

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

CUBA, ARE SANCTIONS WORKING?

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ABSTRACT

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The United States has imposed economic sanctions, travel restrictions and severed diplomatic ties with Cuba in order to create conditions for an economic collapse and regime change. Washington's policy toward Cuba has not changed in the last seven administrations. Unilateral sanctions are extremely difficult to bring significant change with today's technology and globalization. After a detailed research on the "Ways" of US Policy toward Cuba, this research paper suggests a modification with five steps in order to reach Washington's endstate.

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CUBA, ARE SANCTIONS WORKING?

This paper will review the United States (US) policies on Cuba and assess whether the current policy is working or not. Surprisingly, the nine presidential administrations since 1959, both Democratic and Republican, have been consistent with their strategy on Fidel Castro and have had only one objective: to create an economic collapse and see a regime change focusing on a democratic government. First, it is necessary to go back over the nearly 200 years of history concerning Cuba and US relations in order to fully understand the context of the issues today. It remains "unclear which country began the long spiral of antagonism which (has led) to the longest trade embargo of modern history."¹ The events are laid out chronologically in this paper to assist in understanding the complicated relationship, their affects not only on the US and Cuba, but on other countries as well. The aim of this paper is to review the sanctions that the US has imposed on Cuba, and to determine if there are any other means available to reach Washington's objective as stated above.

BACKGROUND (US AND CUBAN RELATIONS)

The relationship of the US towards Cuba and its people has been from one extreme with the lack of US support in their fight for their independence, to the other extreme with the greed of big business wanting to control Cuba. Cuba has struggled as far back as the 1800's when they were under the rule of Spain. Before analyzing current relations, a short explanation of Cuba's history in relation to the US will explain the rationale for the love and hate relationship with America and our policies. The perception of the Cuban people on their dislike of America will show why the last 55 years have been unpredictable and why US policy towards this small island has been so controversial.

1800-1902

Most of the Latin America states gained their independence in the early 1800's, but Cuba along with Puerto Rico and Panama remained colonies of Spain. There are several factors why Cuba did not break away from Spain. The first being, that the rebels, who wanted independence from Spain, were poorly organized. Second, was that the independent fighters in the Latin American States who had gained independence were exhausted and the will to continue to free all states had reached a climax.

The first indicator, of many, that the US was not concerned with the people of Cuba was when the US indicated it was not in favor of their independence. In 1823 the Monroe Doctrine was established, which was a formal agreement with European powers. "President Monroe and

his Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, were not willing to risk war for nations they did not know would survive.”² President Monroe did not want the European powers to intervene in the American region with any state that had claimed their independence, but for those that were still under control of a European power, such as Cuba with Spain, the US would not intervene with “rebellious colonies.”³ Although the US favored less European influence in the area, Washington was not comfortable with Cuba's independence. The small island would not be able to defend itself from a European power nation. The British had used Cuba as a staging base in the British-American War of 1812, and it was still a recent reminder to the US administration. Ironically, Washington's reason became reality one hundred forty years later during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1963.

However, the US had visions of annexation, as did many Cubans. In fact, John Quincy Adams wrote a letter to the US Minister in Spain indicating US interest in the annexation of Cuba. It would provide a source of stability in the region and would guarantee access to the US Market for Cuban goods.⁴ The southern states found the idea of annexation extremely beneficial. There were slave revolts throughout the Caribbean and the annexation “would add another slave state and strengthen the South's negotiating position in relation to the North.”⁵

On the other hand the administration was concerned what a free Cuba would do for slaves in the Southern States. In 1825, the new Secretary of State, Henry Clay remarked, “Would not the freed slaves of Cuba be tempted by the very fact of that independence to employ all means which vicinity, similarity of origin and sympathy could supply, to foment and stimulate insurrection (among the slaves of the southern states)?”⁶

In 1868, Cuba began their fight for independence. It was a ten year fight with horrific fighting and brutality from both the rebels and the Spaniards. The Cuban rebels tried to arrange military expeditions from US soil, but Washington did not oblige, because of the agreement with Spain and the Monroe Doctrine. The Rebels lost and an Armistice was signed leaving Cuba still under the control of Spain. The devastation of years of fighting cost plantation owners dearly, many who could not pay their mortgages lost their land in foreclosures. Many of those plantations ended up in American hands. The Cubans were resentful that the US did not help their cause for independence.

“Economic integration increased and by 1894 Cuba accounted for three-quarters of all Latin America's exports to the US and more than half of Latin America's total imports from the US went to the island.”⁷ Trade was important to the US with the depression in 1898 and annexation of Cuba again became a desire of Washington. Whereas in Cuba the idea of annexation to the US and independence from Spain remained divided amongst the population.

Slavery was no longer an issue since it was abolished both in the US and in Cuba, but blacks still sought independence and related it to human rights. Spain did not allow any representation from the blacks or the poor white communities. Any delegation of voting rights was made to the middle or higher class, of which approximately half were Spaniards living in Cuba. Cuba was still under martial law, which had been imposed by Spain seventy years earlier, and freedom of the press as well as assembly or associations were strictly forbidden. The US was not in favor of martial law and during the depression (mid 1890's), imposed the Wilson-Gorman tariff on raw sugar exports from Cuba. This tactic was not hurting Spain as much as the Cubans themselves. This was Cuba's number one export. Spain responded with discriminatory tariffs on US imports to Cuba. It seems throughout this period that both the Spaniards and Americans were battling each other and the Cubans were caught in the middle. Lower exports in Cuba reduced wages and higher import tariffs caused higher prices for goods.

A military revolt in 1895 was another attempt to pull away from the grip of Spain. Three Cubans, José Martí, Máximo Gomez, and Antonio Macea spearheaded this revolt. Martí was the key leader in pushing for independence and he was revered by Cubans. He spent fifteen years in the US and desperately wanted Cuba's independence and not US annexation. Throughout Martí's life his writings both favored and criticized the US. Cubans compared him to Thomas Jefferson in the US with his thoughts of ideological persuasions. He did not like US capitalism and referred to it in a famous unfinished letter: "It is my duty to prevent, through the independence of Cuba, the USA from spreading over the West Indies and falling with added weight upon other lands of Our America. . . . I know the monster because I have lived in its lair, and my weapon is the slingshot of David."⁸ Fidel Castro uses Martí's writings (unfavorable ones) in many of his speeches.

After Martí's death in May of 1895 during a skirmish with the Spaniards, the war turned badly, "Cuba lost one sixth of its population to combat or disease".⁹ Washington finally entered the war on the rebels' behalf on 25 April 1898, when the USS Maine was mysteriously blown up in the harbor of Havana. This was the justification used by the US to enter the war. Of course, many Cubans believed that the USS Maine was blown up by Americans to justify their intervention. The war extended to Puerto Rico and the Philippines, and ended in an overwhelming success for the US on 17 July 1898.

Recently during Operation Iraqi Freedom, in the spring of 2003, a Marine raised the American flag after a fierce battle in an Iraqi city and it caused an uproar around the world. It was the same situation in Cuba 105 years ago. The US flag and not the Cuban flag was raised as the Spaniards withdrew. To add to Cuban resentment of the US, Washington filled the

administrative posts in Cuba with Americans and not Cubans. During the war the Cuban rebels and the US troops had had difficult relations. This was exasperated by American troops using racial epithets against Cuban rebels who were mostly black.

The US occupied Cuba for five years following their independence from Spain. Washington drafted a set of articles; known as the Platt Amendment which set up the basic guidelines for US and Cuban relations, and despite Cuban resistance, the articles were implemented in 1903. Article III specifically stated "That the government of Cuba consents that the US may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty..."¹⁰ Article VII gave the US the right to acquire land for naval stations, providing the legal basis for the base at Guantánamo Bay.¹¹ In return, the US agreed to pull US troops from the Island. Seventy-five years after the rest of Latin America won their freedom; Cuba was independent on 20 May 1902.

1906-1964

The US occupied Cuba two more times following their independence. The first time was from 1906 to 1909 and again from 1917 to 1922.¹² Both events were in response to unrest after elections from political party disputes. It was a political game; the losing party would cause a disturbance to get outside intervention. Although the occupation was legal through the Platt Amendment, it increased nationalistic resentment. The US became an active participant in Cuban politics.

During the Revolution of 1933 praetorianism occurred under the control of ex-Sergeant Fulgencio Batista. Batista became the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and was backed by Washington. The Platt Amendment was abrogated in 1934, leaving all political control to Colonel Batista. He exercised governmental control through a series of six puppets until he was elected president in 1940. He served as president until 1944 when he was defeated by opponents Ramón Grau San Martín (1944-1948) and Carlos Prío (1948-1952). General Batista emerged again when he seized power during the 1952 elections (he was in third place in the polls). By this time Batista was less concerned about popular support, his programs and economic structure weakened with each year of his leadership. He postponed scheduled elections and used increased brutality against any opponents. He nearly escaped an assassination attempt in 1957.¹³

Throughout the 1950's Cuba was the American playground. US citizens, particularly businessmen would travel to Havana to drink, gamble and enjoy the beaches. Prostitution was

rampant. American corporations dominated the land and industry. The American Mafia also made a foothold on the small island. A French journalist, Jean Daniel printed an article that supposedly quoted President Kennedy's remarks just days before his assassination in Dallas: "I believe there is no country in the world, including all of the African regions ... where economic colonization, humiliation and exploitation were worse than Cuba, in part owing to my country's policies during the Batista regime ... I will go even further: to some extent it is as though Batista was the incarnation of a number of sins on the part of the United States."¹⁴ Cubans witnessed first hand the party life of wealthy US businessmen and "many Cubans resented this foreign control over their country".¹⁵

The next Cuban revolution was in 1959 and it brought Fidel Castro to power and ousted General Batista. During the revolution, the US backed Batista who used increasingly brutal tactics. Castro had attended Havana University, was involved with left-wing politics and he was a self proclaimed Marxist. The US concern about communism led them to continue to support and supply arms to Batista. The Batista government and the US were closer than ever until Batista began bombing civilians with US supplied munitions. The US was not supportive of his tactics as the Cuban middleclass became the primary targets and this was bad for business. As the violence increased the Eisenhower Administration began to distance itself from Batista, but American businessmen maintained close ties. Many Cubans thought that Washington was partly responsible for the spilled blood. Batista refused to cooperate with Washington until it was too late, and Castro moved into Havana on 1 January 1959. Thousands of Cubans fled Cuba, mostly to the US and particularly to Florida. Castro tried to conceal his Marxist beliefs from the public in order to gain public support. The American media countered quickly by accusing his regime of communism.¹⁶

On 17 May 1959, Castro enacted the Cuban Land Reform Act (also known as Agrarian Reform Law) which prohibited personal ownership of farms greater than 1000 acres, knowing that most US owned land was in excess of that limit. The government annexed that land for its own use. Relations with the Soviet Union tightened and nine months (Feb '60) after the annexation, Castro hosted the Soviet Union's Foreign Minister, resulting in oil and sugar trade with the Soviet Union. Cuba also received Soviet loans and technological aid. President Eisenhower's reaction was the elimination of all sugar imports from Cuba with the American Sugar Bill in July of 1960. Cuba's export of sugar to the US at that time was 70% of its total export.¹⁷

US and British oil companies based in Cuba refused to refine Soviet crude oil. Cuba's counter reaction was the nationalization of all American and British properties. Castro

eventually confiscated all land held by US citizens, a total of 48 companies totaling almost \$1.2 billion in property. The US responded with an economic embargo in October of 1960, on all US goods except for food and medicine. As the tension built, Cuba cut diplomatic ties on 3 January 1961.¹⁸

Castro declared Cuba a socialist state on 16 April 1961, just one day before the disastrous US backed Bay of Pigs Invasion (an attempt to overthrow the Castro regime). The CIA had trained approximately 1300 Cuban exiles for the invasion and those who were not killed were taken prisoner. Following the imprisonment of the Cuban exiles, President Kennedy passed the Foreign Assistance Act, which established a total embargo on US trade with Cuba in Proclamation 3447.¹⁹

Less than a year later the Organization of American States (OAS) suspended Cuba as a member. On 3 February 1962, only 12 days after the OAS exiled Cuba, President Kennedy initiated the Trading with the Enemy Act which was originally used in 1917 during the First World War. This was the first fully imposed economic sanction against Cuba. Shortly after the economic sanction was imposed, Cuba began food rationing (March 1962). This step at the time looked promising for the economic collapse of the Castro Regime.²⁰

On 8 July 1963, the Soviet Nuclear Missile Crisis occurred. This was the most serious incident with the possibility of all out nuclear war with the Soviet Union, and tensions were extremely high, both in the US and the Soviet Union. The US intolerance towards Cuba had hit its all time high and from this point forward there was a major shift in Washington's attitude toward Cuba. A new Legislative Act was put in place, the Cuban Assets Control Regulations Act which forbade US citizens from engaging in any commercial or financial relations with Cuba. The only exception was conducting business through foreign subsidiaries of US companies.²¹

In 1964, the US cut off diplomatic ties with all the other Latin American countries except Mexico, because of Cuban-sponsored political and guerilla activities throughout Latin America. In 1968 the Cuban government nationalized most of the private sector. Cuba became a member of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance with the Soviet Union in July of 1972. The OAS began to re-establish ties with Cuba in 1975 when the majority of the Latin American States voted to lift the multilateral sanctions. Ironically the US was one of those states that voted to lift sanctions; however it did not rescind its own embargo or re-establish any relations, although the US did conduct secret discussions with Havana. When Cuba entered the Angolan Civil War in the fall of 1975 the US administration, in retaliation, ended all negotiations once again.²²

1977-1996

The Carter administration lifted the travel restrictions for Americans in 1977 and some dialogue was established between Havana and Washington D.C. with the Interest Sections. This process is one step below the ambassadorial level. In 1980 the Mariel Boatlift incident created, once again, more tensions between the two countries. Approximately 124,000 Cuban refugees arrived in Florida, including some 800-900 Cuban criminals sent by Castro. Then in 1982, President Reagan re-imposed travel restrictions and exerted pressure on US companies to suspend their indirect links with Cuba through foreign subsidiaries.²³

During the Bush administration in 1992, the President signed the Cuban Democracy Act which allowed Non Government Organizations (NGO) to make humanitarian donations to Cuba and it also permitted travel to Cuba for educational and religious reasons. Since 1992 Cuba has been able to buy medicine from the US.²⁴ The Cuban government "buys approximately \$2 million worth of medicine and health products annually."²⁵

Tensions were once again heated when on 24 February 1996, Cuba shot down two civilian planes carrying four Cuban exiles. The Clinton administration said the two planes were in international airspace and Castro declared that they were in Cuban territorial limits. The planes were part of the Brothers to the Rescue Organization and were dropping anti-Castro propaganda over Havana. The Clinton administration then initiated the Helms-Burton Act. This was not anything dramatically different; in fact it was formally called the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act. Its goal was to discourage foreign investment by penalizing foreign companies for trading with Cuba.²⁶ No visas were issued to any US citizen and Title III of this Act allowed any US citizen who owned land confiscated by Cuba in 1959 to file suit against any foreign company using that land. The European Union (EU) was not in favor of US policy and severely criticized the US. The EU claimed the Bill violated international law and continued to harm the Cuban citizens. The Helms-Burton Act also restricted all US chartered flights to Cuba, restricted Cuban diplomats' movement within the US (to the United Nations) and expanded the Radio and Television Marti Broadcasting Network. The intent of this Act was again, the economic collapse of Cuba and ultimately a regime change.²⁷

President Clinton also ended all covert operations in Cuba conducted by the CIA. During President Clinton's second term he suspended Title III of the Helms-Burton Act which was imposed during his first term. Also during his second term in 2000, the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act was passed.²⁸ This was a bipartisan effort in congress allowing US agricultural exports to Cuba. "Cuba was ranked 226th in food and agriculture products from the US at the time the Act was passed. Cuba then quickly climbed to 35th place and is

expected to be in the top 20 most important markets of US food and agricultural exports for 2004.²⁹

CURRENT ADMINISTRATION

The current administration's policy toward Cuba has not made any drastic changes over the policies of the past seven administrations. The present "US policy toward Cuba is to promote a peaceful transition to a stable, democratic form of government and respect for human rights. Our policy has two fundamental components: maintaining pressure on the Cuban Government for change through embargo and the Libertad Act providing humanitarian assistance to the Cuban people, and working to aid the development of civil society in the country."³⁰

The Bush administration outlined requirements for lifting the US trade embargo during President Bush's Cuban Independence Day speech on 28 May 2002; where he said our goal is the "Initiative for a New Cuba establishing a framework for discussion of lifting the US trade embargo and travel ban on Cuba."³¹ The requirement was to have the 2003 elections in Cuba with internationally established standards as well as economic reform. The elections took place without the international standards. President Bush, like his predecessor, then suspended Title III of the Helms-Burton Act.³²

The US national security policy is to "expand the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy and to ignite a new era of global economic growth through free markets and free trade".³³ The US will achieve these two goals through supporting change in states that do not recognize human dignity, assisting in economic growth, free societies and building infrastructure of democracy, and finally protecting American citizens and their properties abroad. Although the National Security Strategy does not specifically target Cuba, numerous articles and speeches from the chain of Presidents, from Eisenhower to Bush articulate a need for change in Cuba.

COMPARISON TO EASTERN EUROPE

In his book *Democracy Delayed*, author Juan Lo'pez does a comparison aligning Cuba and the Castro regime with three very similar countries and their governments prior to the collapse of Eastern Europe in November 1989. He compares Cuba to that of three former Eastern block countries; East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Romania. He discusses the reasons why the Castro regime has endured for the past four and a half decades and shows that some transitions are more important than people may think. As we look at Cuba and the three Eastern block countries, one can conclude that all four had hard-line regimes. Policy

implications in the political, social and economic areas are key to any transition. Logical argument would show more differences with Cuba's transition than that of Eastern Europe's transition.³⁴ But Lopez identifies that those differences are the wrong ones. He says "the fundamental obstacle to a transition in Cuba is that most people feel incapable of inducing a political transformation."³⁵

POLITICAL

As we review the political reasons, the Eastern block countries all had opposition prior to their collapse. The Eastern block countries had mass protests for democracy. Demonstrators organized and rallied for their cause. The fear of serious backlash from their governments was nowhere near that of Cuba. In Cuba there has been no major resistance. In fact, there has been little to no opposition throughout the past 45 years. The communist party remains loyal to the current regime. There has not been any massive resignation from the party and Cuba is absent of any large scale protest. One theory is that most of the opposition simply migrates to Florida and those who remain in Cuba feel that any opposition activities would be ineffective. Instead of opposing the dictator the unhappy simply work on an exit visa. "If a sense of efficacy were widespread in Cuba, then transition along the paths of the East German or Romanian transition could occur."³⁶ History shows the Cuban people that demonstration against the Castro government is not a viable solution. "The Castro government was responsible for 20,400 extrajudicial killings, that is, executions or murders in prison by guards."³⁷

During the cold war era in 1980, the government had an unrestrained release of thousands of Cubans migrating to the US and it happened again in 1994. Millions of Cubans dream of prosperity in the US, they see their relatives who have found their dream and have prospered. Not all Cubans who travel across the "Straits of Florida" find their dreams, however they have exceeded their standard of living compared to their homeland. The bottom line is the youth of Cuba are centered on "induced hopelessness".³⁸

So why were the demonstrations in Eastern Europe successful and not in Cuba? Demonstrations need people and in Eastern Europe the communications within groups, work places and social areas worked well. A huge benefit was Western radio where broadcasts reached and incited the populace. That is not the case in Cuba. The number one difference between Europe and Cuba is the lack "of belief in political efficacy among people in Cuba."³⁹

The Cubans appear to be very methodical in what they are willing to sacrifice. There have been several small scale successful protests. In March of 1997 the Cuban government fired fisherman from the state run fishery because they were taking fish to feed their families and in

October of the same year over two hundred truck drivers and owners protested against a 50% tax increase. Following both small scale protests, the government reinstated the fisherman and negotiated a lesser tax increase with the truck drivers/owners. The perception that the Cuban citizens do not voice their concerns or protest against government policy is wrong. Whether they belong to the communist party or not, Cubans tend to protest for economic and social issues that they perceived have been taken away. "Cubans are able to overcome their fear and go into the streets"⁴⁰ on occasion. However, there has been no large scale protest and any successful protest has been directly associated with a loss of a recent privilege.⁴¹

Who are the political leaders in Castro's regime that could possibly assume control in a post Castro Cuba? By law the First Vice President will assume the duties, and that person is Fidel's younger brother, Raúl who is 73 years old. Many indicate that his age will be detrimental and discount that possibility. Another possibility is Fidel's son, Fidel Castro Díaz-Balart. He is a nuclear energy expert, and something that benefits the US is that he has relatives in the Cuban-American community in Florida. One notable relative is US Representative Lincoln Díaz-Balart from the Republican Party. There are two other possible known candidates: Carlos Lage, Vice President of the Council of State and Ricardo Alarcón, currently President of the National Assembly of the People's Power.⁴² But there is no clear indication of any move to oust or replace Castro.

ECONOMIC

"Modernization theory holds that good economic performance fosters transition to democracy."⁴³ So as people gain sources of power, primarily wealth and organization, they act against a dictatorship. Opponents of US sanctions show why our policy is having the opposite affect on the Cuban government. This is a theory that can be refuted easily and shows no clear evidence of increased development and transition to democracy. Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi looked at 135 countries in the last 55 years and "found that many dictatorships survived at all levels of economic development."⁴⁴

Authors of *The Political Economy of Democratic Transition*, Stephen Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, found during the Eastern block collapse of Europe that many of the communist dictatorships fell because of an economic crisis, not good economic performance or democratic pressures. This would support US policy. They cited of the "twenty-seven Eastern dictator governments that failed, twenty-one had experienced an economic decline. All communist dictatorships in the set (Poland, Romania, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia) experienced economic deterioration or stagnant, low rates of growth in the years before their demise."⁴⁵ So

the evidence indicates perhaps that it is an economic crisis rather than economic development that destabilizes a regime.

Looking at Cuba and their current economy, are they heading to an “Economic Crises”? Cuba’s export value has had a significant drop since 1989; of the 5.4 billion US dollars in exports, four billion dollars were sugar exports. Ten years later, the export value has dropped to 1.5 billion US dollars and sugar exports a dramatic decrease to .5 billion. Their sugar production in metric tons dropped from 8.1 in 1989 to 3.5 in 2003, more than a 56% decrease. But what has helped to offset the downward trend of their sugar industry was the dramatic increase in tourism. Tourism in Cuba has increased with an estimated net revenue of 101 million US dollars in 1989, to 627 million dollars in 1999. A key point is the only Cubans that can work in the tourist industry are those who have registered as communist party members. It is obvious why many Cubans join the communist party for survival.⁴⁶

Several of the Eastern European countries, including Czechoslovakia had a “decline in their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from 1970 to 1990.”⁴⁷ Starting in 1970 most of these countries had a downward trend; in 1980 their GDPs stagnated until 1990. Cuba’s GDP has followed the same trend; in “1985 the estimated GDP per capita was \$334 and by 1996 it had dropped significantly to \$91. This included the free benefits that are provided to all Cubans, such as health care, education and special rations for food. As well the regime has experienced a decline in the quality of these benefits.”⁴⁸

The Cuban health care system has seen a decline in quality. “The mortality rate of people 60 years and older has increased from 48% in 1989 to 53% in 1993. The incidence of Tuberculosis has doubled in the same five years.”⁴⁹ The health care system lacks modern technology and medication, is corrupt and there is a perception of two types of health care; one good system for government officials and the other a poor system for the rest of society. A survey conducted in December 2000 through January 2001 among 787 school and work site employees revealed complete dissatisfaction with medical care.⁵⁰ “Infant mortality dropped but was influenced by one of the world’s highest abortion rates ... and Cuba’s suicide rate ranks among the top five in the world and first in the entire Latin American region.”⁵¹

In the education field many who graduate from college or professional schools are not finding employment within their field of study, and if they do the wages are so low, “\$3 to \$9 per month,”⁵² that they can barely survive. The younger generation turns to crime or prostitution finding it much more profitable than attending school or work.⁵³

There is no surprise that the availability of food has worsened. Since 1989 every major crop except for fresh vegetables, tubers and corn has seen major decline. “In 1997, food

rationing covered less than half of the monthly minimum food needs, forcing people to buy food at high prices on the black market or in government dollar stores. Milk production declined by 48%, eggs 37% and their major staple, rice, was down 13%. In 1956, Cuba's beef consumption was one of the highest in the world and now beef is extremely difficult to find. Daily intake of calories per capita has declined from about 2,845 in 1989 to 1,670 in 1994.⁵⁴ These levels are about the same levels as the two hungriest populations in Latin America, Haiti and Bolivia.⁵⁵

"In 1993, there was an epidemic of optical neuritis caused by malnutrition and vitamin deficiency,"⁵⁶ and an increase of meningitis. The average body weight has fallen by about 20 pounds per adult. Cuba has difficulty in paying for imported oil, thus causing frequent electrical outages. The many blackouts have caused spoilage of food from the lack of refrigeration.⁵⁷

In the fall of 2004 the US administration imposed a \$100 million fine on a Swiss Bank for accepting almost \$4 billion in "laundered" money from Cuba. Shortly after Fidel Castro had his dramatic and well publicized fall during a graduation ceremony on 20 October 2004, Castro did the unexpected. In November he banned the US dollar and imposed a surcharge of 10% on exchanging US dollars under an edict called Resolution 80. This was a move to signal Washington that Cuba will not stand idle when the US initiates hostile intent towards Cuba. As millions of Cubans were forced to trade their savings of US dollars into "chavitos", the current currency, the Cuban government profited millions of dollars from the mandated exchange.⁵⁸ "Resolution 80 occurred on the heels of other restrictions on the economic activities of Cubans: new crackdowns on informal markets such as private taxis, restrictions on the sale of automobiles, the 15% price increase in state-owned dollar stores, and the elimination of 40 occupations from the already small list of authorized professions for self-employment".⁵⁹

More than fifty percent of the current retirement pensioners receive about five dollars a month. This is yet another decrease of benefits. Real pension has decreased almost half from just ten years ago. Many Cubans purchase their food, medicine and clothing on the black market or rely on relatives from abroad, mostly Florida.⁶⁰

ANALYSIS

As discussed earlier the US government's objective in Cuba is the economic collapse and regime change-democratization. What elements of power have the past seven administrations used to entice this change? The obvious one, which has been in place for the past 45 years, is economic power primarily by the use of sanctions. Diplomatic relations were severed over 40 years ago.

When using sanctions on other states, multilateral sanctions are the most effective. The US has not been able to persuade other states to cooperate in our desire for an economic collapse. In fact other nations have capitalized, the two benefiting the most are our neighbors to the north and south; Canada the largest with 1.807 billion US dollars of announced investment and Mexico close behind with 1.806 billion US dollars of announced investment in 1999. Other allies from Australia (\$500 million), United Kingdom (\$75 million) and Israel (\$22 million) have invested as well.⁶¹

Critics indicate sanctions are effective about 33% of the time and for the US about 50% of sanctions imposed after World War II have met or partially met their objectives. Unilateral sanctions have not been very successful for the US administration since 1970, where only “eight of 53 (15%)”⁶² have been effective. Globalization has caused any unilateral sanctions to be less effective. An additional factor is the type of government in power. For example, in democratic states sanctions tend to have an effect, but for authoritarian states sanctions usually strengthen the government’s grip on the populace and their policies.

The US has used a plethora of legal, financial and economic ways to meet their desired objectives. There have been ten acts, bills, or laws developed or enacted to help force the Cuban government to compliance or to show US displeasure of Cuban illegal actions.⁶³

The US diplomatic element of power has been non-existent since the diplomatic ties were severed in 1964. The US has ineffectively used an indirect method through the Swiss embassy as the only dialogue. That was with Interest Sections in 1977 as mentioned earlier in this paper, and that did not last long. Without a direct dialogue states lose any direct representation and the ability to conduct negotiations. Other tools such as information and intelligence gathering are severely hampered as well.

There has been some limited use of the military element of power by the US, the CIA trained exiled Cubans during the disastrous Bay of Pigs episode, and the US did conduct a naval blockade against the Soviet Union and used Air Force intelligence gathering during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

This returns us to sanctions, the only real focus of the US policy in Cuba. What are the intended purposes of sanctions? “...sanctions are used for a variety of purposes: to change the behavior of a target country; to signal disapproval of a government’s behavior; to limit a target state’s freedom of action; to increase the cost of engaging in unacceptable behavior; to demonstrate support for human rights, democracy, counter-terrorism, and other policies”.⁶⁴

The question is: are sanctions working against the Cuban government? The research indicates mixed results. They have also affected American businesses and trickled down to

American taxpayers. The President's Export Council estimated the "direct cost of economic sanctions to the US economy in 1995 at 15 to 19 billion US dollars in lost export sales and up to 250,000 jobs".⁶⁵ There are also the effects of indirect cost such as consumer reliance on US suppliers, competition, and loss of additional contracts.

Are they affecting the people of Cuba? The answer without a doubt is a resounding yes. What about the regime? Unilateral sanctions alone are not very effective at bringing about change. There needs to be complementary measures to assist in the administration's desired end. One issue is that the Cuban people have always been repressed. The American occupation in 1898 was a disastrous time for many Cubans. The War of Independence had left the country in ruins and most people were without jobs. Following the American occupation many of the Cuban governments were corrupt. Those who took power became extremely wealthy. Little effort was dedicated to education, health and building an economic base. Few Cubans had a prosperous life, most worked in foreign factories, many lived in the streets as beggars and prostitution was rampant. The standard of living was poor throughout their history and remains so today.

There was a slight change when US companies dominated the island. Tourism was up and about a third of the Cubans achieved middle class status. But more importantly in the eyes of the Cubans was that most of the economic success benefited Americans living in the US and not the Cubans. Even during the build up of the American companies "Five million people did not have access to electricity, running water, or sewage facilities. Many peasants were without needed land or any way of making money, and many of their children couldn't attend school".⁶⁶

The former regime under the ousted dictator Fulgencio Batista was also corrupt. Prior to him fleeing to Spain his estimated embezzlement and bribery income was approximately \$300 million. After Castro assumed power, there was a drastic change to all Cubans in the area of medical care and education. Although the middleclass virtually disappeared by fleeing to the US or losing their status, the people saw education reform with over 10,000 classrooms built in less than two years, huge gains in health care and rents were reduced by 50%.⁶⁷ Every Cuban could see a doctor and receive medical care. But sanctions and lack of any economic reform has changed the quality of those benefits and they continue to decline. At the end of the cold war in Europe and with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba's imports dropped dramatically from "8.1 billion US dollars to 2.3 billion US dollars."⁶⁸ Food shortages, blackouts, industrial and agricultural shutdowns had a huge effect on the Cuban economic base, but still the government endured.

Why the different US administration tolerance level with the Soviet Union and China?

Both of these countries were communist, and China still is today. China in particular has been accused of human rights violations yet we still trade with them. In fact China has Normal Trade Relations status (formerly known as Most Favored-Nation Status)⁶⁹ despite their perceived human rights violations and communist government. The US has maintained diplomatic and economic ties with China and Russia, perhaps because of the economic effect they have on the US, whereas Cuba has little effect. Our cold relations with Cuba have outlived our Cold War with the Soviet Union.

The current US policy as outlined in the National Security Strategy to pursue multilateral pressure is key, using the United Nations and the new economic powerhouse; the European Union. The time is right to add a few complimentary programs to our strategy. Fidel Castro is 78 years old; life expectancy in Cuba is 76, indicating he is on borrowed time! His health is failing. He no longer gives speeches of five hours in length. The US has provided humanitarian aid throughout these 45 years, as well as in the aftermath of Hurricane Michelle. The Pope visited Cuba and voiced his plea for lifting the sanctions calling them “unjust and ethically unacceptable.”⁷⁰ Perhaps the time is right for additional efforts. For the first time, it appears that the European Union has gotten involved on the side of the US with “an embargo imposed in protest when Cuba imprisoned 75 civil-right activists in 2003.”⁷¹

The longest standing issue with the US is the subject of the land claims. Cuba cannot pay its' current debt now. What revenue does Castro have now or is he projected to have to pay retribution? The primary source of revenue is or will be tourism. The Cuban government “announced plans to develop 172,500 rooms by 2010 ... an average of 14,000 rooms a year ... (which) seems to be based on the assumption that all US travel and trade restrictions will be lifted by that date, and that \$22 billion will be available for investment in hotels alone.”⁷² If Cuba wants to have any chance of competition with other Caribbean Islands, tourism is the carrot to use.

A survey was done with recent Cuban arrivals to the US as to what level of political and economic changes within their country they fear and here are the most frequent responses:⁷³

- those exiles would return to take their homes, 40%.
- the end of free education up to the university level, 24%.
- the end of free health care, 32%.
- unemployment, 30%.

- chaos and killings during the transition, 51%. However, 68% of the individuals interviewed thought that capitalism would be the best economic system for Cuba.

Changing Castro's regime to a democracy "will require, at a minimum ... economic liberalization, which means disseminating property rights and competitive economic forces; political liberalization, which means granting political rights to opposition forces; and self-restraint, which means creating rules that limit the power of leading political actors."⁷⁴

RECOMMENDATION

Democracy in Cuba can take place, just as it has in the last twenty years across the European continent. The change can even begin while Fidel Castro is still in power. It is clear however, that unilateral sanctions alone will not meet Washington's ends: a democratic state and regime change. The unilateral isolation of Cuba by the US has had a huge affect on the Cuban populace and their economy, but has had the inverse effect with the regime and very likely has helped Castro maintain his authoritarian position. The analysis indicates that a slight shift in US policies could bring about change for this small island.

Cuba is the Caribbean's largest and least commercialized island with a population of just over 11 million people. The threat to this island as a staging base, as it was with Britain in 1812 or when the Soviet Union used them during the Cuban Missile Crises in 1963 is extremely remote today. The US has a strong foothold on the island with Guantánamo Bay. Any military or economic threat from Cuba has vanished with the fall of the Soviet Union and with the effects of fifty years of sanctions. The only security concern that Washington should have would be Cuba's ability to breed terrorist organizations; hence the immediate need to adjust US policy.

The US sanctions have been effective in bringing Cuba to their economic knees. The conditions are now ripe for change and the US can consider lifting the sanctions, but this must be done in conjunction with the implementation of five additional measures. The first key measure is a re-establishment of Diplomatic ties. Both countries must have dialogue to negotiate or settle any disputes. Secondly, the US must refuse to allow any Cuban dissidents to emigrate to US territory. This will assist Washington's cause to keep the civil unrest within the borders of Cuba and not in this country, particularly in Florida. The third and fourth step must work in conjunction with each other. The third step is settling the expropriation claims for US citizens and companies. It may require an arbitrator or some indirect negotiations through the UN or OAS. The US has resolved claims in other situations. For example, "there were claims with the Peoples Republic of China of 197 million US dollars and it was resolved with both countries settling the dispute for approximately 80 million US dollars."⁷⁵ Obviously Cuba's

economy cannot afford such a task, but Cuba's tourist industry is growing and desperately needs US tourism. The fourth step is changing US policy in allowing US citizens to travel to and from Cuba. This will allow Castro the dollars needed to grow tourism, but more importantly give them the capital to compensate some percentage of the US claims. Castro is already anticipating some change in US tourism by 2010 with evidence of major construction of additional hotels along Cuban beaches. The fifth step is encouraging foreign investment from the European Union, Canada, and Mexico to help rebuild the broken infrastructure and to help kick start the Cuban economy.

CONCLUSION

Establishing Diplomatic ties followed by resolution of property claims and the relaxing of US travel restrictions will bring about a slow change in Cuba. If the US allows the natural globalization process to take place, this will lead the Cuban people to seek the government and standard of living that they desire. The lifting of the sanctions will slowly kick start the economy. Focus must be on two groups: the Cuban-American populace whom can assist their relatives and their neighbors with open dialogue, travel, and financial assistance, and the second group is foreign investors. Democracy will happen as it did throughout Eastern Europe. It will not occur overnight and it will require assistance from the international community. Any country that has gone through a democratic transition has needed assistance from the international community. If the US reaches out in a time when Cuba begins her transition, the benefits will affect both countries. The Cuban people will be free and their standard of living will improve dramatically. The US will see a financial gain and the Cubans long time struggle will finally come to fruition.

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ENDNOTES

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⁴ Gillian Gunn, *Cuba in Transition* (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1993), 4.

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⁸ Mark Falcoff, *Cuba, The Morning After* (Washington D.C.: The American Enterprise Institute Press, 2003), 43; quoted in Hugh Thomas, *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 310.

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²⁶ William J. Clinton, "Bill Clinton (1946-)"; available from http://library.thinkquest.org/18355/bill_clinton.html?tskip1=1; Internet; accessed 9 October 2004.

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²⁸ Javier Corrales, "Cuba After Fidel," *Current History* 104 (February 2005): 73.

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³² Washington File, "Fact Sheet: Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act," 17 January 2002; available from <<http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/ar/us-cuba/burton17.htm>>; Internet; accessed 9 October 2004. 1-2.

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³⁶ Ibid., 61.

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³⁸ Ibid., 62.

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