American Economic Association and the Allied Social Sciences Association of the United States; maintains professional contacts with social scientists throughout the world interested in engaging in scholarly discussion and research on Cuba and its comparative development) <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/asce/pdfs/volume17/pdfs/reeder.pdf>

Many Americans express interest in travel to Cuba, according to the American Society of Travel Agents, and U.S. travel to Cuba would increase markedly in the absence of sanctions. Cuba is increasingly able to meet U.S. tourist demand, owing to the addition of hotel capacity and recent improvements in tourism services and facilities. The Commission estimated that without the travel sanctions, travel by Americans to Cuba would increase from 171,000 to between about 554,000 and 1.1 million in the short term. Since these American visitors could, to some extent, displace current foreign tourists in Cuba, the net effect in the short term is a potential annual increase in additional tourist visits to Cuba of between 226,000 and 538,000.

OBSERVATION 5. The Plan produces 3 ADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGE 1. Hurricane Relief. Travel & remittances would help Cubans recover from hurricane damage

Associated Press, 4 Sept 2008, Cuban activists ask U.S. to ease embargo after storm <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/americas/09/04/cuba.embargo.ap/index.html>

Two prominent Cuban dissidents have asked President Bush to loosen restrictions temporarily on travel and sending money to the communist-run island to help tens of thousands left homeless by Hurricane Gustav. Marta Beatriz Roque and Vladimiro Roca signed a Spanish-language letter to Bush that they delivered to the U.S. Interests Section in Havana on Wednesday. Officials at the mission, which Washington maintains here instead of an embassy, said they passed it along to the White House. The letter, sent by fax to foreign reporters on Thursday, asks Bush to lift restrictions on travel and money transfers to Cuba by Cuban exiles in the United States "for at least two months." "You know as well as we do that any family member abroad would like to have physical contact with those who are going through a difficult situation," they wrote. Gustav slammed into western Cuba with 140 mph winds Saturday, ripping roofs off homes, leveling buildings, tossing trees, cars and power lines and crumpling electric towers. About 100,000 homes nationwide were damaged, thousands beyond repair, and Fidel Castro suggested recovery could cost billions of dollars.

ADVANTAGE 2. Religious freedom. Freedom to travel removes obstacles to religious freedom.

A. Link: Religious activity is blocked by the travel restrictions

Mavis Anderson (Senior Associate, Latin American Working Group, a coalition of over 65 national religious and grassroots organizations) , 7 July 2006, “The United States and Cuba – Strands of a Failed Policy,” Americas Policy Program, Center for International Policy, <http://americas.irc-online.org/am/3350>

Main-line U.S. churches are increasingly frustrated as they try to visit sisters and brothers of faith (of which there are many--Cuban churches are filled to overflowing) in Cuba. Many denominations have had religious travel licenses and for years have conducted trips to Cuba to interact with partners for mutual support, to learn about them and the circumstances in which they live, to bring material aid, and to join Cuban Christians in worship and study. Repeatedly, applications for renewal of these licenses have been denied.

B. Impact: Religious travel spreads understanding and positive change in Cuba

Rep. James P. McGovern (D-Mass) , Rep. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz) and Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif), January 2006, “Maintain Religious and Faith-Based Travel to Cuba, <http://www.cubasolidarity.com/takeaction/lobbying/index.htm>

A policy that decides which part of the body of a church or religious institution can engage in mission and which cannot, curtails religious freedom, impairs the ability of local congregations to participate in global mission, and politicizes the outreach of the church. In addition, the churches being denied new or renewed licenses are, by and large, the religious organizations that have had the most long-standing ties and relationships with their partners of faith in Cuba. It is these ties which have slowly helped spread understanding and strengthen the ties between people from the United States and Cuba. We believe it is important to recognize the power of faith based organizations to affect positive change in the world and not place obstacles in the way of these religious partnerships.

ADVANTAGE 3. Freedom and democracy.

Commenting on a bill that passed in the US House of Representatives, but did not become law, to end Cuban travel and remittance restrictions in 2002, Mavis Anderson, Geoff Thale and Prof. Wayne Smith endorsed our plan because it would uphold the constitutional rights of Americans and promote freedom and democracy in Cuba. They said, quote:

Mavis Anderson (Senior Associate, Latin American Working Group, a coalition of over 65 national religious and grassroots organizations), Geoff Thale, (Program Director of the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA); worked professionally on issues of human rights, democracy, and development in Central America for more than twenty years and has testified before Congressional committee; WOLA is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that monitors human rights and social justice issues in Latin America) , Prof. Wayne Smith (Center for International Policy Senior ; visiting professor of Latin American studies and Director of the University of Havana exchange Program at Johns Hopkins University; former Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; served as executive secretary of President Kennedy's Latin American Task Force and chief of mission at the U.S. Interests Section in Havana) 24 July 2002, “House Endorses Changes in Cuba Embargo” (brackets added) [www.ciponline.org/cuba/cubainthenews/newsarticles/072402housepresrelease.htm](http://www.ciponline.org/cuba/cubainthenews/newsarticles/072402housepresrelease.htm)

Rep. Flake commented, "If we want to effectively to promote American ideals of freedom and democracy in Cuba, we can't continue to deny Americans the freedom to travel to Cuba.” "The travel vote reflects the will of the American people, who are overwhelmingly opposed to travel controls. Quite rightly, they see these as an infringement of their constitutional rights imposed simply to pander to a tiny group of hard-line Cuban exiles in Florida,” said Wayne Smith, Senior Fellow at the Center for International Policy. “The vote will be applauded also by Cuban religious leaders and by most dissidents and human rights activists, who have long urged the lifting of travel controls. As Elizardo Sanchez, Cuba's leading human rights activist, has often put it: ‘The more American citizens in the streets of Cuban cities, the better for the cause of a more open society.’”

2A EVIDENCE: TRAVEL & REMITTANCES

INHERENCY

Travel restrictions were tightened in 2004, including restrictions on educational and religious travel

US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 30 Nov 2007, “Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” GAO-08-80, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf>

In 2004, reflecting administration policy, OFAC began tightening restrictions on U.S. travel to Cuba. Rule changes included reducing the permitted frequency of family visits from once every 12 months to once every 3 years; restricting visits to immediate family; lowering the allowed per diem—the amount of money that family travelers may spend per day—from $167 to $50; requiring each family traveler to obtain a license; eliminating the license for additional family visits in cases of humanitarian need; and increasing restrictions on educational and religious travel.

Cash remittances and gift restrictions tightened in 2004

US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 30 Nov 2007, “Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” GAO-08-80, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf>

In 2004, reflecting administration policy, OFAC and BIS tightened restrictions on sending cash remittances and gift parcels to Cuba. Rule changes included restricting remittance recipients to senders’ immediate family, expanding the ban on remittances or gifts to senior Cuban government and Communist Party officials, and drastically reducing the value of remittances that travelers could carry to Cuba. Rule changes also restricted the recipients and contents of gift parcels.

Restrictions limit Americans traveling to Cuba to fewer than 200,000

John Reeder (project leader), July 2007, U.S. International Trade Commission report, U.S. Agricultural Sales to Cuba: Certain Economic Effects of U.S. Restrictions, published by Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (non-profit and non-political professional organization affiliated with the American Economic Association and the Allied Social Sciences Association of the United States; maintains professional contacts with social scientists throughout the world interested in engaging in scholarly discussion and research on Cuba and its comparative development) <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/asce/pdfs/volume17/pdfs/reeder.pdf>

U.S. restrictions on travel to Cuba limited the number of Americans traveling to Cuba to fewer than 200,000 in 2005 and reduced the amount of U.S. dollar remittances to Cuba from Cuban-Americans. A large proportion of these remittance dollars received by Cuban citizens are spent on U.S. agricultural products.

Strict sanctions on Cuba in Status Quo: Intended to weaken Cuban regime

US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 30 Nov 2007, “Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” GAO-08-80, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf>

The stated purpose of this embargo—the most comprehensive set of U.S. economic sanctions on any country—is to weaken the Castro regime by denying it hard currency. To achieve this goal, the Cuban Assets Control Regulations (CACR), which the Department of Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) administers, generally prohibit all trade, travel, and financial transactions with Cuba or Cuban nationals by U.S. citizens, residents, foreign visitors, or foreign subsidiaries of U.S. firms.

Cuba-related travel inspections impact anti-terrorist efforts at Miami airport

US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 30 Nov 2007, “Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” GAO-08-80, [www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf)

The impact of CBP’s Cuba-related inspections process on its ability to carry out its primary mission of protecting against terrorists and terrorist weapons at the Miami airport occurs in the context of recent GAO reports that found weaknesses in CBP’s inspections capacity nationwide and highlighted that effective use of secondary inspections are critical to CBP’s primary antiterrorism mission. In November 2007, we reported that CBP staffing shortages have affected its ability to carry out antiterrorism programs and have created other vulnerabilities in its inspections process at U.S. ports of entry. There is also a growing concern that terrorists with no criminal record may use legitimate travel documents when they attempt to enter the country through ports of entry. The report observed that the shortages and weaknesses increased the potential that terrorists and inadmissible travelers could enter the country and that failure to apprehend a potentially dangerous person increases the possibility that homeland and national security may be compromised.

ADVANTAGES

Tourism to Cuba would increase sales of US agricultural goods

John Reeder (project leader), July 2007, U.S. International Trade Commission report, U.S. Agricultural Sales to Cuba: Certain Economic Effects of U.S. Restrictions, published by Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (non-profit and non-political professional organization affiliated with the American Economic Association and the Allied Social Sciences Association of the United States; maintains professional contacts with social scientists throughout the world interested in engaging in scholarly discussion and research on Cuba and its comparative development) <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/asce/pdfs/volume17/pdfs/reeder.pdf>

Additional tourist arrivals would increase U.S. sales of agricultural goods to Cuba because of the increased tourist demand for food and because of higher Cuban economic growth boosting domestic demand for high quality U.S. food products.

Lifting travel restrictions would create 16,000 to 23,000 jobs

Mark P. Sullivan (Specialist in Latin American Affairs; Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, Congressional Research Service) 27 Feb 2007, "Cuba: US Restrictions on Travel and Remittances" <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/83002.pdf>

According to a report prepared for the Center for International Policy, a policy group that advocates lifting the embargo, U.S. economic output would expand by $1.18 - $1.61 billion, with the creation of between 16,888 and 23,020 jobs if travel restrictions were lifted.

Lifting restrictions would help Cuba reform its economy

Prof. Raj M. Desai, (Georgetown Univ. School of Foreign Service, Visiting Fellow, Global Economy and Development, Wolfensohn Center for Development, The Brookings Institution) March 2008, Can Raúl Castro Revive Cuba's Private Sector? <http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2008/03_cuba_desai.aspx>

There are few signs that Cuba will seek lessons from Eastern European rather than Chinese economic history anytime soon. Unfortunately the U.S. embargo, the Helms-Burton Act, and the overall poisonous relationship between the U.S. and Cuba now precludes the U.S. from providing any guidance or assistance in matters of Cuban economic reform. A recent poll of Cuban Americans by Florida International University shows that, for the first time, majorities support allowing U.S. companies to sell medicines and food in Cuba, U.S. citizens to travel and remit incomes there, and no single U.S. move would have a greater impact on the direction of Cuban reform than the lifting of these restrictions.

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES

Travel & cash restrictions hard to enforce

US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 30 Nov 2007, “Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” GAO-08-80, <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-08-80>

U.S. officials and others told GAO that several factors hinder enforcement of the Cuba embargo, sometimes acting in concert. (1) Lack of cooperation from foreign countries has undercut the embargo's effectiveness and hampered inspections and investigations. (2) Divided U.S. public opinion, particularly regarding the new travel and cash transfer restrictions, has contributed to widespread, small-scale embargo violations and the selling of fraudulent religious and other travel licenses, among other problems. (3) Some embargo violations are difficult to detect or control, such as fraudulent licenses and on-line money transfers via third countries. (4) The embargo's complexity and changing rules may have led to unintended violations by some individuals and companies.

US officials don't know if travel & remittance restrictions reduce hard currency available to Cuban regime

US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 30 Nov 2007, “Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” GAO-08-80, [www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdfHYPERLINK](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdfHYPERLINK)

However, the impact of tighter restrictions on travel, remittances, and gifts to Cuba implemented in 2004-2005 cannot be determined, because reliable data are not available. As a result, U.S. officials do not know whether the rule changes have reduced the hard currency available to the Castro regime as intended.

Easy to circumvent travel restrictions

US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 30 Nov 2007, “Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” GAO-08-80, (brackets added) <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf>

Agency officials said that detection of fraudulent Treasury licenses and other documents is difficult. Travel licenses can be duplicated on a computer, and no fast, automated system exists for CBP [Customs & Border Protection] to check whether licenses are legitimate. Moreover, smugglers and others attempting to travel with fake documents can easily avoid detection by not boarding a flight if they observe that CBP is conducting inspections of departing passengers. CBP Miami reports that, since the 2004 rule changes went into effect, it has identified several thousand fraudulent travel licenses.

Technology makes it easy to circumvent remittance restrictions

US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 30 Nov 2007, “Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” (brackets added) GAO-08-80, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf>

CBP [Customs & Border Protection] and ICE [Immigration & Customs Enforcement] officials reported that new financial services technologies present opportunities for sending funds to Cuba in violation of the U.S. embargo. In particular, travelers can easily exit the United States carrying stored-value cards worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. CBP officers noted that they generally lack the authority and technology to examine these cards. In addition, a number of non-U.S. online transfer services provide opportunities for sending funds to Cuba without detection, and some of these sites allow transfers greater than the limit, and without other restrictions, imposed by the CACR [ Cuban Assets Control Regulations].

NEGATIVE BRIEF: EMBARGO IS GOOD

INHERENCY

US is already Cuba’s 5th largest trade partner

Impact/Analysis: Challenge the Affirmative to prove the benefits of their plan by showing how they link to the trade we are already doing with Cuba.

Reuters News Service, 14 Aug 2008, “Cuba: U.S. Trade Rises” NEW YORK TIMES, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/15/world/americas/15briefs-USTRADERISES_BRF.html>

The United States ramong Cuba’s top five trading partners in 2007 for the first time since imposing a trade embargo in 1962. Data for 2007 on the Web site of Cuba’s National Statistics Office placed the United States fifth at $582 million, up from $484 million in 2006. The United States began selling food to Cuba in 2002 under an amendment to the embargo.

Embargo will be lifted when Cuba reforms – until then, human rights are non-negotiable

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Sec. of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez, 22 May 2008, “Cuba's Leaders Must Be Held Accountable,” MIAMI HERALD, [www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2008/05/105134.htm](http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2008/05/105134.htm)

Ultimately, any attempt to ease Cuba into the 21st century with relatively small and highly controlled economic openings will not work. The Cuban regime must show that it has the confidence in itself and in its people to stop using the secret police to control the country's political discourse. The regime should remove the fear factor from Cuba's political life. The United States is eager to support Cuba and its talented people in transforming their society. We want to engage with Cuba -- but not until the Cuban government chooses to engage its own people as free citizens, whose rights and dignity are nonnegotiable.

Freedom Fund will give Cubans grants and loans when the government reforms

Carlos Gutierrez (Secretary of Commerce) 24 Oct 2007, Ask the White House on Cuba Policy, <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/07/q4/94130.htm>

The President today announced a new initiative to develop an international multi-billion dollar Freedom Fund for Cuba. This fund would help the Cuban people rebuild their economy and make the transition to democracy. The President asked Secretary Rice and myself to enlist foreign governments and international organizations to contribute to this initiative. The Cuban government must demonstrate that it has adopted, in word and deed, fundamental freedoms. These include the freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of press, freedom to form political parties, and the freedom to change the government through periodic, multi-party elections. And once these freedoms are in place, the fund will be able to give Cubans -- especially Cuban entrepreneurs -- access to grants, loans and debt relief to help rebuild their country.

HARMS/SIGNIFICANCE

Moral Justification: Cuba does not have the same freedoms as China

Carlos Gutierrez (Secretary of Commerce) 24 Oct 2007, Ask the White House on Cuba Policy, <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/07/q4/94130.htm>

Though China does not have a full, market economy it does exhibit much of the behaviors and benefits of an open economy. In China, people can open a business. They can invest. There is a tremendous amount of choice for consumers. A Chinese worker can get paid directly for their work. The Cuban people don't enjoy the same opportunities.

Embargo is successful at its purpose: Denies resources to anti-American regime

Jeff Franks (Journalist), REUTERS NEWS SERVICE, 22 May 2008, “U.S. official says Cuba embargo successful,” [www.reuters.com/article/newsOne/idUSN2143173120080522](http://www.reuters.com/article/newsOne/idUSN2143173120080522)

A U.S. trade embargo in place 46 years against Cuba has been successful, U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez said on Wednesday, even though the island's communist government remains. Gutierrez said the embargo, imposed in 1962 to undermine the government of Fidel Castro, deprived Cuban leaders of resources they would have used for "ill-focused goals." "The purpose of the embargo is to deny resources to a regime who is clearly anti-American, who doesn't like our country, and in that regard the embargo has been extremely successful," Gutierrez said in a phone interview from Washington.

Reverse Plan Advocate: Embargo is a proportionate response to Cuban repression

Ray Walser (Senior Policy Analyst for Latin America at The Heritage Foundation) 21 March 2008, “The Cuba Embargo: Too Soon to Tear Down the Goal Posts,” FOX News, (the word "primacy" in the text is spelled that way in the original; it should probably be "primary") <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,340330,00.html>

The communist, totalitarian system perfected between 1959 and the present regrettably remains firmly in place. The structures of power, dominance by a privileged, vanguard party, the planned economy, jails and prisons for political offenders, the omnipresent secret policeman and the inner censor keep Cubans tightly controlled. Raul Castro won’t relax the rules of the totalitarian political game. Until he does, the U.S. shouldn’t remove its primacy sanction. The embargo remains as much as ever a matter of basic principle, a proportionate response to Cuban repression. There is no indication that respect for human rights will improve under Raul.

Embargo not the cause for Cuba's economic problems

WTVJ NBC6 News (Miami, Fla.), 20 Feb 2008, “U.S. Trade Embargo With Cuba Expected To Outlast Fidel Castro” <http://www.nbc6.net/news/15352708/detail.html>

Gary Hufbauer, an economist with the Peterson Institute, a Washington think tank, said any normalization of relations would have only a slight impact on the U.S. economy because Cuba is such a small market. He said agriculture and tourism would see modest gains. He said Cuba would get a boost if it could once again export to the United States, but he said it has been the communist system, rather than the U.S. trade embargo, that has been the major factor depressing living standards in Cuba. "Some people say that the embargo deprived Cuba of economic resources," Hufbauer said. "But the main reason Cuba is poor is that its economic system is crummy and has been for a long time."

Raul's reforms won't accomplish much

Ray Walser (Senior Policy Analyst for Latin America at The Heritage Foundation) 21 March 2008, “The Cuba Embargo: Too Soon to Tear Down the Goal Posts,” FOX News, [www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,340330,00.html](http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,340330,00.html)

In an age of high-tech, innovation and globalizing commerce, Raul offers the dazzling promise of more market gardens, possibly the chance to become a repairman, an independent truck driver or a bed-and-breakfast operator. If the Cuban people have aspired for decades to own an automobile, the best they likely are to receive under Raul’s slow-paced "China model" of economic reforms and market openings will be a rickshaw.

SOLVENCY

Unwelcome pressure: American businesses not excited about Cuba

Marla Dickerson (Journalist), 20 Feb 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES, "U.S. businesses are eager to jump in" <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/feb/20/business/fi-cubaecon20>

Some U.S. firms complain that the Cuban government has pressed them to lobby their legislators for an end to the American trade embargo in exchange for contracts – a price some have found too steep, according to John Kavulich, a senior policy advisor with the U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council. “The problem is when the Cubans start putting conditions” on the contracts, said Kavulich, who declined to name companies that have been pressured in such a way. Kavulich said that so far, U.S. businesspeople have shown little excitement about the changing of the guard in Cuba. “They know that nothing has changed,” he said.

Solvency: Trade doesn't help the average Cuban

Disad Link: Trade gives money to Cuban dictatorship

Carlos Gutierrez (Secretary of Commerce) 24 Oct 2007, Ask the White House on Cuba Policy, <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/07/q4/94130.htm>

And, though millions of dollars have poured into Cuba from Canada, Europe and other points around the globe, it has not benefited the average Cuban. More investment and money spent in Cuba means more money lining the pockets of the Cuban dictator and his cronies. Instead of comparing Cuba with China, we should compare Cuba to other countries that are similar, such as North Korea.

Venezuela will sabotage American engagement with Cuba

Ray Walser (Senior Policy Analyst for Latin America at The Heritage Foundation) 21 March 2008, “The Cuba Embargo: Too Soon to Tear Down the Goal Posts,” FOX News, [www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,340330,00.htm](http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,340330,00.htm) "

Cuba’s major foreign backer, President Hugo Chávez, will do everything possible to sabotage any American entry into Cuba. In the past decade, Chávez has spent billions in propping up the Castro regime and advancing the socialist, anti-imperialist cause. His oil subsidies, activism and anti-American agenda will continue to influence Raul and others and will be difficult to counter short of a real democratic change inside Cuba. U.S. taxpayers aren’t likely to replace the $2 billion to $4 billion in subsidies the regime currently receives from Venezuela.

Lifting embargo gives no significant economic benefit to the Cuban people

Ray Walser (Senior Policy Analyst for Latin America at The Heritage Foundation) 21 March 2008, “The Cuba Embargo: Too Soon to Tear Down the Goal Posts,” FOX News, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,340330,00.html>

Lifting the embargo will not significantly benefit the prosperity and material well-being of the Cuban people. If the game were to end now, the chief beneficiaries would be the large business corporations with more capital than conscience.

Cubans don't have money to spend on higher-quality products

Adam Davidson (journalist), 9 Nov 2006, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, National Public Radio, “U.S. Farmers Push for Easing Embargo on Cuba,” [www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6463381](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6463381)

John Berthold is a Cuba-trade skeptic. He's the marketing director of Walhalla Bean Co. in Grand Forks, N.D. Walhalla buys beans from farmers like Juliuson. During harvest, about 20 semis show up each day, carrying 50,000 pounds of beans per truck. Berthold travels the world selling beans, and he says it's just not worth his while to think too much about Cuba. The best way to increase bean sales, Berthold says, is to convince more Americans to eat them. Then come the bean-loving markets of Europe. Berthold says U.S. beans are the best in the world, but they cost more than Chinese beans. So Berthold wants to target markets that have money to spend on a higher-quality product. And Cuba is not one of those markets.

Unclear whether Cuba would increase agricultural imports without the embargo

Adam Davidson (journalist), 9 Nov 2006, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, National Public Radio, “U.S. Farmers Push for Easing Embargo on Cuba,” [www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6463381](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6463381)

Agriculture economists who study the issue say they're not sure exactly what would happen if the U.S. trade embargo were lifted. Cubans import a lot of beans from Brazil, China and elsewhere. It's not clear how much of that market U.S. growers could take.

Without major internal reform, Cubans are doomed to low-wage/low-productivity economy

Prof. Raj M. Desai, (Georgetown Univ. School of Foreign Service, Visiting Fellow, Global Economy and Development, Wolfensohn Center for Development, The Brookings Institution) March 2008, Can Raúl Castro Revive Cuba's Private Sector? <http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2008/03_cuba_desai.aspx>

Many observers predict that Raúl Castro will follow the Chinese model of gradual reform rather than the "shock therapy" pursued by the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. But the reforms pursued by China may be ill-suited for an island nation of 11 million with a relatively small agricultural sector, located a half-hour's flight from the world's largest economy. Without rapidly reforming its inefficient state enterprises, Cuba may face the prospect of becoming trapped in a low-wage, low-productivity cycle. To avoid this, Cuba should embrace some of the lessons from successful Eastern European reformers.

Improving US-Cuba relationship requires resolution of expropriation claims

Analysis/Impact: Just removing the embargo isn't enough to resolve economic issues with Cuba. AFF can't fiat that Cuba would accept any US proposal for expropriation claim resolution. (Expropriation refers to the seizure of private property by the Cuban state after Castro’s revolution, without compensation to the property owners)

Prof. Raj M. Desai, (Georgetown Univ. School of Foreign Service, Visiting Fellow, Global Economy and Development, Wolfensohn Center for Development, The Brookings Institution) March 2008, Can Raúl Castro Revive Cuba's Private Sector? <http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2008/03_cuba_desai.aspx>

Any hope for dramatic changes in the U.S.-Cuba relationship hinges on how Cuba and the U.S. choose to resolve the problem of expropriation claims. In the U.S. alone, approximately 6,000 claims by U.S. nationals totaled $6.8 billion (about 25 percent of Cuba's GDP) in 2002. A number of alternatives to direct restitution have been proposed, and their joint acceptance will greatly increase the likelihood that the embargo will be lifted. In particular, the U.S. should consider accepting what several observers have recommended: a negotiated lump-sum payment from Cuba to the U.S., on behalf of U.S.-based claimants. By this method, the U.S. government would negotiate directly with the Cuban government to receive a one-time transfer that would be distributed to all claimants who have agreed to abide by certain conditions. Doing so would smooth the path for the significant diaspora investment that would likely flow to Cuba. Cuba, of course, would find it impossible to pay out anything close to $6.8 billion. But if similar settlements between the U.S. and Eastern European nations are taken as precedent, the resulting agreement would be less than 100 percent of the net present value of the total amount, and would not include interest payments. If these conditions were applied to Cuba, the resulting total would be considerably less. The government-to-government approach is preferable to the alternatives, such as granting physical restitution of property, or shares in privatizing enterprises to claimants, or direct payments from the Cuban government.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Funding a threatening regime

A. Link: Cross-apply Solvency card above: Trade gives money to Cuban dictatorship

B. Link: Resources in the hands of Cuban government will harm this country and others

Carlos Gutierrez (Secretary of Commerce) 24 Oct 2007, Ask the White House on Cuba Policy, <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/07/q4/94130.htm>

Over the past decades, the Western Hemisphere has moved forward in significant ways: economically, politically, culturally. Under the Castro dictatorship, however, Cuba has moved backward. As long as regime resources are available, a threat is posed. The embargo was put in place for one major reason: to deny Castro the resources to do damage to this country and other countries in the world.

C. Impact: Cuba hurts US military operations

James M. Roberts (Research Fellow in Freedom and Growth at The Heritage Foundation's Center for International Trade and Economics; 25 years at the US Dept. of State as a Foreign Service Officer), 18 Oct 2007, “Cuba at the Crossroads: The Threat to U.S. National Security,” HERITAGE FOUNDATION, <http://www.heritage.org/research/LatinAmerica/wm1669.cfm>

Cuba traffics in intelligence. U.S. intelligence secrets collected by Cuba have been sold to or bartered with Russia, China, North Korea, Iran, and other enemies of the United States. China is known to have had intelligence personnel posted to the Cuban Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) site at Bejucal since 2001, and Russia continues to receive Cuban SIGINT information. Additionally, many Cuban intelligence agents and security police are advising Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. Cuban intelligence has successfully compromised every major U.S. military operation since the 1983 invasion of Grenada and has provided America's enemies with forewarning of impending U.S. operations.

2. Legitimacy for the communist regime

A. Link: Lifting the embargo grants legitimacy

Ray Walser (Senior Policy Analyst for Latin America at The Heritage Foundation) 21 March 2008, “The Cuba Embargo: Too Soon to Tear Down the Goal Posts,” FOX News, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,340330,00.html>

Lifting the embargo will confer unmerited legitimacy on the communist regime of the Castro brothers. Raul may lack Fidel's charisma and ego, he may be more tolerant of dissent and he may be less of a prima donna, but he will call the plays using Fidel’s playbook.

B. Impact: Legitimacy is life or death issue for autocratic governments and their leaders

Robert Kagan PhD ( senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; former Deputy for Policy in the State Department's Bureau of Inter-American Affairs. From 1984-1985, he was a member of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff ), 27 April 2008, "The dictators are back... and we don't care," LONDON SUNDAY TIMES, <http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/books/book_extracts/article3821251.ece>

To nonliberals, the international liberal order is not progress. It is oppression. This is more than a dispute over theory and the niceties of international jurisprudence. It concerns the fundamental legitimacy of governments, which for autocrats can be a matter of life and death. China’s rulers haven’t forgotten that if the liberal democratic world had had its way after the events at Tienanman Square in 1989, they would now be out of office, possibly imprisoned or worse.

3. Strengthens and prolongs the totalitarian regime

José Azel,(Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, Univ. of Miami), 3 Mar 2008, "Cuba: Snuff Out the Embargo (Pro Versus Con Debate)" <http://www.govcentral.com/news/1535-cuba-snuff-out-the-embargo-pro-versus-con-debate>

There are many negative unintended consequences to unilaterally lifting the embargo without meaningful changes in Cuba’s political and economic model. Most important of all, it would ensure the continuation of the current totalitarian regime by strengthening state enterprises that would be the main beneficiaries of currency inflows into business owned by the Cuban government.

NEGATIVE BRIEF: OIL DEVELOPMENT

HARMS/SIGNIFICANCE

Oil has less than 1/2 the impact on the economy today as it did in 1980

Stephen Brown, Raghav Virmani and Richard Alm (Brown is director of energy economics and microeconomic policy, Virmani is a research analyst and Alm is senior economics writer in the Research Department of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas) May 2008, "Crude Awakening: Behind the Surge in Oil Prices" FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF DALLAS, [www.dallasfed.org/research/eclett/2008/el0805.html](http://www.dallasfed.org/research/eclett/2008/el0805.html)

Finally, it is important to note that—despite rising real prices and imports—oil siphons relatively less money out of the American economy than it did in the past. Expenditures on petroleum products today account for about 5 percent of all after-tax income earned in the United States, less than half of the 11.6 percent spent in 1980.

Oil hasn't done much damage to the US economy

Michael M. Grynbaum (journalist), 5 Oct 2007, “Can a Plucky U.S. Economy Surmount $80 Oil?” NEW YORK TIMES, [www.nytimes.com/2007/10/05/business/05oilecon.html?ref=business](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/05/business/05oilecon.html?ref=business)

Part of the reason that costly oil has not done too much damage, it seems clear, is that the economy has become less sensitive to energy prices than it was in the 1970s. Two important trends reinforced each other, economists say. Driven by higher prices, many industries became more efficient in their use of fuel. And services, which require less energy than manufacturing, became a far bigger share of the economy. Over all, the amount of energy needed to produce $1 of economic output has been cut nearly in half since 1980, Energy Department figures show.

INHERENCY

41 billion barrels of unexploited oil in areas already open for leasing

Catherine Brahic (journalist), Aug 2008, NEW SCIENTIST, Offshore oil drilling in the US: what's at stake? <http://environment.newscientist.com/channel/earth/dn14529-offshore-oil-drilling-in-the-us-whats-at-stake.html>

In comparison, areas that have already been opened up to drilling as a result of exceptions to the congressional and presidential bans are estimated to hold 41 billion barrels of crude unexploited oil and 6 trillion cubic metres of unexploited natural gas. "Of all the oil and gas believed to exist on the Outer Continental Shelf, 82% of the natural gas and 79% of the oil is located in areas that are currently open for leasing," says Nick Rahall, Democratic representative for West Virginia.

SOLVENCY

Cuban oil is only a few months of US energy consumption

Michael Janofsky (journalist), 9 May 2006, “Cuba irks U.S. with plans for oil drilling,” INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/05/09/news/cuba.php>

The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that the energy field on Cuba's side alone may have 4.6 billion barrels of oil and 9.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. That much energy is equivalent to just a few months of the United States' total energy consumption.

No commercially viable quantity of oil in Cuban waters

Mauricio Claver-Carone (a director of the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC in Washington and formerly served as an attorney with the U.S. Treasury) 25 July 2008,”How the Cuban embargo protects the environment,” INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/07/25/opinion/edcarone.php>

In recent weeks this strategy has taken center stage in Washington with political and public opinion leaders openly discussing the irony of "the Chinese drilling 60 miles from Florida's coast," while U.S. law prevents American companies from doing the same along the outer continental shelf. The premise of the argument, however, is just not true. Chinese companies are not drilling in Cuba's offshore waters. Nor do the Chinese have any lease agreements with Cuba's state-owned oil company, Cupet, to do so. As a matter of fact, the last drilling for oil off Cuba's coast took place in 2004 and was led by the Spanish-Argentine consortium Repsol YPF. It found oil but not in any commercially viable quantity.

Expenses and political risks for oil companies: Cuba can take their assets again like they did before

Mauricio Claver-Carone (a director of the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC in Washington and formerly served as an attorney with the U.S. Treasury) 25 July 2008,”How the Cuban embargo protects the environment,” INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/07/25/opinion/edcarone.php>

Neither is it financially or logistically viable for partners of the current Cuban regime to undertake deep-water exploration without access to U.S. technology, which the embargo prohibits transferring to Cuba. The prohibitions exist for good reason. Fidel Castro expropriated U.S. oil company assets after taking control of Cuba and has never provided compensation. Equally important, foreign companies trying to do business with Cuba still face a lot of expenses and political risks. If, or when, the Cuban regime decides again to expropriate the assets of these companies, there is no legal recourse in Cuba.

Partnership with Cuba will not reduce fuel costs for American consumers

Mauricio Claver-Carone (a director of the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC in Washington and formerly served as an attorney with the U.S. Treasury) 25 July 2008,”How the Cuban embargo protects the environment,” INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, [www.iht.com/ahttp://www.iht.com/articles/2008/07/25/opinion/edcarone.php](http://www.iht.com/ahttp://www.iht.com/articles/2008/07/25/opinion/edcarone.php)

Frankly, it is bewildering why some seem to believe that U.S. companies partnering with one more anti-American dictatorship to explore and develop oil fields will somehow reduce fuel costs for American consumers and contribute to U.S. energy independence. One needs only to look at the reaction of the international oil markets when Hugo Chávez of Venezuela nationalized assets of U.S.-based ConocoPhillips and Chevron.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Environmental damage

A. Link: Blocking Cuban oil drilling is good for the environment

Mauricio Claver-Carone (a director of the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC in Washington and formerly served as an attorney with the U.S. Treasury) 25 July 2008,”How the Cuban embargo protects the environment,” INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, [www.iht.com/ahttp://www.iht.com/articles/2008/07/25/opinion/edcarone.php](http://www.iht.com/ahttp://www.iht.com/articles/2008/07/25/opinion/edcarone.php)

For many years the U.S. embargo has served to protect America's national security interests; today it is also serving to prevent Cuba's regime from drilling near U.S. shores. And that's good for the environment.

B. Impact: Offshore drilling hurts the environment, beaches and tourism

Catherine Brahic (journalist), Aug 2008, NEW SCIENTIST, Offshore oil drilling in the US: what's at stake? <http://environment.newscientist.com/channel/earth/dn14529-offshore-oil-drilling-in-the-us-whats-at-stake.html>

Environmentalists say the top risk from drilling platforms is the wastewater they routinely discharge. Among others, this contains drilling fluids and heavy metals including mercury. According to the Committee Against Oil Exploration, a rig in the Gulf of Mexico rig dumps 90,000 tons of drilling fluid and metal cuttings over its lifetime. The contaminants accumulate in the marine food web and can affect the shoreline as well. The governor of North Carolina has said he is opposed to drilling off his state's coast because of concerns that waste from the platforms might contaminate local beaches and have a negative effect on the tourism industry. Some groups are also concerned that building drilling platforms can affect whale populations. In eastern Russia, a Shell-backed project to build the Sakhalin II drilling platform has been blamed for disturbing local grey whales.

NEGATIVE BRIEF: TRAVEL & REMITTANCES

HARMS/SIGNIFICANCE

Cuba travel & embargo enforcement requires few resources

US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 30 Nov 2007, “Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” GAO-08-80, (brackets added) [www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf)

Additionally, OFAC [Office of Foreign Assets Control] officials said that Cuba embargo cases consume a much smaller portion of the agency’s resources than the number of Cuba embargo violations suggests. The majority of Cuba embargo investigations involve unlicensed travel and imports of Cuban cigars; according to agency officials, such cases are relatively simple matters that require fewer resources per case than do complex cases involving suspected violations of U.S. trade and financial sanctions, such as those on Iran.

US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 30 Nov 2007, “Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” GAO-08-80, [www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf)

Although the Cuba embargo is one of more than 20 sanctions programs that the agency administers, OFAC data show that from 2000 through 2005, Cuba embargo cases― most involving unlicensed travel and imports of Cuba cigars―accounted for over 70 percent of the agency’s total penalty cases. However, in 2006, the number of fines collected fell to 290 and Cuba embargo cases accounted for 29 percent of total penalty cases (see fig. 5.). OFAC said that this decline reflected a decision to focus more resources on penalizing violations of other sanctions programs.

INHERENCY

Status Quo has hundreds of millions of dollars in remittances going to Cuba

US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 30 Nov 2007, “Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” GAO-08-80, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf>

Estimates of remittances to Cuba vary widely. A study by the Inter-American Dialogue estimated that U.S. remittances to Cuba in 2001 were $930 million.69 The 2004 CAFC report estimated that U.S. remittances to Cuba in 2003 ranged from $400 million to $800 million but acknowledged that they could be as high as $1 billion. A 2005 study by a Miami-based public opinion research consulting firm concluded that Cuban Americans sent approximately $460 million to their families in 2004.71 Data from several sources show that worldwide remittances to Cuba increased steadily from 1995 to 2005, from between $500 million and $600 million to between $900 million and $1 billion.

Cuba was offered hurricane aid but refused it

CNN, 15 Sept 2008, “Cuba refuses hurricane aid offer, U.S. says,” [www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/americas/09/15/cuba.us/](http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/americas/09/15/cuba.us/)

The United States Agency for International Development, USAID, on Monday urged the Cuban government to think again about its refusal of direct U.S. assistance for hurricane victims."We call on the Cuban government to reconsider their decision on the United States offer, which we made with no preconditions and whose only objective was to get relief to people in dire need." USAID administrator Henrietta Fore said in a Monday afternoon conference call with reporters. Fore said the United States over the weekend had offered to begin relief flights as soon as Tuesday to Cuba, on civilian aircraft, delivering plastic sheeting, blankets and hygiene kits. The first flight would have brought aid worth $349,000. "And while we wait for the Cuban government's reconsideration of the United States offer we will continue to implement other components of our $5 million assistance package," Fore added. The United State will immediately obligate approximately $1.5 million in emergency humanitarian assistance to reputable international relief organizations and nongovernmental organizations.

SOLVENCY

US tourism will not bring democracy to Cuba

José Azel (Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, Univ. of Miami), 3 Mar 2008, "Cuba: Snuff Out the Embargo (Pro Versus Con Debate)" [www.govcentral.com/news/1535-cuba-snuff-out-the-embargo-pro-versus-con-debate](http://www.govcentral.com/news/1535-cuba-snuff-out-the-embargo-pro-versus-con-debate)

Moreover, U.S. tourism will not bring democracy to Cuba. For years, hundreds of thousands of tourists from Canada, Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere have visited the island. Cuba is no more democratic today. On what mystical grounds do opponents of the embargo offer that American tourists will do the trick?

DISADVANTAGES

1. Cuban government oppression

A. Link: Travel & remittances provide currency that helps keep Cuban government in power

US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 30 Nov 2007, “Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” GAO-08-80, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf>

In 2003, for example, the President directed DHS to tighten enforcement of the embargo, and, in 2004, the President initiated tighter restrictions on travel, cash remittances, and gifts to Cuba. These tighter restrictions reflected recommendations by the interagency Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba (CAFC), which concluded that the Cuban government captures a percentage of the money spent by U.S. residents on travel, cash remittances, and gifts through a variety of taxes and fees and this hard currency helps keep the Cuban government in power.

Link: Cuban government profits from US remittances and travel  
Cross-apply under Solvency: Tourists do not participate in meaningful exchanges with Cuban people

US Government Accountability Office (GAO), 30 Nov 2007, “Economic Sanctions: Agencies Face Competing Priorities in Enforcing the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” GAO-08-80, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf>

2004 CAFC [Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba] report.The report concluded that hard currency provided by U.S. travelers’ spending and U.S. residents’ remittances and gifts contribute to keeping the Cuban government in power. The Cuban government captures a percentage of travelers’ spending through state-run airlines, state-run stores, and customs duties. Most U.S. travelers go to Cuba to visit family; however, the CAFC report found that some travelers using educational travel licenses engage in tourist activities, thereby spending money on the island without participating in the kind of meaningful exchanges with the Cuban people that these licenses are designed to encourage. According to the report, the Cuban government profits from U.S. remittances through inflated fees for currency exchange and state-run stores where products are sold for hard currency.

B. Impact 1: Peaceful dissidents are persecuted

Amnesty International USA (Amnesty International is an international volunteer group that studies and promotes human rights throughout the world; founded in 1961 it has over 2 million members), 29 Feb 2008, “Cuba signs up for human rights,” <http://www.amnestyusa.org/document.php?lang=e&id=ENGNAU200802294050>

[Cuban Foreign Minister] Mr [Felipe Perez] Roque announced the Cuban government’s intention to sign the agreements in December 2007. The announcement coincided with an increasing crackdown against dissidents between 21 November and 10 December – International Human Rights Day – when many political dissidents were arbitrarily arrested because of their involvement in peaceful protests. At the time of the announcement, Kerrie Howard, Deputy Director at Amnesty International’s Americas Programme, said that "the Cuban government must signal its true commitment to human rights treaties by acting to release all those detained solely for their peaceful political activities and ensuring that all human rights are respected and promoted across the country."

C. Impact 2: Basic human rights are denied

Amnesty International USA (Amnesty International is an international volunteer group that studies and promotes human rights throughout the world; founded in 1961 it has over 2 million members), “Cuba: Fundamental freedoms still under attack,” 2006, [www.amnestyusa.org/document.php?lang=e&id=ENGAMR250012006](http://www.amnestyusa.org/document.php?lang=e&id=ENGAMR250012006)

Governments are bound by international law to uphold the right to freedom of expression, which includes the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers and in any media. However, freedom of expression is very restricted in Cuba because of the complete control exerted by the government on all media outlets. Private ownership of press, radio, television and other means of communication is prohibited by law, thus the exercise of the right to freedom of expression is restricted by the lack of means of mass communication falling outside state control.