

CLOSEOUT FILES



Resolved: That the United States should
normalize relations with Cuba.

Introduction

First things first, congratulations on (presumably) qualifying for nationals! It is quite the honor although your work is really just beginning. Nationals is typically a great tournament year after year and boasts a very unique format. In a nutshell, the format is six prelim rounds with two judges per round, and teams that win eight or more ballots (of the 12 possible) break. Then in elims, it is just double elimination until only one team remains.

The topic this year is decent with ample ground on both sides. It's a timeless debate that has been ongoing for decades, but is somewhat timely as we wait to see exactly what Obama is going to do.

Almost everyone agrees that the United States' primary interest is to establish democracy in the region and remove the Castro regime. Most the clash in the round will probably revolve around what the United States should do in order to accomplish that goal and whether normalizing strengthens the Cuban people or not. It is important to note that we have always been close and willing to help the Cuban people just not their oppressive dictator.

On the pro side, hammer in how embargos and blockades do not work. The current firm policy has been in place for a long time and we have not seen any significant changes for the better, so clearly it is a failed policy. It is time to try something different and normalize relations. If we are willing to have open relations with nations that pose a far greater threat to us such as Iran, North Korea, and Russia, then why not Cuba? Cuba has also shown a willingness to cooperate and help its people in recent years if you look at their education and health efforts. In addition, normalizing relations will help in terms of spreading democracy because capitalism breeds democracy and it will empower the Cuban people by giving them more information. Finally, we want their cigars.

On the con side, it is important to note that the primary purpose of the embargo is to keep money out of the hands of the government. Castro uses his power and resources to suppress the Cuban people and allowing him access to more capital would only work against our interests. Historically, Castro has used available money to combat U.S. efforts in supporting peace around the world by supporting terrorists. The embargo is also used as a tool for leverage to force the Cuba government to change their exhibitions of human rights violations. At this point, Cuba has not shown promise when it comes to human rights; therefore, normalizing relations with Cuba now would eliminate the incentive for the Cuban government to change. Since the United States' main goal is to help the Cuban people, we can still go about supporting them through means of aid and information without subjecting them to the negatives effects of lifting the embargo.

You will notice that this issue of the Closeout Files follows a very different format. Due to the importance of Nationals, we felt that publishing points and responses would hinder teams who encountered someone else who had read these files. Nationals draws from such a diverse group of debaters and we did not want there to be a uniformity of ideas in which every team knew which arguments and responses to expect. We also didn't want teams to focus solely on the arguments we offered when they were preparing. All of the evidence in the issue is included for a reason and is organized into a logical progression of ideas. Because of all of these reasons, the Closeout Files would rather take a more personal approach when it comes to offering analysis. We would like to start a dialogue with all of you where we offer help and suggestions for your debating. Please ask us any questions you might have about the topic, how evidence should be used, nationals in general. Run ideas for arguments or blocks by us, and send us your cases for our analysis. We look forward to being of assistance and please contact us via e-mail at CloseoutFiles@yahoo.com. Good luck everyone!

Background

New Cuba Policy

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

On March 11, 2009, President Obama signed into law the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009 (H.R. 1105, P.L. 111-8), which has three provisions intended to ease U.S. sanctions on Cuba for family travel (Section 621 of Division D), travel related to the marketing and sale of agricultural and medical exports (Section 620 of Division D), and payment terms for U.S. agricultural exports to Cuba (Section 622 of Division D). (For further background, see the legislative section in “Restrictions on Travel, Remittances, and Agricultural Exports” below.)

- As implemented by the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), the provision easing family travel reinstates a general license as it existed prior to the Bush Administration’s tightening of family travel restrictions in June 2004. Travel is now allowed once every 12 months to visit a close relative for an unlimited length of stay, and the limit for daily expenditure allowed by family travelers is the same as for other authorized travelers to Cuba (State Department maximum per diem rate for Havana, currently \$179 day). The new general license also expands the definition of “close relative” to mean any individual related to the traveler by blood, marriage, or adoption, who is no more than three generations removed from that person.
- With regard to the provision related to the marketing and sale of agricultural and medical goods, OFAC maintained that it would issue regulations in the coming weeks, although a letter from Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner published in the Congressional Record stated that the new regulations “would provide that the representatives of only a narrow class of businesses would be eligible, under a new general license, to travel to market and sell agricultural and medical goods.” The Secretary also maintained that “any business using the general license would be required to provide both advance written notice outlining the purpose and scope of the planned travel and, upon return, a report outlining the activities conducted, including the persons with whom they met, the expenses incurred, and business conducted in Cuba.” (Congressional Record, March 10, 2009, p. S2933.)
- A third omnibus provision prohibits funds in the Act from being used to administer, implement, or enforce a February 25, 2005 amendment to the Cuban embargo regulations clarifying that the term “payment of cash in advance” means that payment is to be received prior to the shipment of the goods from the port at which they are loaded. The Trade Sanctions Reform and Export

Enhancement Act of 2000 (TSRA) requires either the “payment of cash of advance” for such exports (or financing by third country financial institutions), but TSRA provides no definition of cash in advance. Prior to the February 2005 amendment to the Cuban embargo regulations, U.S. exporters could be paid for the goods before they were unloaded in Cuba. OFAC guidance on the implementation of the omnibus provision states that TSRA’s statutory provisions remain in place that agricultural exports to Cuba be either paid for by “cash in advance” or financed using a third-country bank. In a letter published in the Congressional Record, however, Secretary of the Treasury Geithner provided additional guidance on the implementation of this provision, stating that “exporters will still be required to receive payment in advance of shipment.” Given this interpretation, it appears that the omnibus provision will have little, if any, practical effect. (Congressional Record, March 10, 2009, p. S2933.)

Embargo Details

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

Since the early 1960s, U.S. policy toward Cuba has consisted largely of isolating the island nation through comprehensive economic sanctions, including an embargo on trade and financial transactions. The Cuban Assets Control Regulations (CACR), first issued by the Treasury Department in July 1963, lay out a comprehensive set of economic sanctions against Cuba, including a prohibition on most financial transactions with Cuba and a freeze of Cuban government assets in the United States. The CACR have been amended many times over the years to reflect changes in policy, and remain in force today.

These sanctions were made stronger with the Cuban Democracy Act (CDA) of 1992 (P.L. 102-484, Title XVII) and with the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-114), the latter often referred to as the Helms/Burton legislation. The CDA prohibits U.S. subsidiaries from engaging in trade with Cuba and prohibits entry into the United States for any sea-borne vessel to load or unload freight if it has been involved in trade with Cuba within the previous 180 days. The Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, enacted in the aftermath of Cuba’s shooting down of two U.S. civilian planes in February 1996, combines a variety of measures to increase pressure on Cuba and provides for a plan to assist Cuba once it begins the transition to democracy. Most significantly, the law codified the Cuban embargo, including all restrictions under the CACR. This provision is especially noteworthy because of its long-lasting effect on U.S. policy options toward Cuba. The executive branch is circumscribed in lifting or substantially loosening the economic embargo without congressional concurrence until certain democratic conditions are met, although the CACR includes licensing authority that provides the executive branch with some administrative flexibility (e.g. travel-related restrictions in the CACR have been eased and tightened on numerous occasions). Another significant sanction in

the law is a provision in Title III that holds any person or government that traffics in U.S. property confiscated by the Cuban government liable for monetary damages in U.S. federal court. Acting under provisions of the law, however, both President Clinton and President Bush have suspended the implementation of Title III at six-month intervals.

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf>

United States Government Accountability Office

Report to Congressional Requesters

November 2007

The Cuban Assets Control Regulations, the designation of Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism, several laws, and changes in administration policies since mid-2003 are key elements of the current U.S. embargo on Cuba.

Cuban Assets Control Regulations. In 1963, Treasury issued the CACR, which regulate all transactions involving property and services in which Cuba or a Cuban national has an interest, including travel, remittances, and other financial transactions with Cuba.¹⁷ After coming to power in 1959, the Cuban government began seizing U.S. properties and businesses. The United States responded with increasingly tight restrictions on trade with Cuba, culminating in President Kennedy's declaration in February 1962 of an almost complete embargo on Cuba.¹⁸ These rules have been revised many times since 1963 to reflect U.S. policy changes with regard to the Cuba embargo. For example, OFAC's 1999 amendments to the CACR significantly expanded travel licensing. (See app. II for a timeline of key changes to the CACR and other events in the evolution of the U.S. embargo on Cuba since 1960.)

Designation of Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism. In 1982, the United States designated Cuba a state sponsor of terrorism,¹⁹ principally for supporting terrorist groups in Latin America such as the M-19 movement in Colombia. Designated state sponsors of terrorism are subject to strict export controls, including a ban on the export of arms-related technologies and a policy of denial²¹ ²⁰ for dual-use exports. Financial transactions with state sponsors of terrorism also are restricted, and designated countries are ineligible to receive U.S. foreign assistance. Many of these restrictions already applied to Cuba under the existing embargo at the time of its designation. The current U.S. embargo on Cuba is the most comprehensive regime of U.S. sanctions on any country, including the other countries designated by the U.S. government to be state sponsors of terrorism—Iran, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria. (See app. III for a comparison of U.S. sanctions on Cuba and these countries.)

Cuban Democracy Act. In 1992, the President signed the Cuban Democracy Act,²² intended to support democracy in Cuba by further restricting U.S. trade with the Cuban government and encouraging other countries to limit their trade. The law permitted U.S. exports of medicine and medical supplies to Cuba, with certain exceptions. However, the law required that exporters obtain a specific license for such items and that the U.S. government be able to verify the items were used for the intended purposes and benefited the Cuban people. The law also restricted

trade with Cuba by foreign subsidiaries of U.S. firms and prohibited any vessel unlicensed by Treasury from (1) loading or unloading freight in a U.S. port within 180 days after leaving a Cuban port where it engaged in trade of goods or services or (2) entering a U.S. port while carrying goods or passengers to or from Cuba or goods in which Cuba or a Cuban national had an interest.

Helms-Burton Act. In 1996, shortly after Cuban authorities shot down an aircraft flown by U.S. citizens, the President signed the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act, commonly known as the Helms-Burton Act.²³ This law codifies the CACR²⁴ and allows the President to suspend the embargo only if he determines that a transition government is in power in Cuba. The law also permits U.S. nationals to sue in U.S. federal court persons trafficking in property seized by the Cuban government²⁵ and provides for denying entry into the United States to aliens (and their immediate families) involved in the trafficking of seized property.²⁶

Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000. In 2000, Congress passed TSRA, which required the President to lift unilateral U.S. sanctions on the export of food, agricultural commodities, and medical products worldwide and permitted their export to Cuba²⁷ and other designated state sponsors of terrorism subject to licensing.²⁸ The legislation was introduced in Congress after lobbying by farm groups and agribusiness firms affected by declining agricultural exports and lower commodity prices in the late 1990s.

Plans for the Embargo

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

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March 18, 2009

Some have advocated a policy of keeping maximum pressure on the Cuban government until reforms are enacted, while continuing efforts to support the Cuban people. Others argue for an approach, sometimes referred to as constructive engagement, that would lift some U.S. sanctions that they believe are hurting the Cuban people, and move toward engaging Cuba in dialogue.

Dating back to 2000, there have been significant efforts in Congress to ease U.S. sanctions, with one or both houses at times approving amendments to appropriations measures that would have ceased U.S. sanctions on Cuba. Ultimately, these provisions were stripped out of final enacted measures, in part because of presidential veto threats.

Definitions

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Normalize>

Dictionary.com

Normalize

1. to make normal. to establish or resume (relations) in a normal manner, as between countries.

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Normalize>

Merriam-Webster

Normalize

1 : to make conform to or reduce to a norm or standard

2 : to make normal (as by a transformation of variables)

3 : to bring or restore (as relations between countries) to a normal condition

Oxford English Dictionary

Normalize

1. To make normal; to bring or return to a normal or standard condition or state.

2. To stabilize, establish, or resume (political relationships) between two parties, esp. two countries.

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Pro Evidence

Overview of Reasons to End the Embargo

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March 18, 2009

In general, those who advocate easing U.S. sanctions on Cuba make several policy arguments. They assert that if the United States moderated its policy toward Cuba—through increased travel, trade, and diplomatic dialogue—then the seeds of reform would be planted, which would stimulate and strengthen forces for peaceful change on the island. They stress the importance to the United States of avoiding violent change in Cuba, with the prospect of a mass exodus to the United States and the potential of involving the United States in a civil war scenario. They argue that since the demise of Cuba's communist government does not appear imminent, even without Fidel Castro at the helm, the United States should espouse a more pragmatic approach in trying to induce change in Cuba. Supporters of changing policy also point to broad international support for lifting the U.S. embargo, to the missed opportunities for U.S. businesses because of the unilateral nature of the embargo, and to the increased suffering of the Cuban people because of the embargo.

Major arguments made for lifting the Cuba travel ban are that it contributes to the suffering of Cuban families; it hinders efforts to influence conditions in Cuba and may be aiding Castro by helping restrict the flow of information; it abridges the rights of ordinary Americans; and Americans can travel to other countries with communist or authoritarian governments.

http://www.economist.com/opinion/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13527669

The United States and Latin America

A new start in the Americas

Apr 23rd 2009

From The Economist print edition

The Economist has long believed that the embargo is unfair (it hurts Cubans rather than their government), illogical (America has normal relations with other communist countries such as China and Vietnam) and counterproductive (it gives the Castro brothers a pretext for tyranny). Many Americans have come round to that view. Congress may now start to dismantle the embargo.

Embargo Has Failed

http://congress.indiana.edu/radio_commentaries/ia_1st_step_toward_change_for_cuba_end_embargo.php

Lee Hamilton

The Center on Congress at Indiana University

As far as the embargo goes, its major benefactors have been politicians seeking support in this country and anti-American leaders overseas in need of talking points — not the Cuban or American people. The embargo has failed to achieve regime change in Havana, the Cuban people continue to suffer under a repressive regime, and, furthermore, it has alienated our Latin American allies.

Purpose of Easing Sanction with Cuba

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7997063.stm>

BBC

Monday, 13 April 2009

The move, announced by White House spokesman Robert Gibbs, comes after Mr Obama last month signed a spending bill easing some economic sanctions on Cuba.

Mr Gibbs said the aim was to promote democracy and human rights on the Caribbean island.

Restrictions would also be lifted on US telecommunications companies applying for licenses to operate in Cuba, Mr Gibbs added.

That move could open the way for a greater flow of information to the island via the internet, says the BBC's Kevin Connolly in Washington. "The president would like to see greater freedom for the Cuban people," said Mr Gibbs. "There are actions that he can and has taken today to open up the flow of information to provide some important steps to help that."

Current Policy Logically Flawed

<http://www.stormingmedia.us/19/1953/A195384.html>

Joseph W Curtain

Naval Postgraduate School Monterey CA

June 1, 2008

Cuba's economy has not only survived the end of Soviet-era subsidies but has thrived in the era of globalization. This thesis documents the adjustments the Cuban government has made to the economy and the increase in foreign direct investment (FDI) that has occurred as a result. The thesis also shows how China, Venezuela and Iran continue to invest more money in the island and subsequently threaten to wield more influence over Cuba. The U.S. has the opportunity to mitigate the threats posed by Venezuela and Iran vis-a-vis Cuba. However, the policy espoused by current policy makers is logically flawed. The Helms-Burton Act contains unrealistic benchmarks for ending the embargo that provide little incentive for Cuban leaders to liberalize. Neither presidential candidate advocates a change in this legislation. In contrast, this thesis argues that the normalization of relations with Cuba can diminish the influence Iran and Venezuela have on Cuba and keep potential threats from coming ninety miles off the coast of the U.S. The next president should call for Congress to repeal the Helms-Burton Act so that executive discretion can be exercised with respect to Cuban foreign policy.

Cuba Willing to Normalize Relations

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Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

Raúl Castro asserted in an August 18, 2006, published interview that Cuba has “always been disposed to normalize relations on an equal plane,” but at the same time he expressed strong opposition to current U.S. policy toward Cuba, which he described as “arrogant and interventionist.”⁴¹ In response, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Thomas Shannon reiterated a U.S. offer to Cuba, first articulated by President Bush in May 2002, that the Administration was willing to work with Congress to lift U.S. economic sanctions if Cuba were to begin a political opening and a transition to democracy. According to Shannon, the Bush Administration remained prepared to work with Congress for ways to lift the embargo if Cuba was prepared to free political prisoners, respect human rights, permit the creation of independent organizations, and create a mechanism and pathway toward free and fair elections.

Thai Press Reports

April 9, 2009

Earlier the same day, the US delegation had met with Cuban President Raul Castro who expressed his wish for an end to 50 years of hostility between the two countries. The Cuba Ministry of Foreign Relations released an official communique about the meeting, stating that Cuba is willing to open talks on any subject with the US as long as it respects Cuba's sovereignty and independence.

Also, according to US sources, President Obama is expected to announce soon that he is easing travel restrictions imposed on Cuban-Americans by George W Bush in 2004.

Cuba-U.S. Cooperation

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Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs , March 18, 2009

Because of Cuba's geographic location, the country's waters and airspace have been used by illicit narcotics traffickers to transport drugs for ultimate destinations in the United States. Over the past several years, Cuban officials have expressed concerns over the use of their waters and airspace for drug transit as well as increased domestic drug use. The Cuban government has taken a number of measures to deal with the drug problem, including legislation to stiffen penalties for traffickers, increased training for counternarcotics personnel, and cooperation with a number of countries on anti-drug efforts. Cuba has bilateral counternarcotics agreements with 33 countries and less formal arrangements with 16 others, according to the Department of State. For several years, Cuba's Operation Hatchet has focused on maritime and air interdiction and the recovery of narcotics washed up on Cuban shores. Narcotics smuggling through Cuban territory decreased in 2006, according to both U.S. and Cuban officials.⁸⁶ According to the Department of State, Cuba aggressively pursues an internal enforcement and investigation program against its incipient drug market with an effective nationwide drug prevention and awareness campaign, Operation Popular Shield.

Over the years, there have been varying levels of U.S.-Cuban cooperation on anti-drug efforts. In 1996, Cuban authorities cooperated with the United States in the seizure of 6.6 tons of cocaine aboard the Miami-bound Limerick, a Honduran-flag ship. Cuba turned over the cocaine to the United States and cooperated fully in the investigation and subsequent prosecution of two defendants in the case in the United States. Cooperation has increased since 1999 when U.S. and Cuban officials met in Havana to discuss ways of improving anti-drug cooperation. Cuba accepted an upgrading of the communications link between the Cuban Border Guard and the U.S. Coast Guard as well as the stationing of a U.S. Coast Guard Drug Interdiction Specialist (DIS) at the U.S. Interests Section in Havana. The Coast Guard official was posted to the U.S. Interests Section in September 2000, and since that time, coordination has increased. Cuba maintains that it wants to cooperate with the United States to combat drug trafficking, and on various occasions has called for a bilateral anti-drug cooperation agreement with the United States. In January 2002, Cuba deported to the United States Jesse James Bell, a U.S. fugitive wanted on drug charges, and in early March 2002, Cuba arrested a convicted Colombian drug trafficker, Rafael Bustamante, who escaped from jail in Alabama in 1992. At the time, then Drug Enforcement Administration head Asa Hutchison expressed appreciation for Cuba's actions, but indicated that cooperation would continue on a case-by-case basis, not through a bilateral agreement.⁸⁸ In February 2007, Cuba extradited drug trafficker Luis Hernando Gómez Bustamante to Colombia, an action that drew praise from U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Anne Patterson.⁸⁹ Gómez Bustamante was subsequently extradited to the United States in July 2007 to face drug trafficking charges.

Cuba Doesn't Deserve to be on the Terrorism List

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

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Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

Critics of retaining Cuba on the terrorism list maintain that it is a holdover from the Cold War. They argue that domestic political considerations keep Cuba on the terrorism list and maintain that Cuba's presence on the list diverts U.S. attention from struggles against serious terrorist threats.

<http://www.freetrade.org/node/433>

Center for Trade Policy Studies

Cuba and the United States in the 21st Century

Rice University, Houston, Texas, October 12, 2005

by [Dan Griswold](#)

The embargo had a national security rationale before 1991, when Castro served as the Soviet Union's proxy in the Western Hemisphere. But all that changed with the fall of Soviet communism. Today, more than a decade after losing billions in annual economic aid from its former sponsor, Cuba is only a poor and dysfunctional nation of 11 million that poses no threat to American or regional security.

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.

<http://www.districtchronicles.com/media/paper263/news/2004/05/27/Perspectives/Normalize.Relations.With.Cuba.Now-683881.shtml?norewrite200604201541&sourcedomain=www.districtchronicles.com>

Fletcher, Bill Jr., Precinct Reporter

May 27, 2004

It has additionally kept Cuba on the list of states that allegedly sponsor terrorism, despite the fact that no evidence is cited to support such allegations.

U.S. Currently Talks with Countries that Pose Greater Threats

<http://www.caribbeannetnews.com/news-15645--6-6--.html>

Wellington C. Ramos

McClatchy – Tribune Business News

April 14, 2009

The United States must realize that China is an overpopulated country and needs more land for its people. They will stop at nothing to spread their influence throughout other regions in the world. President Barack Obama should not hesitate in normalizing relations with Cuba now, because it will bring added benefits to our country and people in trade and other areas. If we can talk to Russia, China, North Korea and Iran, which are nations that pose a more serious threat to our survival, then why not Cuba?

Economic Changes Under Raul

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

Since Fidel stepped down from power in 2006, Cuba's political succession from Fidel to Raúl Castro has been characterized by a remarkable degree of stability. Although initially there were not any significant economic changes under Raúl, there were signs that changes could be coming.

In a July 2007 speech, Raúl maintained that structural changes were needed in the Cuban economy in order to increase efficiency and production. In his first speech as President in February 2008, Raúl promised to make the government smaller and more efficient, to review the potential revaluation of the Cuban peso, and to eliminate excessive bans and regulations that curb productivity.⁴ Since March 2008, the government has implemented a number of economic changes that from the outside might not seem significant, but are noteworthy policy changes for a government that has heretofore followed a centralized communist economic model.

Some analysts maintain that once Fidel is gone, hardliners in Cuba's political system will have a more difficult time holding back the advance of needed economic reforms.⁶

On July 26, 2007, in a speech commemorating Cuba's revolutionary anniversary, Raúl Castro acknowledged that Cuban salaries were insufficient to satisfy needs, and maintained that structural changes were necessary in order to increase efficiency and production. He also maintained that the government was considering increasing foreign investment in the country. Some observers maintain that the speech was a forecast for economic reforms under Raúl, while others stress that only small marginal changes occurred in Raúl's first year in power.²⁷ In the aftermath of Raúl's July 2007 speech, Cuban public expectations for economic reform increased. Thousands of officially sanctioned meetings were held in workplaces and local PCC branches around the country where Cubans were encouraged to air their views and discuss the future direction of the country. Complaints focused on low salaries and housing and transportation problems, and some participants advocated legalization of more private businesses.²⁸ Raised expectations for economic change in Cuba increased the chance that the government actually would adopt some policy changes. Doing nothing would run the risk of increased public frustration and a potential for social unrest.

Economic Changes Under Raul Cont'd

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Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

In mid-March, the government announced that restrictions on the sales of consumer products such as computers, microwaves, and DVD and video players would be lifted. In late March, it announced that it would lift restrictions on the use of cell phones. This officially occurred in mid-April. One of Cuba's major reform efforts under Raúl Castro in 2008 was focused on the agriculture sector, a vital issue because Cuba reportedly imports some 80% of its food needs and is paying an increasing amount for such imports due to rising food prices. In an effort to boost food production, the government began giving farmers more discretion over how to use their land and what supplies to buy. Decision-making on agriculture reportedly has shifted from the national government to the local municipal level, with government bureaucracy cut significantly.

In April 2008, the government announced that it would begin revamping the state's wage system by removing the limit that a state worker can earn. This is an effort to boost productivity and to deal with one of Cuba's major economic problems: how to raise wages to a level where basic human needs can be satisfied. The problem of low wages in Cuba is closely related to another major economic problem: how to unify the two official currencies circulating in the country—the Cuban convertible peso (CUC) and the Cuban peso, which traded at about 24 to 1 CUC in 2008. Most people are paid in Cuban pesos, and the minimum monthly wage in Cuba is about 225 pesos (about \$9 U.S. dollars³¹), but for increasing amounts of consumer goods, convertible pesos are used. Cubans with access to foreign remittances or who work in jobs that give them access to convertible pesos are far better off than those Cubans who do not have such access.

Economic Growth of Cuba

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

From 1994-2000, as Cuba moved forward with some limited market-oriented economic reforms, economic growth averaged 3.7% annually. Economic growth was strong in the 2005-2007 period, registering an impressive 11.2% in 2005 (despite widespread damage caused by Hurricanes Dennis and Wilma), 12.1% in 2006, and 7.3% in 2007.²¹ The economy benefitted from the growth of the tourism, nickel, and oil sectors, and support from Venezuela and China in terms of investment commitments and credit lines. Cuba benefits from a preferential oil agreement with Venezuela, which provides Cuba with more than 90,000 barrels of oil a day. Some observers maintain that Venezuela's oil subsidies amounted to more than \$3 billion a year in 2006.²² Venezuela also helped Cuba upgrade an oil refinery in Cienfuegos, which was inaugurated in 2007. In 2008, economic growth slowed to an estimated 4.3%. This was prompted by several problems, including the declining price of nickel, which accounts for a major share of Cuba's exports.

Human Rights in Cuba are Getting Better

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

In February 2009, the independent Cuban Commission on Human Rights and National Reconciliation (CCDHRN) documented at least 205 political prisoners, down from 234 in January 2008. The number also reflected the continued decline from previous years when the Commission estimated at least 283 prisoners at the beginning of 2007 and 333 at the beginning of 2006. The Commission maintains, however, that the government has resorted to short-term arbitrary detentions to target suspected dissidents, with more than 1,500 such detentions in 2008.

In late February 2008, Cuba signed two U.N. human rights treaties: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Some considered this a positive step, but others stressed that it remains to be seen whether the Cuban government will take action to guarantee civil and political freedoms.¹⁴ One significant step taken by the government in late March 2008 was the lifting of a ban on Cubans staying at tourist hotels. Although few Cubans will be able to afford the cost of staying in such hotels, the move is symbolically significant and ends the practices of what critics had dubbed “tourism apartheid.” On the other hand, prior to the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 2008, up to a dozen Cuban human rights activists reportedly were detained in order to prevent them from attending planned events.

Over the years, Cuba has expressed pride for the nation’s accomplishments in health and education. According to the U.N. Development Program’s 2007/2008 Human Development Report, life expectancy in Cuba in 2005 was 77.7 years, adult literacy was estimated at almost 100%, and the infant mortality rate was 6 per 1,000 live births, the lowest rate in Latin America.

Time to Acknowledge and Reward Efforts

<http://www.caribbeannetnews.com/news-15645--6-6--.html>

Wellington C. Ramos

McClatchy – Tribune Business News

April 14, 2009

Throughout the Caribbean, Latin America and in the liberation of several African nations, the country of Cuba played a vital role in the social, economic and political development of many countries in these regions. Cuba has also offered scholarships to citizens of most of these countries to go there and study medicine, engineering and other needed professions in these countries.

I know several Belizeans who went to Cuba and studied there to get their degrees. Many of these students spoke to me about their living experiences in that country and they gave a different account from what is posted in the American media from time to time. Yet, despite this, the United States government for some strange reason continues to refuse to normalize relations with this country.

Cuba is a country that has paid its dues when reaching out to other underdeveloped countries in the world and it is now time for the United States to acknowledge and reward them for their efforts.

When my country of Belize was trying to obtain its independence from Britain back in the early ! 970s, Cuba was among the countries that supported Belize's push for independence and was even willing to make a military commitment to defend Belize if necessary against Guatemala if our country was attacked by them. This was at a time when Cuba was also assisting Angola and Mozambique, two countries known as the Frontline African States, from an external aggression.

Embargo's Don't Work

<http://www.freetrade.org/node/245>

Center for Trade Policy Studies

by Aaron Lukas

Aaron Lukas is an analyst with the Cato Institute's Center for Trade Policy Studies.

December 14, 2001

Not only has the embargo backfired, it wastes American resources that are needed to fight terrorism. Treasury officials who could be unraveling terrorist financial networks are instead tracing property owned by Spanish hotels in Cuba to make sure it wasn't stolen from Americans decades ago. INS agents that could be watching our borders for suicide bombers are instead worrying about tourists who may have spent money in Havana. These shouldn't be our top priorities. In fact, they shouldn't be priorities at all.

Along with an end to the embargo, funds currently wasted on attempts to de-legitimize the Castro regime could be diverted to more productive uses. For instance, money currently spent on Radio Mardi (which is electronically jammed by the Cuban government) could go instead to a Radio Free Afghanistan--a region where the broadcasts might actually do some good.

History shows that isolation isn't necessarily an effective means of fostering change. In 1970, 17 of 26 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean had authoritarian regimes. Today, only Cuba has a dictatorial regime. Yet only Cuba has been subjected to a comprehensive embargo. Elsewhere, economic engagement has been the rule. That the Cuban people have suffered under a brutal tyrant is indisputable; that the embargo has made their plight worse is equally obvious.

Embargo is No Longer Effective

http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/1231_cuba_huddleston.aspx

Brookings Institute

Cuba at Fifty

Everything that needs to be said has been said on Cuba. The glorious Revolution is tired; its young and charismatic leaders now ill, dead, and decrepit, and its archenemy ravaged by recession and battered by the unkind sting of an unpopular war. Nothing is to be gained from isolation or even more isolation. And, Raul Castro has offered up several olive branches. Although no longer wrapped in the usual rhetoric, they are heavy with demands for the return of Guantanamo Bay and Cuba's "Five Heroes." Although Cuba's economy has slowed, its friends—Brazil, Mexico, China, Spain, and Russia—are extending credit. U.S. sanctions now serve more to punish the Cuban people and harm our image than hurt the Cuban government.

http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0310_cuba_huddleston.aspx

The Brookings Institute

Cuba Embargo's Usefulness Has Run Its Course

MARCH 10, 2008

There can no longer be any doubt that our isolation of Cuba did not and cannot bring about the end of the revolution. What will bring about the revolution's demise are old age, illness and death. More important, the revolution will evolve as it loses its founding fathers and becomes increasingly less isolated from its neighbors though the Internet, television, travelers and the flow of information.

Embargo is No Longer Effective Cont'd

http://www.economist.com/world/americas/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13496228

Cuba and the United States

It takes two to rumba

Apr 16th 2009

Raúl Castro's reaction to a small American olive branch may be even more cautious than Barack Obama's offering of it

For those who favour change, "the key issue is to understand that the embargo is not an instrument for [the] democratisation" of Cuba, argues Robert Pastor, who was in charge of relations with Latin America in the Carter administration.

Agence France Presse -- English

December 31, 2008 Wednesday 8:05 AM GMT

Jordi Zamora

WASHINGTON, Dec 31 2008

It is an insult to Americans who are barred from traveling there or doing business in Cuba," argued Daniel Griswold of the Cato Institute.

"By increasing our commercial ties to Cuba, America will be in a stronger position to influence events there. After almost half a century, the embargo has failed to change the Cuban regime or benefit the people of Cuba in any way," he said.

Embargo Leads Cuba to Create Ties with Other Countries and Enemies

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

As its economy reeled from the loss of Soviet support, Cuba was forced to open up its economy and economic relations with countries worldwide, and developed significant economic linkages with Canada, Spain, other European countries, and China.

In recent years, Venezuela—under populist President Hugo Chávez—has become a significant source of support for subsidized oil imports and investment. Relations with Russia have also intensified recently, with the visit of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to Havana in November, the visit of several Russian warships to Cuba in December 2008, and Raúl Castro's visit to Moscow in late January 2009. Chinese President Hu Jintao also visited Cuba in November signing a dozen agreements.

Embargo Harms U.S. Security

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb111/hb111-57.pdf>

The Cato Institute

Ironically, the embargo has also become somewhat of a U.S. security liability itself. A recent report by the Government Accountability Office points out that enforcing the embargo and travel ban diverts limited resources from homeland security that could be used to keep terrorists and criminals out of the United States. The GAO report warned that arrival inspections from Cuba intended to enforce the embargo are “straining Customs and Border Patrol’s capacity to inspect other travelers according to its mission of keeping terrorists, criminals, and inadmissible aliens out of the country.”

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0880.pdf>

United States Government Accountability Office

Report to Congressional Requesters

November 2007

Reflecting the administration’s embargo-tightening policy, DHS’s Customs and Border Protection (CBP) inspects all exports to Cuba at Port Everglades and, since 2004, has increased intensive, “secondary” inspections of passengers arriving from Cuba at the Miami airport; in 2007, CBP conducted these inspections for 20 percent of arrivals from Cuba versus an average of 3 percent of other international arrivals. CBP data and interviews with agency officials suggest that the secondary inspections of Cuba arrivals at the airport may strain CBP’s ability to carry out its mission of keeping terrorists, criminals, and other inadmissible aliens from entering the country. Moreover, recent GAO reports have found weaknesses in CBP’s inspections capacity at key U.S. ports of entry nationwide. After 2001, OFAC opened more investigations and imposed more penalties for embargo violations, such as buying Cuban cigars, than for violations of other sanctions, such as those on Iran. In contrast, BIS, DHS’s Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Justice have primarily investigated, penalized, or prosecuted export violations and crimes that present a greater threat to homeland and national security or public safety.

Embargo Harms U.S. Security Cont'd

http://www.house.gov/list/press/ny15_rangel/GAOCuba121907.html

WASHINGTON - Ways and Means Chairman Charles B. Rangel and Congresswoman Barbara Lee (Oakland, CA) today released a [GAO report](#) which finds that Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is spending inordinate time and resources looking for contraband from Cuba--mostly cigars and rum - at the expense of keeping terrorists and other criminals from entering the US.

"I am dismayed to learn that the Bush Administration's Cuba policies have led Homeland Security and Treasury to direct scarce resources at such trivial violations, particularly when we know that our nation's borders remains vulnerable to real threats such as drugs and weapons," said Chairman Rangel.

"This GAO report is yet another example that the embargo is not working and highlights just how backwards and out of touch the Bush administration's national security priorities really are," said Congresswoman Lee. "Diverting vital resources away from investigating cases of illegal arms and terrorist financing calls into question the relevance of the Cuba embargo.

The GAO report, initiated at the request of Chairman Rangel and Congresswoman Lee, found that while the U.S. has over 20 trade sanctions programs in place—including sanctions against Iran, North Korea, and Syria—more than 60 percent of cases investigated by Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control target contraband entering from Cuba, not more dangerous violations of sanctions regimes aimed at blocking money laundering or technology transfers.

Embargo Hurts U.S. Influence

http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2009/~media/Files/rc/reports/2009/0413_cuba/0413_cuba.pdf

Brookings Institute

CUBA: A New Policy of Critical and Constructive Engagement Brookings Institute

April 2009

Our nearly 50-year old policy toward Cuba has failed on both counts: it has resulted in a downward spiral of U.S. influence on the island and has left the United States isolated in the hemisphere and beyond.

Perversely, the policy of seeking to isolate Cuba, rather than achieving its objective, has contributed to undermining the well-being of the Cuban people and to eroding U.S. influence in Cuba and Latin America. It has reinforced the Cuban government's power over its citizens by increasing their dependence on it for every aspect of their livelihood. By slowing the flow of ideas and information, we have unwittingly helped Cuban state security delay Cuba's political and economic evolution toward a more open and representative government. And, by too tightly embracing Cuba's brave dissidents, we have provided the Cuban authorities with an excuse to denounce their legitimate efforts to build a more open society.

Engagement should serve to enhance personal contacts between Cuban and U.S. citizens and permanent residents, diminish Cuba's attraction as a rallying point for anti-American sentiment, and burnish our standing in the region and the wider international community. If we engage, the Cuban government will no longer be able to use the U.S. threat as a credible excuse for human rights abuses and restrictions on free speech, assembly, travel, and economic opportunity. This in turn would encourage the international community to hold the Cuban government to the same standards of democracy, rights and freedoms that it expects from other governments around the world.

Ending the Embargo would Help the People more than the Government

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb111/hb111-57.pdf>

The Cato Institute

Even before those measures took place, the agricultural productivity of the nonstate sector (comprising cooperatives and small private farmers) was 25 percent higher than that of the state sector. As Cuban farmers increase their efficiency and productivity, normal trade ties with the United States would benefit them directly by opening up a market of 300 million consumers. Ending the embargo could contribute to democracy in Cuba by empowering a nascent private sector that is increasingly independent of the government. Other recent reforms—such as new licenses for private bus and taxi operators and lifting bans on the consumption of electronic appliances—may encourage this development. As a Hoover Institution study pointed out: “In time, increasing amounts [of expanded tourism, trade, and investment] would go beyond the state, and although economics will not single-handedly liberate Cuba, it may contribute some to that end. This is so, in part, because the repressive Cubans within the state apparatus are subject to influences that can tilt their allegiances in positive ways.”

Ending the Embargo would lead to Social Change

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb111/hb111-57.pdf>

The Cato Institute

Even though Cuba—unlike other communist countries with which the United States actively trades, such as China or Vietnam—has not undertaken substantial market reforms, an open U.S. trade policy is likely to be more subversive of its system than is an embargo. Proponents of the Cuban embargo vastly underestimate the extent to which increased foreign trade and investment can undermine Cuban communism even if that business is conducted with state entities.

Replacing the all-encompassing state with one that allows greater space for voluntary interaction requires strengthening elements of civil society, that is, groups not dependent on the state. That development is more likely to come about in an environment of increased interaction with outside groups than in an environment of increased isolation and state control. According to Philip Peters, vice president of the Lexington Institute, thousands of independent workers in Cuba “are dramatically improving their standard of living and supplying goods and services while learning the habits of independent actors in competitive markets.” And because most of these workers are in the service industries (mostly restaurant and food service), they would greatly benefit from the presence of Americans visiting for business or pleasure. A recent study from the International Trade Commission calculates that between 550,000 and 1 million U.S. citizens would visit the island every year if the travel ban were lifted, compared with 171,000 that did so in 2006, mainly Cuban Americans visiting family.

<http://www.freetrade.org/node/433>

Center for Trade Policy Studies

Cuba and the United States in the 21st Century

Rice University, Houston, Texas, October 12, 2005

by [Dan Griswold](#)

Our research at the Cato Institute confirms that trade and globalization till the soil for democracy. Nations open to trade are more likely to be democracies where human rights are respected. Trade and the development it creates give people tools of communication—cell phones, satellite TV, fax machines, the Internet—that tend to undermine oppressive authority. Trade not only increases the flow of goods and services but also of people and ideas. Development also creates a larger middle class that is usually the backbone of democracy.

Lifting The Embargo will Increase the Speed of Change

http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0310_cuba_huddleston.aspx

The Brookings Institute

MARCH 10, 2008

But how fast and how far the revolution evolves depends upon U.S. policy. If we remove the barriers to communication, we will speed the forces of change. Just as was the case in Eastern Europe as a result of the Helsinki agreements, the Cuban people will be empowered by human contact, the free flow of information, and the support and encouragement of Americans and Cuban Americans from Florida to California.

Ending Embargo Sends Message to World

<http://www.freetrade.org/node/245>

Center for Trade Policy Studies

It's Time, Finally, to End the Cuban Embargo

by Aaron Lukas

Aaron Lukas is an analyst with the Cato Institute's Center for Trade Policy Studies.

December 14, 2001

But perhaps most significant would be the message that scrapping the embargo would send to the Taliban and other regimes that sponsor terrorism: foreign governments need not follow the American model, but states that attack us forfeit the right to choose their own destiny.

Reason to end the Helms-Burton Act

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb111/hb111-57.pdf>

The Cato Institute

The Libertad Act, better known as the Helms-Burton Act for its sponsors Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Rep. Dan Burton (R-IN), is an ill-conceived law. It grants U.S. citizens whose property was expropriated by Castro the right to sue in U.S. courts foreign companies and citizens “trafficking” in that property (Title III). That right—not granted to U.S. citizens who may have lost property in other countries—is problematic because it essentially extends U.S. jurisdiction to the results of events that occurred in foreign territory. By imposing sanctions on foreign companies profiting from property confiscated by the Castro regime, the Helms-Burton Act seeks to discourage investment in Cuba. However, while Helms-Burton may have slowed investment in the island, U.S. allies (in particular Canada, Mexico, and members of the European Union) have not welcomed that attempt to influence their foreign policy by threat of U.S. sanctions. Consequently, they have repeatedly threatened to impose retaliatory sanctions and to take the United States to the World Trade Organization.

Economic Impacts of Lifting Embargo

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

Since 2002, the United States has been Cuba's largest supplier of food and agricultural products. Cuba has purchased almost \$2.7 billion in agricultural products from the United States since late 2001. Overall U.S. exports to Cuba rose from about \$7 million in 2001 to \$404 million in 2004. U.S. exports to Cuba declined in 2005 and 2006 to \$369 million and \$340 million, respectively, but increased to \$447 million in 2007. In 2008, U.S. agricultural exports to Cuba rose to \$718, far higher than in previous years, in part because of the rise in food prices and because of Cuba's increased food needs in the aftermath of several hurricanes and tropical storms that severely damaged Cuba's agricultural sector.⁶⁷

Some groups favor further easing restrictions on agricultural exports to Cuba. They argue that the restrictions harm the health and nutrition of the Cuban population. U.S. agribusiness companies that support the removal of restrictions on agricultural exports to Cuba believe that U.S. farmers are missing out on a market so close to the United States. Some exporters want to change U.S. restrictions so that they can sell agriculture and farm equipment to Cuba.⁷⁰ Agricultural exporters who support the lifting of the prohibition on financing contend that allowing such financing would help smaller U.S. companies expand purchases to Cuba more rapidly.⁷¹ On July 19, 2007, the U.S. International Trade Commission issued a report, requested by the Senate Committee on Finance, maintaining that the U.S. share of Cuba's agricultural, fish, and forest imports would rise from one-third to between one-half and two-thirds if trade restrictions were lifted.

<http://www.freetrade.org/node/245>

Center for Trade Policy Studies

It's Time, Finally, to End the Cuban Embargo by Aaron Lukas

Aaron Lukas is an analyst with the Cato Institute's Center for Trade Policy Studies.

December 14, 2001

No significant U.S. industries would be threatened by scrapping the embargo since Cuba has few competitive exports, making the political costs of freeing trade with Cuba lower than is the case with other countries. American exporters, however, pay a hefty price. The U.S. International Trade Commission estimates U.S. firms lose between \$684 million and \$1.2 billion worth of business per year. Those contracts go to Canadian, European, and other firms.

Economic Impacts of Lifting Embargo Cont'd

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb111/hb111-57.pdf>

The Cato Institute

Business groups such as agricultural producers have grown increasingly critical of the embargo since it deprives them of a potentially lucrative market. For example, since the enactment of the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act in 2000, which allows cash-only sales to Cuba of U.S. farm products and medical supplies, U.S. agricultural exports to the island went from zero to \$447 million in 2007. The International Trade Commission estimates that lifting the embargo could further increase U.S. farm sales to Cuba by between \$175 million and \$350 million per year. According to the American Farm Bureau, Cuba could eventually become a \$1 billion agricultural export market for U.S. farmers. It is important that, as trade expands and relations normalize, Washington resists calls to provide export credits or other official assistance to U.S. businesses or the Cuban government. Such corporate welfare and foreign aid have a poor record at promoting development.

<http://www.usitc.gov/publications/pub3932.pdf>

The United States International Trade Commission

U.S. Agriculture Sales to Cuba: Certain Economic Effects of U.S. Restrictions, July 2007

The Commission estimates that the number of overnight U.S. visitors to Cuba would increase from 171,000 in 2005 (the base year) to between 554,000 and 1.127 million visitors per year in the short run if restrictions on travel were abolished (table 3.3). Tourist expenditures by all tourists in Cuba would increase by between 13 and 33 percent. The increased number of visits by U.S. residents raises the price of tourism services in Cuba, and fewer non-U.S. foreigners would visit Cuba. In light of this potential displacement, the Commission's estimate of the net additional tourists that would visit Cuba in the first year of unrestricted travel ranges from 226,000 to 538,000 and is consistent with other empirical travel studies.

Because of data limitations and the non-market aspects of Cuban purchasing decisions, the overall effect of removing restrictions on U.S. exports to Cuba is difficult to estimate. However, based on interviews with Cuban purchasing officials, sector modeling results, and discussions with U.S. industry officials, the Commission estimates that the U.S. share of Cuban agricultural, fish, and forest product imports would rise to between one-half and two-thirds.²

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

March 30, 2009 Monday , David Adams, Times Latin America Correspondent

If the embargo were lifted, that kind of agricultural trade would grow significantly, concluded a 2007 government report by the International Trade Commission. Experts at the University of Florida calculated that Cuba's agricultural trade could be worth more than \$1.7 billion.

U.S. Companies Missing out on Oil Exploration

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

June 27, 2008 Friday

DAVID ADAMS , Times Latin America Correspondent

American oil companies have long had their eyes on Cuba's offshore potential. The U.S. Geological Survey has estimated that Cuba could have somewhere between 4.6-billion and 9.3-billion barrels of oil as well as even greater quantities of natural gas. That's about half the size of the estimated resources in the Gulf of Mexico.

Cuba reportedly plans to start drilling sometime next year. It lacks the money and technology to develop the resources itself so it has sold rights to a number of major oil companies, including Repsol (Spain), Norsk Hydro (Norway) and Petrobras (Brazil).

Cuba's offshore oil has the potential to make Cuba self-sufficient, perhaps even a modest exporter of oil. But, under a four decades-old economic embargo, American companies are barred from participation in Cuba's energy industry.

Opening Cuba to American petroleum companies could favor U.S. interests, says Huddleston, who served as head of the U.S. diplomatic mission there from 1999 to 2002. Letting U.S. companies into Cuba would give the United States greater influence over the technology and environmental safety of Cuba's offshore drilling.

"Why can we buy from Venezuela and not Cuba? That kind of boggles the mind right there," she added, noting that Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez currently represented a greater threat to U.S. interests in Latin America than Cuba.

Embargo Needs to Be Lifted Now

http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0310_cuba_huddleston.aspx

The Brookings Institute

MARCH 10, 2008

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.

http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/0220_cuba_huddleston.aspx

Brookings Institute

What Does Fidel Castro's Retirement Mean for Cuba?

FEBRUARY 20, 2008

As Cubans' lives slowly begin to improve, there will be less fear of loosening controls on travel, investment, and private initiatives. It will take a much longer time to end the monopoly of the one party system and to allow the formation of a true opposition.

As for the United States, we may well become irrelevant. Cuba's offshore oil reserves and sugar cane ethanol will allow it to diversify and end its dependence on Venezuela. By opting to isolate Cuba, the Bush administration slows up the reform process and places the United States on the sidelines. If we want to play a role in a future Cuba, we need an engagement and reconciliation policy that is geared to quicken regime evolution.

U.S. Should Not Wait For Cuba to Act

http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2009/~/_media/Files/rc/reports/2009/0413_cuba/0413_cuba.pdf

Brookings Institute

CUBA: A New Policy of Critical and Constructive Engagement Brookings Institute

April 2009

Although it will take Cuban cooperation to achieve a real improvement in relations, we should avoid the mistake of predicating our initiatives on the actions of the Cuban government. The United States must evaluate and act in its own interests. We must not tie our every action to those of the Cuban government, because doing so would allow Cuban officials to set U.S. policy, preventing the United States from serving its own interests.

Cuban Government Uses Embargo to Their Advantage

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/LatinAmerica/hl1048.cfm>

The Heritage Foundation

October 24, 2007

The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez

the 35th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce

It is clear that the restrictions imposed on the Cuban people have nothing to do with the U.S. embargo and nothing to do with our policies. It has everything to do with Castro's desire and the regime's desire to stay in power. They may use the U.S. as an excuse for everything they do.

"Why do we need such a strong military, and why do we need to spy on our people? Well, because the U.S. is going to attack us one day." That's not true. "Why is it that people don't have enough to eat? It's not because Communism doesn't work, it's because of the U.S. embargo." So all of that just confuses people; the reality is this is a regime that has done everything and anything to stay in power.

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb111/hb111-57.pdf>

The Cato Institute

Moreover, the embargo continues to be the best—and now the only—excuse that the communist regime has for its failed policies.

Elizardo Sa´nchez Santa Cruz, a leading dissident in Cuba, has aptly summed up that strategy: “[Castro] wants to continue exaggerating the image of the external enemy which has been vital for the Cuban Government during decades, an external enemy which can be blamed for the failure of the totalitarian model implanted here.”

<http://www.freetrade.org/node/433>

Center for Trade Policy Studies

Cuba and the United States in the 21st Century

Rice University, Houston, Texas, October 12, 2005

by [Dan Griswold](#)

As a foreign policy tool, the embargo actually enhances Castro's standing by giving him a handy excuse for the failures of his homegrown Caribbean socialism. He can rail for hours about the suffering the embargo inflicts on Cubans, even though the damage done by his domestic policies is far worse. If the embargo were lifted, the Cuban people would be a bit less deprived and Castro would have no one else to blame for the shortages and stagnation that will persist without real market reforms.

Cuban Government Uses Embargo to Their Advantage Cont'd

www.cafc.gov

Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State

Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce

July 2006

The 2004 CAFC report identified the “survival strategies” of the Castro regime and its cynical manipulation of United States humanitarian policies and examined its relentless pursuit of hard currency to maintain its repression of the Cuban people and their aspirations for freedom. Recommendations designed to limit the regime’s access to hard currency were implemented and have subsequently helped to restrict the funds available to the regime to sustain itself in power.

International Disapproval of Embargo

http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2009/~//media/Files/rc/reports/2009/0413_cuba/0413_cuba.pdf

Brookings Institute

CUBA: A New Policy of Critical and Constructive Engagement Brookings Institute

April 2009

In the 2008 United Nations General Assembly, 185 countries voted against the U.S. embargo and only two, Israel and Palau, supported the U.S. position.

Europe Lifted Sanctions on Cuba

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/LatinAmerica/wm1967.cfm>

The Heritage Foundation

June 24, 2008

On June 19, 2008, over dinner in Brussels, the European Union's foreign ministers agreed to lift sanctions against Cuba. This decision closes an uncharacteristically confrontational chapter in EU-Cuban relations that began after the March 2003 Cuban crackdown on dissent that resulted in the arrest of 75 pro-democracy advocates, the cream of Cuba's nascent civil society.

Castro Opposition Doesn't Believe in Embargo

<http://www.freetrade.org/node/245>

Center for Trade Policy Studies

by Aaron Lukas

Aaron Lukas is an analyst with the Cato Institute's Center for Trade Policy Studies.

December 14, 2001

That line is wearing thin after four decades. In a new Cato study, interviews with leading Cuban dissidents reveal a preference for engagement and little support for the embargo. If Mr. Castro's staunchest opponents think the embargo has helped keep him in power, we shouldn't doubt them.

Even Critics Recognize Some Efforts Have Been Made

http://www.stanford.edu/group/wais/Cuba/cuba_mseeley.html

Ronald Hilton
Stanford University
January 1, 2000

As usual, Miles Seeley talks sense. He says:

"I agree with Linda that we should normalize relations with Cuba. I also have mixed feelings about him and his regime and am not willing to overlook his totalitarian abuses; but at the same time I can recognize his educational and health efforts. The bottom line seems to be that the hard line taken by most Miami Cuban expatriates dictates US policy. That's not good, but not uncommon, either. I might draw a parallel to the influence of the US Jewish community on US policy toward Israel and the Middle Eastern Arab states, a situation with which I am all too familiar."

Public Opinion Regarding U.S. –Cuba Relations

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/04/opinion_0420.html

Center for American Progress

Public Opinion Snapshot: Public Backs U.S.-Cuba Relations, By [Ruy Teixeira](#) | April 20, 2009

Consider these results from a WorldPublicOpinion.org early April survey on Cuba policy and U.S. public opinion. The survey asked respondents which position was closest to theirs given recent leadership changes in Cuba: that it was “time to try a new approach to Cuba, because Cuba may be ready for a change” or that since the Communist Party is still in control, the United States “should continue to isolate Cuba.” By a 59-to-39 percent margin the public backed the time-for-a-change approach.

Critically, the public also believes overwhelmingly that if we go down this road and increase travel and trade between Cuba and the United States, the end result will be a more open and democratic Cuba. This position is supported by 71 percent of the American public.

http://www.brookings.edu/events/2008/~//media/Files/events/2008/1202_cuba_poll/1202_cuba_poll.pdf

The Brookings Institution in collaboration with Florida International University (FIU) and the Cuba Study Group released a poll gauging public opinion among Cuban Americans in south Florida on December 2, 2008.

Majority support for ending the U.S. embargo against Cuba:

- 55 percent of Cuban Americans oppose continuing the embargo.
- 79 percent think the embargo has worked not very well or not at all.
- This poll marks the first time that a majority has supported ending the embargo in an FIU survey of the Cuban American community since it began similar polling in 1991.

A majority of Cuban American voters want increased engagement with Cuba:

- 56 percent Cuban Americans who are registered to vote support reestablishing diplomatic relations with Cuba, with even greater support amongst the community at large.
- 72 percent of registered Cuban American voters would like to see direct talks between the U.S. and Cuban governments on issues of bilateral concern, including migration.
- 55 percent of those who support maintaining the embargo were still in favor of the Obama administration opening dialogue with the Cuban government.

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb111/hb111-57.pdf>

The Cato Institute

Signs of increasing political dissatisfaction with the embargo show that the tide of opinion is clearly turning. A February 2008 Gallup poll showed that 61 percent of Americans favored reestablishing diplomatic ties with Cuba—a 6 percentage point increase since 2004.

Cuba Relations Illogical - Majority of Americans Want to Normalize

<http://www.districtchronicles.com/media/paper263/news/2004/05/27/Perspectives/Normalize.Relations.With.Cuba.Now-683881.shtml?norewrite200604201541&sourcedomain=www.districtchronicles.com>

Fletcher, Bill Jr., Precinct Reporter
May 27, 2004

Yet, the activities of the Bush administration are not a joke. Oddly, opinion polls continue to indicate that the majority of the people of the U.S.A. seek normal relations with Cuba, and an increasing number of businesses seek to take advantage of opportunities for investment in Cuba. Nevertheless, a relatively small group of both Cuban exiles and Right-wing fanatics united in their hatred of President Castro and the Cuban government has insisted on a policy of destabilization that has not worked, even on its own terms, not to mention representing the height of hypocrisy and arrogance.

Since the Cuban Revolution succeeded in ousting the corrupt puppet regime of Batista in 1959, succeeding U.S. administrations have done all that they could to undermine the Cuban government. During the 1960s, such interventions were not limited to the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961, but also included a covert military operation that carried on through the mid 1960s. The accompanied economic sanctions and other efforts to isolate the Cuban government.

None of the worked.

People in the U.S.A. often stop and ask, what is the logic in the hatred by U.S. administrations of the Cuban government? What is particularly odd is that the U.S. was able to establish sound diplomatic relations with the former Soviet Union, even during the height of the Cold War. Relations were opened with the People's Republic of China, beginning in the early 1970s during the Vietnam War (when the Chinese were openly supporting North Vietnam and the anti-US rebels in South Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea/Cambodia). Yet, for some reason the US cannot seem to change its attitude toward Cuba.

Every allegation against Cuba, even if true, could as well be made about other governments with which the U.S. has or has had normal diplomatic relations. Yet, the attempts to destroy the Cuban government persist.

U.S. Aid to Opposition Groups Helps Castro

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb111/hb111-57.pdf>

The Cato Institute

The commission also endorsed the administration's policy of providing aid to Cuban opposition groups, thus lending a semblance of credibility to Castro's claims that dissident groups are agents of Washington, undermining their standing.

President has Power to Lift Embargo

http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/0224_cuba_huddleston.aspx

Brookings Institute

Use "Smart Power" to Help Cubans

Contrary to popular myth and public misunderstanding, if President Barack Obama wishes to change the U.S. policy toward Cuba, he has ample authority to do so. If he takes charge of Cuba policy, he can turn the embargo into an effective instrument of "smart power" to achieve the United States' policy objectives in Cuba.

Obama's leadership is needed to change the dynamic between the United States and Cuba. The status quo is no longer an option. Not only has it failed to achieve its goals; it has tarnished our image in the hemisphere and throughout the world.

Again and again we hear that the embargo can't be changed because the Helms-Burton law codified it. Nothing could be further from the truth. Whether you agree or disagree with the current commercial embargo, the president can effectively dismantle it by using his executive authority. Helms-Burton codified the embargo regulation, but those regulations provide that "all transactions are prohibited except as specifically authorized by the Secretary of the Treasury by means of regulations, rulings, instructions, and licenses." This means that the president's power remains unfettered. He can instruct the secretary to extend, revise or modify embargo regulations.

Since 1992, U.S. law -- the Cuban Democracy Act -- has sought to expand access to ideas, knowledge and information by licensing telecommunications goods and services. Yet, in practice, regulations are so strictly interpreted that the United States in effect is imposing a communications embargo on Cuba. To lift it, the president can authorize a general license for the donation and sale of radios, televisions and computers. In addition, rather than helping Cuban state security keep Yoani Sánchez and others off the Internet, the Obama administration could make Internet technology readily available so that any barriers to communications would be clearly the fault of the Cuban government, and not ours.

Suggestion for Future Policy with Cuba

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb111/hb111-57.pdf>

The Cato Institute

Congress should

- repeal the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad, or Helms-Burton) Act of 1996,
- repeal the Cuban Democracy (Torricelli) Act of 1992,
- restore the policy of granting Cuban refugees political asylum in the United States,
- eliminate or privatize Radio and TV Marti,
- end all trade sanctions on Cuba and allow U.S. citizens and companies to visit and establish businesses in Cuba as they see fit, and
- move toward normalizing diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Con Evidence

Overview of Reasons to Keep the Embargo

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

On the other side, opponents of changing U.S. policy maintain that the current two-track policy of isolating Cuba, but reaching out to the Cuban people through measures of support, is the best means for realizing political change in Cuba. They point out that the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996 sets forth the steps that Cuba needs to take in order for the United States to normalize relations. They argue that softening U.S. policy at this time without concrete Cuban reforms would boost the Castro government, politically and economically, and facilitate the survival of the communist regime. Opponents of softening U.S. policy argue that the United States should stay the course in its commitment to democracy and human rights in Cuba, and that sustained sanctions can work. Opponents of loosening U.S. sanctions further argue that Cuba's failed economic policies, not the U.S. embargo, are the causes of Cuba's difficult living conditions.

Major arguments in opposition to lifting the Cuba travel ban are that more American travel would support Castro's rule by providing his government with potentially millions of dollars in hard currency; that there are legal provisions allowing travel to Cuba for humanitarian purposes that are used by thousands of Americans each year; and that the President should be free to restrict travel for foreign policy reasons.

Opponents of further easing restrictions on agricultural exports to Cuba maintain that U.S. policy does not deny such sales to Cuba, as evidenced by the large amount of sales since 2001. Moreover, according to the State Department, since the Cuban Democracy Act was enacted in 1992, the United States has licensed billions of dollars in private humanitarian donations. Opponents further argue that easing pressure on the Cuban government would in effect be lending support and extending the duration of the Castro regime. They maintain that the United States should remain steadfast in its opposition to any easing of pressure on Cuba that could prolong the Castro regime and its repressive policies. Some agricultural producers that export to Cuba support continuation of the prohibition on financing for agricultural exports to Cuba because it ensures that they will be paid.

Cuba Only Willing to Normalize Relations on Own Terms

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

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March 18, 2009

In a December 2, 2006 speech, Raúl reiterated an offer to negotiate with the United States. He said that “we are willing to resolve at the negotiating table the longstanding dispute between the United States and Cuba, of course, provided they accept, as we have previously said, our condition as a country that will not tolerate any blemishes on its independence, and as long as said resolution is based on the principles of equality, reciprocity, non-interference, and mutual respect.”

Refuses to Make Concessions on Issues of Importance

<http://www6.miami.edu/Iccas/Docs/BBC%20Interview2.pdf>

Professor Jaime Suchlicki (University of Miami)

BBC World Service

July 1, 2008

Let me emphasize that the United States Government has been talking to the Cuban Government for the past 49 years, there is conversation in Geneva, in Washington, in Havana at the U.S. Interests Section. We have achieved agreements with Cuba in the area of hijacking airplanes, also on immigration. The issue is not about talking or about conversations, the issue is about the willingness of the regime in Cuba to provide concessions dealing with moving Cuba to a democratic society, opening up Cuba to the market. On those issues that are significant, the Cuban government has refused, and it has refused in part, because the Cuban government is tied primarily to Venezuela, Iran, China and other countries that don't have any conditionalities in their relations with Cuba. They provide the Castro regime aid and credits and the Castro regime doesn't have to do anything in exchange. So, those are the kind of regimes that ideologically and pragmatically the Castro brothers like to do business with. We have seen on numerous occasions that the interest of Cuba is not in tying itself to the United States or to the Western democracies.

Must Wait Until a Regime Willing to Provide Real Concessions is in Power

<http://www6.miami.edu/Iccas/Docs/BBC%20Interview2.pdf>

Professor Jaime Suchlicki (University of Miami)

BBC World Service

July 1, 2008

Cuba under the Castro brothers is anti-democratic, anti-capitalist, anti-Western. Fidel Castro, years before he came to power, as a student leader distributed anti-United States propaganda in Colombia in 1948. In the mountains, when he was fighting against the dictatorship of Batista in 1958, he wrote that his real struggle, once he came to power, would be against the United States. Here is a leader that is an enemy of the United States, that doesn't want relations with the United States, that has done a lot of things to hurt the interests of the United States, from introducing Soviet nuclear missiles in 1962, to supporting Middle-Eastern terrorist groups, to supporting groups in Latin America. It is not up to the United States now all of the sudden to say, look we are going to lift sanctions in the hope that you are going to be "a good boy" and you are "going to be nice to us." The sanctions have to be negotiated, and have to be negotiated when there is a regime in Havana willing to provide real, meaningful concessions.

U.S. Planning and Willing to Help a Transition Gov't

www.cafc.gov

Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State

Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce

July 2006

With this report, the Commission continues an ongoing planning and coordination process to hasten democracy in Cuba and institutionalizes ongoing planning to support, if requested, a Cuban Transition Government that guarantees political freedom, economic opportunity, and holds free and fair multiparty elections.

Planning for Fidel's Succession

www.cafc.gov

Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State
Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce
July 2006

Yet at the same time that we see hope and growth in Cuban civil society, Fidel Castro and his inner circle have begun a gradual but intrinsically unstable process of succession. The regime is unquestionably attempting to insulate itself from the consequences of Fidel Castro's incapacitation, death, or ouster. The regime continues to harden its edges and is feverishly working to forestall any opportunity for a genuine democratic transition on the island. The current regime in Havana is working with like-minded governments, particularly Venezuela, to build a network of political and financial support designed to forestall any external pressure to change.

Recommendations to hasten the end of the Castro dictatorship include: measures to empower the Cuban people to prepare for change by strengthening support to civil society; breaking the regime's information blockade; a diplomatic strategy to undermine the regime's succession strategy by supporting the Cuban people's right to determine their future; and measures to deny revenue to the Castro regime that is used to strengthen its repressive security apparatus and to bolster the regime against pressure for change.

Helping Now Too Premature

http://www.finalcall.com/artman/publish/article_4368.shtml

Charles Davis

February 6, 2008

“Now, of all times, we must do nothing that will slow momentum toward genuine political change,” declared Roger Noriega, a former assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs under President George W. Bush. He was speaking at a mid-January conference devoted to Cuba policy hosted by the influential neoconservative American Enterprise Institute.

“There will be plenty of time to help the Cuban people rebuild their economy on firm foundations,” Mr. Noriega said, “but moving in prematurely to provide a modicum of material benefits to some Cubans may allow what’s left of the Castro brothers’ regime to bide a few more tragic days in power.”

History Shows Normalizing With Cuba Fails

<http://www6.miami.edu/Iccas/Docs/BBC%20Interview2.pdf>

Professor Jaime Suchlicki (University of Miami)

BBC World Service

July 1, 2008

There is a willingness on the part of some members of Congress to change policy. For whatever reason there are some Congresspeople that will have a resolution ready for President Obama to lift the travel ban, to lift the embargo. I don't know how Obama will react. Whether he will say, wait let me negotiate or, let's do it unilaterally. Let me point out that over the past 30 years Latin America, Europe, Canada, have been engaged with Cuba. Millions of tourists from those countries have been to the island. Yet Cuba is not more democratic, there is no change in Cuba; there is a continuation of Fidel Castro's regime. Despite trade with Western Europe, despite tourism from Latin America, Canada, Cuba is not freer or more prosperous. So neither tourism, nor investments have brought about significant changes. Should we expect that American tourists have a magic wand and they are going to arrive in Havana and say "democracy," "freedom" and all of a sudden things are going to change?

Well, that is not realistic and if we believe that, then we should send American tourists to North Korea and to Iran and see if we can convert those countries to democracy. I don't believe that trade, tourism, or investments are going to bring about change in Cuba. First there has to be willingness on the part of the Cuban government to change and second there has to be pressure from below, strong enough to force the government to change. When those two circumstances begin to happen then American policy should change.

To Normalize Relations Sends Wrong Signal

<http://www6.miami.edu/Iccas/Docs/BBC%20Interview2.pdf>

Professor Jaime Suchlicki (University of Miami)

BBC World Service

July 1, 2008

Basically my testimony was that American Foreign Policy should not be given away to the Castro regime without the Castro regime providing first some meaningful concessions.

Sanctions are a tool to bring about change, and if the regime of General Raul Castro is not willing to provide meaningful concessions, like some other regimes in the world, that are not willing to respond to either sanctions or concessions, then, we should wait for the opportunity when there is a new regime in Cuba and then use the travel ban, the embargo to accelerate the process of change and to bring about a democratic Cuba.

The policy of the United States in Latin America for the past 30 years, since President Jimmy Carter, has been consistent in emphasizing democracy, freedom and elections. We have not been consistent all over the world, but at least in Latin America, we have been consistent, and to normalize relations with the Castro regime without any change in Cuba, will send the wrong signal, that we support a dictatorship, that we support a military regime under General Raul Castro, and that we are unwilling to bring Cuba into the family of democratic nations, like we have done in Panama, Haiti, Grenada, and in other countries where we became involved. Although I am not advocating intervention, I feel that there is a policy that has been established now for the past 35-40 years vis-à-vis Latin America and we should maintain that kind of policy.

Achievements of the Embargo

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/LatinAmerica/hl1048.cfm>

The Heritage Foundation

October 24, 2007

The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez

The 35th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce

When the subject of Cuba comes up, one question that I'm always asked is, "The embargo has been in place for about 47 years: Has it worked?" And my answer to that is yes, the embargo has worked. One of the things that history never does for us is tell us what did not happen. We only know what has taken place. What we don't know is what could have happened. The embargo has denied Castro resources, and that's what the embargo was intended to do.

Think about those times when Castro has had resources. In 1962, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, there were missiles stationed on the island. History has confirmed--and it has been written from members of the Communist Party in the then-Soviet Union and Cuba as well as to Castro himself--that he wanted desperately to keep those missiles. And it wasn't enough that in exchange for giving up those missiles, he got a guarantee that the U.S. would not invade Cuba. He wanted those missiles, and at one point he was willing and ready to do whatever had to be done--even use those missiles. That was 1962. Think about the money he put in Angola, the resources he put into Africa (and I'm talking about military resources, not humanitarian resources). In Salvador, Nicaragua, Grenada, and throughout the world, he funded guerrilla movements.

So when he has had resources, those resources have not gone to benefit the Cuban people. The Cuban people are still standing in line waiting for food, and that food doesn't even last for the month that the ration card is for. That has not changed in 48 years. When he has had resources, it usually has been used to somehow threaten Cuba's neighbors and fund guerrilla movements--anything that can hurt the U.S.

Think about it: Anything that can hurt the U.S. That has been their policy for over 48 years, and that has been more important than putting a focus on the plight of the people in Cuba. So when there have been resources, Cubans have not benefited; only Castro, the Cuban military, and foreign Communist guerrillas have benefited.

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb111/hb111-57.pdf>

The Cato Institute

Cuban officials, who have estimated the cumulative cost of the embargo at more than \$40 billion.

Current Firm Policy is Working

www.cafc.gov

Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State

Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce

July 2006

As long as the regime abuses the people of Cuba our policy will remain firm. Implementing the Commission's recommendations for hastening a transition has helped break the regime's information blockade on Cubans and is denying resources that the regime would otherwise use to repress its citizens.

Denying Resources Have Had Visible Benefits

www.cafc.gov

Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State
Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce
July 2006

The first report of the Commission recommended, and the President directed be implemented, a comprehensive set of measures to deny the Castro regime the revenues it needs to maintain its repressive security apparatus. By the regime's own admission, these measures — and continued enforcement actions — have sharply cut licensed and unlicensed travel to the island each year since the implementation of the measures of the first report.

Limitations on travel, parcel deliveries and remittances have sharply curtailed the regime's manipulation of and profiteering from U.S. humanitarian policies. These measures have been successful and should continue to be implemented.

In order to undermine the regime's succession strategy, it is critical that the U.S. Government maintain economic pressure on the regime to limit its ability to sustain itself and repress the Cuban people. Moreover, as we rapidly approach the transitional moment, the more economic pressure there is on the regime, the greater the likelihood there will be dramatic and successful change for the Cuban people.

Embargo will End when Cuba Changes

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/LatinAmerica/hl1048.cfm>

The Heritage Foundation

October 24, 2007

By The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez

The 35th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce

I'm always asked the question as well, "When is the U.S. going to change the policy? When is the U.S. going to lift the embargo?" And that's not the question. The real question is, "When will Cuba change its policies? When will the Cuban regime change?" This is about what happens in Cuba, not what happens in Washington, and we shouldn't get distracted with, "It's the embargo and it's everything else." The problem is the policy of the Cuban government.

Human Rights in Cuba

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

Cuba has a poor record on human rights, with the government sharply restricting freedoms of expression, association, assembly, movement, and other basic rights. It has cracked down on dissent, arrested human rights activists and independent journalists, and staged demonstrations against critics. Although some anticipated a relaxation of the government's oppressive tactics in the aftermath of the January 1998 visit of Pope John Paul II, government attacks against human rights activists and other dissidents have continued since that time. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights maintained in its 2007 annual human rights report that the Cuban government's "restrictions on political rights, freedom of expression, and dissemination of ideas have created, over a period of decades, a situation of permanent and systematic violations of the fundamental rights of Cuban citizens."

According to the State Department's human rights report for 2008, issued in February 2009, the Cuban government continued to commit numerous serious abuses during the year. Among the human rights problems cited in the State Department report were arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights advocates and members of independent professional organizations; harassment, beatings, and threats against political opponents by government-recruited mobs, police, and state security officials; beatings and abuse of detainees and prisoners; denial of fair trial; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions, including denial of medical care; and interference with privacy, including pervasive monitoring of private communications. As noted in the report, the government tightly controlled Internet access, with citizens only accessing it through government-approved institutions or through a few Internet facilities offered by foreign diplomatic offices.

In March 2003, the government conducted a severe crackdown and imprisoned 75 democracy activists, including independent journalists and librarians and leaders of independent labor unions and opposition parties. At present, 54 of the "group of 75" political prisoners remain incarcerated.

Human Rights in Cuba Cont'd

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

On January 15, 2009, one of the detainees, Reynaldo Labrada Pena who had worked with the Varela Project, was released from prison after completing his sentence. In February 2008, Cuba released four political prisoners—union activist Pedro Pablo Alvarez Ramos, human rights activist Omar Pernet Hernández, and journalists Jose Gabriel Ramón Castillo and Alejandro González Raga—but sent them into forced exile to Spain.

Despite the reduction in the number of prisoners, human rights activists maintain that the overall situation has not improved. Cuban human rights activist Elizardo Sánchez, the head of the CCDHRN, asserts that the government is still repressing dissidents, with threats, police searches of people's homes, interrogations, and short detentions. Sánchez asserts that the police state is still in force in Cuba, reflected in almost every aspect of national life.

www.cafc.gov

Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State

Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce

July 2006

The Castro regime is failing to address even the most basic humanitarian needs of the Cuban people. Chronic malnutrition, polluted drinking water, and untreated chronic diseases continue to affect a significant percentage of the Cuban people. Conditions will not improve as long as Fidel Castro remains in power.

Human Rights Haven't Changed in Cuba

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/LatinAmerica/wm1967.cfm>

The Heritage Foundation

June 24, 2008

Fidel's Propaganda Victory? European Union Removes Cuba Sanctions

by [Ray Walser, Ph.D.](#)

Since Raúl Castro assumed legal control on February 24, 2008, the Cuban government has slightly loosened some of its most onerous restrictions on consumer goods. For instance, by engineering a new cash-and-carry form of communism, Raúl's regime allows Cubans with hard currency to purchase computers, cell phones and DVDs. Citizens—if they possess the cash—are now able to holiday at resort hotels in Cuba and have improved chances of owning property. Without disclosing a master strategy, Cuban officials say they want to concentrate on encouraging private incentives in agriculture, where Cuba's production remains abysmal. Other measures seek to create what Havana spin-masters are calling a new "meritocracy" with incentives for productivity.

Despite the above-noted cosmetic changes, Raul's political views remain in synch with Fidel's. The regime has demonstrated no positive movement on human rights reform. Of the original 75 political prisoners detained during the 2003 crackdown, approximately 55 remain incarcerated. And escape from imprisonment carries a heavy price; most of those let out were removed for medical reasons stemming primarily from inhumane treatment.

Cuban Elections not Fair

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119155.htm>

2008 Human Rights Report: Cuba

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

February 25, 2009

On February 24, the National Assembly unanimously elected Raul Castro to succeed his brother as chief of state, president, and commander in chief of the Armed Forces. Fidel Castro remains officially the first secretary of the Communist Party (CP). In the January 20 elections for the National Assembly, which were neither free nor fair, the CP won as much as 98 percent of the vote and 606 of the 614 seats in the National Assembly. The Ministry of the Interior exercises control over police, the internal security forces, and the prison system.

Cuban Government Denies Human Rights

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119155.htm>

2008 Human Rights Report: Cuba

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

February 25, 2009

The government continued to deny its citizens their basic human rights and committed numerous, serious abuses. The government denied citizens the right to change their government. At year's end there were at least 205 political prisoners and detainees. As many as 5,000 citizens served sentences for "dangerousness," without being charged with any specific crime.

The following human rights problems were reported: beatings and abuse of detainees and prisoners, including human rights activists, carried out with impunity; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions, including denial of medical care; harassment, beatings, and threats against political opponents by government-recruited mobs, police, and State Security officials; arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights advocates and members of independent professional organizations; denial of fair trial; and interference with privacy, including pervasive monitoring of private communications. There were also severe limitations on freedom of speech and press; denial of peaceful assembly and association; restrictions on freedom of movement, including selective denial of exit permits to citizens and the forcible removal of persons from Havana to their hometowns; restrictions on freedom of religion; and refusal to recognize domestic human rights groups or permit them to function legally. Discrimination against persons of African descent, domestic violence, underage prostitution, trafficking in persons, and severe restrictions on worker rights, including the right to form independent unions, were also problems. Although physical torture was rare, authorities beat, harassed, and made death threats against dissidents, both inside and outside of prison. Many were detained repeatedly, interrogated, and threatened with physical harm to themselves and their families. Some detainees and prisoners endured physical abuse, sometimes by other inmates with the acquiescence of guards, or long periods in isolation or punishment cells. Political prisoners and detainees who refused to wear the prison uniform or take part in "reeducation" activities were targeted for mistreatment.

Cuba Stifles Opposition

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119155.htm>

2008 Human Rights Report: Cuba

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

February 25, 2009

The government continued to subject persons who disagreed with it to "acts of repudiation," although these incidents, especially those that occurred in front of the homes of dissidents, continued to show a marked decline. The government targeted dissenters by directing militants from the CP, the Union of Communist Youth (UJC), Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs), the Federation of Cuban Women, the Association of Veterans of the Cuban Revolution, and other groups and individuals to stage public protests against the dissidents, usually in front of their homes. Participants shouted insults and obscenities. Mobs sometimes damaged the victim's home or property and occasionally assaulted the victim or his relatives. Leading dissidents, such as Martha Beatriz Roque, continued to receive death threats. Although the government characterized acts of repudiation as spontaneous, undercover police and State Security agents were often present and clearly directed the activities, for example by threatening neighbors with job loss if they did not participate. The government did not detain any participants in acts of repudiation, even those who physically attacked the victim, nor did police respond to victims' complaints.

The authorities routinely engaged in arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights advocates. In most cases, dissidents were held for several hours and then released without charges. The CCDHRN confirmed 1,500 such detentions during the year but suspected there were many more. There were 325 similar detentions in 2007. On January 30, the government-banned Assembly to Promote Civil Society reported that seven dissidents, including Jorge Luis Garcia Perez (Antunez) and his wife Iris Perez, were beaten and arrested in Santa Clara while trying to pay homage to the hero of Cuban independence, Jose Marti, as a form of protest against the government. On April 21, 10 members of the Damas de Blanco ("Ladies in White") gathered in a central Havana square to protest the continued imprisonment of family members who were among a large group arrested in 2003. They were met by a caravan of police officials, apprehended by force, placed onto buses, and removed from the area. On July 29, the political police and rapid response brigade prevented 20 dissidents from participating in a peaceful march in Holguin designed to be an act of solidarity with political prisoners of conscience. Angel Luis Tellez Aguilera, the vice president of the United Commission on Human Rights, was arrested, detained for several hours, and released without charges. On July 12, State Security detained dissident Francisco Chaviano and at least five other activists in Havana who were planning to attend a public demonstration.

Cuba Stifles Opposition Cont'd

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119155.htm>

2008 Human Rights Report: Cuba

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

February 25, 2009

The CCDHRN stated that the government held at least 205 political prisoners and detainees at year's end, compared with 240 at the end of 2007. The convictions were for such offenses as disrespect of the head of state, disrespect and scorn of patriotic symbols, public disorder, and attempting to leave the country illegally. Other inmates were convicted of disseminating enemy propaganda, illicit association, clandestine printing, or the broad charge of rebellion, which sometimes has been brought against advocates of peaceful democratic change. For example, on February 2, police beat and detained human rights activist Mijail Capote Aranda for expressing antigovernment sentiments in the city of Manzanillo, Granma Province. A court sentenced him to three years in prison for "disrespect to the head of state" and "attack on police officers." Laws against antigovernment propaganda, graffiti, and disrespect of officials impose penalties of between three months and one year in prison; criticism of the president or members of the ANPP or Council of State is punishable by three years in prison. Disseminating "enemy propaganda," which includes expressing opinions at odds with those of the government, is punishable by up to 14 years' imprisonment. The government considered international reports of human rights violations and mainstream foreign newspapers and magazines to be enemy propaganda. Local CDRs inhibited freedom of speech by monitoring and reporting dissent or criticism.

The government occasionally staged acts of repudiation, in which it mobilized Communist militants and others to hold public rallies aimed at intimidating and ostracizing members of dissident organizations. The government also took steps to prevent the movement of activists; on many occasions, State Security, police, and mobs prevented "Ladies in White" members and members of other dissident groups from traveling to Havana, or elsewhere within the country, to take part in peaceful assembly.

Cubans Denied Freedom of Speech

www.cafc.gov

Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State

Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce

July 2006

Cubans continue to be imprisoned for activities that Americans take for granted each and every day: reading and viewing what they wish; accessing information from the outside world, including the Internet; meeting in their homes to discuss the future of their country; running a lending library; or conducting petition drives. Despite the savage campaign against them by the regime, the Cuban people are losing their fear and continue to risk life, limb, livelihood, and imprisonment in search of a better future for their families and their nation.

Cuba Government Doesn't Allow Information

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119155.htm>

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February 25, 2009

The government considered print and electronic media to be state property. The government owned and the CP controlled all media except for a number of underground newsletters. The government operated four national television stations, six national radio stations, one international radio station, one national magazine, and three national newspapers. Additionally, it operated many local radio stations, television stations, magazines, and newspapers. All were official CP organs. Content was nearly uniform across all of these media; none enjoyed editorial independence. The regime vigorously prosecuted attempts to distribute unauthorized written, filmed, or photographed material. The law bars "clandestine printing." The government was the sole book publisher in the country, and with the exception of some Catholic Church publications, state censors required prepublication approval.

The government controlled nearly all Internet access. Authorities reviewed and censored e-mail. Authorities employed Internet search filters and also blocked access to Web sites they considered objectionable. Citizens could access the Internet only through government-approved institutions, except at Internet facilities provided by a few diplomatic offices. Despite the government's March 21 decision to permit citizens to purchase personal computers, access to the Internet was strictly controlled and given only to those deemed ideologically trustworthy. The only citizens granted direct Internet access were some government officials and certain government-approved doctors, professors, and journalists. The government restricted Internet use in government offices, confining most officials to Web pages related to their work. In March and April authorities tightened Internet restrictions to block citizens' access to certain independent Web sites. Both foreigners and citizens were allowed to buy Internet access cards from the national telecommunications provider and to use hotel business centers, where Internet access can be purchased only in convertible pesos. Access usually costs between 128 and 288 convertible pesos (\$5.76 to \$12.51) an hour, a rate beyond the means of most citizens. The government stated that less than 12 percent of the population used Internet services in 2007, a figure that included citizens who had access to the government intranet only at work. The law requires all public Internet centers to register with the government and permits the Ministry for Information Technology and Communications to control and supervise all such centers without prior warning.

Government Limits People's Movement

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119155.htm>

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The law qualifies freedom of movement within the country, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and in practice the government severely restricted these rights. The government tightly restricted foreign and domestic travel by dissidents and limited internal migration from rural areas to Havana. Authorities frequently picked up dissidents visiting Havana and promptly escorted them back to their home provinces.

Government Makes it Extremely Difficult to Emigrate

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119155.htm>

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February 25, 2009

Those seeking to emigrate legally alleged they also faced fines, reprisals, harassment, and intimidation by the government; involuntary job transfers; threatened arrest; and dismissal from employment.

Fees for medical exams, exit permissions, passport costs, and airport taxes are payable only in convertible pesos, and amounted to approximately 630 convertible pesos (\$680.40) for an adult, or nearly three years' salary. These fees represented a significant hardship, particularly for migrants who had been fired from their jobs for being "politically unreliable" and had no income. At year's end some would-be migrants were unable to leave the country because of inability to pay exit fees. Authorities routinely dispossessed migrants and their families of their homes and most of their belongings before permitting them to leave the country. The government also demanded payment of hefty fines for past attempts to leave the country illegally.

Government has Control over Candidates

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119155.htm>

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February 25, 2009

Candidates for provincial and national office must be approved in advance by mass organizations, such as the women's and youth party organizations controlled by the government. A small group of leaders, under the direction of the president, selected the members of the highest policy-making bodies of the CP, the Politburo, and the Central Committee. Although not a formal requirement, in practice CP membership was a prerequisite for high-level official positions and professional advancement.

Government is Corrupt

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119155.htm>

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February 25, 2009

The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption; however, the government did not implement the law effectively, and officials frequently engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. The law provides for public access to government information, but in practice requests for information routinely were rejected, often on the grounds that access is not a right.

Government Doesn't Allow Workers to Unionize

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119155.htm>

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The law does not allow workers to form and join unions of their choice. Rather, the state established official unions and did not permit competing independent unions. Official labor unions had a mobilization function and did not act as trade unions, promote worker rights, or protect the right to strike. Such organizations were under the control of the state and the CP, which also managed the enterprises for which the laborers worked. Because all legal unions were government entities, antiunion discrimination by definition did not exist. Workers often lost their jobs because of their political beliefs, including their refusal to join the official union. On July 20, the National Bureau of Taxation removed Luis Gomez Perez's license to practice as a barber because he was a member of the independent trade union, the Central Christian Union (CSC).

Cuba has Lacking Economic Freedom

<http://www.heritage.org/index/Country/Cuba>

2009 Index of Economic Freedom

Product of the Heritage Foundation and Wall Street Journal

Cuba's overall economic freedom remains severely hampered by numerous institutional weaknesses, and the private sector is very limited. Because the Communist government dictates economic policies, many aspects of economic activity are tightly controlled and state-dominated. No courts are free of political interference, and private property (particularly land) is strictly regulated by the state.

Government Doesn't Admit Any Mistakes

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119155.htm>

2008 Human Rights Report: Cuba

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

February 25, 2009

In violation of its own statutes, the government did not recognize any domestic human rights groups or permit them to function legally. Several human rights organizations continued to function outside the law, including the CCDHRN, the Christian Liberation Movement, the Assembly to Promote Civil Society, and the Lawton Foundation for Human Rights. The government subjected domestic human rights advocates to violence, intense intimidation, and harassment, including threats of death and disappearance.

The government rejected international human rights monitoring. No UN Special Rapporteurs visited the country. The government continued to deny human rights organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross access to political prisoners and detainees.

Cuba as a Terrorist Nation

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

Cuba remains on the State Department's terrorism list. According to the State Department's Country Reports on Terrorism 2007 report (issued April 30, 2008), Cuba has "remained opposed to U.S. counterterrorism policy, and actively and publicly condemned many associated U.S. policies and actions." The report also noted that Cuba maintains close relationships with other state sponsors of terrorism, such as Iran and Syria, and has provided safe haven for members of several Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs): the Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA) and two Colombian insurgent groups, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN). Colombia has publicly acknowledged that it wants Cuban mediation with the ELN.

The 2007 report also maintained that Cuba continued to permit U.S. fugitives from justice to live legally in Cuba. Most of the fugitives entered Cuba in the 1970s, and are accused of hijacking or committing violent actions in the United States.

The State Department report noted that Cuba stated in 2006 that it would no longer provide safe haven to new fugitives who may enter Cuba. In 2006, Cuba returned a U.S. fugitive who had sequestered his son and flew a stolen plane to Cuba in September. In April 2007, Cuba returned another U.S. fugitive, Joseph Adjmi, who was convicted of mail fraud in the 1960s, but disappeared before beginning his 10-year sentence. On June 13, 2008, Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it deported another U.S. citizen, Leonard Auerbach, wanted in the United States for sexual exploitation of a minor and for child pornography, who had entered Cuba from Mexico in April.⁹³ More recently, press reports maintain that a number of fugitives from Florida accused of bilking the U.S. government of millions through Medicare fraud have fled to Cuba.⁹⁴

Those who support keeping Cuba on the terrorism list argue that there is ample evidence that Cuba supports terrorism. They point to the government's history of supporting terrorist acts and armed insurgencies in Latin America and Africa. They point to the government's continued hosting of members of foreign terrorist organizations and U.S. fugitives from justice.

Cuba Threat to U.S. Security

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/LatinAmerica/wm1669.cfm>

The Heritage Foundation

October 18, 2007

Cuba's Threat to U.S. National Security

The next event will feature a discussion of the many ways that Castro's Cuba threatens U.S. national security. A number of security issues stand out:

Cuba is aggressively spreading anti-Americanism throughout Latin America and is deeply involved in backing and advising the increasingly totalitarian and virulently anti-U.S. regime of Venezuelan dictator-President Hugo Chávez.[1]

Since Raul Castro took the reins as acting head of state in 2006, Cuban intelligence services have intensified their targeting of the U.S. Since 9/11, however, U.S. intelligence agencies have reduced the priority assigned to Cuba.[2]

Cuba's Directorate of Intelligence (DI) is among the top six intelligence services in the world. Thirty-five of its intelligence officers or agents have been identified operating in the U.S. and neutralized between 1996 and 2003.[3] This is strong evidence of DI's aggressiveness and hostility toward the U.S.

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.[4]

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.[5]

Beijing is busy working to improve Cuban signals intelligence and electronic warfare facilities, which had languished after the fall of the Soviet Union, integrating them into China's own global satellite network. Mary O'Grady of the Wall Street Journal has noted that this means the Chinese army, at a cyber-warfare complex 20 miles south of Havana, can now monitor phone conversations and Internet transmissions in America.[6]

Russia Plans on Using Cuba

<http://www.fpri.org/enotes/200808.lee.havanaobamaputin.html>

Foreign Policy Research Institute

August 2008

One reason is that the current U.S. policy makes Cuba a target of opportunity for a resurgent and increasingly hostile Russia. Vladimir Putin talks openly about “restoring our position in Cuba,” and hints are surfacing in Moscow that Russia might reestablish a military and intelligence presence on the island in response to the planned missile defense shield in Eastern Europe. Points of cooperation under consideration include use of Cuba as a refueling stop for long range bombers and for reconnaissance ships and aircraft, and also reopening of a gigantic Soviet-era electronic monitoring and surveillance facility at Lourdes, near Havana. A state visit to Havana in July by hard-line Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin (an ex-KGB member of Putin’s inner circle) and head of Russia’s Security Council Nikolai Patrushev could presage a new strategic dialogue between Moscow and Havana, even though the visit was officially touted as investment-related.

Goal is Democracy in Cuba

www.cafc.gov

Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State

Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce

July 2006

Our goal is to support the growing consensus for democracy in Cuba itself. A perpetuation of the status quo in Cuba through a succession among the current ruling elites would be a tragedy for the Cuban people. They have endured decades of dictatorship and deserve to regain their sovereignty and chart a new course for their country.

Embargo is a Tool for Leverage

<http://www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed052002a.cfm>

The Heritage Foundation

May 20, 2002

Leaving those issues aside, the embargo remains one of the few instruments the United States has that can promote change on the island. Critics claim it has produced no results, but then, 43 years of commercial relations between the regime and other nations around the world hasn't produced much change either. That's because commerce is possible only with the state, since private enterprise is illegal in Cuba.

The U.S. embargo limits commerce with Cuba's unelected leaders, who confiscated property owned by U.S. citizens now worth about \$7 billion. Those limits should remain in place until the regime enacts democratic reforms, agrees to respect human rights and releases its political prisoners. If the United States eases the sanctions, such changes definitely won't take place.

Obama Plans to Use Embargo as Leverage

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

During the electoral campaign, President Obama had pledged to lift restrictions on family travel to Cuba as well as restrictions on Cuban Americans sending remittances to Cuba. At the same time, he also pledged to maintain the embargo as a source of leverage to bring about change in Cuba. However, Obama also asserted that if the Cuban government takes significant steps toward democracy, beginning with the freeing of all political prisoners, then the United States would take steps to normalize relations and ease the embargo.

During her Senate Foreign Relations Committee confirmation hearing for Secretary of State on January 15, 2009, Senator Hillary Clinton reiterated President Obama's pledge to lift restrictions on family travel and remittances. She indicated that the Administration did not yet have a timeline on the change, but maintained that the Administration would consult closely with Congress as it proceeds. Clinton also reiterated Obama's position that it is not time to lift the embargo since it provides an important source of leverage for further change in Cuba.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7997063.stm>

BBC

Monday, 13 April 2009

The US president has indicated he would be open to dialogue with Cuba's leaders. But he has said that, like previous American presidents, he will only consider a full lifting of the US embargo once Cuba's communist government makes significant moves such as the holding of democratic elections. Cuba's President Raul Castro has said he is prepared to negotiate with the new US administration, providing there are no preconditions.

No Change Between Fidel and Raul

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/LatinAmerica/hl1048.cfm>

The Heritage Foundation

October 24, 2007

By The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez

The 35th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce

I think that the key question is below Fidel and Raul. We don't think any change will come from Fidel and Raul; we do not have these hopes, and I think it would be a bit naïve to think that Raul is--after 48 or 49 years of being the Defense Minister in a Communist regime--all of the sudden going to be enlightened to change.

No Political Change Under Raul

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

While additional economic changes under Raúl Castro are likely, few expect there will be any change to the government's tight control over the political system, which is backed up by a strong security apparatus. Some observers point to the reduced number of political prisoners, from 283 at the end of 2006 to around 219 in mid-2008, as evidence of a lessening of repression, but dissidents maintain that the overall situation has not improved. Some observers contend that if the new government of Raúl Castro becomes more confident of ensuring social stability and does not feel threatened, it could move to soften its hard repression, but for now the government is continuing its harsh treatment of the opposition. The selection of José Ramón Machado as First Vice President also appears to be a clear indication that the Cuban government has no intention of easing tight control over the political system.

Changes in the bureaucracy had been anticipated since February 2008 when Raúl Castro vowed to make the government smaller and more efficient, but the ouster of both Felipe Pérez Roque and Carlos Lage, who lost all their government and party positions, caught many observers by surprise. What was unexpected about the simultaneous ouster of both Pérez Roque and Lage was that they represented different tendencies within Cuba's communist political system. Pérez Roque, a former private secretary to Fidel, was known as a hardliner, while Carlos Lage, who was responsible for Cuba's limited economic reforms in the 1990s, was viewed as a potential economic reformer.

Raul Economic Changes will not Harm Communist System

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

Some maintain that Raúl will be liberated to move more quickly to usher in needed economic reforms, although few observers believe that the Cuban leader will take any actions that could threaten the stability of the communist government.

Looking ahead, several factors could restrain the magnitude of economic policy change in Cuba. A number of observers believe that as long as Fidel Castro is around, it will be difficult for the government to move forward with any major initiatives that are viewed as deviating from Fidel's orthodox policies. Other observers point to the significant oil subsidies and investment that Cuba now receives from Venezuela that have helped spur Cuba's high economic growth levels over the past several years and maintain that such support lessens the government's impetus for economic reforms. Another factor that bodes against rapid economic policy reform is the fear that it could spur momentum for political change. Given that one of the highest priorities for Cuba's government has been maintaining social and political stability, any economic policy changes are likely to be smaller changes introduced over time that do not threaten the state's control.

Businesses Should Not Reinforce a Repressive State

http://www.finalcall.com/artman/publish/article_4368.shtml

Charles Davis

February 6, 2008

“President Bush has clearly stated that changes in our policy will be driven by changes in Cuba,” said Kirsten Madison, a deputy assistant secretary of state in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.”

“We want our businesses to engage in Cuba at a time and in a circumstance that they will be able to reinforce and support a process of change, not reinforce a repressive state,” she said.

Castro Uses Resources to Maintain Grip on Power

www.cafc.gov

Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State

Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce

July 2006

The policies of the Castro regime continue to debilitate the Cuban economy, impoverish the Cuban people, and isolate Cuba from economic advances enjoyed by the rest of the Western Hemisphere. The regime ignores its obligations to its people and diverts its resources to maintain its grip on power, manage a succession of the regime, and destabilize democracies elsewhere in the Hemisphere. The more financially stressed the system is, the more difficult it will be for any leader who follows Fidel Castro to preside over a succession within the dictatorship

Cuba Only Changes During Economic Hardship

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

Cuba Issues for the 111th Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs, March 18, 2009

When Cuba's economic slide began in 1989, the government showed little willingness to adopt any significant market-oriented economic reforms, but in 1993, faced with unprecedented economic decline, Cuba began to change policy direction. Beginning in 1993, Cubans were allowed to own and use U.S. dollars and to shop at dollar-only shops previously limited to tourists and diplomats. Self-employment was authorized in more than 100 occupations in 1993, most in the service sector, and by 1996 that figure had grown to more than 150 occupations. Also in 1993, The government divided large state farms into smaller, more autonomous, agricultural cooperatives (Basic Units of Cooperative Production, UBPCs). It opened agricultural markets in 1994, where farmers could sell part of their produce on the open market, and it also permitted artisan markets for the sale of handicrafts. In 1995, the government allowed private food catering, including home restaurants (paladares), in effect legalizing activities that were already taking place), and approved a new foreign investment law that allows fully owned investments by foreigners in all sectors of the economy with the exception of defense, health, and education. In 1996, it authorized the establishment of free trade zones with tariff reductions typical of such zones. In 1997, the government enacted legislation to reform the banking system and established a new Central Bank (BCC) to operate as an autonomous and independent entity.

After Cuba began to recover from its economic decline, the government began to backtrack on some of its reform efforts. Regulations and new taxes made it extremely difficult for many of the nation's self-employed. Some home restaurants were forced to close because of the new regulations. In 2004, the Cuban government limited the use of dollars by state companies for any services or products not considered part of their core business. Some analysts viewed the measure as an effort to turn back the clock on economic reform measures.²⁵ Also in 2004, Fidel Castro announced that U.S. dollars no longer would be used in entities that at the time accepted dollars (such as stores, restaurants, and hotels). Instead, dollars had to be exchanged for "convertible pesos," with a 10% surcharge for the exchange. Dollar bank accounts are still allowed, but Cubans are not able to deposit new dollars into the accounts. Beginning in April 2005, convertible pesos were no longer on par with the U.S. dollar, but instead were linked to a basket of foreign currencies. This reduces the value of dollar remittances sent to Cuba and provides more hard currency to the Cuban government.²⁶

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/LatinAmerica/BG1456.cfm>

The Heritage Foundation, July 6, 2001

As for the U.S. trade embargo, simply lifting it will not improve conditions either. The rest of the world has been doing business with Castro on and off for 42 years and the dictator has only softened his grip when his government was in financial straits.

Economic Impacts of Embargo

Agence France Presse -- English

December 31, 2008 Wednesday 8:05 AM GMT

Cuba and US debate costs of the Revolution, 50 years on

Cuba's government has put its pricetag on allegedly crippling US sanctions: more than 92 billion dollars since 1962, when then president John F. Kennedy approved the full trade embargo in effect on Cuba, according to official Cuban data out in October.

And US sanctions serve as a useful political symbol in both countries, whether or not they deliver much economic bite.

Cuba Economy Kept Afloat by Foreign Subsidizes

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb111/hb111-57.pdf>

The Cato Institute

Cuba has received approximately \$12 billion in the form of subsidized oil from Venezuela's Hugo Cha'vez since 1999.

www.cafc.gov

Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State

Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce

July 2006

At the same time, there are clear signs the regime is using money provided by the Chavez government in Venezuela to reactivate its networks in the hemisphere to subvert democratic governments. The Castro regime's international meddling is done at the expense of the needs of the Cuban people. There is a growing sense of frustration among ordinary Cubans with a dictatorship that asks them to sacrifice, but expends considerable resources in the far flung reaches of the hemisphere and beyond.

Cuba Losing Cash Flow

<http://www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed052002a.cfm>

The Heritage Foundation

May 20, 2002

More to the point, now is not the time to lift sanctions. Castro's Cuba-low on cash-finally seems to be running out of lenders as well. Soviet subsidies to the island nation dried up in 1991 with the fall of the Soviet Union. Since then, Castro has survived by purchasing on credit wherever he could. But last September, France reportedly halted \$175 million in trade when Cuba failed to pay for commodities purchased in 2000, and other governments and foreign companies have frozen accounts as well.

U.S. Willing to Help; Normalizing Just Isn't Answer

www.cafc.gov

Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State

Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce

July 2006

To empower the Cuban people and the Cuban democratic opposition to take advantage of these new opportunities, the Commission recommends the Cuba Fund for a Democratic Future: **\$80 million** over two years to increase support for Cuban civil society, expand international awareness, break the regime's information blockade, and continue developing assistance initiatives to help Cuban civil society realize a democratic transition. The Commission also recommends consistent yearly funding of Cuba democracy programs at no less than \$20 million on an annual basis thereafter until the dictatorship ceases to exist.

Willing to Help Cuban People, but Not Accomplished by Strengthening an Oppressive Dictator

www.cafc.gov

Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State

Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce

July 2006

The Cuban dictatorship remains a danger, especially to its own people, even in its twilight. It still seeks to frustrate democratic governance in the region and to actively undermine United States interests. Cubans endure the grim reality of life in their country. Living under a dictatorship means a daily struggle to satisfy needs and wants, with immorality, and, above all, with hopelessness.

Cubans in Cuba, at great personal risk, are already talking about a democratic transition for their country. It is what Cubans say about the future of Cuba that truly matters. The civic opposition movement is creating momentum for democratic change in Cuba. With our offer of support, advice, and help to all who seek democratic change in Cuba, we hope to add to this momentum and to keep pace with the Cuban people as they press for democratic change.

U.S. Can Still Help Cuba with the Embargo

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119155.htm>

2008 Human Rights Report: Cuba

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

February 25, 2009

After a half-century of failed policy, there is enormous support in the Cuban-American community for initiatives that will improve the well being and independence of the Cuban people. What they didn't know -- but know now -- is that there is no reason they can't reach out to the Cuban people and still retain the embargo as symbol of their concern about the Cuban government's failure to live up to international norms of human rights, democracy and transparency.

Most Benefit will come from Helping People Directly

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/LatinAmerica/hl1048.cfm>

The Heritage Foundation

October 24, 2007

The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez

The 35th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce

Our focus needs to remain on the plight of the people in Cuba, and that is why the U.S. authorizes humanitarian donations to reach the Cuban people. Our nation today is the largest source of help in Cuba, so if you look at remittances going to Cuba, if you look at humanitarian food aid going to Cuba, humanitarian medicine aid going to Cuba, the U.S. is the largest provider.

U.S. Provides Aid to Cuban People

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40193_20090318.pdf

Cuba Issues for the 111th

Mark P. Sullivan, Specialist in Latin American Affairs

March 18, 2009

Since 1996, the United States has provided assistance—primarily through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), but also through the State Department and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED)—to increase the flow of information on democracy, human rights, and free enterprise to Cuba. USAID’s Cuba program has supported a variety of U.S.-based non-governmental organizations with the goals of promoting a rapid, peaceful transition to democracy, helping develop civil society, and building solidarity with Cuba’s human rights activists.¹⁰⁸ These efforts are largely funded through Economic Support Funds (ESF) in the annual foreign operations appropriations bill. From FY2001-FY2007, the United States provided a total of almost \$71 million in funding for Cuba democracy efforts. For FY2008, Congress fully funded the Administration’s request for \$45.7 million in ESF for democracy assistance for Cuba in the Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY2008.

Embargo in Cuban Peoples Best Interest

<http://www.freetrade.org/node/245>

Center for Trade Policy Studies

December 14, 2001

But unlike the sanctions on Iraq, we're told, the Cuban embargo isn't designed to punish a dangerous enemy. Rather, it's a gift to the Cuban people; a sort of "tough love" that is ultimately in their own best interest.

Normalize is More Than Just Embargo

http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/0414_democracy_piccone.aspx

Brookings Institute

The Huffington Post

And then there is Cuba. Raul Castro will not be at the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago because Cuba does not adhere to the inter-American system's fundamental principles of democracy and human rights. That is as it should be. But Mr. Obama will face considerable pressure from his colleagues to fudge this bright line by engaging, rather than isolating Cuba, as they and nearly every other country has done. Indeed, the White House has already begun moving in this direction by easing restrictions on family travel and remittances to the island. Much more can and should be done in the coming months to continue this process of rapprochement between Washington and Havana. But lifting Cuba's suspension as a member of the Organization of American States (OAS), as many are advocating, would be a step too far. All this progress is at risk if the region's governments decide to lift Cuba's suspension as a member of the OAS without preconditions. Unless the Castro regime takes serious steps toward meeting the region's basic human rights standards, including rights to free speech, fair elections and due process for political prisoners, it should not be considered for renewed membership. The Obama Administration, which appears determined to open new paths of dialogue with difficult countries like Cuba, Iran and Syria, must be careful not to lower the bar so far that its own neighborhood loses its distinct identity as a community of democratic states.

EU and U.S. Sanctions Against Cuba were Different

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/LatinAmerica/wm1967.cfm>

The Heritage Foundation

June 24, 2008

The EU, in a rare demonstration of displeasure with Cuba, objected to this ruthless and unwarranted suppression of peaceful dissent. While the response was far more symbolic than substantive, the EU froze high level visits to Cuba, denied Cuban officials participation in certain cultural activities and urged member states to invite dissidents to cocktail receptions at their embassies in Havana. However, trade, travel and investment between the EU and Cuba were not disrupted.

U.S. Sanctions Still Needed Even without EU

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/LatinAmerica/wm1967.cfm>

The Heritage Foundation, June 24, 2008

Although it appeared the U.S. and its European allies shared similar views regarding the repressive nature of Cuban communism, the EU's decision to terminate its sanctions against Cuba demonstrates otherwise. Despite the crumbling of European resolve, the United States must maintain its principled stand, both in word and deed, against the oppressive Cuban regime.

The EU was never truly serious about defending human rights or democracy in Cuba. A handful of members of the "New Europe"—the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland in particular—valiantly stood beside the Cuban people urging the EU to hold Cuba accountable for violations of human rights. Old Europe, however, proved it is comfortable with Cuba's aging, communist dictatorship. By preferring kind words and gentile gestures over forceful sanctions, the old democratic core of the EU only further legitimize a ruthlessly anti-democratic regime.

Concerned primarily with the preservation of trade, investments and travel junkets, the EU prefers a live-and-let live, post-ideological arrangement with the Castro brothers. In addition to providing a moral victory to a dying but defiant Fidel, such an approach assures that tyranny will continue to dictate the pace of economic and political change in Cuba.

The EU has elected to engage Cuba through unconditional dialogue regardless of substantive improvement in Cuban human rights. From its awkward phraseology designed not to offend to its surrender of even the slightest pretense of moral criticism, the EU stakes its position on a rose-colored vision of political change in Cuba. Such a position attributes a spirit of open-mindedness and reciprocity that appears altogether absent in Cuba's leadership.

As Fidel Castro responded, the end of sanctions will not have "absolutely any economic consequences."

The precedence set by the EU will certainly not go unnoticed by the rising autocracies of Russia and China or by brutal tyrannies clinging to power in Burma, Sudan, Zimbabwe and elsewhere. The EU's willingness to do business with tyrants strengthens the hand of other leaders trampling democratic and human rights. Unfortunately, the EU's reversal will further the international isolation of the U.S.'s principled commitment to genuine democratic change in Cuba. Fear of such global disapproval, even as a price for defending human rights, creates additional pressures for American political leaders to imitate their EU counterparts and propose negotiations without conditions and the lifting of economic sanctions without a commitment to reciprocal change.

A Cuba policy that offers unconditional negotiations with the Castro regime or the removal of sanctions and controls without positive actions on the part of the Cuban government to release political prisoners and initiate a serious dialogue with Cuba's civil society and its fledgling democratic opposition would represent a step back from fundamental U.S. human rights commitments worldwide. Therefore, despite the EU's recent actions, the U.S. must maintain its commitment to a free Cuba, even when such a commitment demands the continuation of internationally unpopular sanctions.

Embargo Should Not Be Removed for Economic Reasons

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/LatinAmerica/EM654.cfm>

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Lifting the embargo would be a serious mistake because it would focus relations even more on Castro and devastate those in Cuba who seek reform. It would signal that quick sales are more important to America than freedom while giving the regime additional resources to suppress opposition, control expression, and block the development of institutions that would serve as a basis for civil society.

Keep the embargo.

Under current Cuban law, trade is only possible with the Cuban government. Rather than provide resources to the regime, Washington should withhold full trade relations until Castro allows free elections, opens markets, releases political prisoners, and restores civil liberties. In the meantime, the Administration should streamline licensing procedures for donations, simplify paperwork for approved classes of travelers, and find avenues to support nascent autonomous sectors of civil society in Cuba, such as small entrepreneurs.

Food Problems Not Because of Embargo

Agence France Presse -- English

December 31, 2008 Wednesday 8:05 AM GMT

Cuba and US debate costs of the Revolution, 50 years on

"Though some would blame Cuba's food problems on the US embargo, facts suggests the food shortages are a function of an inefficient collectivized agricultural system and a scarcity of foreign exchange resulting from Castro's unwillingness to liberalize Cuba's economy," a University of Miami Cuba Transition Project study found.