



A TIME FOR CHANGE

Rethinking US-Cuba Policy



WASHINGTON OFFICE ON LATIN AMERICA

Lilah Rosenblum

MAY 2002



Washington Office on Latin America

The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) promotes human rights, democracy and social and economic justice in Latin America and the Caribbean. WOLA facilitates dialogue between governmental and non-governmental actors, monitors the impact of policies and programs of governments and international organizations, and promotes alternatives through reporting, education, training and advocacy. Founded in 1974 by a coalition of religious and civic leaders, WOLA works closely with civil society organizations and government officials throughout the hemisphere.

In our view, U.S. policy toward Cuba has not been formulated on the basis of sound judgments about strategies that will best promote human rights and social justice on the island, but on the basis of outdated Cold War ideology and special interest group politics. We believe that the embargo hurts domestic U.S. economic and political interests without bringing us any foreign policy benefits. We believe that engagement with Cuba is a more sensible, effective, and humane strategy for promoting human rights and social justice there. Engagement would also be economically beneficial to the United States. This booklet presents a critique of current policy and suggests policy alternatives.

ISBN# 0-929513-47-9

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May 2002

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Acknowledgements

This educational booklet was written by Lilah Rosenblum, WOLA's Special Assistant for Cuba. It is based, in part, on draft materials written by Caroline Richard, WOLA Program Assistant for Cuba from June 1998 through March 2000. It was edited by Geoff Thale, Senior Associate for Cuba.

Special thanks to WOLA interns Jennifer Johnson, Leah Nero, Emily Pierce, Karen Juckett, and Rubrick Biegon, who conducted invaluable background research for the packet. Many thanks also to Minor Sinclair of Oxfam American, Richard Erstad of American Friends Service Committee, Mavis Anderson of the Latin America Working Group, Lisa Wright of Church World Service, and William LeoGrande and Philip Brenner of American University for their input and helpful suggestions throughout the editing process. A special thanks to Rachel Farley and Nadia Malley of WOLA for their editorial and production assistance.

This publication was designed by Mary Schrider at Free Hand Press. Photographs were taken by Lilah Rosenblum and Sarah Shanley.

This booklet was written and published with the generous support of the Christopher Reynolds Foundation, the Arca Foundation, and other donors.

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Introduction

There has been growing public debate about U.S. policy toward Cuba over the past several years. The visit of Pope John Paul II to the island, the Elián Gonzalez saga, the growing number of Americans who have traveled there, and the post-Hurricane Michelle sales of U.S. agricultural products to Cuba have all focused public attention on the issue. This debate will continue over the next several years. There will be efforts to further ease the restrictions on food and medical sales, efforts to end the travel ban, and calls to lift all sanctions on Cuba. This booklet is intended to serve as a resource for citizens concerned about changing U.S. policy toward Cuba. It provides the up-to-date factual information and intellectual arguments to make the case that U.S. policy should change.

The United States government has been wedded for the past forty years to a policy towards Cuba that is both inhumane and ineffective, and that hurts the economies of both countries. WOLA believes that U.S. policy toward Cuba is shaped by outdated Cold War ideology and special interest group politics. We believe that engagement with Cuba would be politically and economically beneficial to the United States, and would be a more sensible, effective, and humane strategy for promoting human rights and social justice there. As this booklet makes clear, policy-makers, religious and humanitarian organizations, the business community, and civil and human rights groups all have interests in changing U.S. policy toward Cuba.

As the debate over Cuba policy grows, we hope you talk to friends, neighbors, community groups, and your legislators about U.S. policy toward Cuba, and that this guide is informative and helpful to you in your efforts to improve U.S.-Cuba relations.

The U.S. embargo on Cuba: Hurting ourselves and not helping Cuba

As this booklet demonstrates, the United States is hurting itself, as well as Cuba, by cutting off trade and relations with the island. Farmers, agricultural exporters, the transportation industry, and others, are losing trade and investment opportunities. U.S. citizens who could benefit from medical advances in Cuba are being denied access to new drugs and technology. All Americans are being denied the right to travel to Cuba.

If there were compelling reasons — human rights reasons, national security reasons, or others — to maintain our embargo on Cuba, then we would accept the economic and political costs of doing so. But there are not.

There is no convincing human rights rationale for the embargo. While Cuba clearly has human rights problems about which we should be concerned, our embargo has done nothing to make the Cuban government improve its human rights record. A policy of

engagement would be far more effective in encouraging Cuba to expand the political rights of its citizens.

There is no national security rationale. The Cuban government does not pose a threat to U.S. national security. Its conventional military has been dramatically reduced over the last decade. The Defense Department does not list Cuba as a country pursuing the development of biological or chemical weapons, nor was it listed as a nation possessing weapons of mass destruction or advanced conventional munitions. In November 1997, a report by several U.S. military and intelligence agencies concluded that,—"Cuba does not pose a significant security threat to the United States or other countries in the region." In 1998, the Pentagon reported the same findings to the U.S. Congress.

There is no foreign policy rationale. U.S. officials, and many Americans, may not like Fidel Castro or his political or economic views. But disagreement with the political or economic views of another country normally leads the United States to engage in debate and diplomacy, not to impose punitive economic sanctions.

The United States is paying an economic and political price for a policy that makes no sense, while doing nothing beneficial for the people of Cuba. The embargo has not led to improved human rights conditions or increased political openness on the island. Meanwhile, it hurts the Cuban people by making food and medical products more difficult to obtain, and by restricting people-to-people contact between Americans and Cubans. The United States should end the embargo and move toward normal relations with Cuba. It should then use diplomacy to address the differences between our countries.

Thwarting change

The U.S. embargo on Cuba was imposed in the 1960s, at the height of the Cold War. Although the world has changed dramatically since then, U.S. policy toward Cuba has not. Today, most Americans are convinced that U.S.-Cuba policy should change. In June 2000, in the midst of the Elián Gonzalez debate, polls showed that a great majority of the American people supported ending the U.S. embargo on Cuba. Religious, labor, and business groups had all called for easing restrictions on Cuba. In July 2000, an overwhelming majority of the House of Representatives voted to stop enforcing the restrictions on travel, and on food and medicine sales to Cuba. But in October 2000, after an intense lobbying campaign by the Cuban-American right, the House Republican leadership used parliamentary maneuvers to block major changes in the embargo. The same proposals to ease the embargo were passed again in July 2001, by an even larger margin. Once again, they were blocked.

The evidence is clear. The majority of Americans and a majority in Congress want to move in the direction of meaningful change in U.S. policy toward Cuba. But the will of the majority is being blocked by a small, but powerful special interest group, made up of anti-Castro hard-liners in the Cuban-American community, that has influence with Congress and the Administration.



PART 1

What's wrong with
U.S. policy toward Cuba?



WHAT'S WRONG WITH U.S. POLICY TOWARD CUBA?

- The embargo hurts U.S. interests
- The embargo is inhumane to Cubans
- U.S. policy toward Cuba has never achieved its own policy goals
- U.S. policy does not reflect a realistic understanding of Cuba
- U.S.-Cuba policy does not represent the will of the majority of Americans



WHAT'S WRONG WITH U.S. POLICY TOWARD CUBA?

The embargo hurts U.S. interests

The U.S. embargo towards Cuba hurts the U.S. economy

The embargo prevents U.S. businesses from exporting goods to Cuba or investing in Cuba. Forty years ago, this meant little, because trade and investment possibilities in Cuba were very limited. But changes in Cuba itself have created new opportunities. A February 2001 report by the International Trade Commission found that the United States loses up to \$1 billion a year due to lost trade with Cuba.¹ With the recent downturn in the U.S. economy and a hard-hit agriculture industry, prohibiting trade with Cuba hurts U.S. industries.

Beginning in the early 1990s, the Cuban government implemented a number of reforms that fundamentally changed the face of the economy. It eased restrictions on the domestic economy and began to open up to foreign investment. It did so by developing the tourism sector, permitting foreign investment, and authorizing self-employment within Cuba for 150 different occupations. During this time, the Cuban government also legalized the U.S. dollar and passed agricultural reforms such as opening agricultural markets and converting state-owned farms into private cooperatives.

From the perspective of the international community, the reforms to the Cuban economy during the early 1990s opened a new market. Foreign investors and exporters responded, taking modest but real steps to engage economically with Cuba. Official Cuban reports indicate that there are currently 658 foreign companies registered in Cuba and that Cuba has commercial offices in 28 different countries. According to the U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council, 345 joint ventures have been approved by the Cuban government, 75% of which are concentrated in mining, tourism, construction, agriculture, energy, finances, real estate and the food industry.² After legislation was passed promoting free trade zones and industrial parks in Cuba, there are three free trade zones with 223 businesses in operation with 100% foreign ownership. U.S. exporters and investors are being denied access to the Cuban market due to our own government's self-defeating policy.

Food Sales

The main food exporters to Cuba since the economic reforms of the 1990s have been France, Canada, Spain, Argentina, China, Mexico and Thailand.³ According to the U.S.-Cuba

¹ International Trade Commission, "The Economic Impact of U.S. Sanctions with Respect to Cuba, February 2001.

² U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council, "Economic Eye on Cuba" (a weekly report) at <http://www.cubatrade.org>.

³ CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "Cuba: Handbook of Trade Statistics," 1999.

Potential U.S. Agricultural Exports to Cuba: Top 20 States

State	Potential Agricultural Exports	Potential Annual Sales
Arkansas	Rice, Poultry Meat, Soybeans and Soybean Products	\$267,263,000
California	Rice, Dry Milk, Sawn Logs and Dry Beans	\$98,119,000
Iowa	Pork, Corn, Soybeans and Soybean Products	\$70,764,000
Louisiana	Rice, Fertilizer, Seafood and Sawn Logs	\$65,634,000
Texas	Rice, Poultry Meat, Beef and Fertilizer	\$53,857,000
Illinois	Wheat, Corn, Soybeans and Soybean Products	\$52,939,000
Mississippi	Rice, Poultry Meat, Fertilizer and Soybean Products	\$50,932,000
Nebraska	Corn, Beef, Dry Beans and Soybean Products	\$54,880,000
Missouri	Rice, Corn, Soybeans and Soybean Products	\$39,826,000
Kansas	Wheat, Wheat Flour, Beef and Corn	\$38,770,000
North Dakota	Wheat Flour, Sunflower Oil, Dry Beans and Soybean Products	\$37,771,000
North Carolina	Pork, Poultry Meat, Fertilizer and Sawn Logs	\$31,097,000
Washington	Dry Milk, Wheat, Sawn Logs and Potatoes	\$29,326,000
Indiana	Corn, Pork, Soybeans and Soybean Products	\$29,139,000
Georgia	Poultry Meat, Cotton, Sawn Logs and Fertilizer	\$28,743,000
Florida	Poultry Meat, Wheat Flour, Fertilizer and Sawn Logs	\$28,554,000
South Dakota	Wheat, Sunflower Oil, Soybeans and Soybean Products	\$25,998,000
Ohio	Wheat, Corn, Soybeans and Soybean Products	\$25,085,000
Alabama	Poultry Meat, Cotton, Sawn Logs and Fertilizer	\$22,382,000

SOURCE: Rosson, Parr and Flynn Adcock, Center for North American Studies, Department of Agricultural Economics, Texas A&M University under contract for the Cuba Policy Foundation; "Economic Impacts of U.S. Agricultural Exports to Cuba," October 2001.

Trade and Economic Council, exports of agricultural goods from these countries to Cuba increased by \$100 million between 1995 and 1999. In 1998, Cuba imported \$625 million in agricultural products from these countries.⁴ In 2000, the commercial import market for food and agricultural commodities in Cuba was estimated at \$700 million.⁵

In a June 2000 report by the Stern Group, it is projected that the United States could export \$105 million worth of food and agricultural products to Cuba in the first year of a partial liberalization of sales restrictions. During this hypothetical first year, 1,418 new U.S. jobs would be created. The Stern report also projects that within five years of partial liberalization, the United States could export \$420 million in food and agricultural products to Cuba and create 5,670 new U.S. jobs. With an unrestricted trade scenario, the United States could theoretically export \$1 billion in food and agricultural products and create 13,500 new U.S. jobs.⁶

Medical Sales

Like the potential for agricultural exports to Cuba, there is great potential for the export of medicine and medical supplies to Cuba. The Stern report estimates that Cuba could eventually buy around \$1 billion in medicine and medical supplies from foreign suppliers,

⁴ CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "Cuba: Handbook of Trade Statistics," 1999.

⁵ The Stern Group, Inc., "The Impact on the U.S. Economy of Lifting the Food and Medical Embargo on Cuba," June 2000.

⁶ Ibid



based on the assumption that the per capita health care expenditure would be \$100. The Stern report also projects that within the first year of partial liberalization, the United States could export \$6 million in medical supplies, and within 5 years of partial liberalization, the United States could export \$24 million. Under the unrestricted trade scenario, the United States could feasibly export \$600 million in medical supplies and create up to 8,100 new jobs.⁷ These exports to Cuba would benefit U.S. manufacturers of medical machinery and supplies, many of which are small and medium sized firms. U.S. pharmaceutical companies would also benefit from ending restrictions on the sale of medicine and medical supplies to Cuba.

Transportation Industry

Judging from the export projections for food and medicine, a marked increase in transportation output would likely result from the lifting of the embargo. A 1999 Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (ASCE) paper projected that the beneficiaries in the transportation sector would include shippers, such as steamship, railroad, tugboat, barge, longshoreman, and trucking companies.⁸ In addition to the increase in transportation output, there would likely be a ripple effect of growth in U.S. port cities. The Stern report lists possible U.S. port cities that would benefit from the increase of exports to Cuba as New Orleans, Lake Charles, and Baton Rouge in Louisiana; Corpus Christi, Houston, and Galveston in Texas; Gulfport and Pascagoula in Mississippi; and Birmingham and Mobile in Alabama.

Tourism Industry

The majority of foreign investment in Cuba has been in the tourism sector. The countries that have invested most heavily in Cuba's tourism sector are Spain, Germany, Canada, Italy and Jamaica. Companies from these countries have entered into joint ventures with the Cuban government in building large hotel chains. In addition to hotels, the tourism sector has spurred growth in tertiary industries, such as food services, transportation and other hospitality-related industries. Because of the economic sanctions, U.S. companies have missed the boat on investing in these rapidly developing sectors.

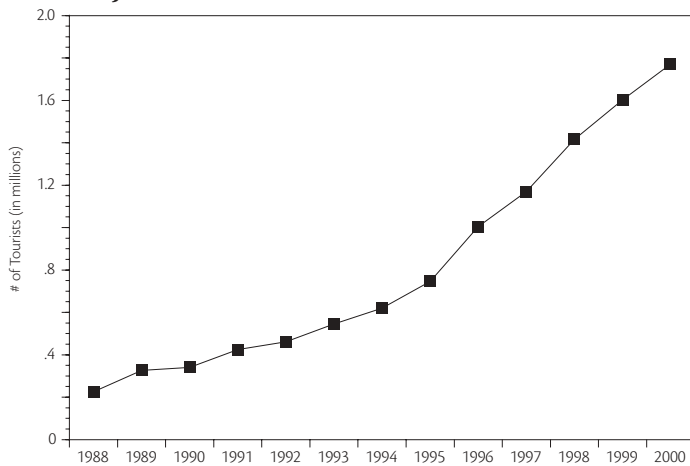
Tourism is a rapidly growing industry in Cuba, creating many opportunities for foreign investment. U.S. companies such as airlines, travel agencies, agricultural exporters, and hotel companies could benefit from investment in this area, and from increased demand for foreign inputs for the Cuban tourism industry.

Additionally, if U.S. relations with Cuba were normalized, American citizens could freely visit the island nation for educational, cultural, economic, diplomatic, and tourist purposes. While the number of U.S. citizens traveling to Cuba under the travel ban totaled around 200,000 in 2001, analysts project that if the embargo were lifted, eventually up to a million American citizens would travel to Cuba annually. In other words, lifting travel restrictions would significantly increase the current number traveling to Cuba from the U.S., increasing business opportunities for several U.S. industries.

⁷ Stern Group, Inc., "Impact on the U.S. Economy of Lifting the Food and Medical Embargo on Cuba, June 2000.

⁸ Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy, "Normalized Trade Relations between the United States and Cuba: Economic Impact on New Orleans and Louisiana," 1999.

Major Tourism Indicators in Cuba, 1988-2000



Sources: Cuban Tourism Ministry, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, CubaNews Estimates, and Center for the Study of the Cuban Economy

Over the past decade, there has been a remarkable increase in Cuba's economic ties with other countries. With the domestic economic reforms of the past decade, there has been significant growth in foreign trade, and an influx of foreign investment in Cuba (especially in the tourism sector). Cuba currently trades with the majority of countries in Latin America, Europe, Asia

and Africa. U.S. companies, ranging from the agricultural industry to travel agencies, have been excluded from these trade and investment opportunities.

The embargo denies U.S. citizens the benefits of Cuban medical advances

In addition to the potential exports to Cuba, the United States could import biotechnology products from Cuba. Through targeted investment in biotech research and a high level of education in general, Cuba has researched leading treatments for diseases such as HIV/AIDS and cancer. Cuba has also developed vaccines for Meningitis B and Hepatitis B, and made several advances in the field of alternative medicine. According to a June 2001 Pugwash Policy Brief, trials for these vaccines are in advanced stages at the Havana Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, making their development distinctive even among industrialized nations.⁹ All of these treatments, including the HIV/AIDS vaccine, while still in preliminary stages, would not be available for American consumption due to the embargo.

Cuba's 38 biotech and medical research centers have produced 400 biotech patents including: monoclonal antibody and interferon, for treatment of cancer and viral disease; Meningitis B and Hepatitis B vaccines, both certified by the World Health Organization; recombinant streptokinase for treatment of heart attacks; biomodulin-T; blood derivatives (albumin, anti-meningococcal immunoglobulin); and vaccines for rabies, small pox, tetanus, diphtheria, salmonella tphi. Products in development include: combined vaccines, cholera vaccine, cancer vaccine, AIDS vaccine, new radioactive mabs, interleukin-2, and new interferon combinations.¹⁰ Cuba exports these medical products to over 20 countries, including the U.K. and Canada, but not to the United States.

⁹ Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, "Pugwash Policy Brief: U.S.-Cuban Medical Cooperation, Effects of the U.S. Embargo," June 2001.

¹⁰ Ibid

The embargo restricts Americans' freedom to travel

Currency controls enforced by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the U.S. Treasury Department prohibit most Americans from traveling to Cuba. Since 1997, authorities have stiffened penalties—by law fines can legally run as high as \$55,000, with the typical fine being \$7,500. The number of penalty letters issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Controls (OFAC) of the U.S. Treasury Department has increased markedly since President Bush took office. In 2000 there were a total of 188 penalty letters issued, and in 2001, under the Bush Administration, 766 were issued. These restrictions infringe upon Americans' constitutional right to travel, especially when there is a low level of risk involved with such travel. The Supreme Court has found the right to travel to be protected by the First and Fifth Amendments of the Constitution. Former Supreme Court Justice William Douglas said, "[f]reedom of movement is the very essence of our free society, setting us apart...it often makes all other rights meaningful." The Supreme Court has allowed travel bans on the basis of national security. But the Department of Defense has declared that Cuba is no longer a military threat to the United States. Yet, the U.S. government continues to impose restrictions on travel to Cuba, while simultaneously allowing Americans the right to travel to other communist nations, including China and Vietnam.

The travel ban also severely limits opportunities to promote cultural understanding between Cubans and Americans and improved relations between the two countries. Increased contact between Americans and Cubans would help dispel stereotypes and promote mutual understanding.

Not only are Americans deterred from traveling to Cuba, but Cubans are often denied access into the United States when, under similar circumstances, other foreign visitors are allowed to enter. The United States has consistently discriminated against Cuban scholars, scientists, and professors by refusing to grant them visas because of their political ideology. Furthermore, current restrictions prevent Cuban-Americans from traveling to Cuba more than once a year, and then only in case of family emergency, further dividing Cuban-Americans from their families in Cuba. No other immigrant group in the United States faces such restrictions.

The embargo isolates the United States from its allies

While the United States maintains neither diplomatic nor commercial relations with Cuba, other countries have taken advantage of the opportunity to positively engage with the island nation. During the mid and late 1980s, most countries in Europe and Latin America resumed relations with Cuba. To date, Cuba has re-established diplomatic relations with 164 different countries (78 of which have embassies on the island), and Cuba has embassies in 86 countries and representation in several major international bodies. Cuba, along with the United States, is an original co-signer of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and an original member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The international community has repeatedly denounced U.S. policy towards Cuba. The United Nations (UN) General Assembly has voted for the past ten consecutive years to condemn the U.S. embargo against Cuba. In the most recent vote in November 2001, there were 167 votes in favor of denouncing the embargo, three

The Attitude of the International Community toward U.S.-Cuba Policy

"Economic embargoes...are always deplorable because they hurt the most needy."

— Pope John Paul II, January 23, 1998 in a letter to Cuban youth

"The economic embargo imposed [by the U.S. government once] . . . made sense...[as] a geopolitical injunction. Forty years later, it is no more than a relic of the Cold War, to which American rancor devotes too much importance."

— Jornal de Brasil, January 11, 1999, editorial

"Canada believes that, as a rule, economic sanctions are much more effective if applied multilaterally after full consultation among trading partners... Canada continues to be concerned about the extraterritorial character of U.S. unilateral sanctions, such as the Helms-Burton Act and the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act. Such measures negatively affect Canadian traders and investors, hamper Canada's ability to pursue shared political goals with the United States and undermine the security of international investment."

— "Current Issues in Canada-U.S. Relations"; Canadian Embassy to the United States, April 4, 2000, report, <http://www.canadianembassy.org/foreignpolicy/report.asp>

"[The U.S. should] show some courage and capacity for new ideas on ending the embargo that has caused such tremendous suffering for the Cuban people, yet hasn't shaken the foundation of support for the government of Castro."

— Bridgetown Nation of Barbados, January 7, 1999, editorial

"The U.S. embargo against Cuba is one of the key factors keeping Castro in power... But the embargo exists only on paper, since the rest of the world, from Spain to Canada, is more than willing to sell Castro anything.. Without the embargo, Castro would not have lasted 40 years."

— El Pais of Spain, January 6, 1999, editorial

"The Washington policy towards the island is as schizophrenic as Fidel Castro's verbal radicalism. For more than three decades the U.S. policy has totally missed its aims...A total suspension of the embargo is necessary."

— General-Anzeiger of Germany, January 6, 1999

"The long-lasting intervention from the North has proven to be ineffective. As time goes by, the blockade has turned into both a pretext and a cause used by Cuba's political regime to consolidate its power... The questionable embargo must be revised and Cuba should be allowed to seek change as a result of an autonomous evolution not foreign intervention."

— El Espectador of Bogotá, Colombia, January 9, 1999, editorial

"Thirty years of defiance should have taught Washington that, no matter how hard the embargo made life for Cubans, it was never likely to lead to a popular revolt against Fidel Castro's government. Since the end of the Cold War, the only effect the embargo has had is to allow Canadian and European companies to move in and seek out the best deals in Cuba, much to the frustration of their American rivals."

— Nation of Thailand, January 10, 1999, editorial



against (U.S., Marshall Islands, and Israel), and three abstentions (Latvia, Micronesia, and Nicaragua). Individual member states have also spoken out against U.S. policy towards Cuba. Throughout the 1990s, with the stiffening of the terms of the U.S. embargo on Cuba, member states from the European Union (EU) and Latin America repeatedly denounced U.S. sanctions against Cuba (while also criticizing Cuba for its human rights record). In 1992, after the Congress approved legislation to tighten the embargo, the European Union criticized the U.S. action. Speaking on behalf of the EU, the UN representative from the United Kingdom said, "Although the European Community and its member states are fully supportive of the peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba, they cannot accept that the United States unilaterally determines and restricts European Community economic and commercial relations with any foreign nation which has not been collectively determined by the United Nations Security Council to be a threat to international peace and security."

The international community reproached the United States again during the debate surrounding the Helms-Burton Act in 1996. Helms-Burton threatened European and Latin American investors in Cuba with U.S. lawsuits and other sanctions if their investments involved property claimed by Cuban exiles in the United States. The Mexican delegation criticized Helms-Burton saying, "Mexico considers that not only does the implementation of this kind of legal measure ignore the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, but its objectives run counter to the majority view in the international community, which has rejected the economic embargo against Cuba in the UN General Assembly several years running."

In an increasingly globalized community, it is disadvantageous, and frankly embarrassing, to have the majority of the world's nations denounce a unilateral policy of an international "superpower." If the current goal of the U.S. government is to promote democracy and respect for human rights in Cuba, it should abandon a strategy that has been ineffective and has cost the United States substantially in the eyes of world leaders and citizens.

U.S. policy toward Cuba discredits the United States, especially in Latin America

As we embark upon the 21st Century, Latin America has become an increasingly important region for U.S. foreign policy. During his presidential campaign, George W. Bush spoke of the importance of the Latin American region saying, "This can be the century of the Americas ... Should I become president, I will look south not as an afterthought, but as a fundamental commitment of my presidency." As the United States becomes more engaged in the economics and politics of Latin American countries, having healthy commercial and diplomatic relations in the region becomes a priority. In such a context, it is important for the United States to maintain the respect of Latin American leaders.

U.S. policy toward Cuba does not play well with most Latin American leaders. For many Latin Americans, U.S.-Cuba policy exemplifies the hegemonic dynamic that has plagued U.S.-Latin American relations for over a century and a half. In this view, the U.S. government, realizing its inability to exert pressure over the Cuban regime, has retaliated by punishing Cuba by imposing an economic embargo on the island nation. For many Latin

Americans, this smacks of the interventionism that has bedeviled the U.S. approach to Latin America: the Guatemalan coup in the 1950s, supporting the so-called “Dirty Wars” in the Southern Cone countries in the late 1960s and 1970s, overthrowing the democratically elected Allende government in Chile in 1973, escalating the violence and financially and militarily supporting the Central American civil wars in the 1980s, and doing the same in Colombia today, under the guise of the “War on Drugs”—often thwarting popular democratic movements and governments in the region.

Thus for many Latin Americans, Cuba — whatever its internal problems — is a symbol of resistance to U.S. hegemony. Due to this underlying dynamic and the inherent senselessness of current U.S.-Cuba policy, many Latin American leaders do not approve of the U.S. embargo against Cuba.

Every Latin American country currently engages with Cuba, and most have voted to condemn the U.S. unilateral sanctions against Cuba in the UN General Assembly. Additionally, Cuba is seen as an international leader in establishing coalitions among developing nations, especially within Latin America. Cuba currently sends doctors and humanitarian aid to Latin American and African nations.

Also, Cuba has Investment Protection and Promotion Agreements with 16 Latin American and Caribbean nations, including Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela.

The United States has failed to compel Latin American nations to maintain sanctions on Cuba. Commercial and diplomatic relations between Cuba and the rest of Latin America have been restored and continue to grow stronger. Multilateral sanctions by the OAS against Cuba were lifted in the early 1970’s, and Latin American countries began to trade with Cuba while the United States maintained its isolationist policy. In the past few years the countries of Latin America have engaged in hundreds of millions of dollars of trade with Cuba. Cuba is a member of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), which aims to increase integration and economic development in the region and to eventually create a common market, and of the Association of Caribbean States, which holds goals similar to ALADI. Cuba has also engaged in talks to become a member of the Caribbean Community trading block (CARICOM), and to become an associated nation to the South American trading block MERCOSUR. It is clear that increased trade and integration between Cuba and its Latin American neighbors continues to be a priority, and the United States’ isolationist policies toward the nation are therefore a potential stumbling block for relations between the United States and the rest of the hemisphere.



WHAT'S WRONG WITH U.S. POLICY TOWARD CUBA?

The embargo is inhumane to Cubans

In different ways at different times over the past forty years, the U.S. embargo has compromised the well-being of the Cuban people, while failing to change the political situation in Cuba. When U.S. trade was halted in the early 1960's, the Cuban economy was damaged and the Cuban people suffered. When trade with the Soviet bloc replaced U.S. trade, the economy recovered. The Cuban economy was profoundly affected by the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989 and the U.S. embargo has only compounded those economic difficulties. In the 1990's, the embargo exacerbated shortages in food, medicine, energy, and everyday supplies (soap, paper, etc.). Additionally, the travel restrictions imposed by the United States have suppressed the Cuban economy's potential in tourism as well as limited cultural and educational exchange between the two countries.

The United States and Cuba are logical trading partners due to their physical proximity and their complementary needs. Although Cuba can and does trade with most other countries in the world (despite the regulations imposed by the Helms-Burton Act), trading with the United States would be much cheaper and more efficient. The proximity of the two countries would reduce transportation costs and time. Currently, Cuba trades with far off countries, for goods it could more easily, and more cheaply, obtain from the United States. For instance, Cuba currently imports its rice from China and Thailand and its wheat from France, whereas before the embargo, Cuba imported its grain from the United States. The most inexpensive rice in the world is available in Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas, a few hundred miles from Cuba; and wheat could be purchased more cheaply from Kansas and Washington State than from France.

Today, the central humanitarian issues of the U.S. embargo on Cuba are the restrictions on the sale of food and medicine to Cuba. Although legislation passed in October 2000 technically permits the sale of food and medicine to Cuba, financing restrictions included in this legislation make it difficult and often cost-ineffective to complete transactions. Restrictions on travel to Cuba exacerbate food, medicine, and other shortages within Cuba by suppressing Cuba's economic potential.

Exacerbating food and nutrition problems

Since colonization, Cuba has depended on foreign imports in order to meet the dietary needs of its people. To cultivate its own food, Cuba imports agricultural inputs such as pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers, and farm machinery. A majority of pre-Revolutionary foodstuffs came from the United States. After the Cuban Revolution of 1959, the Soviet Union became the chief exporter to the island.

Cuba's Health Care System

Since the Revolution in 1959, Cuba has made great strides in building a universal health care system. The Cuban government provides comprehensive health services to all of its citizens free of charge. Cuba ranks among the top 30 nations in the world in the under-5 mortality rate (a key indicator of health status), alongside the United States, though its per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is much lower. According to the June 2001 Pugwash Policy Brief, Cuba was the first country to eradicate small pox (1923) and polio (1962), and has nearly eradicated cholera, yellow fever, bubonic plague, malaria, diphtheria, measles, rubella, and mumps. Cases of meningeal tuberculosis, whooping cough, and tetanus have all been reduced to 1 case per 10,000 citizens.

In 2000, Cuba was ranked in the top 20% of nations (39 out of 191) in terms of overall health status by the World Health Organization based on a variety of health indicators. Cuba has vaccinated 100% of its citizenry against 12 diseases since the creation of the National Immunization Program in 1962. Leading causes of death in developing countries whose GDP is about the same as Cuba's are infectious diseases such as Acute Respiratory Infection, AIDS, diarrhea, tuberculosis, and malaria. In contrast, the main causes of death in Cuba are cancer and heart disease- identical to the main causes of death in industrialized nations like the United States. A popular saying in Cuba is, "we live as poor people, but we die like rich people." Severe shortages in medicine and medical supplies caused by Cuba's economic difficulties and exacerbated by the embargo, however, undercut the benefits of Cuba's strong health care system.

With the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989, Cuba lost its principle trading partner and the extremely favorable trade terms it had received. The economy was devastated. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Outlook of October 1998, the per capita caloric intake in Cuba dropped 38% from 2,908 in 1989 (before the fall of the Soviet Union) to 1,863 in 1994.¹¹ This drastic plunge in daily caloric intake led to widespread malnutrition, and an increase in nutrition-related conditions such as optical neuritis (temporary blindness), in the early 1990s. The American Association of World Health (AAWH) reports that in 1992 and 1993, over 50,000 Cubans between the ages of 25 and 64 were afflicted by an outbreak of neuropathy, most likely due to malnutrition.¹² There was also marked weight loss among adults, and an increase in malnourished pregnant women and low birth-weight babies. The U.S. embargo on Cuba exacerbated the severe food shortages that occurred in Cuba in the years after the fall of the Soviet Union. The AAWH report concluded that, "the U.S. embargo had significantly contributed to the appearance of these nutrition-related conditions by causing further cuts in foodstuffs and other key imports." Through increased trade liberalization and careful domestic planning and distribution, the Cuban government has been able to recover from this nutritional crisis in recent years. While daily per capita caloric intake levels are almost back to their pre-crisis status, U.S. trade restrictions continue to constrain Cuba's ability to meet its food needs.

¹¹ Economic Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture, "Agricultural Outlook," October 1998.

¹² American Association of World Health, "The Impact of the U.S. Embargo on Health and Nutrition in Cuba," 1997.

Medicine Shortages

Upon returning from a visit to the island in September 1999, Senators Tom Daschle (D-SD) and Byron Dorgan (D-ND) reported that Cuban hospitals lack over 200 medicines. Shortages of medicines (even basic ones such as Ibuprofen and Erythromycin) cause Cuba to ration medicine and supplies. While Cuba boasts one of the highest doctor-to-patient ratios in the hemisphere, hospitals lack substantial resources, including medications, medical equipment, and daily supplies. Pharmacies frequently experience shortages of basic medications such as antibiotics and anti-parasitic treatments.

Throughout the economic crisis of the 1990s, which persists today, Cuba has suffered from shortages in medical equipment, spare parts, pharmaceutical inputs, and medications. These shortages have stymied Cuba's advanced medical system, increasing instances of disease, such as HIV/AIDS, breast and other types of cancer, water-borne diseases, tuberculosis, kidney and heart disease. In the case of HIV/AIDS, while CD⁴ drugs are taken bi-annually, prophylaxis and combination therapy can only be given on a lottery basis as supplies arrive from humanitarian aid. Experimental and alternative treatments are given only as they become available from Cuban research and development.¹³

In the context of these shortages in the Cuban health care system, it is important to mention that the U.S. embargo on Cuba is the only known embargo worldwide that explicitly includes food and medicine. These sanctions violate articles of the Geneva Convention, and the UN Charter on Human Rights, and many other multilateral accords signed by the United States.

The main effects of the U.S. embargo on medicine and medical supplies as cited by the American Association of World Health (AAWH) are: the inaccessibility of new drugs, medical equipment, pharmaceutical and biotechnology inputs, as well as financial constraints and delivery delays.¹⁴ Certain laws related to the U.S. embargo on Cuba (imposed under the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992) prohibit the sale of any drug internationally patented by a U.S. manufacturer after 1980. This stipulation prevents Cuba from purchasing almost 50% of the world-class medicines currently available. U.S. law also prohibits the sale of medical equipment, parts, and accessories containing more than 20% of U.S. components. The Cuban Democracy Act also bans the export of raw materials for Cuba's pharmaceutical and biotech industries. By denying Cuba access to U.S.-made pharmaceuticals, raw materials, medical equipment and parts, Cuba is forced to either purchase these products from Europe and Asia, sometimes at higher prices, or to go without. According to a June 2001 Pugwash Policy Brief, imported pharmaceuticals consume 52% of Cuba's national public health budget.¹⁵

Ultimately, the U.S. embargo on Cuba increases the shipping costs of critical food and medical products. The Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 established that vessels that have docked at Cuban ports within 180 days (or six months) are prohibited from docking at U.S.

¹³ Aids Treatment Access Cuba pamphlet at <http://www.cubasida.net>, 2001.

¹⁴ American Association of World Health, "The Impact of the U.S. Embargo on Health and Nutrition in Cuba," 1997.

¹⁵ Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, "Pugwash Policy Brief: U.S.-Cuban Medical Cooperation, Effects of the U.S. Embargo," June 2001.

The Impact of the U.S. Embargo on Cuba's Health and Nutrition

<i>Drugs and Medical Equipment</i>	The Cuban Democracy Act (1992), by forbidding foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies from selling to Cuba, posed new and almost insurmountable obstacles to the sale of medicines and medical supplies.
<i>Food Security</i>	U.S. sanctions reduce Cuba's import capacity for basic foodstuffs. Shipping regulations and the ban on direct and subsidiary trade in food close Cuba off from an otherwise natural market.
<i>Water Quality</i>	The embargo contributes to serious cutbacks in supplies of safe drinking water and was a factor in the increase in morbidity rates in the 1990s.
<i>HIV Infection and AIDS</i>	The embargo limits access to life-prolonging drugs for Cuban HIV/AIDS patients, and otherwise impairs prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and research in this field.
<i>Women's Health</i>	The U.S. embargo directly contributes to lapses in prevention, diagnosis, therapeutic and surgical treatments of breast cancer; diminished alternatives for contraception; gaps in availability of in-vitro genetic testing resources; reduced access to medications associated with pregnancy, labor and delivery, and deficient nutrition during pregnancy.
<i>Children's Health</i>	Cuba's economic crisis, exacerbated by embargo restrictions, exacts a toll on children's health, particularly in neonatology, immunizations, pediatric hospital care, access to medicines, and treatment of acute illnesses.
<i>Hospital Care</i>	The economic crisis and the U.S. embargo have seriously eroded surgery, radiology, clinical services and access to medication, hospital nutrition, and hygiene.
<i>Oncology</i>	The U.S. embargo bars Cubans' access to state-of-the-art cancer treatment under U.S. patent, subjects all diagnosis and treatment-related imports to delays due to the shipping ban, and hinders domestic research, development and production due to the ban on biotech-related exports.
<i>Cardiology</i>	The U.S. embargo constitutes a direct threat to patient care, by denying Cuban heart patients access to lifesaving medications and equipment only available in the United States.
<i>Nephrology</i>	The embargo limits the chance of survival of Cuban patients with chronic renal failure; increases their suffering; and adds significant expense to already costly care.
<i>Professional Advancement and Scientific Information</i>	The embargo remains a formidable barrier to the free flow of ideas and scientific information between Cuban medical researchers and their colleagues in the United States.
<i>Humanitarian Donations</i>	Donations do not compensate to any major degree for the hardships inflicted by the embargo on the health of the Cuban people. There are restrictions placed on charitable donations from the U.S. similar to those placed on commercial trade. Contributions rarely match needs in terms of specific drugs, equipment or replacement parts.

SOURCE: American Association of World Health, "The Impact of the U.S. Embargo on Health and Nutrition in Cuba," 1997.

ports. This stipulation strongly dissuades foreign companies from exporting products to Cuba, as the United States is a logical stopping point for a ship due to its proximity to the island. It also delays the arrival of foodstuffs and medicine, while increasing their price. A 1997 AAWH report calculated that, "if goods could be sent to Cuba from the United States, Cuba would save \$215,800 for each ship replacing a European freighter and \$516,700 for each ship replacing an Asian freighter." Saving \$200,000-\$500,000 per shipment would likely alleviate some of Cuba's economic problems and improve its access to food and medical products.

Travel

Although not as directly related to the health and well being of the Cuban people as the restrictions on food and medicine sales, the restrictions on travel to Cuba also hinder the growth of the Cuban economy and, in turn, the ability of the government to provide social services for its people. By prohibiting U.S. citizens from spending money in Cuba, and effectively from traveling to Cuba, the U.S. government denies Cuba millions of dollars in revenue each year in tourist dollars. It is estimated that the revenue lost in potential U.S. tourist dollars is one of the greatest costs of the embargo for Cuba.

Supporters of travel restrictions to Cuba argue that U.S. citizens traveling to Cuba would generate income for the Cuban government and thus "prop up the regime." It is certainly true that U.S. travelers would spend money in Cuba, and that the profits would go to Cuban state enterprises (or Cuban-European joint ventures). If millions of American tourists were to visit Cuba, this would boost the Cuban economy significantly. But the benefits of exchange between Americans and Cubans far outweigh whatever may be the costs of strengthening the Cuban economy. In addition, the notion that by denying the Cuban government revenue from U.S. travelers we are undermining the regime is simply wrong. Cuba has survived without U.S. tourism for many years, and a strategy of starving the Cuban government by restricting U.S. travel is ineffective since millions of tourists from Canada and Europe visit the island each year.





WHAT'S WRONG WITH U.S. POLICY TOWARD CUBA?

U.S. policy toward Cuba has never achieved its own policy goals

The economic embargo against Cuba was imposed in February 1962, at the height of Cold War confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The embargo has remained in place for the last forty years, even though the geo-political context has changed dramatically. As times have changed, defenders of the embargo have articulated new purposes and new justifications for continuing to isolate Cuba, but the embargo itself has continued.

The goal of U.S.-Cuba policy has shifted from overthrowing the Castro regime to containing Cuban communism to promoting human rights and democracy in Cuba. The strategy that the United States has pursued toward Cuba, defined by unilateral economic sanctions, has been ineffective in achieving any of these goals.

When the embargo was first imposed, it was one part of a larger strategy to overthrow the Castro regime, then seen as an enemy of the United States. As hopes for overthrowing the regime faded during the 1960s, the goals of the embargo shifted. In the 1970s and 1980s, the embargo was promoted as a tool to contain Cuba's desire to spread communism throughout the hemisphere. In the last decade, the embargo has been defended principally as a vehicle to promote human rights and democracy in Cuba, although some hard-liners have returned to arguing for it as a way to undermine the regime. As the following section illustrates, the embargo has never produced any of the results that its supporters claimed it would. The United States continues to impose sanctions on Cuba, when all the evidence suggests that these sanctions do not achieve their own goals.

The embargo has never undermined the Cuban government

When economic sanctions were originally imposed, their purpose was to weaken and undermine the Castro government. Some analysts have long argued that this was a mistaken purpose and that seeking to overthrow the regime should never have been a goal of U.S. policy. In this view, the United States could have pursued a mixture of accommodation with Cuba and support for democratization and human rights there, without seeking to overthrow the regime.

But at the time, a Cold War mentality dominated the thinking of policymakers. The majority view among U.S. policymakers in the early 1960's was that the United States could and should legitimately seek to overthrow the Castro government. By the end of the 1960's, many

foreign policy analysts came to believe this was an unrealistic goal. However desirable it may once have seemed, it was unlikely to happen because the government had consolidated itself and no serious internal opposition existed. Given that there were no realistic possibilities for overthrowing the regime, the embargo ceased to make sense as a strategy.

Others continued to believe this goal was possible, and that the embargo was an effective strategy, despite Cuba's economic growth throughout the 1970s and 1980s. With the end of Soviet aid to Cuba in the early 1990s, their hopes revived. They argued once again that the embargo might serve to strangle Cuba economically, and help to undermine the regime.

Sanctions Reform

U.S. economic sanctions on Cuba are one of the most visible examples of an ongoing debate about sanctions reform in general. Though currently obscured by the focus on terrorism, the debate about economic sanctions continues.

Economic sanctions have long been used as a foreign policy tool. In some cases, sanctions have been designed to weaken a country economically, in preparation for military action. In the 1970s and 1980s, sanctions began to be considered an alternative form of diplomacy, offering a tool short of warfare to bring about economic or political changes in foreign governments. Sanctions began to be imposed by the U.S. Congress for a variety of reasons. For instance, opponents of apartheid in South Africa called for economic sanctions as a way to compel the white minority government to change.

In the past decade, a reconsideration of sanctions policy has taken place. A number of groups have questioned the effectiveness of sanctions policy, asking under which circumstances sanctions may work, and under which they do not. Others have questioned the humanitarian impact of sanctions, particularly on innocent civilian populations. And others have begun to weigh the effectiveness of sanctions against their costs in lost trade and business opportunities.

This is a continuing debate. Our view is that sanctions may, under some circumstances, be appropriate and effective tools of diplomacy in responding to serious human rights violations by governments. However, most effective sanctions are multi-lateral, rather than unilateral, and are employed as one element of a larger political and diplomatic strategy to encourage change in a government. Sanctions should never include food and medicine; those who suffer most from food and medical sanctions are usually innocent civilians. The effectiveness of sanctions should be reviewed periodically and the benefits ought to be weighed against the damage done to civilian populations. The imposition or retention of sanctions should be judged in light of the views expressed by civil society and opposition groups in the targeted country.

Church World Service and the American Friends Service Committee have produced thoughtful reports on the sanctions issue, and on the views of religious and development organizations on the topic.

There is little evidence that the embargo has been effective in undermining the Cuban government during any of these periods. The U.S. embargo on Cuba had a serious impact on the Cuban economy in the 1960s, but the government survived, and economic weakness did not generate popular unrest. Cuba then developed political and commercial relations with the Soviet Union, which helped subsidize the Cuban economy. As a result, the embargo had limited impact in the 1970s and 1980s. The embargo did not weaken the Cuban economy again until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. In the last decade, sanctions have hurt an already weakened economy, but they have not generated the kind of unrest that would destabilize the government. In fact, the Cuban government has been able to use the U.S. embargo as a scapegoat for domestic discontent, garnering further internal political support. Furthermore, the Cuban economy has been recovering since 1994, making the chances of an overthrow of Castro less and less likely.

The embargo did not constrain Cuba's foreign policy

Some argue that the embargo on Cuba effectively achieved the U.S. goal of containing the spread of communism in the Western Hemisphere from the 1960s through the 1980s. There is no doubt that Cuba provided support, politically and sometimes financially and logistically, to guerrilla movements in Latin America in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. But, there is a great deal of debate about how important Cuban support was to these movements, as there is debate about how the United States and national governments in Latin America should have responded to the guerrilla insurgencies.

In most countries in the region that experienced guerrilla insurgencies, the guerrillas were defeated by national governments (often through brutal campaigns of repression), or the two sides arrived at negotiated solutions to the conflicts. The United States provided military and intelligence support to most of the Latin American governments that were challenged by rebels. While containment of communism was the stated goal of U.S. policy in the region, the brutality of the U.S.-supported military campaigns raised serious concern over U.S. commitment to human rights and democracy.

Unlike the U.S. case, it is not at all clear how central Cuba's support for rebel groups was to these various conflicts. Even if one assumes that it was a major player, it is difficult to see how the U.S. embargo on Cuba played any significant role in constraining the behavior of the Cuban government. U.S. sanctions against Cuba did not decisively affect the Cuban economy until the termination of Soviet aid in the early 1990's. By that point, Cuba had already formally renounced support for revolutionary movements in Latin America. Furthermore, it was widely accepted that the spread of communism in the Western Hemisphere was no longer a central threat to U.S. national security.

The embargo has done nothing to promote human rights and democracy in Cuba

The embargo has also failed to promote human rights and democracy in Cuba. After forty years, the embargo has had no visible effect in encouraging the Cuban government to permit multi-party elections, or broaden freedom of speech and assembly, or to release political prisoners. In fact, it is during the times when the United States puts the most

pressure on the Cuban regime (for example, after the passage of the Cuban Democracy Act in 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act in 1996) that the human rights situation in Cuba deteriorates. External threats have caused the Cuban government to crack down on any perceived threats within the system rather than to open avenues of public criticism. If the United States is serious about promoting human rights and democracy in Cuba, then it needs to look for a new approach.

Conclusion

Regardless of whether one believes that U.S. policy toward Cuba was once effective in protecting U.S. national interest, it is abundantly clear that it no longer serves any useful purpose. Cuba no longer supports communist insurgencies throughout Latin America and it poses no security threat to the United States. Even after ten years of economic crisis caused by the fall of the Soviet Union and the economic pressure from the U.S. embargo, the Cuban government has not made the kinds of changes that the U.S. seeks.

By refusing to trade and engage with Cuba, the United States has eliminated any opportunity to positively affect the political or human rights situation in Cuba. If the United States had better relations with Cuba, it would be in a better position to promote basic individual rights in Cuba. Not only is the U.S. policy of isolation toward Cuba fundamentally ineffective, but it is based on outdated ideas about Cuba that are clouded by rhetoric.





WHAT'S WRONG WITH U.S. POLICY TOWARD CUBA? U.S. policy does not reflect a realistic understanding of Cuba

U.S. policy toward Cuba was developed in the context of the Cold War, and it continues to be mired in a Cold War framework. This has made it difficult for U.S. policymakers to realistically understand and evaluate what is happening in Cuba today, and to adjust policy in response to these changes. While Cuba today certainly does not reflect the economic and political model endorsed by the United States, many significant changes have taken place within Cuba itself. In addition, changes have taken place in the U.S.' own assessment of Cuba's national security status. U.S. government security and intelligence agencies have reported on several occasions that Cuba poses no security threat to the United States—contradicting a tenet on which U.S.-Cuba policy was initially based. U.S. policy toward Cuba should respond to the changes that have taken place within Cuban society since the policy was first conceived and reflect Cuba's actual security status in relation to the United States.

Cuba and U.S. national security

When the embargo was first put into place, Cuba was seen as a national security threat to the United States. Over the past four decades, much has changed geopolitically and within Cuba. The Cold War is over, Russia removed its last military installation from the island, and Cuba has stopped supporting guerilla insurgencies abroad. In addition, Cuban military and defense spending has been cut substantially in the last decade. It is clear that a strong military and intervention abroad are no longer priorities for the Cuban government. Cuba cut military spending by 50% after the 1989 demise of the Soviet Union. The Center for Defense Information calculated that Cuba spends in one year on its military what the United States spends in 17¹/₂ hours (using figures from the International Institute for Strategic Studies' book of budgets and Department of Defense figures).¹⁶

Due to these military changes within Cuba, the U.S. government has recognized that the island is not a threat to U.S. national security. Several government agencies have released reports concluding this. According to a November 1997 report entitled, "The Cuban Threat to National Security" issued by the Defense Intelligence Agency in conjunction with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Department of State, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, the National Security Agency, and the U.S. Southern

¹⁶ Center for Defense Information at <http://www.cdi.org>.

Command Joint Intelligence Center, “Cuba does not pose a significant security threat to the United States or other countries in the region.”¹⁷ In 1998, the Pentagon reported the same findings to the U.S. Congress.

Although a 1998 Defense Department report suggested that Cuba’s biotechnology industry had the capacity to produce biological weapons, there has been no evidence suggesting that it has done so. In fact, Cuba was not mentioned in the Defense Department’s 2000 report of worrisome states pursuing or possessing biological and chemical weapons. Nor was Cuba listed as a nation that possesses weapons of mass destruction or advanced conventional munitions in a 2000 CIA report to Congress.

While Cuba has been on the U.S. State Department’s list of terrorist nations since 1982, it has remained on this list due to domestic political considerations rather than actual national security concerns. It would be politically difficult for the President to remove Cuba from the terrorist list because the vocal and politically influential Cuban-American hard-liners would fiercely oppose such a measure.

A year 2000 State Department report entitled, “Patterns of Global Terrorism” did not report any terrorist acts sponsored by Cuba itself. Instead, it reported that: “Cuba continued to provide safe haven to several terrorists and U.S. fugitives in the year 2000.” Specifically, the report mentioned that Cuba harbors Basque separatists; has maintained ties with Colombian guerilla forces; and allowed a number of U.S. fugitives to live within its borders.¹⁸

While the State Department’s assertion about the presence of these people in Cuba is correct, these accusations should not lead one to the conclusion that the Cuban government sponsors terrorism. The Basque separatists live in Cuba as a result of an understanding between the Spanish and Cuban governments. Cuba has facilitated meetings between Colombian guerilla organizations and the Colombian government, in attempt to broker peace in a country ravaged by a thirty-seven year civil war. There are several U.S. fugitives living in Cuba, in large part, because there is no extradition treaty between the United States and Cuba. No such treaty exists due to the U.S.’ longstanding policy of diplomatic isolation of Cuba. Furthermore, none of these fugitives were charged with terrorism. The reasons listed in the State Department report for keeping Cuba on the terrorist list are off-target and easily refuted—revealing the superficial rationale for keeping Cuba on the list.

Changes within Cuban society

Processes of economic, social, and political change are underway in Cuba, and policymakers ought to take them into account. In the current global context, it is nearly impossible for Cuba to remain as politically and economically isolated as it was during the thirty years of Soviet dependence (1959-1989). Cuba has had to reinsert itself into the world market, and this has inevitably produced economic, political, and social changes in the country itself.

¹⁷ Defense Intelligence Agency, CIA, Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, National Security Agency, U.S. Southern Command Joint Intelligence Center, “The Cuban Threat to National Security,” November 1997.

¹⁸ United States Department of State, “Patterns of Global Terrorism,” 2000.

The Social and Political Implications of Economic Reform in Cuba

The economic reforms implemented in 1993-1995 have also had significant social and political impacts in Cuba. In particular, the influx of U.S. dollars via family remittances and income from the tourist industry has resulted in significant systemic and social changes. An estimated \$800 million-\$1.2 billion is sent to the island annually from relatives abroad, and in 2000 the Cuban government reported 1.77 million tourists produced \$2.05 billion in revenue. Analysts report that approximately 60% of all sales transactions in Cuba now take place in U.S. dollars.

The consequences of the “dollarization” of the Cuban economy are contradictory. More Cubans are able to purchase a wider variety of products, yet rising social and racial inequalities and crime rates, and the expansion of the black market, all indirectly result from the proliferation of dollars. Access to dollars can dramatically alter a Cuban’s quality of life, creating rifts between those with access to dollars and those without. The lure of dollars also creates a strong pull towards the service and tourism industries, where pay and tips in dollars are much more common. Also, access to dollars has reawakened racial tensions in Cuban society. Cubans of European ancestry have more access to dollars through what seems a disproportional presence in the tourism industry and the greater likelihood that they have relatives abroad who send remittances than do Cubans of predominantly African ancestry. This racialized “dollarization” further deepens the divide between Afro-Cubans and European-Cubans, an inequality the revolution sought to erase.

Economic reforms and employment

After the collapse of the Soviet trading bloc, the Cuban government realized that it needed to integrate itself into the global economy in order to survive. Its principal trading partner had disappeared, and it needed to find new markets for its goods. Because trade with the Soviet Union had taken place on extremely favorable terms, the Cubans were forced to replace the income from Soviet trade subsidies by making their economy more efficient, developing new exports, and by attracting foreign investment.

The Cuban government began a process of economic reform in the 1990’s. Seeking capital from abroad, the government legalized some forms of foreign investment. To generate new sources of income, the government began to promote tourism. To increase economic efficiency, the Cuban government reformed the agriculture industry by significantly expanding market mechanisms; modernized traditional sectors such as mining; invested in the development of new technology and products; and authorized self-employment for over 150 different occupations. The government also legalized the use of the U.S. dollar, permitting Cubans to receive cash remittances from relatives and friends abroad, and permitting domestic sales in dollars. These economic reforms brought in new income, opened sectors of the Cuban economy to foreign investment, and allowed for domestic economic liberalization, pulling the Cuban economy out of the severe economic crisis of the early 1990s.

The most significant reforms were implemented during 1993-1995, and the pace of change has since slowed. These economic changes, while falling short of the re-



introduction of the market economy, nonetheless signal real shifts in the Cuban economic model. Not only does Cuba now have an economic system with strong market elements, but these economic reforms have led to political and social changes as well. The attitude of U.S. policymakers toward Cuba should take into account the changes that are underway.

Sources of employment in Cuba, traditionally controlled by the Cuban government, are increasingly diversifying. Recent statistics indicate that since the late 1980s when the state employed 95% of the total labor force, non-state employment has risen significantly. According to the Cuban government, “155,614 self-employed workers have licenses to operate small businesses in several economic activities.” Typically, these activities include private restaurants limited to 12 seats, small artisan workshops, repair services, and the sale of agricultural products in farmers’ markets. When other non-state employment (including cooperative farming — see below) is added in, non-state employment totals somewhere between 15% and 20% of total employment. According to the U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council, in 2000 the average government salary was estimated at 249-259 Cuban pesos (approximately USD\$11-\$15) per month, making items that are available only in dollars such as certain food items, medicines, or gasoline beyond the reach of most Cubans.¹⁹ The meager salary, coupled with the possibility of earning dollars by providing services to tourists, lure many professionals to supplement their income as taxi-drivers, bartenders, and hotel housekeepers. Due to this phenomenon, concern is growing in Cuba, a country that takes pride in its highly-skilled labor force, over the increasing draw of well-educated workers to service industry jobs in tourism rather than professional occupations.

As mentioned, non-state forms of employment have grown in the agricultural sector over the last decade. Despite the Cuban government’s prioritization of the tourism industry and the development of new exports such as pharmaceuticals and vaccines, traditional agricultural products, such as sugar cane and tobacco, continue to occupy a significant space within the Cuban economy. Reforms to the agricultural sector implemented in the early 1990’s initiated a process of decentralization from traditional state-controlled planning, and this had a major impact on employment patterns. According to a 2001 Oxfam America report, many state-owned farms were transformed into cooperatives. Farm workers became owners of the cooperative farms, while the state retained title to the land and leased it to the cooperative on a long-term basis. Some 4,000 farm cooperatives, called Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPCs) now farm about 40% of the arable land in the country. (And there are about 91,300 individual farmers, as well.) In 1994, the regime legalized private agricultural markets where both independent and state-owned farms could sell products directly to the Cuban population at free-market prices. While these farmers’ markets are extremely popular, free market prices can be ten times the price of an identical product purchased at a state store (although quantities at state stores are limited and rationed). Purchases at farmers’ markets can cost the average Cuban up to 66% of his/her salary.²⁰

¹⁹ Economic Eye on Cuba, U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council “Economic Eye on Cuba” (a weekly report) at <http://www.cubatrade.org>.

²⁰ Oxfam America, “Going Against the Grain: Agricultural Crisis and Transformation,” June 2001.

Political reforms

Along with these economic openings, there has been political change as well. The new policies implemented in recent years are less than and different from the steps that the United States has called for in Cuba. At the same time, political changes have taken place, and it would be shortsighted to ignore them.

Several changes are worth noting:

First, the role of representative political institutions has grown over the last ten years. Presidential elections in Cuba continue to be single-party, uncontested affairs. Elections to the National Assembly can be competitive in each district. Candidates run as individuals, and are elected by secret ballot. In contrast to the past, candidates need not be members of the Communist Party to run. (In fact, the Assembly includes a number of non-Party elected members, among them several Protestant ministers.) The Cuban National Assembly was created in 1976. Though often criticized as a rubber stamp for decisions made by the executive branch or the Communist Party, the Assembly's authority has grown over time. Some major changes in the National Assembly include increased professionalization of staff, longer meetings, and increased debate during meetings. (Government proposals are often modified, and sometimes withdrawn as a result of Assembly debate.) In addition, municipal assemblies are directly elected and exercise more authority over local governments. In neighborhoods, elected Popular Councils have been developed to identify and advocate for community needs with local governments.

Second, the Cuban government is engaged in a process of decentralization. This is primarily in the economic arena. Since the mid-1990s, at the economic level, centralized planning has been reduced. Factories, state farms, and other workplaces, are responsible for setting and meeting their own budgets, and for making many of their own decisions about what suppliers they purchase from, and to whom they sell their output. This economic decentralization has had some impact on the political process as well. Municipal governments have seen their budgets grow, and have taken on more responsibility for setting spending priorities, rather than simply implementing national ministry decisions. Some municipal leaders have begun to argue for greater autonomy in choosing what firms will be selected to carry out public works projects, etc.

Non-governmental organizations and local development initiatives

One of the most interesting developments in Cuba in recent years has been the emergence of organizations that function in non-traditional ways, and focus on social development in Cuba. While social and cultural clubs and churches have always existed in Cuba, the kind of NGOs, community groups, and other organizations familiar in the United States and Latin America did not exist in Cuba in the 1970s and 1980s. Social services were generally carried out by government agencies, rather than by voluntary charitable or religious organizations. Citizen opinions were expressed through Communist Party organized neighborhood clubs or mass organizations. Autonomous community groups and national organizations did not exist.

This began to change in the 1990s. As the economy struggled, and elements of the Cuban social safety net were weakened, churches began to meet some social service needs, often using funds provided by religious groups from abroad. Think tanks, educational centers,

Cuban Non-Governmental Organizations

Non-governmental organizations first emerged in Cuba in the 1990's as service providers, trying to meet needs created by the economic crisis that Cuba was undergoing. The Martin Luther King Center at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Havana began to run meal programs for the elderly, and in cooperation with European donors, to build some housing in Havana. Caritas, a Catholic social service agency, began to carry out medical programs in cooperation with the Cuban government, and with support from church agencies in the United States and Europe. A number of think-tanks began to carry out independently-funded research projects. Several organizations, including the Group for Integrated Development of the Capital, began to work with local community groups to identify and meet community needs. Over time, these groups have slowly expanded their work, and others have emerged.

and other organizations that had been part of the governmental apparatus in the 1980s became formally independent. Many sought foreign funding for their work, and some began to carry out or sponsor projects to meet local community needs.

These new groups are not at this point NGOs in the sense we know them in the United States. These are new institutions in Cuba, and both they and the government are involved in a process of defining their role in society. While formally independent of the state, they do not generally take positions critical of the government. (It is important to recognize that public criticism of government policy is not a defining characteristic of NGOs. While we often think of NGOs as vocal critics of governments, many U.S. social service NGOs take no position on political issues. Similarly, financial independence from the government is not by itself a criterion either, as some large U.S. NGOs get most of their budget from federal funds and carry out federal programs.) Nonetheless, these independent organizations exist and are slowly growing. In the process, they are creating a new set of political relationships and possibilities in Cuba. Over time, they may help reshape the Cuban political process.

Since the early 1990s, a number of interesting local experiments in community development have emerged in Cuba. As discussed in a forthcoming report from Oxfam America²¹, the Group for the Integrated Development of the Capital, an urban planning group that advises the city government of Havana, began to develop local "workshops" in which community residents identified and began to address community needs. These workshops have expanded across the country (there are now more than 170 of them). They focus on community needs, strongly emphasize local participation in identifying and resolving problems, and focus on community level networks.

Expanding religious freedoms

Since the late 1980s, religious tolerance in Cuba has grown markedly. The Cuban government has expanded religious freedoms by allowing religious expression in both

²¹ Oxfam America, June 2001. "Social Development in Cuba," forthcoming.



public and private arenas, opening spaces for religious press, and generally improving relations with the religious community through both symbolic and substantive gestures. The Cuban Council of Churches, representing mainstream Protestant denominations, had a first formal meeting with Castro in the 1980s. In that decade, Castro also met with several foreign religious leaders. In the 1990s there were significant changes to Cuban law and practice. The ban on religious believers' membership to the Communist Party was repealed in 1991, the Cuban constitution was rewritten to classify Cuba as a secular State rather than an atheist State in 1992, and Christmas was declared a national holiday in 1997.

One of the most important steps in improving Church-State relations in Cuba was the momentous visit of Pope John Paul II to the island in January 1998. The pontiff's visit itself symbolized a break from repressive policies of the past that restricted public religious expression in Cuba and a growing acceptance of organized religious activities independent of the State. This visit also prompted the Cuban government to release a number of political prisoners and allow for large-scale open-air masses and other public religious ceremonies.

Today, according to Rev. Raimundo García Franco of the Christian Center for Reflection and Dialogue in Cardenas, Cuba, approximately 250,000 Cubans currently identify themselves as practicing Catholics, while the number of Cubans who identify as simply Catholic (practicing and non-practicing) is estimated to be in the millions. Another 250,000 identify themselves as Protestants, and 2,000 as Jewish.²² The majority of Cuba's 11 million inhabitants describe themselves as atheist, non-practicing Catholics, or practitioners of Afro-Cuban religions. The relatively low number of Cubans claiming membership in any official religious denomination may explain why religious leaders have shifted their focus away from increased engagement with official government leaders to more pastoral activities, such as door-to-door evangelization campaigns and providing medical services and meals.

While the past two decades have seen marked improvements in Church-State relations in Cuba, there have also been difficulties. At different moments, the Cuban State has responded to what it has perceived as threats or challenges from religious leaders or religious communities. For instance, in 1993, Cuban Catholic bishops were denounced in the State media after expressing concerns about the economy and calling for a more open political system. There have been tensions between the government and some evangelical churches, especially about churches conducting religious services in homes and apartments rather than in licensed church spaces. And some government officials have expressed concerns about the growing influence of Rastafarianism among Afro-Cuban youth.

Despite these occasional setbacks, Church-State relations in Cuba have improved considerably since the 1980's. Religious individuals and institutions are no longer

²² Presentation by Rev. Raimundo García Franco, Executive Director, Christian Center for Reflection and Dialogue at a conference sponsored by WOLA, the Georgetown University Caribbean Project, and American University in Washington, DC entitled, "Church-State Relations in Cuba: Three Years After the Pope's Visit," May 14, 2001.

Human Rights in Cuba

According to a 2002 Human Rights Watch Report on Cuba, the government continues to violate the human rights of its citizens.²³ Some aspects of Cuba's human rights situation mentioned by the report are:

- **Repressive Treatment of Government Opponents.** Peaceful opponents of the government continue to be jailed, subjected to short-term detentions, house arrest, surveillance, arbitrary searches, evictions, travel restrictions, politically-motivated dismissals from employment, threats and other forms of harassment.
- **Restricted Individual Freedoms.** Freedom of expression, association, assembly, movement (including leaving the country) remained restricted under Cuban law.
- **Lack of Judicial Independence.** The government-controlled courts undermined the right to a fair trial by restricting the right to a defense, and frequently failed to observe the few due process rights available to defendants under Cuban law.
- **Poor Treatment of Prisoners.** Prisoners frequently suffered malnourishment and lived in overcrowded cells without appropriate medical attention.
- **Freedom of Press Restricted.** The Cuban government regularly detained independent journalists, sometimes prosecuting them. Others were harassed or prevented from working by the police. Foreign journalists also faced harassment if they attempted to work with or assist their Cuban counterparts.

discriminated against in an official context, are allotted more freedom to practice and publicly express their religious beliefs, and have their own uncensored print media to express their views (which are, at times, at odds with the State). Religious institutions in Cuba occupy an important, yet precarious, role in Cuban society. They exist independently of the State, and are able to criticize the government, yet need to be cautious of the extent to which they challenge it. They serve an important role in forging Cuba's nascent civil society by engaging in this important dialogue with the State.

Human rights in Cuba

Human rights is a highly polarized topic in the debate on Cuba today, with heated rhetoric on all sides. It is important to have a balanced view on this issue. Cuba is not China, where government troops shot down demonstrators in the central square in 1989, and where religious leaders are being arrested and imprisoned today. Nor is Cuba the Central America of the 1980's where death squads murdered thousands of civilians. Nor is Cuba the Sudan where human slavery still exists today. Overblown rhetoric on Cuba's human rights record will not contribute to constructive dialogue about the situation.

Having said that, the human rights situation in Cuba is deplorable. The government holds single party elections, continues to restrict freedom of speech and association, and arrests and harasses those who promote dissident political positions.

²³ Human Rights Watch, "Human Rights Watch World Report" at <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k2/americas5.html>.

Historical-political context

While it is important to criticize the restrictions on civil and political liberties in Cuba, it is also important to recognize the historical and political context in which they occur. U.S. hostility toward the Cuban government is a significant long-term factor in shaping the political climate in Cuba. There have been countless expressions of U.S. hostility toward the Cuban government over the past forty years, including the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1962, the numerous attempts on Fidel Castro's life orchestrated by the CIA, and the U.S.' tacit tolerance of acts of terrorism committed by elements in the exile community against the island. The U.S. embargo on Cuba (which falls under the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917) and the fact that the United States has included Cuba on its list of terrorist nations since 1982, sends a strong signal to Cuba that the United States considers it an enemy. Because Cuba perceives that the United States treats it as an enemy and it feels susceptible to U.S. aggression, it responds to this perceived external threat by closing down political spaces within Cuba and cracking down on internal dissent, which it often sees as U.S-sponsored.

Current U.S. policy should not be an excuse for Cuba's behavior, nor should it blind us to Cuba's responsibility for its political and economic situation. But we should recognize that U.S. hostility toward Cuba is one of the factors framing the Cuban political dynamic. In the absence of U.S. hostility, the Cuban political situation would likely evolve in very different ways.

Social and economic rights

While social and economic rights do not play a key role in discussions of human rights in the United States, they do play an important role in the human rights framework in many other countries, and in international organizations. While the Cuban government has a weak record on political and civil rights, it has a strong record on social and economic rights. The social and economic gains made over the past forty years in Cuba are impressive, with free health care and education for all citizens, resulting in marked improvements in social, racial, and gender equality. Cuba has a highly educated work force and in terms of overall health status, it is ranked alongside the most advanced industrial nations. The Cuban government has clearly made social and economic rights a priority.

Human rights projections for the near future

The human rights situation in Cuba has not changed dramatically in the last few years, and is unlikely to change dramatically in the next year or two. However, there has been some progress. In November 2000, the Ibero-American Summit was held in Cuba, and a number of Latin American leaders met publicly with dissidents while there. While the Cuban government was indignant, it felt compelled to say that the leaders were free to meet with whomever they wanted. Continuing European pressure has led to the release of three of the four prominent dissidents who were sentenced to jail in 2000. In small, but real ways, the Cuban government is feeling and responding to consistent pressure from foreign governments.

The government continues to harass dissidents — there was a wave of detentions in the months after the November 2000 Ibero-American summit. Most detentions are short

term. The number of long-term political prisoners dropped to about 300 at the time of the Pope's visit. The Independent Cuban Commission on Human Rights and National Reconciliation reported in January 2002 that the number of political prisoners on the island had fallen to 210.

In recent years dissidents have become more united than they had been in the past. Elizardo Sanchez, the President of the Independent Cuban Commission on Human Rights and National Reconciliation and a leading dissident on the island, argues that there has been a sea change in the dissident community in the last five years, with a majority of dissidents now opposing the U.S. embargo. In addition, most dissidents called for the return of Elián Gonzalez to Cuba. Despite their greater unity, the dissident community is not generally considered an effective political force in the country — they remain small and marginal.

As U.S.-Cuban contact grows (the number of delegations, cultural exchanges, academic trips, etc., has increased dramatically in the last few years), there will be some pressure on Cuban officials to further relax controls over travel and informal controls over contact. This will, over time, erode social controls and encourage greater independence of thought and action in the academic community and in civil society more broadly.

At the same time, the formal political processes of the one-party state are unlikely to change soon. While government efforts at decentralization continue, and NGO and quasi-NGO activities that encourage local initiatives evolve, these are unlikely to have much impact on the structures of national decision-making in the near future.

Currently, the United States is in no position to encourage improved human rights conditions in Cuba or to support the institutionalization of democracy. The efforts the U.S. government makes to support dissidents, or to strengthen civil society, are mostly counter-productive. (In fact, as noted elsewhere in this report, U.S. support and funding for dissidents has made them more vulnerable to the charge that they are U.S. agents. Those who hope for change in Cuban society but do not see themselves as dissidents, or in open opposition to the government, neither seek nor accept U.S. support.) U.S. influence on the Cuban government for positive change is basically non-existent.

Historically, Cuba has remained steadfast against short-term external pressures. Cuba usually digs its heels in further when it receives pressure from foreign countries regarding specific human rights cases. Still, Canada, the Vatican, and European governments have arguably had some influence on the human rights climate. The number of political prisoners has decreased, and the government is less heavy-handed than in years past. However, as the March 1999 case of the four dissidents sentenced to jail illustrates the Cuban government is willing to risk international opprobrium when it feels it is necessary. Low-key, long-term external pressure has generally been the most effective tactic for encouraging human rights improvements in Cuba.

All this implies that our principal focus ought to be on changing U.S. policy, with the expectation that it will have a long-term impact on Cuba itself. At the same time, we must recognize and continue to be critical of the real human rights issues in Cuba.

U.S.-Cuban contact

There has been a substantial increase in contact and exchange between the United States and Cuba over the last several years and these interchanges help break down barriers on both sides. The U.S. visits of Cuban musical and cultural groups are well-known. There have also been growing numbers of visits by Cuban researchers and academicians. And on the U.S. side, the number of citizens visiting Cuba has grown dramatically. According to the Office of Foreign Assets Controls (OFAC) of the U.S. Treasury Department, approximately 200,000 U.S. citizens traveled to Cuba in the year 2001, including 60,000 traveling illegally, without official licenses from the Treasury Department. Many of those who traveled officially to Cuba did so in the context of cultural, scientific, academic, and educational exchanges. Universities, scientific organizations, and other groups have been traveling to Cuba to see the country for themselves, and to develop contacts with their Cuban counterparts. There has also been a rise in the number of Cuban-Americans travelling to Cuba in the past several years.

Formal relationships between Cuban and U.S. groups have grown as well. Stronger bonds have been forged between U.S. and Cuban religious groups since the Pope's monumental visit to Cuba in 1998. There are formal relations between churches and synagogues in the United States and their counterparts in Cuba. Catholic Relief Services works closely with Caritas, its Cuban counterpart, and the National Council of Churches works with and supports the Cuban Council of Churches. A "U.S.-Cuba Sisters Cities Association" also forges bonds between the U.S. and Cuban people with Sister City relationships between Madison, WI and Camaguey; Mobile, AL and Havana; Pittsburgh, PA and Matanzas; Tacoma, WA and Cienfuegos; and many more. Another symbolic, yet important step toward improving U.S.-Cuban relations was the baseball game played between the Cuban National team and the Baltimore Orioles in the spring of 1999. Through these formal and informal exchanges, relationships are being forged between U.S. and Cuban citizens.

Conclusion

Social, political, and economic change is occurring in Cuba. In some aspects of human rights and democratization, there have been gradual but significant steps forward. In others, there has been little movement. The economy is changing, although the outcome of that process is not yet determined. The political system has become more decentralized and quasi-independent NGOs have emerged. Those who support human rights and democracy cannot be content with what has happened thus far in Cuba; many of the changes to date have yet to be consolidated, and more needs to be done. At the same time, it would be a mistake to pretend that nothing has changed in Cuba in the last decade.



WHAT'S WRONG WITH U.S. POLICY TOWARD CUBA?

U.S.-Cuba policy does not represent the will of the majority of Americans

There is cutting irony in the U.S. demands for democratization in Cuba. A democratic society requires that its governance reflect the will of the majority of the people of that society, but this has not been the case with U.S. policy toward Cuba in recent years. There has been a strong movement within the American public, and the bodies that are meant to represent the American people, to reform current policy toward Cuba. Yet, this momentum has not been translated into meaningful policy change.

Within the past few years, this movement toward reform has become even stronger. The visibility of the Elián Gonzalez case, spanning from November 1999 to June 2000, brought the issue of U.S.-Cuba policy into the consciousness of many Americans. With the extensive media coverage of the case, U.S. public interest and awareness grew. A public opinion poll taken in October 2000 showed that over 85% of the American people believe that the United States should ease the embargo on Cuba, including an increasing number of Cuban-Americans.²⁴

The work of religious, humanitarian, and social justice organizations and individual activists to educate policy-makers, the media, and the American public has also played an important role in the movement toward reform. In addition to groups traditionally interested in humanitarian concerns, the movement has gained the support of agriculture and business organizations in recent years. The business community became involved with efforts to ease restrictions on the sale of food and medicine to Cuba because of the potential within the Cuban market. With the momentum created by humanitarian organizations, along with the resources and political capital of agriculture and business groups, the pressure on Congress to change U.S. policy toward Cuba has grown immensely.

In the past few years, political space has opened for this majority sentiment to come to bear. The main proponents of maintaining the embargo on Cuba, hard-line anti-Castro elements in the Cuban American community, for many years had a stranglehold on the public debate and on U.S. policymakers' views. Due to a number of circumstances, this powerful lobby has weakened, creating opportunities for other, more popular, interests to be heard.

²⁴ Cuban Research Institute, Institute for Public Opinion Research of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, and Center for Labor Research and Studies at Florida International University at <http://www.fiu.edu/orgs/ipor/cuba2000>, October 2000.

Cuban-American Hard-liners: Increasingly Divided

Over the past few years, the hard-line anti-Castro position in the Cuban-American community and its well-financed lobby, the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), which has traditionally swayed Congress and the Administration, has fractured. With the 1997 death of the President and Founder of the CANF, Jorge Mas Canosa, and the increasing divisions along generational and party lines, the CANF has become less formidable in its struggle to maintain the embargo. During the 2000 presidential election, the traditionally Republican foundation held a fundraiser for Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman, causing tensions within the organization. During the Elián Gonzalez affair, CANF Chairman Jorge Mas Santos brought young, politically savvy staff into leadership positions within the organization. These newcomers pushed the CANF to take a more bipartisan approach toward the Cuba policy issue. Traditionally, the CANF has been firmly Republican, but the changes in the leadership's lobbying approach has led to internal dissent and fracturing within the organization. In August 2001, 18 members of the CANF Board of Directors left the organization. In October 2001, the dissident board members formed another anti-Castro group called the Cuban Liberty Council.

Following the Elián Gonzalez saga, the hard-line anti-Castro forces in the Cuban-American community lost legitimacy among the American public due to their inflammatory, irrational behavior during this affair. While it is still hard to tell if these problems will keep the CANF from remaining an effective lobbying group, anti-embargo proponents may find themselves in a better position to press their views with policymakers.

As a reflection of pressure from humanitarian and religious groups and agricultural and business interests, there has also been growing congressional support for easing the U.S. embargo on Cuba over the past few years. Most Members of Congress, along both sides of the aisle, believe that U.S. policy toward Cuba is outdated and ineffective. Some are in favor of easing the embargo because of humanitarian reasons, some for economic reasons, and some just because it is so clearly an ineffective and useless policy of years past.

Despite widespread public and congressional support for legislation that would ease the embargo on Cuba, individuals in the House Republican leadership and Cuban-American members of Congress have repeatedly blocked passage of such measures. They have succeeded in doing so through their control of key legislative positions, and the use of parliamentary maneuvers, such as refusing to allow floor votes on legislation that would ease the embargo on Cuba.

In the October 2000 Agriculture Appropriations bill, this small minority was able to effectively nullify legislation that could have brought about meaningful change in U.S.-Cuba policy. The original language for the bill would have allowed for the sale of food and medicines to Cuba without restrictions. The conditions attached to the bill prohibit the U.S. government and U.S. banks from extending credit for sales, allowing only cash sales or third-country bank financing. In practice, these financing restrictions have made it

Cuba-related Bills Introduced in the 106th Congress in Support of Easing the Embargo

Type of Legislation	Bill Name	Bill #	Sponsor	# of Cosponsors
Food & Medicine	Freedom to Market Act	HR. 212 IH	Nethercutt (R-WA)	32
	Cuban Humanitarian Trade Act of 1999	HR. 230	Rangel (D-NY)	73
	US Agricultural Trade Act of 1999	HR. 817	Ewing (R-IL)	18
	Cuban Food and Medicine Security Act of 1999	HR. 1644	Serrano (D-NY)	176
	Agricultural Trade Bill	S. 101	Lugar (R-IN)	12
	Food and Medicine Sanctions Relief Act of 1999	S. 327	Hagel (R-NE)	18
	Food and Medicine for the World Act of 1999	S. 425	Ashcroft (R-MO)	5
	Agriculture and Trade Freedom Act	S. 566	Lugar (R-IN)	27
	Cuban Food and Medicine Security Act of 1999	S. 926	Dodd (D-CT)	26
Agriculture Appropriations Act of 2000	S. 1233	Cochran (R-MS)	0	
Travel & Exchange	News Bureaus Exchange	HR. 258	Serrano (D-NY)	0
	Travel and Cultural Exchanges	HR. 259	Serrano (D-NY)	1
	Mutual Education and Cultural Exchange	S. 73	Moynihan (D-NY)	0
	Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act of 2000	S. 1919	Dodd (D-CT)	4
	Allow Travel between U.S. and Cuba	HR. 4471	Sanford (R-SC)	103
Drug Trafficking	Cooperation in Drug Interdiction	HR. 2365	Rangel (D-NY)	12
	Amendment to the Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill to make funds available to the Secretary of Defense to cooperate with Cuban authorities on drug interdiction	S. AMDT. 3588 to S. 2522	Specter (R-PA)	1
				<i>Agreed to in the Senate by voice vote</i>
Remittances	Authorization of Cash Remittances	HR. 257	Serrano (D-NY)	0
Diplomacy	Baseball Diplomacy Act	HR. 262	Serrano (D-NY)	22
General	Free Trade with Cuba Act	HR. 229	Rangel (D-NY)	28
	Cuba Reconciliation Act	HR. 256	Serrano (D-NY)	0
	Lift Trade Embargo	HR. 1181	Paul (R-TX)	0
	Sanctions Rationalization Act	S. 927	Dodd (D-CT)	1
	Trade Normalization with Cuba Act	S. 2617	Baucus (D-MT)	8
	U.S.-Cuba trade Act of 2000	HR. 4856	Rangel (D-NY)	1
U.S.-Cuba trade Act of 2000	S. 2896	Baucus (D-MT)	3	

extremely difficult for the Cuban government to purchase foodstuffs from the United States. The legislation also included a provision that made it more difficult to change current restrictions on travel to Cuba. These conditions were forced into the final legislation as a result of private, closed-door meetings, rather than open floor debate or congressional consensus. Despite popular public and congressional support to pass legislation that would fundamentally change U.S. policy toward Cuba, the House Republican leadership manipulated the legislative process in response to narrow special interests and to appease the Cuban-American hard-liners.

Cuba-related Bills Introduced in the 107th Congress in Support of Easing the Embargo

Type of Legislation	Bill Name	Bill #	Sponsor	# of Cosponsors
Food & Medicine	To amend the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 to allow for the financing of agricultural sales to Cuba	HR. 173	Serrano (D-NY)	1
	Cuba Food and Medicine Access Act of 2001	S. 239	Hagel (R-NE)	5
	Cuban Humanitarian Trade Act of 2001	S. 402	Baucus (D-MT)	3
	Cuban Humanitarian Trade Act of 2001	HR. 797	Rangel (D-NY)	5
Travel & Exchange	Repeal travel restrictions to and certain trade sanctions to Cuba	S. 171	Dorgan (D-ND)	5
	Amendment to Treasury-Postal Appropriations to end funding for travel restrictions to Cuba	HR. AMDT. 241 to HR. 2590	Flake (R-AZ)	0 <i>Passed 240-186</i>
Drug Trafficking	To authorize Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy to enter into drug interdiction efforts with Cuba	HR. 1124	Rangel (D-NY)	0
Diplomacy	Baseball Diplomacy Act	HR. 26	Serrano (D-NY)	1
General	Cuba Reconciliation Act	HR. 174	Serrano (D-NY)	2
	United States-Cuba Trade Act of 2001	HR. 796	Rangel (D-NY)	5
	Free Trade with Cuba Act	HR. 798	Rangel (D-NY)	5
	Free Trade with Cuba Act	S. 400	Baucus (D-MT)	4
	United States-Cuba Trade Act of 2001	S. 401	Baucus (D-MT)	3
	Bridges to the Cuban People Act	S. 1017	Dodd (D-CT), Chafee (R-RI)	26
	Bridges to the Cuban People Act	HR. 2138	Serrano (D-NY), Leach (R-IA)	107
	To lift the Trade Embargo on Cuba and for Other Purposes	HR. 2662	Paul (R-TX)	2
	Amendment to Treasury-Postal Appropriations to end all funding for the enforcement of the embargo	HR.AMDT.242 to HR. 2590	Rangel (D-NY)	0 <i>Failed: 201-227</i>
	To lift trade embargo on Cuba	HR. 2662	Paul (R-TX)	2
Provision of Farm Bill to lift private financing restrictions on the sale of food and medicine to Cuba	Section 335 of S. 1731	Harkin (D-IA)	0	

For up-to-date information regarding Cuba-related legislation, see <http://thomas.loc.gov>, <http://www.wola.org> or <http://www.lawg.org>.

Despite this maneuvering by the House Republican leadership, many Representatives and Senators maintained, and continue to maintain, interest in seeing current Cuba policy change. There were several Cuba-related bills introduced in the 106th and 107th Congresses in favor of changing U.S. policy toward Cuba. These bill charts give a sense of the key players in this debate and demonstrates the breadth of interest in this issue.



PART 2

If the embargo is so bad,
why is it still in place?



The will of the majority is being blocked by a small but powerful special interest group, made up of anti-Castro hard-liners in the Cuban-American community, that has influence with Congress and the Administration.



If the embargo is so bad, why is it still in place?

The U.S. embargo on Cuba was imposed in the early 1960's, at the height of the Cold War. At the time, many U.S. foreign policy analysts saw Cuba as one front in a global struggle against communism. But the Cold War ended over a decade ago, and the U.S. struggle against the Soviet Union, and the states and organizations seen as its proxies, came to an end. Today, most serious students of foreign policy — including many who dislike the Cuban government and Cuban social and economic policies — recognize that the Cold War rationale for the U.S. embargo against Cuba has disappeared.

As other sections of this booklet demonstrate, there are a great many reasons to oppose the embargo. It hurts U.S. economic and political interests, it hurts the Cuban people, and it has failed to achieve its own policy goals. Why then is the embargo still in place?

More than anything else, the answer has to do with domestic U.S. politics. As the foreign policy rationale for the embargo disappeared with the end of the Cold War, Cuban exiles and hard-line Cuban-Americans forged a well-organized and effective special interest group that lobbies Congress and the Administration, contributes heavily to political campaigns, and forms a key voting group in two states (Florida and New Jersey) that are critical to winning the Presidency. They have developed political power, and have exercised this power effectively.

The Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) is the best known of the pro-embargo lobby groups. Formed in the 1981, it came into prominence in the 1990's. It is an effective organization, with a substantial budget, a Washington advocacy office, and good media contacts. Members of Congress and Administration officials take it seriously.

Hard-line Cuban-Americans have been major contributors to political campaigns, and this too has increased their impact. The top recipients of Cuban-American campaign contributions have been those policymakers who have fought the hardest to maintain or tighten the embargo on Cuba. The Center for Responsive Politics (<http://www.opensecrets.org>) compiled information on campaign donations from Cuban-American individuals and PACs for the period of 1979-2000 and found that Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), and Dan Burton (R-IN) and Senators Robert Torricelli (D-NJ), Jesse Helms (R-NC), and Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) are among the top 20 recipients of such donations. These Members of Congress have introduced and supported legislation that would tighten the embargo on Cuba.

This study also showed the relationship between campaign finances and the introduction of key Cuba legislation. For instance, the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act (Helms-Burton) was introduced in 1996 by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Rep. Dan Burton (R-IN). Both of these Members of Congress received large amounts of money from Cuban-American groups and individuals in the election year directly preceding the passage of this legislation in Congress. Rep. Burton, who had been in Congress since 1982 received no money from the Cuban-American lobby before 1990. Between 1990 and mid-1996, he received over \$61,000 in contributions. After the passage of Helms-Burton, the Cuban-American contributions decreased markedly. Sen. Helms has received over \$86,000 in Cuban-American campaign contributions, 74% of which came in 1995-1996, when Helms was running for reelection and the Helms-Burton Act was before Congress.²⁵

The power of the hard-line Cuban-American position also strongly correlates with their electoral role in two key states—Florida and New Jersey. Cuban-American voters are heavily concentrated in both of these states. Though they still constitute relatively small percentages of the electorate in each state, they can be an important voting bloc in key elections. Politicians of both parties who are in close races often feel that they must respond to the demands of this constituency.

It should be noted that the hard-line pro-embargo position does not represent the views of all Cuban-Americans. While the hard-line position is the most vocal, and most well funded, there are many Cuban-Americans who do not share those particular views. Polls show that a growing majority of Cuban-Americans believe the embargo should be eased. An October 2000 Florida International University poll found that 66% of Cuban Americans think that U.S. companies should be allowed to sell medicine to Cuba and 54% think that U.S. companies should be able to sell food to Cuba.²⁶ Organizations like the Cuban Committee for Democracy (<http://www.ccdusa.org>) and the Cuban American Alliance and Education Fund (<http://www.cubamer.org>) and others represent other points of view in the Cuban-American community.

While the major reason that the embargo has stayed in place is the political power of the hard-line Cuban-American position, two other factors are important as well.

First, while most foreign policy analysts believe that the embargo is an anachronism, there remains a great deal of hostility toward the government of Fidel Castro. Much of this hostility is a legacy of the Cold War era, when the U.S. foreign policy community saw Cuba through the lens of Soviet-U.S. competition. Many U.S. officials remain viscerally opposed to the current Cuban government because of the attitudes that were developed in the Cold War era. In addition, there is ideological hostility to the non-market aspects of the Cuban economy, and opposition to the Castro government because it does not support an unconditional transition to a market economy. Finally, there is concern about Cuba's

²⁵ The Center for Responsive Politics, "The Cuban Connection: Cuban American Money in U.S. Elections, 1979-2000." at <http://www.opensecrets.org/pubs/cubareport/index.asp>.

²⁶ Cuban Research Institute, Institute for Public Opinion Research of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, and Center for Labor Research and Studies at Florida International University at <http://www.fiu.edu/orgs/ipor/cuba2000>, October 2000.

record on democracy and human rights. These factors combine so that policymakers, while skeptical of the embargo, are reluctant to take steps that appear to legitimate or accept a Cuban government that they dislike. This contributes to a certain “inertia” on Cuba policy, where policymakers do not formulate concrete proposals for policy change.

Second, until recently there has been no strong U.S. domestic constituency in favor of lifting the embargo. With pro-embargo forces active, and policymakers quiescent, only a strong, politically motivated constituency is likely to be able to effect change in U.S. policy. The elements of such a domestic constituency have begun to emerge in the last few years through the opposition to the food and medicine embargo on the part of religious, human rights, and activist groups, combined with the agricultural community’s interest in farm sales to Cuba.

A strong anti-embargo constituency has indeed emerged and consolidated itself. This diverse constituency — through organizing grassroots groups and individuals to educate their representatives in Congress and through the influence of business and agricultural interests — has effectively if gradually moved Congress to reflect and honor the will of the American people. Over the past several years, an increasing number of Cuba-related bills have been introduced, and the bills that have been voted on, have won an increasing number of anti-embargo votes. Majorities in both chambers of Congress have repeatedly voted to ease or end the embargo on Cuba and will continue to do so. It is just a matter of time and continued effort on the part of anti-embargo groups until the will of the majority of American people and the will of the Congress is translated into meaningful policy change.



PART 3

What would be a more
effective Cuba policy?



The embargo was initiated at the height of the Cold War, in a geopolitical context that no longer exists. A reconsideration of U.S. policy would begin by admitting that the Cold War rationale for the embargo has ended.



What would be a more effective Cuba policy?

In the past few years, decisive majorities in both the House and the Senate voted to substantially ease the U.S. embargo on Cuba. While the will of the Congress has been repeatedly blocked by last minute parliamentary maneuvers, the Cuba issue is likely to reemerge in future congressional debates. Regardless of what happens legislatively, it is clear that there is strong public and congressional support for fundamentally rethinking U.S. policy toward Cuba.

The U.S. government lacks a coherent policy toward Cuba. Instead of an overall strategy that addresses U.S. interests and concerns in the Caribbean region, along with concerns about human rights and democracy in Cuba, the United States maintains an ineffective policy that has been in place for forty years. –“Maintaining the embargo” has become a formula, a substitute for a thoughtful consideration of what the United States hopes to achieve with its Cuba policy, and how it hopes to do so.

Given the change that has gone on in Cuba in the last decade, and the change that may come in the next, it is particularly disturbing that the U.S. has no pro-active Cuba policy. Over the next decade, Fidel Castro is likely to retire or die, and new leadership will emerge on the island. It seems foolish and short-sighted to maintain a policy that keeps the United States out of contact with those who may lead the Cuba of tomorrow.

Policy considerations

The embargo was initiated at the height of the Cold War, in a geopolitical context that no longer exists. A reconsideration of U.S. policy would begin by admitting that the Cold War rationale for the embargo has ended.

In the post-September 11 context, questions about national security arise when evaluating U.S. relations with other countries. Does Cuba pose a threat to U.S. security interests in the Western Hemisphere today? In terms of conventional warfare, the answer is clearly no. The size of the Cuban military has been drastically reduced since the end of the Cold War and the era of Soviet support, and poses no threat to the United States or other governments in the region. The Pentagon’s annual review of threats to U.S. security in Latin America does not consider the Cuban military to be a major threat. Cuba has formally and publicly disavowed support for armed revolutionary groups in Latin America. As previous sections of this booklet have shown, policymakers do not believe that Cuba sponsors or permits terrorism by groups based on the island, and do not identify Cuba as posing a threat for chemical or biological warfare.

In fact, from the point of view of U.S. security, the most serious threat comes from political instability within Cuba itself. Rapid destabilization of the Cuban government or society might produce internal unrest, civil war, and refugee flows that could be disruptive in the Caribbean and in Florida and along the U.S. Gulf Coast. The U.S. security interest lies in encouraging peaceful processes of change and development on the island, rather than in instability.

If the principal U.S. security interest has to do with encouraging peaceful processes of change, the principal moral interest of the United States has to do with encouraging greater democratization and respect for human rights in Cuba itself.

There is much to criticize in Cuba's record on democracy and human rights, but it is difficult to imagine that the United States is in any position to encourage change in Cuba. Because there are no diplomatic relations, most travel to the island is prohibited, and commercial relations are forbidden, the United States has little moral ground to push for change in Cuba.

In addition to security and human rights considerations, domestic political issues are also important in the formulation of a new U.S. policy. There are two significant domestic political issues. Most obviously, the concerns of the Cuban exile community must be recognized (although their views need not be accepted uncritically). In addition, the concerns of those U.S. citizens whose property was expropriated by the Cuban government in the early 1960's must also be addressed.

Finally, a new policy should recognize that building a new relationship between Cuba and the United States will be a long and complex process. There is a history of hostility between the U.S. and Cuban governments, and Cuba has a great deal of mistrust and skepticism about the United States. A new policy should begin by noting that the United States accepts Cuban sovereignty, and seeks a neighborly relationship.

A new policy

A more effective policy would begin to engage with Cuba. It would allow for the unrestricted sale of food and medicine, and explore the possibility of two way sales. It would expand cultural, scientific, and academic contact, eliminating travel restrictions for that sort of travel. It would move toward ending all travel restrictions, so that Americans could visit Cuba for themselves. The policy would need to recognize that large scale tourist travel would be several years down the road, as U.S. firms would need to negotiate with Cuban authorities and the Cuban travel industry would need to expand its infrastructure and establish tour programs.

Policy suggestions:

- Reestablish commercial relations with Cuba, beginning with food and medicine sales, and proceeding to two-way trade.
- Seek to encourage travel by Cuban-Americans and Cuban exiles back to the island to visit relatives and reestablish contact, and explicitly portray this to the Cuban community in the United States as an important benefit of the new approach.

- Actively encourage academic, scientific and cultural exchange, and permit travel by any American citizen.
- End U.S. licensing requirements that restrict U.S. NGOs that want to work in Cuba or that restrict humanitarian assistance to Cuba.
- Explore cooperation in areas of common interest, including antiterrorism, migration, drug interdiction, and environmental concerns in the Caribbean.
- Increase the level of U.S. and Cuban diplomatic contacts, moving over time to normal diplomatic relations.
- Announce that the United States seeks, in the context of respect for Cuban sovereignty and normal diplomatic relations, to encourage Cuba to relax restrictions on freedom of association and freedom of expression. Announce that the United States differs with the Cuban government in its views on human rights issues, as we differ with many countries with whom we have normal diplomatic and commercial relations, and that the U.S. will seek, in the course of its contact with Cuba, to urge the government to modify its policies.

Effective ways to support reform within Cuba

The U.S. government, through USAID, has a program that it describes as supporting reform in Cuba. As presently conceived, these efforts are counterproductive and hinder, rather than help, real reform in Cuba. There are at least two problems with how the United States offers support to reformers in Cuba. First, the United States is not guided by careful political judgments about who supports reform and change in Cuba. Those who seek change in Cuba have a range of political views. There are those who seek what they describe as reform, or “humanization” within society, and others who see change coming only through the overthrow of the regime. But U.S. analysis is ideologically driven. Those who support reform or “humanization” of the Cuban political system are discounted, as insufficiently opposed to the regime. The United States tends to use ideological litmus tests to classify groups by how anti-Castro they are. Until recently, for example, U.S. Interest Section officials in Havana insisted that the Cuban Catholic Church was the only real NGO in the country. Thus U.S. policymakers lack a real understanding of the dynamics and forces of change in Cuban society.

Second, because U.S. policy has been historically committed to overthrowing the Castro government, official U.S. contacts with groups in Cuba often have negative consequences for the groups themselves. Those receiving U.S. support are perceived by the Cuban government to be linked to a U.S. strategy of undermining and overthrowing the government. Thus, contact with the U.S. government paints all those who seek reform as “subversives.” It marginalizes rather than empowers civil society groups in Cuba.

A new policy ought to permit and encourage U.S. non-governmental groups to reach out to individuals and groups in Cuba, but ought to be very cautious about official U.S. contacts. It ought also to make clear that the United States government is not seeking to use contact with civil society as a way to overthrow the Cuban government.

The impact of U.S. policy change

We should not expect these actions to produce any immediate changes in Cuba itself, but instead we should take them because they are sensible steps from the point of view of U.S. interests. Over the long term, we can expect that changes in the context of U.S.-Cuban relations will lead to significant changes in the internal political dynamics in Cuba. However, these changes will not happen in a one-to-one correspondence with changes in U.S. policy. We should not expect that they will change immediately, and we cannot predict exactly what changes in Cuban society and government will take place in the next decade. But there can be little doubt that engaging with Cuba will have a more positive effect than isolating it, or supporting those who seek to overthrow it.

There is no doubt that the Cuban government will portray this as a victory for Cuba, but this should not trouble us. It is a victory for a sensible policy by the United States - one that will, in the long run, serve our national interests, and help ease the process of change in Cuba itself.

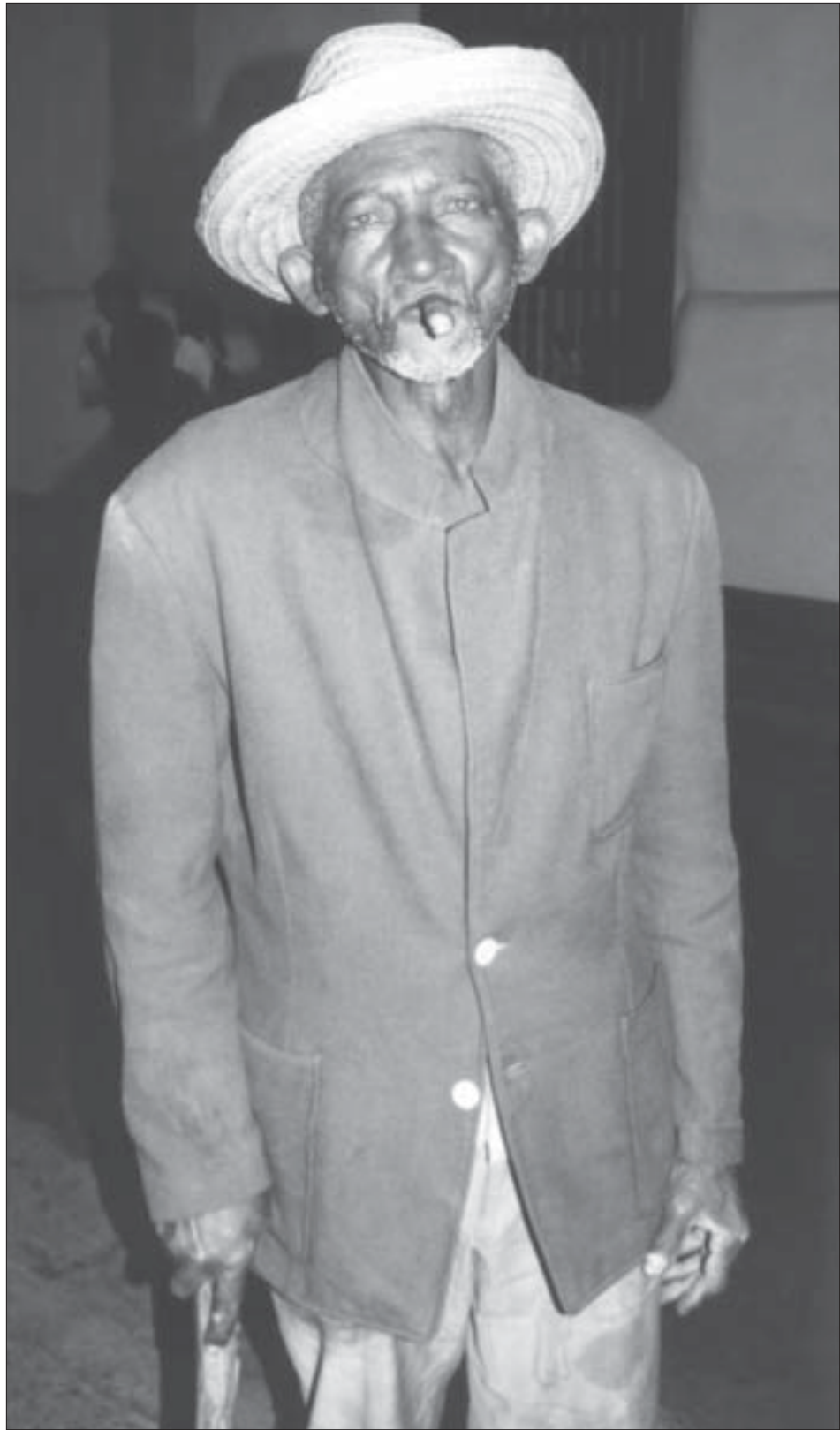
The current debate

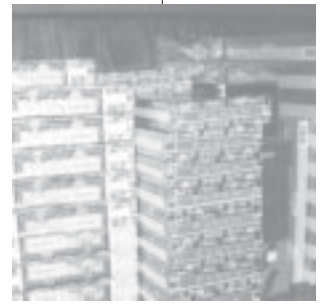
While the ultimate goal is to end the embargo and normalize relations with Cuba, this policy change will likely take place gradually through piecemeal legislative changes. This year, initiatives that would ease the embargo on Cuba will be proposed in both Houses of Congress. Legislation that would lift financing restrictions on food and medical sales, remove restrictions preventing U.S. citizens from traveling to Cuba, as well as many other measures that would ease the embargo will be introduced in Congress. There are several potential legislative vehicles for these initiatives, such as the Agriculture Appropriations Bill, the Treasury-Postal Appropriations Bill, the Farm Bill (Agriculture Authorizations Bill), the State Department Authorizations Bill, etc. (Please see the appendices for in-depth talking points on why the United States should allow unrestricted food and medical sales and U.S. travel to Cuba.)



PART 4

Appendices





APPENDICES

Myths and facts about Cuba and the embargo

Myths and Facts about Cuba

MYTH: Cuba is a repressive police state.

FACT: Cuba is a country with human rights problems that should be criticized. But it is not a police state. This is the sort of exaggeration that does a disservice to reasoned discussion about Cuba. Cuban citizens are not ripe for rebellion and held in check only by the presence of police and informants. As visitors to Cuba can attest, most Cubans feel free to express their personal and political opinions, and do not perceive themselves as repressed. At the same time, there is no doubt that the Cuban government forbids opposition political parties, restricts freedom of association and freedom of the press, harasses opponents of the regime, and holds over 200 political prisoners. These restrictions on political rights are wrong, and should be condemned. But they do not make Cuba a police state.

MYTH: Fidel Castro is an unpopular leader in Cuba, who only maintains his position by force.

FACT: Whatever people in the U.S. think of him, Castro is a charismatic and still popular figure in Cuba. Over the past 40 years, he has enjoyed considerable support from the Cuban people, due in part to his government's efforts to provide health care, education, and housing to all parts of the country. Most of the discontent in Cuba today stems from the economic problems that have plagued Cuba since the fall of the Soviet Union.

MYTH: The Cuban government is run by aging revolutionaries.

FACT: While Fidel Castro himself is in his seventies, a generational change is underway in the Cuban government and in Cuba's National Assembly. A number of senior government officials are in their forties and early fifties, and the Minister of Foreign Relations is in his thirties. The Cuban National Assembly is quite varied, with an average age of 43; 23% of the delegates are women. Additionally, Assembly members come from a range of backgrounds, including teachers, artists, intellectuals, journalists, etc.

MYTH: Political repression is responsible for the majority of Cuban emigration.

FACT: Most Cubans who leave the island today do so for economic reasons. The loss of trade and subsidies following the collapse of the Soviet Union, coupled with the U.S. embargo, have resulted in economic difficulties that have only recently begun to ease. The

migration of Cubans to the U.S. is encouraged by American immigration policy, which favors Cuban “refugees” over similar would-be migrants from other countries.

MYTH: The tumultuous history of U.S.-Cuba relations, including the decades-long embargo, has created feelings of overwhelming resentment and hostility among Cubans toward the American people.

FACT: While Cubans may criticize the U.S. government’s policy toward Cuba, and deplore the economic embargo, they distinguish between the American people and U.S. government policy. Far from resenting the United States, Cubans celebrate the social and cultural ties that have been traditionally shared by the citizens of the two countries, especially in the areas of music and athletics.

MYTH: Years of state tyranny have left Cuba without any civil society.

FACT: While Cuba has always had various civic and social clubs, the nature of its government — with a strong state that met most social needs, a dominant political party, and national officially recognized organizations for students, women, and other social groups — was not conducive to the development of Western-style non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The economic struggles of the 1990’s, however, have provided an opening for the emergence of autonomous and semi-autonomous NGOs. Numerous religious and community groups, including think-tanks and educational centers, now operate formally independent of the state, often with foreign assistance.

MYTH: In an effort to attract tourists to the country, the Cuban government has fostered the nation’s growing prostitution industry.

FACT: There is no doubt that prostitution has increased in Cuba, in response to internal economic difficulties and the growing tourist industry. Far from encouraging the sex trade, however, the government has actively worked to curb the burgeoning industry. Responses to the increase in prostitution included the passage of various laws in the late 1990’s designed to treat prostitution as a social problem.

MYTH: There is tourism apartheid in Cuba.

FACT: As in most tourist destinations in Latin America and the Caribbean, there is generally some economic disparity between the foreign tourists and the local population. As Cuba’s tourism industry has grown over the past decade, this economic disparity has become more apparent. While there is no official rule separating tourists from Cubans, most Cubans cannot afford to frequent tourist locations because most of them use U.S. dollars instead of Cuban pesos and cost more than most Cubans can afford. While it is disturbing that many Cubans cannot afford certain establishments in their own country, this does not constitute “tourist apartheid.” It resembles the situation in other Latin American and Caribbean nations with large tourism industries.

Myths and Facts about the Embargo

MYTH: To support easing the embargo and normalizing U.S. relations with Cuba is to support communism.

FACT: U.S. policy toward Cuba has not brought about political or economic change on the island over the last 40 years. Despite the embargo, the Castro regime has remained in power. On the other hand, the embargo has negatively affected the lives of the Cuban people—making humanitarian goods such as food and medicine scarce, and restricting person-to-person contact between the two nations (making it difficult for Cuban-Americans to visit their families in Cuba). — Ending the embargo simply means abandoning a failed policy, and replacing it with a more realistic approach.

MYTH: The United States does not trade with Cuba because of its human rights abuses against its citizens.

FACT: The United States maintains strong commercial and diplomatic ties with countries with much worse human rights records than Cuba, including China and Saudi Arabia. In fact, the U.S. policy of isolation toward Cuba makes the United States less able to encourage respect for human rights or a political opening in Cuba. Countries that engage with Cuba, such as Canada and members of the European Union, have had and continue to have more influence with the Cuban government.

Many experts believe that ending the decades-long hostility between the United States and Cuba would have a major impact on political dynamics on the island, and would lead to change in the human rights climate.

MYTH: The United States should wait until Fidel Castro retires or dies before it engages with Cuba.

FACT: Waiting for Castro to leave the scene before establishing relations with Cuba is unwise for many reasons. One should not assume that, after Castro departs, there will be fundamental change in Cuba's political and economic systems. It is short sighted to base an entire policy on hypotheticals—on the chance that someone might die or something might change. In the case that there is a sudden and drastic political transition in Cuba, a chaotic and unstable situation could result and have serious security implications for the United States. It would be advantageous for the United States and Cuba to have well established relationships between government agencies, NGOs, religious and business groups in the event of such a destabilization or in the event of a change in government.

MYTH: U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba represents the will of the majority of the American people.

FACT: U.S.-Cuba policy is an outcome of complex U.S. domestic political dynamics. Election politics in the key swing states of New Jersey and Florida have strongly influenced the public debate surrounding the embargo. Hard-line Cuban-American constituents in these states have affected policy direction through campaign contributions and extensive lobbying.

MYTH: Foreign companies who invest in Cuba are breaking international law by violating the Helms-Burton Act of 1996, which, among other things, allows U.S. citizens to advance claims in U.S. courts on former property that was nationalized by the Cuban government.

FACT: The unilateral nature of Helms-Burton and its dubious basis in international law have rendered the Act virtually illegitimate in the eyes of the international community. In

fact, Cuba's foreign investment and diplomatic ties with other countries have grown in recent years. Portions of Helms-Burton have been challenged in international bodies such as the World Trade Organization, preventing full implementation of the Act's legislation. Both the Clinton and Bush Administrations have waived the implementation of key sections of the law.

MYTH: American businesses have access to so many markets that the economic impacts of restricting trade with Cuba are negligible.

FACT: With over 11 million people, Cuba is a smaller market than China or Brazil. But economists estimate that if the U.S. were to normalize relations with Cuba, U.S. businesses could garner approximately \$1.6 billion in the first year of unrestricted trade liberalization. Such economic liberalization toward Cuba could also create up to 21,000 new jobs for U.S. citizens. (Stern Report, June 2000)

In 1998, Cuba imported \$625 million worth of foodstuffs from countries such as France, Canada, Argentina, Spain, Thailand, China and Mexico. (CIA Directorate of Intelligence, Cuba: Handbook of trade Statistics 1999) Due to its proximity to Cuba, the United States would have a comparative advantage over other countries that currently do business there, especially in the sale of food staples such as wheat and rice.

MYTH: The U.S. embargo is successfully isolating Cuba from investment and global integration.

FACT: The U.S. embargo has not only failed in its goal of isolating the Castro regime, but in fact, it has served to isolate the U.S. while other countries have benefited from investment in and trade with Cuba.

Without U.S. competition, China, Mexico, Canada, the European Union and other countries are capitalizing on the Cuban market. Foreign companies are investing in tourism, mining, telecommunications, and energy. According to the Cuban government's official figures, it has approved 345 joint ventures with 100% foreign-owned companies. Three free trade zones have been established with 223 foreign businesses in operation.



APPENDICES

Timeline of U.S.-Cuba relations: 1959-2002

- Before 1959** In 1953, Fidel Castro leads abortive attacks on Moncada army barracks in Santiago de Cuba, is arrested, tried, and imprisoned. In 1955, Castro is freed a under general amnesty and goes into exile in Mexico. In 1956, Castro and 81 followers aboard the yacht, Granma, land in Cuba and begin a campaign to overthrow President Fulgencio Batista.
- January 1, 1959** Fulgencio Batista flees Cuba. On Jan 2, Ernesto Che Guevara enters Havana and Fidel Castro enters Santiago de Cuba. The revolutionary forces assume control.
- October 19, 1960** A partial trade embargo against Cuba is declared by the U.S. government, following expropriation of U.S. businesses.
- January 3, 1961** The United States breaks diplomatic ties with Cuba, and travel to the island by U.S. citizens is banned.
- April 17, 1961** Cuban exiles, with the support of the U.S. Government, attempt to attack Cuba in the Bay of Pigs Invasion.
- January 22-31, 1962** The Organization of American States declares Marxism-Leninism incompatible with the inter-American system and suspends Cuba from membership.
- February 7, 1962** The partial trade embargo is expanded to include all trade, except non-subsidized food and medicine products.
- October 16-28, 1962** Soviet missiles are discovered in Cuba. After a tense confrontation with the United States, Soviet Premier Khrushchev agrees to withdraw the missiles and the United States agrees not to invade Cuba and to prevent other countries from doing so.
- December 23-24, 1962** Over 1,000 prisoners from the Bay of Pigs invasion arrive in Miami in exchange for \$53 million worth of food and medicine.
- July 8, 1963** The Treasury Department, using its authority under the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917, issues more restrictive Cuba Assets Control Regulations.
- Early 1970s** Selected OAS members (Peru, Argentina, Jamaica, Guyana, and Barbados) reestablish commercial ties with Cuba and Argentina extends credit to Cuba.

Early to mid 1970s	U.S.-Cuban tensions decline. The United States votes with other OAS members to end the multilateral sanctions against Cuba, while maintaining the unilateral embargo; the Carter Administration eases travel restrictions to Cuba, and the United States and Cuba open interests sections in each other's capitals.
April 22, 1980	Castro announces that anyone who wants to leave Cuba may do so. About 125,000 Cubans leave through the port of Mariel, reaching Florida by late September. The U.S. government classifies the <i>Marielitos</i> as "entrants, status undetermined" and interns them until claimed by relatives or other sponsors.
April 19, 1982	President Reagan re-institutes the travel ban.
May 20, 1985	U.S. government's Radio Martí begins broadcasting to Cuba.
February 1990	James Baker, U.S. Secretary of State under George Bush Sr., pointedly refuses to rule out the possibility of invading Cuba. The Bush Administration seeks to increase pressure on Cuba following the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe.
December 26, 1991	The collapse of the Soviet Union leaves Cuba without its chief economic and military support.
May 5, 1992	President Bush signs the "Cuban Democracy Act," which strengthens the embargo in order to increase economic pressure on Cuba.
September 9, 1994	In response to a large number of Cuban rafters who flee the island in the fall of 1994, the Clinton Administration signs an agreement with the Cuban government to permit 20,000 Cubans to enter the United States per year. Cuba agrees to curb the exodus of rafters.
February 1995	Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) introduces a bill designed to tighten the embargo on Cuba. The bill stalls in the Senate.
May 2, 1995	The United States announces that Cubans picked up at sea will be returned to Cuba, where they can apply at the U.S. Interests Section in Havana to be part of the 20,000 legal immigration quota.
Fall 1995	The Clinton Administration seeks to increase people-to-people contact between the United States and Cuba.
February 24, 1996	Two private planes from Miami-based Brothers to the Rescue are downed by the Cuban government, killing the four pilots.
February 26, 1996	President Clinton suspends direct flights to Cuba, halts family remittances, and tightens family travel. He announces his willingness to sign the Helms-Burton Act, which dramatically curtails presidential authority to loosen the embargo, places that power in the hands of Congress, and sets rigid legislative benchmarks for the kinds of changes which must take place in Cuba before relations can be normalized.
July 1996	President Clinton invokes presidential authority to waive, for a six-month period the, a section of the Helms-Burton Act that enables

- U.S. citizens to sue foreign investors in U.S. courts over claims that they were trafficking in the expropriated property of American citizens. This waiver has been periodically renewed up to the present.
- March 1997** The American Association for World Health releases a comprehensive report on the impact of the U.S. embargo on health and nutrition in Cuba.
- June 1997** Representatives Esteban Torres (D-CA), Jim Leach (R-IA), and others introduce the Cuban Humanitarian Trade Act of 1997 (HR 1951) in the House of Representatives. This legislation would lift the embargo on food and medicine to Cuba.
- November 6, 1997** Senators Christopher Dodd (D-CT), John Warner (R-VA) and a broad bipartisan group introduce the Cuban Women and Children Humanitarian Relief Act (S. 1391) in the Senate. The legislation would give the President discretionary authority to exempt the sale of food and medicine from the embargo.
- January 21-25, 1998** Pope John Paul II visits Cuba. He calls for moral renewal and reconciliation among Cubans and for the world to engage with Cuba.
- March 20, 1998** President Clinton announces three changes in U.S. policy toward Cuba: 1) the resumption of direct flights from the United States to Cuba for humanitarian purposes; 2) legalization of family remittances to Cuba of up to \$300 per quarter; and 3) the development of new procedures that would expedite the sale of medicine to Cuba.
- September 1998** Congressional session ends with no vote on Cuba legislation, but 19 co-sponsors in the House and 6 co-sponsors in the Senate.
- October 13, 1998** Senator John Warner (R-VA) and a bipartisan group of 14 Senators send a letter to President Clinton encouraging the establishment of a National Bipartisan Commission to review current U.S.-Cuba policy. This proposal is supported by former Secretaries of State Lawrence Eagleberger, Henry Kissinger, and George Shultz, former Majority Leader of the Senate Howard Baker, former Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci, former Under Secretary of State William Rogers, former Assistant Secretary of State Harry Shlaudeman, and former Senator Malcolm Wallop.
- January 5, 1999** President Clinton announces steps to revise some aspects of U.S. policy toward Cuba, including: 1) expanding remittances by allowing any U.S. resident, not just family members, to send up to \$1,200/year to individual Cuban families or to organizations independent of the government; 2) increasing people-to-people contacts by streamlining licensing and visa procedures for educational, cultural, humanitarian, religious, journalistic, and athletic exchanges; 3) authorizing the sale of food and agricultural inputs to independent non-governmental entities; 4) authorizing direct charter passenger flights to and from cities in addition to Miami and Havana; 5)

seeking to establish direct mail service to Cuba. An initiative to hold baseball games in Cuba and the United States between an American team and the Cuban National Team is announced. However, the president rejects the Warner proposal of a National Bipartisan Commission and the embargo remains fully intact.

- March 1999** Companion bills in the House and Senate proposing the exemption of food and medicine from the embargo are introduced by Representative Serrano (D-NY) and Senators John Warner (R-VA) and Christopher Dodd (D-CT). At least ten bills are introduced this congressional session on lifting the embargo, humanitarian trade, travel and cultural exchange, news bureaus exchanges, cash remittances, baseball, and scholarships by a variety of Members of Congress.
- March & May 1999** The Baltimore Orioles play baseball in Havana's Latinoamericano Stadium against the Cuban National Baseball Team and the Cuban team plays a second game against the Orioles at Camden Yards, Baltimore. Neither team wins on their home field.
- August 5, 1999** The Senate passes the Ashcroft Amendment which calls to end all unilateral sanctions on the sale of food and medicine worldwide (including Cuba, Libya, North Korea, Iran, Iraq, and Sudan).
- November 25, 1999** Elián Gonzalez, a young Cuban boy, is rescued off the coast of Florida and remains in the United States for 8 months (for most of the time under the care of distant relatives in Miami).
- 1999** An estimated 160,000 Americans visit Cuba, only 82,000 of whom have official Treasury Department licenses.
- April 6, 2000** Elián Gonzalez's Cuban family arrives in the United States. Elián's family then remains in the United States until the U.S. Attorney General, Janet Reno, rules that Elián can return home to Cuba.
- April 22, 2000** INS officials storm the house of Elián's Miami relatives and place the boy in the custody of the State.
- June 28, 2000** Elián Gonzalez returns to Cuba after months of legal and political battles between his Miami relatives, the Clinton Administration, his family in Cuba, and the Cuban government.
- July 2000** A bipartisan group of four Congressmen offer an amendment to the Treasury-Postal Appropriations Bill to ban Treasury Department funding for the enforcement of restrictions on travel by U.S. citizens to Cuba. This amendment passes 232 to 186. Representative Jerry Moran (R-KS) offers an amendment to the same bill that would also ban Treasury funds for enforcement of U.S. restrictions on the sale of food and medicine to Cuba, which passes 301 to 116.
- September 19, 2000** The U.S. International Trade Commission holds hearings to determine the economic impact of the embargo on the U.S.



- economy. Testimony is given by academics, economists, businesspeople, and NGO leaders from both sides of the debate.
- September 27, 2000** Eight prominent Republicans, including several former high-ranking government officials, urge an easing of the U.S. embargo on Cuba.
- October 18, 2000** After months of maneuvering by the House leadership, legislation to ease the food and medicine embargo on Cuba is passed in the Agriculture Appropriations Bill (the “Nethercutt compromise”) which actually takes a step backward. The sale of food and medicine to Cuba is allowed, yet Cuba cannot receive public or private U.S. financing in order to buy these products. They must either pay in cash or seek financing through third countries. The travel restrictions are also codified, removing the presidential power to modify them.
- February 2001** The International Trade Commission releases its report entitled, “The economic impact of U.S. sanctions with respect to Cuba.” The commission concludes that the embargo on Cuba costs U.S. exporters as much as \$1 billion annually. Critics say this figure is too low.
- March 22-24, 2001** Castro meets with Bay of Pigs veterans, CIA agents who organized Operation Mongoose, officials from the Kennedy Administration, and retired members of the Cuban military at a conference in Havana, 40 years after the Bay of Pigs invasion.
- June 8, 2001** Five Cubans are convicted in Miami federal court of espionage against U.S. military installations and U.S.-based Cuban exile groups. One of these convictions was found to be connected to the February 1996 shoot down of the “Brothers to the Rescue” planes.
- June 12, 2001** Senators Dodd (D-CT) and Chafee (R-RI) introduce broad-based legislation (“Bridges to the Cuban People Act”) in the Senate that would ease several different aspects of the embargo on Cuba. Identical legislation is introduced in the House by Reps. Serrano (D-NY) and Leach (R-IA). At the time of publication, there are 26 cosponsors in the Senate and 107 in the House.
- July 25, 2001** A new Member of Congress, Representative Jeff Flake (R-AZ), introduces an amendment to the Treasury-Postal Appropriations bill that would end enforcement of the travel ban to Cuba. This amendment passes 240-186. Directly following this vote, Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) introduces an amendment that would end enforcement of the entire embargo. This measure does not pass, but it garners 201 bipartisan votes (within 17 votes of victory).
- August 7, 2001** Twenty members of the CANF board of directors resign due to internal disputes. In October, these defectors form a new anti-Castro organization called the Cuban Liberty Council.
- September 11, 2001** Fidel Castro is the first foreign leader to send condolences to the United States following the terrorist attacks. He denounces

- terrorism, offers medical assistance to the United States, and pledges to ratify all 12 of the UN anti-terrorism treaties.
- September 2001** Several Senate bills meant to ease the embargo on Cuba are postponed due to the difficult political context following the September 11 attacks on the United States.
- September 20, 2001** Ana Belen Montes of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency is arrested and accused of spying for Cuba.
- October 16, 2001** The Bush Administration restricts the movement of Cuban diplomats in Washington to the area within the Beltway (reducing the area from 1,960 square miles to 273 square miles) due to the recent Cuban espionage charges.
- October 17, 2001** Russia closes its Lourdes listening station in Cuba, taking with it \$200 million in annual rent.
- November 4, 2001** Hurricane Michelle hits Cuba, killing 5 people, destroying thousands of homes, downing telephone and electricity lines, and wiping out citrus, coffee, tobacco, and sugar crops. The humanitarian crisis caused by Michelle prompts Cuba to purchase \$30 million worth of agricultural products from the United States, the first sale of U.S. goods to Cuba in over 40 years. In later months, the Cuban government purchases additional agricultural goods from the United States on a cash basis.
- January 11, 2002** Bush recess appoints Otto J. Reich, a conservative Cuban-American, to the position of Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemispheric Affairs, bypassing the Senate Judiciary Committee approval process for presidential appointments. Reich will maintain his position for one year from his appointment and then require a Senate hearing to remain in this post.
- January 2002** United States sends captured Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters to Guantanamo Naval Base in Cuba. The Cuban government agrees to cooperate with U.S. authorities if any prisoners escape.
- March 21, 2002** A bipartisan group of Members of the House of Representatives formally announces the founding of the "Cuba Working Group," whose mission is to ease the embargo on Cuba. Some of the founding members are Reps. Flake (R-AZ), Delahunt (D-MA), Emerson (R-MO), Snyder (D-AR), and Nethercutt (R-WA).

The material in this timeline was drawn from "Engagement or Isolation: How the International Community Approaches Cuba," produced by the Washington Office on Latin America, January 1997; "A New Inning for U.S.-Cuba Relations: A Media Guide for the U.S.-Cuba Baseball Games," produced by Americans for Humanitarian Trade with Cuba, Cuban-American Alliance Education Fund, Cuban Committee for Democracy, Latin American Working Group, Oxfam America, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, and the Washington Office on Latin America, March 1999; "The Last 40 Years," an article published in the Miami Herald, December 27, 1998; and from "Cuba and the United States: A Chronological History," Jane Franklin, 1997.



APPENDICES

Organizations on-record as opposing the embargo on food and medicine to Cuba

Churches/Religious Organizations

American Friends Service Committee, Latin America and Caribbean Programs
American Jewish Congress
Catholic Relief Services
Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, IL
Christian Reformed Church
Church of the Brethren, Washington Office
Church Women United
Church World Service
Episcopal Church, Office of Government Relations
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Franciscan Mission Service
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Jesuit Conference
Kentucky Inter-religious Taskforce on Central America
Maryknoll Missioners
Mennonite Central Committee
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
Network-A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Northeast Hispanic Catholic Center
Pax Christi USA-National Catholic Peace Movement
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism)
Rhode Island State Council of Churches
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
United Church of Christ, Office for Church in Society
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church in Society
United Methodist Church, General Board of Global Ministries
United States Catholic Conference

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Alliance for Responsible Cuba Policy
American Association of World Health
Center for International Policy
Cuban American Alliance Education Fund
Cuban American Women of the US
Cuban Committee for Democracy
Frontiers of Freedom Institute
Oxfam America
Washington Office on Latin America
World Policy Institute Cuba Project

Business/Trade

Americans for Humanitarian Trade with Cuba
USA*Engage (partial membership listed below)
National Foreign Trade Council, Inc.
United States Chamber of Commerce
Small Business Exporters Association
Construction Industry Manufacturers Association
Automotive Parts and Accessories Association
Grocery Manufacturers of America
North American Export Grain Association
Computer and Communications Industry Association
Manufacturers Alliance
Petroleum Equipment Suppliers Association
U.S. Association for International Business and Trade
International Wood Products Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
National Association of Manufacturers
The National Grange

- American Soybean Association
- American Feed Industry Association
- Emergency Committee for American Trade
- International Association of Geophysical Contractors
- Equipment Manufacturers Institute
- Food Distributors International
- Computing Technologies Industries Association
- European-American Business Council
- American Association of Exporters and Importers
- Alamar Associates
- American Farm Bureau Federation
- American Medical Device Manufacturers
- American Rice, Inc.
- Archer Daniels Midland
- Beaumont Rice Mills
- Cargill Corporation
- Cattlemen's Association
- Contigroup Companies
- Illinois Soybean Association
- Medical Device Manufacturers Association
- Mississippi Black Farmers and Agriculturists Association
- National Association of Wheat Growers
- National Barley Growers Association
- National Cattlemen's Beef Association
- National Chicken Council
- National Coalition of 100 Black Women
- National Corn Growers Association
- National Farmers Union
- National Milk Producers Federation
- National Oilseed Processors Association
- North American Millers Association
- Port of Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- Port of Beaumont, Texas
- Port of Gulfport, Mississippi
- Port of Oakland
- Rice Belt Warehouses, Inc.
- South Carolina State Port Authority
- Texas Farm Bureau
- Texas Ports Association
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- U.S. Millers' Association
- U.S. Rice Producers Association
- U.S. Seed Grain Council
- U.S. Wheat Associates
- USA Rice Federation
- Wheat Export Trade Education Committee

Unions

- American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
- United Auto Workers of America

This list was compiled by the Latin America Working Group



APPENDICES

Talking points on Cuba and U.S. national security/terrorism

In the heated atmosphere after the September 11th attacks, you may have heard charges that Cuba is a “state sponsor of terrorism” or a “threat to U.S. security and global stability.” The information below is intended to be helpful to you in addressing these kinds of charges.

1. The U.S. government has repeatedly concluded that Cuba poses no security threat to the United States.

A. Cuba has not been named as a state that possesses biological or chemical weapons. Cuba was not mentioned in the Defense Department’s 2000 report of worrisome states pursuing or possessing biological and chemical weapons. (www.defenselink.mil/pubs/chembio02012000.pdf)

B. Cuba has not been listed as a nation that possesses weapons of mass destruction or advanced conventional munitions. Cuba was not listed as a threat in a 2000 CIA report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions. (www.cia.gov/cia/publications/bian/bian_sept_2001.html)

C. Several U.S. government agencies have reported that Cuba poses no security threat to the U.S. According to a November 1997 report entitled, “The Cuban Threat to National Security” issued by the Defense Intelligence Agency in conjunction with the CIA, Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, National Security Agency, and the U.S. Southern Command Joint Intelligence Center, “Cuba does not pose a significant security threat to the U.S. or to other countries in the region.” In 1998, the Pentagon reported the same findings to the U.S. Congress. (www.defenselink.mil/pubs/cubarpt.htm)

D. Cuban military and defense spending has been cut substantially in the last decade. It is clear that this is not a priority for the Cuban government. The Cuban government cut their military’s size by 50 percent after the 1989 demise of the Soviet bloc. A Center for Defense Information study notes that Cuba spends in one year on its military what the U.S. spends in 17½ minutes. In March 1998, General Charles Wilhelm, then-commander of the U.S. Southern Command, said that the quality and character of the Cuban armed forces had changed significantly since the collapse of the Soviet Union, adding “we have

convincing evidence that as much as 70 percent of the effort of the existing force is being expended on agricultural and other self-sustaining activities" ("Cuban Military No Threat, Turns to Farming," Anthony Boadle, Reuters, March 31, 1998).

2. The Cuban government denounces terrorism in general and spoke out strongly against the September 11th terrorist attacks on the U.S.

A. The Cuban government has publicly and repeatedly denounced the September 11th terrorist attacks on the United States. The Cuban government released an official statement on September 11th denouncing the attacks, stating:

[T]he Government of our country strongly rejects and condemns the attacks against the aforementioned facilities and hereby expresses its most heartfelt sympathies to the American people for the painful, unjustifiable loss of human lives resulting from such attacks. In this bitter hour, our people commiserate with the people of the United States and express their full willingness to cooperate within its modest possibilities with the health institutions and any other medical or humanitarian organization of that country in treating, caring for and rehabilitating the victims caused by this morning's events (<http://cubaofia.vze.com>).

B. The Cuban government has made statements pledging its support to ending world terrorism. In statements made on September 11, 2001, Fidel Castro proclaimed that "this event should serve to create an international movement against terrorism," adding that the international community should cooperate to "end world terrorism, create a world of conscience against terrorism" ("Cuba's Castro Offers Humanitarian Aid for U.S., Condemns Attacks," Agence France Presse, September 12, 2001). In a September 22nd speech, Fidel Castro said, "Cuba reiterates its willingness to cooperate with every country in the total eradication of terrorism" (<http://cubaofia.vze.com>).

C. The Cuban government supports UN efforts to fight terrorism. Cuba has agreed to ratify the 12 conventions and protocols on international terrorism as called for by the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. These conventions include suppressing the financing of terrorism, providing early warning, cooperating in criminal investigations, and exchanging information on possible terrorist attacks.

3. Despite statements by U.S. government agencies that Cuba does not pose a security threat to the U.S. and the Cuban government's public opposition to terrorism, Cuba remains on the U.S. State Department's list of terrorist nations.

A. Cuba, unlike other countries on the terrorist list, has not pursued in recent years, and has no apparent plans to pursue, acts of international terrorism. On the other hand, countries on the list, like Iraq and Libya, have planned and sponsored international terrorism in recent years, including the year 2000.

B. The rationale used by the State Department to keep Cuba on the terrorist list is flimsy at best. In a report entitled, "Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2000," the U.S. State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Counter-terrorism did not report any terrorist acts sponsored by Cuba itself. Instead, it reported that "Cuba continued to provide safe haven to several terrorists and U.S. fugitives in the year 2000" (www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgrpt/2000/). The report listed the following examples:

- 1) Cuba harbors Basque terrorists. There are a number of Basque separatists that have been living in Cuba for many years. However, they are there as the result of an understanding between the Spanish and Cuban governments, rather than because Cuba is "harboring" them.
- 2) Cuba has maintained ties with the Colombian guerrilla forces, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN). In fact, Cuba has facilitated meetings between these guerilla organizations and the Colombian government, in an attempt to broker peace in a country ravaged by a thirty-seven year civil war.
- 3) There are a number of fugitives from the U.S. living in Cuba. There are non-terrorist U.S. fugitives living in Cuba, in large part, because there is no extradition treaty between the U.S. and Cuba. No such treaty exists due to the U.S.' longstanding policy of diplomatic and commercial isolation of Cuba.

C. None of these aforementioned groups in Cuba are planning or participating in terrorist activities. In off-the-record statements, State Department officials have asserted that there is no evidence that any of these groups are planning or carrying out terrorist operations from Cuba.

D. Cuba is on the list of terrorist nations because of domestic political considerations rather than actual security determinations. It would be politically difficult to remove Cuba from the terrorist list because highly vocal and influential Cuban-American hard-liners would fiercely oppose such measures.

E. There are real terrorist threats facing the U.S.; Cuba is not one of them. In light of the events of September 11, 2001, it is clear that there are real terrorist threats to the U.S. that need to be addressed. Afghanistan is not included on the list of terrorist nations, while Cuba is. Considering that Cuba does not pose a terrorist threat, it is distracting and counterproductive for it to remain on the State Department list merely because of domestic political considerations.

End the embargo on Cuba

Educate your Members of Congress

Important initiatives that would ease the U.S. embargo on Cuba will be debated in Congress in the coming years. These include legislation that would lift financing restrictions on the sale of food and medicine to Cuba, remove restrictions preventing U.S. citizens from traveling to Cuba, and any other legislation that would ease the U.S. embargo on Cuba.

The top 5 reasons to ease the embargo on Cuba:

1. A majority of American citizens want to see an end to the embargo on Cuba. An October 2000 public opinion poll found that over 85% of Americans think the U.S. should ease restrictions on the sale of food and medicine to Cuba (Florida International University poll).
2. A majority of Members of Congress have repeatedly voted in favor of easing the embargo on Cuba. On July 25, 2001, the House of Representatives voted 240-186 to end enforcement of the ban on travel to Cuba. In a subsequent vote, 201 bipartisan Members of the House voted to end enforcement of the entire embargo. While there has never been a specific vote on travel in the Senate, a bipartisan majority of Senators have voted in the past to ease other aspects of the embargo. Despite widespread congressional support, pressure and maneuvering from individuals in the House leadership have prevented such efforts from moving forward.
3. The embargo is bad for business. The embargo prevents U.S. businesses from exporting goods to Cuba. A February 2001 report by the International Trade Commission found that the U.S. loses up to \$1 billion a year due to lost trade with Cuba. With the 2001 downturn in the U.S. economy and an agriculture industry seeking new markets, prohibiting trade with Cuba limits the growth of U.S. industries.
4. The embargo hurts the Cuban people, not the Cuban government. Financing restrictions on the sale of food and medicine to Cuba restricts the sale of these humanitarian products to Cuba. In the past decade, the Cuban people have suffered from food shortages and a general decline in health status, while the Cuban government remains intact.
5. The embargo is a failed policy. For the past 40 years, the U.S. has maintained an embargo against Cuba in hopes of destabilizing and ultimately ending the Castro regime. In its forty years, this policy has been completely ineffective in achieving this goal.

To find the contact information for your Members of Congress, see <http://www.house.gov> for your Representative and <http://www.senate.gov> for your Senators, or call the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121.



APPENDICES

Talking points on food and medicine, and travel

The U.S. should allow for the unrestricted sale of humanitarian products to Cuba.

- 1) Restricting the sale of food and medicine to Cuba hurts the Cuban people, not the Cuban government. Over the past decade, Cuba has suffered from shortages in food and medical supplies. These shortages resulted partly from the weaknesses of the Cuban economy, but were exacerbated by U.S. sanctions on these products. Lack of access to U.S. markets forces Cuba to spend scarce dollars on higher priced foodstuffs and medicines from other countries, while paying higher shipping costs, and denies Cubans access to new drugs available only under U.S. patents, including pediatric anti-cancer medicines. But, the Castro government remains intact, despite the hardships suffered by the Cuban people.
- 2) Unilateral sanctions on humanitarian products, such as food and medicine, have been ineffective in influencing the Cuban regime for the past 40 years. The Cuban government has survived despite the food and medicine embargo, including surviving through a severe economic contraction caused by the end of Soviet support. On May 11, 1999, then- Secretary of Agriculture, Dan Glickman, testified before the Senate Agriculture Committee that “we have found too often that sanctions on food and medicine have no influence on the behavior of governing regimes...[I]nstead they may harm vulnerable citizens, who may be denied basic tools of survival.”
- 3) Selling food and medicine to Cuba would not harm U.S. security. In April 1999, former Undersecretary of State Stuart E. Eizenstat announced the findings of a year-long sanctions review carried out by the Clinton Administration. One key finding was that “[s]ales of food, medicine and other human necessities do not generally enhance a nation’s military capabilities or support terrorism...On the contrary, funds spent on agricultural commodities and products are not available for other less desirable uses.” On June 21, 2000, Congressman George Nethercutt (R-WA) was quoted in the *Dallas Morning News* as saying, “Cuba will not be able to threaten the U.S. with the wheat they buy from American farmers.”
- 4) Unilateral sanctions on Cuba hinder U.S. commercial interests. As world-wide commodity prices continue to fall and U.S. farmers and exporters suffer the effects, legislative efforts to end sanctions on food and medicine to Cuba offer an opportunity to aid our agricultural producers by allowing them access new markets. A June 2000 report by the Stern Group projected that the U.S. could export \$105 million worth of food and agricultural products and \$6 million in medical supplies to Cuba within the first year of partial liberalization, and \$1 billion worth of food and agricultural products and \$600 million in medical supplies per year in an unrestricted trade scenario.

Travel Restrictions are Unnecessary and Infringe upon Americans' Right to Travel.

1) Travel restrictions infringe upon American citizens' right to travel. Former Supreme Court Justice William Douglas said, "[F]reedom of movement is the very essence of our free society, setting us apart...it often makes all other rights meaningful." Many Americans are curious about Cuba and want to see it for themselves and make their own judgements about it. Some would simply like to vacation on a Caribbean island. There is no compelling reason to prevent Americans from traveling to Cuba. While the Supreme Court has allowed travel bans on the basis of national security in the past, several U.S. government agencies have declared that Cuba is no longer a security threat to the United States (see below). Yet, Congress and the Administration continue to uphold travel restrictions to Cuba, while simultaneously allowing Americans the right to travel to other communist nations, including North Korea, China, and Vietnam.

2) Cuba is not a security threat to the U.S. or its citizens. A number of U.S. government agencies have reported that Cuba poses no security threat to the U.S. A November 1997 report entitled, "The Cuban threat to U.S. National Security" issued by the Defense Intelligence Agency, the CIA, the Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, the National Security Agency, and the U.S. Southern Command Joint Intelligence Center reported that "Cuba does not pose a significant military threat to the U.S. or other countries in the region." In 1998, the Pentagon reported the same findings to the U.S. Congress. Additionally, Cuba was not mentioned in the Defense Department's 2000 report of worrisome states pursuing or possessing biological and chemical weapons, nor was Cuba listed as a threat in a 2000 CIA report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions.

3) Travel restrictions prevent exchange and understanding between the two nations. The travel ban severely limits opportunities to promote cultural understanding between Cubans and Americans and impedes improved relations between the two countries. Increased contact between Americans and Cubans would help dispel stereotypes and promote mutual understanding. Some critics of the Cuban government also believe that increased contact between Americans and Cubans would facilitate democratic change on the island. Former Congressman Mark Sanford (R-SC) commented, "We're not going to weaken Castro's grip on power by keeping Americans from traveling there. If we want to create change in Cuba, let good, average American citizens interface with Cubans."

4) The benefits of cultural exchange outweigh the costs of "propping up the regime." Supporters of travel restrictions to Cuba argue that U.S. citizens traveling to Cuba would generate income for the Cuban government and thus prop up the regime. It is certainly true that U.S. travelers would spend money in Cuba, and that the profits would go to Cuban state enterprises (or Cuban-European joint ventures). If millions of American tourists were to visit Cuba, this would boost the Cuban economy significantly. But the benefits of exchange between Americans and Cubans far outweigh whatever may be the costs of strengthening the Cuban economy. In addition, the notion that by denying the Cuban government revenue from U.S. travelers we are undermining the regime is simply wrong. Cuba has survived without U.S. tourism for many years, and a strategy of starving the Cuban government by restricting U.S. travel is ineffective since millions of tourists from Canada and Europe visit the island each year.



APPENDICES

Web resources on Cuba

News

Buro de Prensa Independiente de Cuba
<http://www.cubanet.org/descuba.html>

Cuba Net
<http://www.cubanet.org>

Granma
<http://www.granma.cu>
(English and Spanish, plus four other languages)

Miami Herald
<http://www.miami.com/mld/miami/>

National News Agency, Cuba
<http://www.ain.cubaweb.cu/english/index2.html>

El Nuevo Herald
<http://www.miami.com/mld/elnuevo/>

Radio Martí (Spanish)
<http://www.ibb.gov/marti/>

Radio Habana (Spanish)
<http://www.radiohc.org/>

Washington Post
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/world/americas/caribbean/cuba/>

Human Rights, Religious, Development & Policy Organizations

(The following organizations represent a range of political views on Cuba. Some support the embargo and some oppose it.)

AfroCuba Web
<http://www.afrocubaweb.com>

Alliance for a Responsible Cuba Policy
<http://www.responsiblecubapolicy.com>

American Association for the Advancement of Science
<http://www.shraas.org.rtt>

American Friends Service Committee
<http://www.afsc.org>

Amnesty International 2001 Human Rights Report
<http://web.amnesty.org/web/ar2001.nsf/webamrcountries/CUBA?OpenDocument>

Catholic Relief Services
<http://www.catholicreliefservices.org>

Center for Cuban Studies
<http://www.cubaupdate.org>

Center for Defense Information
<http://www.cdi.org/issues/cuba>

Center for a Free Cuba
<http://www.cubacenter.org>

Center for International Policy
<http://ciponline.org/cuba>

Cuba Facts
<http://www.cubafacts.com>

CubaNet.org
<http://cubanet.org>

Cuba Policy Foundation
<http://cubapolicyfoundation.org>

Cuba Solidarity
<http://www.cubasolidarity.net>

Cuban American Alliance and Education Fund
<http://www.cubamer.org>

Cuban American National Foundation
<http://www.canfnet.org>

Cuban Committee for Democracy
<http://www.ccdusa.org>

Disarm Education Fund
<http://www.disarm.org>

Free Cuba Foundation
<http://www.fiu.edu/~fcf/>

Friends Committee for National Legislation
<http://www.fcnl.org/issues/int/cubindx.htm>

Fund for Reconciliation and Development
<http://www.ffrd.org>

Giraldilla.com
<http://www.giraldilla.com>

Global Exchange
<http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/cuba/>

IFCO/Pastors for Peace
<http://www.ifconews.org/cuba.html>

Latin America Working Group
<http://www.lawg.org/cuba.htm>

Lexington Institute
<http://www.lexingtoninstitute.org/cuba>

Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs
<http://www.loga.org/latinam.html#Cuba>

National Council of Churches of Christ
<http://www.ncccusa.org>

Oxfam America
<http://www.oxfamamerica.org>

U.S.-Cuba Sister Cities Association
<http://www.uscscsa.com>

U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council
<http://www.cubatrade.org/index>

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
<http://www.uusc.org/programs/index.html>

Washington Office on Latin America
<http://www.wola.org>

Witness for Peace
<http://www.witnessforpeace.org/sites/cuba.html>

Business Groups

Alamar Associates
<http://www.alamarcuba.com>

AmCham Cuba
<http://www.amchamcuba.org>

Americans for Humanitarian Trade with Cuba
<http://www.ahtc.org>

USA*ENGAGE
<http://www.usaengage.org/resources/cubanewstand.html>

U.S. Chamber of Commerce
http://www.uschamber.org/_Political+Advocacy/Issues+Index/International+and+Trade/Regional+and+Multilateral/Western+Hemisphere/Free+Trade+Area+of+the+Americas/default.htm

U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council
<http://www.cubatrade.com>

Academic Institutions

American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)
<http://aaas.org>

Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy
<http://www.lanic.utexas.edu/la/cb/cuba/asce> or
<http://www.ascecuba.org>

Cornell University Cuba Working Group
<http://garak.msc.cornell.edu/~plh2/cuba>

Cuba Megalinks
<http://www.laker.net/nike/megalinks.html>

The Cuban Collection at the Otto G. Richter Library, University of Miami
<http://www.library.miami.edu/archives/cuban.html>

Cuba Project, Queens College and Graduate School, CUNY
<http://www.soc.qc.edu/procuba/>

Cuban Research Institute, Florida International University
<http://www.fiu.edu/~lacc/cri>

Cuban Studies Institute, Tulane University
<http://cuba.tulane.edu>

Cuban Universities (Universidades de la República de Cuba)

http://www.web.net/cuba_university/#menu

David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard University

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~drclas>

Georgetown University Caribbean Project's Cuba Program

<http://www.georgetown.edu/sfs/programs/clas/Caribe/Cuba.htm>

Georgetown University-Center for Latin American Studies:

<http://cfdev.georgetown.edu/pdba/Countries/Countries.cfm?ID=12>

Information Services Latin America (ISLA) of the Data Center

<http://www.igc.apc.org/isla>

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

<http://www.macfdn.org>

Latin American Studies Association (LASA)

<http://www.pitt.edu/~lasa>

Social Science Research Council:

<http://www.ssrc.org/programs/cuba/>

University of Texas Latin American Network Information Center Cuba Information (UT-LANIC) (managed by ILAS, funded by Mellon and Ford)

<http://www.lanic.utexas.edu/la/ca/cuba>

U.S. Government Agencies

CIA World Fact Book 2001

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

<http://www.usaid.gov/countries/cu/>

U.S. Dept. of State-Background Information on Cuba

<http://www.state.gov/p/wha/ci/index.cfm?id=2461>

U.S. Dept. of State Cuba Human Rights Report, 2000

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/wha/index.cfm?docid=751>

U.S. Dept. of State Human Rights web page

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/hr/>

U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control (pdf.doc)

<http://www.treas.gov/ofac/t11cuba.pdf>

Cuban Government Agencies

Castro Speeches

<http://www.lanic.utexas.edu/la/cb/cuba/castro.html>

Cuban Constitutions

<http://www.georgetown.edu/LatAmerPolitical/Constitutions/Cuba/cuba.html>

Cuban Interests Section

<http://geocities.com/cubainte/english/index-english.htm>

Government of Cuba

<http://www.cubaweb.cu/eng/index.asp>

Other Cuban Organizations (Spanish)

Casa de las Americas

<http://www.casa.cult.cu>

Centro de Formación Cívica y Religiosa de la Diócesis de Pinar del Río, Cuba

<http://www.vitral.org>

Christian Center for Reflection and Dialogue

<http://www.nodo50.org/ccrd/firstin.html>

Felix Varela Center

<http://www.cfvarela.org>

La Iglesia Católica de Cuba

<http://www.nacub.org/index>

In the case that some of these web links change, please see the basic web address ending with .org, .edu, or .com and search the individual web site for Cuba related information.



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ISBN# 0-929513-47-9