Voted Off the Island: The Case for Trade with Cuba

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

***Resolved: The United States Federal Government should significantly reform its import and/or export policy within the bounds of international trade***

This case repeals the US trade embargo against Cuba, which blocks almost all US trade with the communist island nation. Initiated in 1962 by Pres. Kennedy, it was a response to Cuba’s oppressive communist government (that took over in a revolution in 1959) that made threats against the United States and destroyed human rights for their people. It’s now 60 years into its ineffective and counterproductive existence. Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results is insane. Cuba has not and will not reform its oppressive government under US sanctions. Repealing the sanctions are more likely to create pressure for reform on the Cuban government.

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Voted Off the Island: The Case for Trade with Cuba

A wise man once said the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. After trying a policy for 60 years that hasn’t produced the tiniest fruits of success, it’s time to affirm that the United States Federal Government should significantly reform its import and/or export policy

OBSERVATION 1. DEFINITIONS

Significant

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2022. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/significant> (accessed 10 May 2022)

2a**:**having or likely to have [influence](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/influence#h1) or effect **:**[IMPORTANT](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/important)

Policy

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2022. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy> (accessed 10 May 2022)

a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, or the conditions of the Status Quo. One simple FACT:

The 60-year US trade embargo on Cuba: From Kennedy to Biden

 [Isabella Oliver](https://www.wola.org/people/isabella-oliver/)and [Mariakarla Venancio](https://www.wola.org/people/mariakarla-nodarse-venancio/) 2022 (Oliver -  program assistant for the Drug Policy, Women’s Incarceration, and Cuba programs where she provides support and conducts research and congressional outreach at Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA). Venancio – attorney; MA in International & Public Law; Assistant Director for Cuba at WOLA and coordinates the program’s research and advocacy) 4 Feb 2022 “Understanding the Failure of the U.S. Embargo on Cuba” <https://www.wola.org/analysis/understanding-failure-of-us-cuba-embargo/> (accessed 22 May 2022)

On February 3, 1962, President John F. Kennedy imposed the U.S. embargo on Cuba. The 60th anniversary of the embargo is a stark reminder of the United States’ policy failures of the longest lasting series of sanctions in its foreign policy history. Today, more than half a century since the embargo was put in place, the Biden administration continues to uphold this symbol of hostility between the U.S. and Cuba in the midst of the [most challenging humanitarian crisis](https://horizontecubano.law.columbia.edu/news/magnitude-economic-crisis-cuba) on the island since the 1990s.

OBSERVATION 3. The HARMS

HARM 1. Economic damage to Cuba

Cuba has suffered a $130 billion economic impact from the US trade embargo

Reuters news service 2018. “U.S. trade embargo has cost Cuba $130 billion, U.N. says” 8 May 2018 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cuba-economy-un/u-s-trade-embargo-has-cost-cuba-130-billion-u-n-says-idUSKBN1IA00T> (accessed 22 May 2022)

The UN has adopted a non-binding resolution calling for an end to the embargo with overwhelming support every year since 1992. In a report ahead of the vote last year, Cuba estimated total damage from the embargo at $130 billion. “This country which welcomes us today .. is testing its own ways to face the brutal human costs that it has sustained during an unjust blockade,” the head of the UN’s regional economic body for Latin America, ECLAC, Alicia Barcena told its biennial meeting in Havana on Tuesday. “We evaluate it every year as an economic commission and we know that this blockade costs the Cuban people more than $130 billion at current prices and has left an indelible mark on its economic structure,” she said, without detailing how the organization came to that estimate.

HARM 2. Blocks future economic development

A. The Goal: Economic development by encouraging the private sector

MIAMI HERALD 2022 (journalist Nora G. Torres) 16 May 2022 “In a first, U.S. government green-lights American investment in private business in Cuba” <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/cuba/article261490512.html> (accessed 22 May 2022)

“Over the past three administrations, there has been a consensus view that encouraging the growth of a Cuban private sector independent of government control should be a key element of U.S. policy toward Cuba,” said Ric Herrero, the executive director of the Cuba Study Group, a Cuban-American organization that advocates engagement with Cuba. “Now that Cuban officials have finally taken long-delayed steps to legalize private sector enterprise, we should seize the immediate opportunity to cultivate this sector and inculcate it with western values.

B. The Failure: The Embargo works against its own goal by blocking private sector initiatives

 [Isabella Oliver](https://www.wola.org/people/isabella-oliver/)and [Mariakarla Venancio](https://www.wola.org/people/mariakarla-nodarse-venancio/) 2022 (Oliver -  program assistant for the Drug Policy, Women’s Incarceration, and Cuba programs where she provides support and conducts research and congressional outreach at Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA). Venancio – attorney; MA in International & Public Law; Assistant Director for Cuba at WOLA and coordinates the program’s research and advocacy) 4 Feb 2022 “Understanding the Failure of the U.S. Embargo on Cuba” <https://www.wola.org/analysis/understanding-failure-of-us-cuba-embargo/> (accessed 22 May 2022) (brackets in original) (Dr Perez is a Faculty Fellow, Dept of Economics, at American Univ. in Washington DC)

As Dr. Torres Pérez stated, “One of the arguments behind the current policy is that the private sector is a marginal actor in Cuba and we want the Cuban government to embrace a liberal economic policy as well. However, the sanctions hurt the private sector [the most].”  Peter Kornbluh, the director of the Cuba Project of the National Security Archive, described during the event how the embargo limits the people of Cuba from accessing the internet to support their small businesses, take online U.S. courses, and use financial services like PayPal. He stated how the embargo stands as “a punitive approach which endures to this very day under the Biden administration.”

HARM 3. Medical care denied

A. The Link: Trade sanctions block export of medical supplies to Cuba

Prof. Raul Rodriguez 2020 (*professor and currently Director of the Center for Hemispheric and United States Studies at University of Havana . Member of the working group on US Studies of the Latin American Council on Social Sciences and has been a visiting professor in U.S., Canadian and European Universities*) 18 Dec 2020 “[U.S. Economic Sanctions on Cuba in the context of the Pandemic COVID-19](https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2020/u-s-economic-sanctions-on-cuba-in-the-context-of-the-pandemic-covid-19/)” ETHICS & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2020/u-s-economic-sanctions-on-cuba-in-the-context-of-the-pandemic-covid-19/> (accessed 22 May 2022)

Despite the fact that the U.S. government may authorize sales to Cuba of medicines and medical equipment, in practice major medical manufacturers in the United States do not export their products to Cuba. There are various “chill factors” that prevent U.S. pharmaceutical companies from taking advantage of this possibility. There is a network of ever-changing U.S. government regulations and corresponding interpretations. The extensive licensing requirements involve a complex application process.  There is then a considerable time lag, and even after applying, receiving final authorization is uncertain. The U.S. government allows such medical exports only if a number of prerequisites are met. These include: that there is no reasonable likelihood that the item exported will be used for the purposes of torture or human rights abuses, that it will be not re-exported, and that it would not be used in the production of any biotechnology product. In addition, there is the burden of the application process, and the costs of complying with the regulations, along with the risk of harsh penalties if the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control(OFAC) finds any violation, even if it is inadvertent.  There is also a chilling effect that goes beyond the actual restrictions: even for transactions that are apparently legal, banks and other companies often choose not to do business at all with a sanctioned country to avoid any risk of penalties.

B. The Impact: Lives at stake. US trade barriers block life saving medical care in Cuba

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights 2020. “US must lift its Cuba embargo to save lives amid COVID-19 crisis, say UN experts” 30 Apr 2020 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/04/us-must-lift-its-cuba-embargo-save-lives-amid-covid-19-crisis-say-un-experts> (accessed 23 May 2022)

UN human rights experts\* today called on the United States to lift its economic and financial embargo on Cuba that is obstructing humanitarian responses to help the country’s health care system fight the COVID-19 pandemic. “We urge the US Government to withdraw measures aimed at establishing trade barriers, and ban tariffs, quotas, non-tariff measures, including those which prevent financing the purchase of medicine, medical equipment, food and other essential goods,” they said. The UN experts said the US had ignored repeated calls to waive sanctions that undermine the capacity of Cuba and other countries to respond effectively to the pandemic and save lives.

HARM 4. Food shortages

US farmers can’t export food to Cuba, aggravating food shortages

Reuters news service 2022. (journalist Dave Sherwood) “U.S. farmers, in Havana, say sanctions stymieing food sales to Cuba” 6 Apr 2022 <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/us-farmers-havana-say-sanctions-stymieing-food-sales-cuba-2022-04-06/> (accessed 22 May 2022)

U.S. farmers, on a trade tour in Cuba, said on Wednesday they would like to sell more wheat and other farm products to the impoverished Caribbean island as a global food crisis looms, but that Cold War-era restrictions continue to hamper new deals. Cuba is already suffering from food shortages and preparing for worse as prices soar globally with the war in Ukraine. A delegation of U.S. farm sector representatives in Havana said that embargo restrictions, despite some exceptions for agricultural products, still complicate efforts to ship food that might otherwise prove a lifeline for Cubans.

OBSERVATION 4. The Plan, implemented by Congress and the President

1. Congress votes to remove all import and export trade sanctions on Cuba.
2. Enforcement and funding through existing agencies and existing budgets. Net reduction in public spending by cancelling efforts to enforce trade sanctions.
3. Plan takes effect one week after an Affirmative ballot.
4. All Affirmative speeches may clarify.

OBSERVATION 5. ADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGE 1. Weapon against oppression

Ending the embargo is the best way to hasten reform of Cuba’s oppressive government and empower the Cuban people

Christopher Rhodes 2021 (Lecturer in Government at Harvard University and lecturer in Social Sciences at Boston Univ) 21 July 2021 “The US embargo on Cuba has failed” <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/7/21/the-us-embargo-on-cuba-has-failed> (accessed 22 May 2022)

Counterintuitively, ending the embargo and promoting ties between the US and Cuba is the greatest weapon that America can deploy against the oppressive regime in Cuba. President Obama laid out the strategy when he opened up travel between the two countries: “Nobody represents America’s values better than the American people,” Obama said in 2014, “and I believe this contact will ultimately do more to empower the Cuban people.” Exposing Cubans to the freedoms and opportunities available to their American relatives will increase outrage and pressure towards the Cuban government for failing to provide these things. And removing the ability of the Communist Party to blame the United States for its own failures will lay bare the consequences of the Cuban government’s unwillingness to shift away from Soviet-era economic policies and political repression.

ADVANTAGE 2. Economic benefits

Billions of dollars in economic benefit to both the US and Cuba

Richard Hanania 2021 (president of the Center for the Study of Partisanship and Ideology; Research Fellow at the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies at Columbia University) 15 July 2021 “To Truly Fight Communism, We Must End the Embargo on Cuba “ <https://www.newsweek.com/conservative-case-ending-embargo-cuba-opinion-1610170> (accessed 23 May 2022)

Moreover, increasing American trade with Cuba would give U.S. businesses, stockholders, and consumers more influence in that country. Tourism would also facilitate cultural exchange, and expose people on the island to co-ethnics who have created a much better life for themselves under capitalism. Communist dictators in East Germany and North Korea have traditionally feared this kind of interdependence more than anything else, and for good reason. Of course, setting aside potential political impacts, the most direct effect of the embargo is that it harms both the American and Cuban economies, and it would therefore be worth removing no matter what. While no one can be sure how history would have unfolded had the U.S. not restricted trade and travel, in 2018, the UN estimated that the embargo [had cost Cuba $160 billion,](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cuba-economy-un/u-s-trade-embargo-has-cost-cuba-130-billion-u-n-says-idUSKBN1IA00T) no small sum for a nation whose entire GDP is only around $100 billion. Some argue that the cost to the U.S. is even higher in the aggregate, although losses matter less given the size of the American economy.

2A Evidence: End Cuba Trade Embargo

INHERENCY

A/T “Obama lifted restrictions” – Trump put them back

Reuters news service 2018. “U.S. trade embargo has cost Cuba $130 billion, U.N. says” 8 May 2018 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cuba-economy-un/u-s-trade-embargo-has-cost-cuba-130-billion-u-n-says-idUSKBN1IA00T> (accessed 22 May 2022)

After agreeing to a historic U.S.-Cuban detente in 2014, former U.S. President Barack Obama eased the embargo, which was fully put into place in 1962. But U.S. President Donald Trump last year tightened travel and trade restrictions again. Only the U.S. Congress can lift it in full.

A/T “Biden will solve” –Biden is in no hurry to reform Cuba sanctions policy

Christopher Rhodes 2021 (Lecturer in Government at Harvard University and lecturer in Social Sciences at Boston Univ) 21 July 2021 “The US embargo on Cuba has failed” <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/7/21/the-us-embargo-on-cuba-has-failed> (accessed 22 May 2022)

Joe Biden promised to move away from this Trump strategy of “maximum pressures” against Cuba, but has so far not altered any of the Trump restrictions. The White House admitted earlier this year that “a Cuba policy shift is not currently among President Biden’s top priorities.”

Biden is making the embargo tougher - imposing new sanctions on Cuba

David Adler 2022. (general coordinator of the Progressive International) 3 Feb 2022 “Cuba has been under US embargo for 60 years. It’s time for that to end” <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/feb/03/cuba-us-embargo-must-end> (accessed 22 May 2022)

“Every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba,” the assistant secretary of state, Lester D Mallory, [wrote in an April 1960 memo](https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v06/d499). The goal of the Kennedy administration was clear: “To bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government.” Today, Joe Biden lives up to Kennedy’s legacy and the ambitions of his Cuban embargo. Not only has the president refused to undo the extraordinary sanctions imposed by the Trump administration, reneging on his campaign promise to restore diplomatic relations and leaving Cuba on the list of “state sponsors of terrorism”. He has also doubled down on the embargo, tightening restrictions and imposing a host of new sanctions against the Cuban government.

Biden eased sanctions on travel and remittances (not trade) and speeding up US visas for Cubans

BBC News 2022. “US agrees to ease Trump-era sanctions on Cuba” 17 May 2022 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61473884> (accessed 23 May 2022)

US officials have announced plans to ease tough sanctions imposed on Cuba by former President Donald Trump. Under new measures approved by the Biden administration, restrictions on family remittances and travel to the island will be eased. The processing of US visas for Cubans will also be speeded up.

MINOR REPAIR RESPONSE

Don’t need minor repairs, we need full repeal of the embargo

Peter Kornbluh 2022 (director of the National Security Archive's Chile Documentation Project and Cuba Documentation Project) 25 Jan 2022 “Cuba: 60 Years of a Brutal, Vindictive, and Pointless Embargo” (accessed 23 May 2022) https://www.thenation.com/article/world/cuba-embargo-60-years/?utm\_source=google&utm\_medium=paid&utm\_campaign=tfd\_search\_dsa&gclid=CjwKCAjw4ayUBhA4EiwATWyBrpNw0PYSS9DPVMfsDGM8N1X1CzDh-gaFi8TV\_ixZRDLUQ22y\_PEJ3RoCkV4QAvD\_BwE

Full engagement with Cuba, of course, would require lifting the US embargo—a demand the congressional letter conspicuously fails to make. As the embargo approaches its 60th anniversary, terminating it would require not only White House action but a vote in Congress that the Democratic leadership has neither the political capacity nor the moral courage to prioritize. Indeed, the humanitarian measures that these members of Congress are asking of President Biden are intended to soften an economic crisis that, for decades, the embargo has explicitly attempted to create.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

$144 billion in economic damage to Cuba from the US trade embargo

 [Isabella Oliver](https://www.wola.org/people/isabella-oliver/)and [Mariakarla Venancio](https://www.wola.org/people/mariakarla-nodarse-venancio/) 2022 (Oliver -  program assistant for the Drug Policy, Women’s Incarceration, and Cuba programs where she provides support and conducts research and congressional outreach at Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA). Venancio – attorney; MA in International & Public Law; Assistant Director for Cuba at WOLA and coordinates the program’s research and advocacy) 4 Feb 2022 “Understanding the Failure of the U.S. Embargo on Cuba” <https://www.wola.org/analysis/understanding-failure-of-us-cuba-embargo/> (accessed 22 May 2022)

Dr. Ricardo Torrez Pérez, a leading Cuban economist who is currently a research and teaching fellow at American University, examined the impact of the U.S. embargo on Cuba at a macro level. As a small island, Cuba is in a position where it depends on trade to survive. As a result of the complete prohibition on trade with the United States, a 2021 estimate by the Cuban government found that the embargo has cost the country close to $144 billion. A similar figure has [been acknowledged](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cuba-economy-un/u-s-trade-embargo-has-cost-cuba-130-billion-u-n-says-idUSKBN1IA00T) by the United Nations.

US embargo was intentionally designed to make the Cuban people poor, hungry and desperate

Doug Bandow 2022 (JD from Stanford; former special assistant to Pres. Reagan; senior fellow at the Cato Institute. ) 17 Feb 2022 “The Cuban Embargo Has Failed” <https://www.cato.org/commentary/cuban-embargo-has-failed> (accessed 23 May 2022)

The embargo may be the most complete, longest, and most enduring policy failure in American history. In 1959 Fidel Castro led a revolution against a U.S.-backed strongman, Fulgencio Batista. Castro proved to be even more despotic and turned to the Soviet Union for support. Washington imposed an embargo, which has metastasized [through subsequent regulations and laws](https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/02/03/today-marks-the-60-years-of-the-cuban-embargo-what-exactly-is-it/). The embargo was proposed, the outgoing Eisenhower administration admitted, [to impoverish the Cuban people](https://english.elpais.com/usa/2022-02-07/the-us-embargo-against-cuba-turns-60-with-no-policy-change-on-the-horizon.html). The State Department’s [Lester Mallory urged action](https://www.counterpunch.org/2022/02/10/the-legacy-of-lester-mallory-brief-statement-against-the-u-s-economic-war-against-cuba/) that “while as adroit and inconspicuous as possible makes the greatest inroads in denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government.”

A/T “Medicines are exempt” – But the overall trade sanctions scare businesses away, even from medical supplies

THE GUARDIAN 2021. (British newspaper. Article written by Kathryn Riley, a person with personal experience involving the sanctions on Cuba) 18 July 2021 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/18/a-death-and-desperation-in-sanctions-hit-cuba> (accessed 22 May 2022)

My late husband, Roberto Molina Rivero, was a choreographer and dance poet. He was a dual national and type 1 diabetic. He died in Havana in February. In January, I attempted to send insulin to [Cuba](https://www.theguardian.com/world/cuba) because of the shortage of insulin. DHL failed to deliver this package, returning it with the words “US sanctions on Cuba” scrawled on the label. This matter is under investigation by the Department for International Trade. Medicines are exempt from the embargo. However, companies are reluctant to take medical goods to Cuba.

A/T “Medicine is exempt” – But the sanctions create so many barriers that they still can’t get stuff to Cuba, or delay it or make it more expensive

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights 2020. “US must lift its Cuba embargo to save lives amid COVID-19 crisis, say UN experts” 30 Apr 2020 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/04/us-must-lift-its-cuba-embargo-save-lives-amid-covid-19-crisis-say-un-experts> (accessed 23 May 2022)

The experts noted that the export and re-export of goods to Cuba requires a cumbersome and expensive licensing process because of the US embargo, which undermines the efficiency of buying medicine, medical equipment and technology, given that the issuance of licences or clearance for exemptions can take several months. Despite 16 April updates in the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) Fact Sheet, which provides guidance on humanitarian exemptions (including ones for Cuba), these have not eased or changed the burdensome procedures. “Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of the comprehensive embargo has imposed additional financial burden, increased cargo travel time due to an inability to procure supplies, reagents, medical equipment and medicines necessary for the diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 directly from the United States and therefore constrains the effectiveness of the response,” the experts said. “It also delays the development of e-health and telemedicine due to difficulties in accessing affordable technology.

Example of medical export blocked: Ventilators for Covid patients in April 2020

Prof. Raul Rodriguez 2020 (*professor and currently Director of the Center for Hemispheric and United States Studies at University of Havana . Member of the working group on US Studies of the Latin American Council on Social Sciences and has been a visiting professor in U.S., Canadian and European Universities*) 18 Dec 2020 “[U.S. Economic Sanctions on Cuba in the context of the Pandemic COVID-19](https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2020/u-s-economic-sanctions-on-cuba-in-the-context-of-the-pandemic-covid-19/)” ETHICS & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2020/u-s-economic-sanctions-on-cuba-in-the-context-of-the-pandemic-covid-19/> (accessed 22 May 2022)

In April 2020, two firms based in Switzerland—IMT Medical AG and Acutronic Medical Systems AG—refused to sell ventilators to Cuba, invoking the commercial, financial, and economic sanctions of the United States; both companies had been acquired by U.S. company Vyaire Medical Inc and immediately suspended trade relations with Cuba.

More examples of medical supplies blocked from going to Cuba by US sanctions

Josefina Ferreiro 2020 (Cuban Ambassador to Canada) 21 June 2020 “Cuba’s two pandemics: The coronavirus and the US embargo” <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/6/21/cubas-two-pandemics-the-coronavirus-and-the-us-embargo> (accessed 23 May 2022)

 The blockade is stopping Cuba from getting much-needed medical supplies. For example, if more than 10 percent of the components in the medical equipment or medications we want to buy are of US origin, then Cuba is not allowed to purchase them.  In addition, the US has imposed restrictions on banks, airlines and shipping companies to stop Cuba from receiving materials that other countries are donating or sending to Cuba. In April, the Alibaba Foundation of China tried to donate masks, rapid diagnostic kits and ventilators to Cuba, but the airline contracted by Alibaba to transport those items to Cuba refused to take the goods because they were afraid the US would sanction them.

A/T “Cuba falsely blames all its problems on the embargo” – Then, lifting it is the right thing to do. It won’t cause any harm, and it will pressure the Cuban government by taking away their excuses

David Adler 2022. (general coordinator of the Progressive International) 3 Feb 2022 “Cuba has been under US embargo for 60 years. It’s time for that to end” <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/feb/03/cuba-us-embargo-must-end> (accessed 22 May 2022)

In his speech on the Senate floor, Marco Rubio argued that the US embargo is just a scapegoat for the communists of Cuba, a “talking point” for the regime. If that is the case, then, why not lift the embargo and take the talking point away? If communism is a failed system, then why not let it fail on its own terms, and let Cubans see for themselves the true face of their revolution?

Sanctions on Cuba are unjust: They punish the innocent

Ed Augustin 2022 (NBC News journalist) 4 Feb 2022 “Sixty years after U.S. embargo, its imprint affects Cubans' daily lives “ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/sixty-years-us-embargo-imprint-affects-cubans-daily-lives-rcna14719> (accessed 23 May 2022)

The sanctions amount to “collective punishment" that is incompatible with human rights, said Alfred de Zayas, a professor of international law at the Geneva School of Diplomacy and a retired senior lawyer with the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights. “It is a fundamental principle of law that each person has the right to be treated individually and fairly and not punished for crimes or offenses he or she has not committed,” he said.

Sanctions on Cuba postpone needed reforms by giving their government an excuse for its failures

Ed Augustin 2022 (NBC News journalist) 4 Feb 2022 “Sixty years after U.S. embargo, its imprint affects Cubans' daily lives “ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/sixty-years-us-embargo-imprint-affects-cubans-daily-lives-rcna14719> (accessed 23 May 2022) (brackets in original)

But critics of the Cuban government see the embargo as the gift that keeps on giving — for the Cuban leadership. “It’s allowed them to blame other countries, in this case the U.S., for its own inability to create wealth and well-being,” said Manuel Cuesta Morúa, a vice president of the Cuban Democratic Transition, an opposition group outlawed on the island. “The government has used [the sanctions] to stall the internal reforms the country needs,” Morúa said.

US embargo actually strengthens Cuban government by enhancing their credibility

Ed Augustin 2022 (NBC News journalist) 4 Feb 2022 “Sixty years after U.S. embargo, its imprint affects Cubans' daily lives “ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/sixty-years-us-embargo-imprint-affects-cubans-daily-lives-rcna14719> (accessed 23 May 2022)

“The intelligence community has long said — analytically — that the embargo wasn’t working and wouldn’t work,” said Fulton Armstrong, a former national intelligence officer for Latin America who is now a senior fellow at American University’s Center for Latin American and Latino Studies. “Analysts correctly identified the embargo as enhancing government nationalist credibility, even though most Cubans also don’t exonerate the Communist Party for its failed economic policies."

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY / ADVANTAGES

When removing the embargo enriches the Cuban people, it will empower them to stand up against their government’s oppression

Christopher Rhodes 2021 (Lecturer in Government at Harvard University and lecturer in Social Sciences at Boston Univ) 21 July 2021 “The US embargo on Cuba has failed” <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/7/21/the-us-embargo-on-cuba-has-failed> (accessed 22 May 2022)

Hardliners will argue that easing the embargo now will lessen the pressure on the Cuban government by lessening the societal desperation that has fuelled these protests. And while economic crises can lead to collective outrage, spontaneous protests against authoritarian regimes usually ends in renewed repression rather than regime change. Many experts believe that movements for social change are most effective when people and organisations gain the resources that are necessary for sustained political and social activism. Loosening the economic vice grip on Cuba will help to empower its citizens and civil society to stand up to their government.

Ending the embargo would benefit the Cuban people and add pressure for its government to reform

Prof. Gary Becker 2015. (professor of economics and sociology at the University of Chicago, Nobel Prize in economics) 29 Jan 2015 “Is It Time to End the Cuban Embargo?” <https://www.chicagobooth.edu/review/is-it-time-to-end-cuban-embargo> (accessed 23 May 2022)

Since Cuba no longer provides any significant threat to American interests, there is no sense in continuing to punish the Cuban people with an embargo on trade, nor to provide excuses to its leaders for the poor performance of the Cuban economy. It is time to end the embargo on the export and import of goods and services between the US and Cuba. The Cuban people will benefit almost immediately. This may just be the time when such a move puts added pressure on the Cuban government to end its failed experiment with communism.

Net benefits favor ending the embargo over political benefits of maintaining it

Christopher Rhodes 2021 (Lecturer in Government at Harvard University and lecturer in Social Sciences at Boston Univ) 21 July 2021 “The US embargo on Cuba has failed” <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/7/21/the-us-embargo-on-cuba-has-failed> (accessed 22 May 2022)

Republicans will no doubt accuse the president of being soft on communism or caving in to progressive demands. But if Biden truly wants to put principles, and effectiveness, ahead of politics, he should make a bold choice and end six decades of US failure and Cuban suffering.

Supporter of the communist government admits: Best way to undermine Cuban communism would be repeal the embargo

Doug Bandow 2022 (JD from Stanford; former special assistant to Pres. Reagan; senior fellow at the Cato Institute. ) 17 Feb 2022 “The Cuban Embargo Has Failed” <https://www.cato.org/commentary/cuban-embargo-has-failed> (accessed 23 May 2022)

[Antoni Kapcia](https://jacobinmag.com/2021/09/cuban-revolution-castro-fidel-raul-socialism-soviet-ties-embargo-diaz-canel-protests-pandemic), who has written sympathetically of the Cuban revolution, noted: I’ve always argued that if an American president really wanted to destabilize the Cuban system, they would get rid of the embargo, or promise to get rid of the embargo. To some extent, this is what Barack Obama did, at least in the sense of saying the established policy had failed and slightly easing some restrictions, although he certainly didn’t lift the embargo altogether. But most of the US presidents have done precisely the opposite, and tightened it, or at least continued the involvement. That gives the system and the leadership an alibi in Cuba. But it also plays into nationalism.

US and Cuba both would get economic benefits from ending the embargo

Nicolas Kristoff 2019 (journalist) The Embargo on Cuba Failed. Let’s Move On. 23 Jan 2019 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/23/opinion/cuba-embargo.html> (accessed 23 May 2022)

China’s economic boom began in the early 1980s partly with factories financed by Chinese overseas, and after the American embargo ends, Cuba will have similar opportunities to forge mutually beneficial business partnerships with Cubans overseas. That would benefit both sides.

Repealing the embargo would increase private business activity in Cuba, and scare their oppressive government

Doug Bandow 2022 (JD from Stanford; former special assistant to Pres. Reagan; senior fellow at the Cato Institute. ) 17 Feb 2022 “The Cuban Embargo Has Failed” <https://www.cato.org/commentary/cuban-embargo-has-failed> (accessed 23 May 2022)

 [Biden matched Trump](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/09/world/americas/cuba-government-biden-pressure.html) in pious hypocrisy, announcing “we hear the cries of freedom coming from the island. We’re holding the regime accountable.” Alas, the Díaz‐​Canel government did not fold. In fact, the invincibly ignorant Cuba hawks—most notably Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz, and Robert Menendez—did the communist regime a favor by discouraging contact with America. Collin Laverty of Cuba Educational Travel, which develops trips to conform with U.S. law (and organized my second visit), observed: “If you want to create more space for debate, expanding the entrepreneurial class is one way.” Indeed, after encouraging the development of private business in a desperate attempt to spur the economy, the regime came to fear the rapid increase in private sector firms and cracked down.

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES

A/T “Pressure will change Cuba” – It never has and it never will

Christopher Rhodes 2021 (Lecturer in Government at Harvard University and lecturer in Social Sciences at Boston Univ) 21 July 2021 “The US embargo on Cuba has failed” <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/7/21/the-us-embargo-on-cuba-has-failed> (accessed 22 May 2022)

Cuba-policy hardliners have implicitly accepted the human and economic costs of the embargo as acceptable in order to achieve the goal of undermining the communist regime. They will point towards the unprecedented level of protests currently going on in Cuba as evidence that the embargo is working. It’s not. Yes, Cubans are angry at the economic hardships and pandemic suffering happening amongst their population. But as Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel uses repression and anti-US rhetoric to contain the protests, there’s little indication that the regime is in immediate danger. The communist regime has already survived the fall of its Soviet sponsor, the death of Fidel Castro, and the handover of power from his younger brother Raul to Díaz-Canel, who is not a Castro and was born after the Revolution took power. Sixty years of sanctions have only created hardships for the Cuban people while providing the regime with a convenient scapegoat to blame for all of their country’s economic woes and societal discontent.

Cuba is no threat to anyone and we ought to just leave it alone

Nicolas Kristoff 2019 (journalist) The Embargo on Cuba Failed. Let’s Move On. 23 Jan 2019 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/23/opinion/cuba-embargo.html> (accessed 23 May 2022)

It has been 60 years since Fidel Castro marched into Havana, so it’s time for both Cuba and the United States to grow up. Let’s let Cuba be a normal country again. Cuba is neither the demonic tyranny conjured by some conservatives nor the heroic worker paradise romanticized by some on the left. It’s simply a tired little country, no threat to anyone, with impressive health care and education but a repressive police state and a dysfunctional economy.

Trade with Cuba doesn’t endorse communism any more than trade with China: It’s the best way to spark reform

Megan Boyanton 2021 (journalist) 14 July 2021 “Senators Push to Ease Cuba Trade Ban as Biden Demurs, for Now” <https://about.bgov.com/news/senators-push-to-ease-cuba-trade-ban-as-biden-demurs-for-now/> (accessed 23 May 2022) (brackets added)

Recognition of potential market opportunities isn’t an endorsement of the Cuban government or its political ideology, [Arkansas Rep. Rick] Crawford said. “If communism is the concern, we should stop doing business in China,” he said in a telephone call. “If human rights are the concern, we should stop doing business in China, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and other countries.” The way to spark reform in Cuba is to “simply overwhelm them with capitalism,” he said.

A/T “Terrorism” – Cuba isn’t sponsoring terrorism

CNN 2021. (journalists Rob Picheta and Jennifer Hansler) 11 Jan 2021 “Trump administration names Cuba a state sponsor of terrorism, frustrating Biden's efforts to boost relations” (accessed 23 May 2022) https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/11/politics/trump-administration-cuba-state-sponsor-terrorism-intl/index.html

A US diplomat with experience on Cuba issues [told CNN last month](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/12/30/politics/cuba-state-sponsor-of-terrorism-designation/index.html)that "there simply was not a good argument to be made that Cuba actually sponsored terrorism," when plans to make the change were first reported. "I don't know of anything that has changed since then in real terms -- they're just reinterpreting things to suit politics." Although the designation would likely get overturned by the incoming Biden administration, the diplomat said that it could do "real damage to our credibility on state sponsorship of terrorism."

A/T “Terrorism” – Listing Cuba as sponsor of terrorism was a political stunt with no evidence to support it

Peter Kornbluh 2021 (director of the National Security Archive's Chile Documentation Project and Cuba Documentation Project) 22 Jan 2022 “Biden Must Reverse Pompeo’s ‘Terrorist’ Move Against Cuba” <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/biden-cuba-pompeo-trump/> (accessed 23 May 2022)

“The State Department has designated Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism for repeatedly providing support for acts of international terrorism in granting safe harbor to terrorists,” Pompeo declared on January 11, reversing the Obama administration’s decision to delist Cuba in 2015. To make this claim, Pompeo reportedly circumvented his own State Department’s Bureau of Counter-Terrorism, where the professional analysts know there is no evidence to support it. Indeed, the Cuba designation has been widely denounced as baseless—a self-serving political gambit by Pompeo to attract Florida voters to his expected 2024 presidential campaign, and Donald Trump’s parting effort to sabotage the incoming Biden administration’s ability to restore sanity to US-Cuban relations.

A/T “Terrorism” – Turn: Falsely accusing Cuba of terrorism undermines our efforts against real terrorism

Peter Kornbluh 2021 (director of the National Security Archive's Chile Documentation Project and Cuba Documentation Project) 22 Jan 2022 “Biden Must Reverse Pompeo’s ‘Terrorist’ Move Against Cuba” <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/biden-cuba-pompeo-trump/> (accessed 23 May 2022)

 “In the final days of the Administration, efforts to politicize important decisions concerning our national security are unacceptable and threaten to damage future diplomatic efforts toward Cuba and set a harmful precedent for future designations,” Senators Patrick Leahy, Amy Klobuchar, and seven other senators [wrote to Pompeo](https://www.leahy.senate.gov/press/klobuchar-leahy-and-colleagues-demand-answers-from-the-state-department-about-move-to-designate-cuba-a-state-sponsor-of-terrorism). “One of the consequences of the sort of misuse of the tool that the secretary of state is contemplating is to weaken the deterrence of true state sponsorship of terrorism and undermine the incentives for improved behavior” by rogue states, Paul Pillar, a former deputy director of the CIA’s Counterterrorism Center, [warned in The National Interest](https://nationalinterest.org/blog/paul-pillar/misusing-counterterrorism-tool-again-175772). “The ultimate cost of misusing and thus weakening the tools of counterterrorism will take the form of lives lost in the future to international terrorism.”