

Marcellus

POLICY ANALYSIS

Fall 2021 - Marcellus Policy Analysis

From Retribution to Re-engagement: A New Framework For US-Cuban Relations

By Jaime Vázquez

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Both the United States and Cuba face a crossroads for determining how to preserve their interests and influence in a 21st century Western Hemisphere. Confronting an uneasy populace and economic crisis induced by the global coronavirus pandemic, U.S. sanctions and Cuba's own mismanagement of its economy have compelled it to a dependency on the likes of China and Russia. The United States is being forced to reevaluate its national security strategy to counter the influence of an ascendant China and is currently positioned to lose relative economic and security gains vis-à-vis China in its own backyard. Evolving past the grievances of the Cold War can enable both the U.S. and Cuba to improve their posture to find peace and prosperity in the coming decades.

Policymakers and advocates in favor of a policy of engagement with Cuba do not advertise the economic and geopolitical benefits associated with normalizing relations. Conceptualizing a constructive framework for U.S.-Cuban relations is contingent on a thorough assessment of the benefits that will be gained from shifting course on Cuba. U.S. businesses, Cuban Americans, and Cubans living on the island stand to gain the most on a micro scale. Additionally, the U.S. can pursue détente with Cuba as a means of restructuring what a hemispheric policy looks like in the era of collective security threats – climate change, emerging technologies, global pandemics, and illicit hubs for drug transportation.

The Cold War strategy proved successful for the U.S. vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. It was not successful in pushing Cuba towards democracy, and it is no longer serviceable to U.S. interests in the region moving forward. The U.S. can move in good faith to restore the progress made under the Obama administration and help Cuba defeat COVID-19. From there, the benefits and possibilities associated with normalizing relations are plentiful.

Current U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Cuba

While the Obama administration demonstrated what was possible regarding diplomacy with Cuba, both the Trump and Biden administration have pursued a Cuba policy that is mirror image to the decades long embargo imposed during the Cold War. Shifting from the possibilities presented during the Obama administration, President Trump reapplied the Cold War lens to relations with Cuba.¹ Trump's National Security Advisor, John Bolton, a notable Cuban Hawk, labelled Cuba as part of a "Troika of Tranny" dead-set on clamping down on human rights and driving regional instability.² Justifiably, the Trump administration saw Cuba as an enabler of the Nicolas Maduro regime in Venezuela, the main culprit behind the Venezuelan refugee crisis.³

President Joe Biden has followed suit with his predecessor, as opposed to the President he served in office with, applying additional sanctions on Cuba⁴. In response to Cuba's violent suppression of protests, President Biden has reverted to using sanctions to punish Cuba. Biden's punitive measures clamp on President Obama's initial efforts to de-thaw relations via the transmission of remittances between Cuban Americans and Cubans living on the island.⁵ In the backdrop of the administration's hard stance towards the Diaz-Canel regime in Cuba is again an underlying yearning to empower Cubans to mobilize and carve out a free, democratic Cuba.

The current U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba has found itself stuck in the 20th century without any genuine review of efficacy or advancing of U.S. interests to advance hemispheric security in the 21st century. The Biden administration has a tremendous opportunity to review and update its objectives in the region. Finding a way to constructively co-exist with Cuba can prove to yield benefits for the U.S., and for the freedom-yearning Cubans that policymakers frequently romanticize. A genuine review and compass forward for a constructive Cuba policy will require an honest and thorough assessment of both the successes and failure of the U.S. embargo on Cuba, as well as a balanced and objective assessment of the economic and security benefits that would derive from a strategic restraint-based vision of re-engagement. Normalizing relations with Cuba will require both short-term policies that indicate good faith on behalf of the U.S.,

and long-term strategies to envision a sustainable relationship that can persevere through the upcoming challenges of the 21st century.

Flashpoints in the U.S.-Cuban Relationship

Present-day relations between the United States (U.S.) and Cuba are fraught with various historical flashpoints. The success of the revolution and leader Fidel Castro marked a new era in relations between the two countries. U.S. concerns with hedging hemispheric security vis-à-vis the Soviet Union (USSR) came into conflict with Cuba's initial posture to remain neutral (non-aligned) during the Cold War.⁶

The U.S.'s refusal to accept Cuban neutrality, and lack of financial assistance to help jumpstart Cuba following the revolution pushed Castro and Cuban revolutionaries squarely in the Soviet orbit.⁷ Multiple attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro and the nuclear brinkmanship demonstrated during the Cuban Missile Crisis represent the apex of a relationship that policymakers in Washington found intolerable.⁸ Apart from a few interactions, U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba would remain dormant.

A total embargo on trade and economic relations with the U.S.'s island neighbor would dictate American foreign policy for decades. With the exception of U.S. President Barack Obama's efforts to de-thaw relations with Cuba, the relationship remains stuck in the Cold War to the disadvantage of both countries.⁹

While the U.S. did outlast the Soviet Union in the Cold War, the Cold War strategy towards Cuba was unsuccessful from the early revolutionary days to now. The Cuban Missile Crisis took the long-standing Monroe Doctrine and made it void.¹⁰ The Soviet Union's alliance with an island country forty miles off the coast of Florida revealed the vulnerability of U.S. security and hegemony and proved that an antagonistic U.S. foreign policy could leave Americans in peril.

Another underpinning in U.S. strategy towards Cuba was a yearning to transform Cuba into a democracy. In the Cold War, that strategy came through various coup d'état attempts, including the infamous Bay of Pigs incident.¹¹ In the post-Cold War era, the U.S.

sought to transform Cuba into a democracy via more peaceful means through democracy promotion programs that emphasized Western-friendly information campaigns and dispersed funding towards democratic activists on the island.¹²

Combined, the embargo, various coup attempts, and democracy promotion have failed to make the U.S. safer and have failed to transform Cuba into a democracy. Simultaneously, Cubans and Americans are missing out from the benefits of normalizing relations. Lastly, the United States' longstanding strategy towards Cuba is emblematic of the paternalism that eventually drove Cuba to revolution.¹³ A successful hemispheric strategy for the U.S. will require the U.S. to treat adversaries and allies alike in the region on an equal footing.

De-Thawing of Relations – A Precedent

Changes internally within the U.S. and Cuba made way for a de-thawing of the relationship. Within Cuba, Fidel Castro stepped down in 2008 due to health concerns and his brother and second-in-command Raul Castro assumed leadership. While still maintaining a strict security state, Raul's legacy in Cuba is best known for his economic reforms, which further liberalized the Cuban economy and gave Cubans the opportunity to become owners of real estate and small businesses.¹⁴ Within the U.S., President Barack Obama eased prior restrictions on travel and remittances within his first year in office.¹⁵ Following dialogues shepherded by Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes and a good-faith prisoner swap, Obama and Castro announced an intent to restore full diplomatic ties between the U.S. and Cuba.¹⁶

The Obama era represented a watershed moment in U.S.-Cuban relations and has provided a model for what's possible to achieve for both countries.¹⁷ The framework for normalizing relations was made clear too: easing existing sanctions, re-establishing diplomatic ties, and removing Cuba from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism.¹⁸ Such moves facilitated Cuban access to foreign currencies and what demonstrated what Cuba would be willing to put behind to benefit from normalizing relations with the U.S.

Hope for normalizing relations between the U.S. and Cuba would be dashed not long after the election of President Donald J. Trump. Eager to reverse his predecessor's foreign policy achievements, Trump reinstated sanctions limiting travel and business with Cuba, withdrew Embassy staff after blaming the Cuban government for a mysterious illness that befell American diplomats in Havana, and re-designated Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism.¹⁹ Within Cuba, Raul Castro stepped down from power to make way for the unanimous election of President Miguel Diaz-Canel. Diaz-Canel is a Communist Party insider and has maintained a critical stance towards the U.S. since taking office.²⁰ Relations between the U.S. and Cuba have not since reached the warming of the Obama era.

Cuba Post-Obama

Renewed Hopes For Regime Change

For the past five decades, the U.S. has pushed for, funded, and attempted to catalyze regime change in Cuba.²¹ While the embargo and various sanctions regimen signify the U.S. discontent with Cuba's authoritarian rule and socialist economy, Cuba hawks in Washington see the economic and diplomatic pressure as a potential catalyst for popular uprisings against the Cuban Communist Party.²² Economic mismanagement and grievances over social inequality, alongside the repercussions of the coronavirus global pandemic have prompted a diverse coalition of Cuban activists to organize mass protests against the Diaz-Canel regime.²³ With many democracy activists in both the U.S. and Cuba wondering whether Cuba would finally democratize itself, policymakers in Washington are salivating with the premise of a Cuba ready for change.²⁴ The protests thus far have not rewarded the work and hopes of Cuban democracy advocates and struggles manufactured by the mismanagement of the Cuban economy are being attributed by the regime to the U.S. embargo.²⁵

Attributing Cuba's lack of capacity to vaccinate and protect its population from COVID-19 and manage a stable economy solely to U.S. sanctions and the embargo is dubious. Prior to the pandemic, Cuba shifted its economy to a singular currency to gain more access to foreign currencies via tourism and in-

ternational business.²⁶ With the currency consolidated to higher-than-average prices, and limited tourism due to COVID-19, average Cuban citizens became further impoverished. Cuba's medical innovations and success in creating a vaccine did not preclude it from the struggles associated with vaccine production and distribution.²⁷ A key grievance of the protestors was the slow pace of vaccine distribution.²⁸ Cuba's economic reforms and an already vulnerable supply chain are stronger factors as to why Cuba is so impoverished.

Dissecting the Shortcomings of Isolation

Evaluating the Impact of U.S. Sanctions Policy

The shortcomings of the general U.S. policy towards Cuba are not really estimated or widely discussed within Washington. Democrats and Republicans alike share a mutual disdain for the authoritarian rule of the Cuban Communist Party, and its associated human rights abuses, and do not take regular assessments to see how the current policy hinders or improves U.S. interests or the well-being of Cubans. While the collapse of the Soviet Union put an end to the Cold War, U.S. policy towards Cuba has largely remained unchanged. Unfortunately, the longevity of U.S. policy towards Cuba does not prove beneficial to U.S. interests. Rather, a successful policy towards Cuba should achieve at minimum, three objectives: whether it make the U.S. safer; whether it advances U.S. economic interests and makes us more prosperous; and whether it genuinely improves the lives of the Cuban citizens living on the island. In all three of these areas, the dormant U.S. policy of isolation towards Cuba proves to be ineffective.

The U.S.'s imposition of sanctions has not proven successful in changing the behavior or authoritarian rule within Cuba, and in fact, sanctions exacerbate the extent to which many Cubans suffer from poverty and humanitarian crises.²⁹ The tightening of U.S. sanctions after the collapse of the Soviet Union, via the Cuban Democracy Act and the Helms-Burton Act, left Cuba not only isolated from doing business with the U.S., but also punished foreign businesses and foreign subsidiaries of U.S. businesses from engaging with Cuba.³⁰ With the collapse of the Soviet Union,

Cuba lost a significant portion of its economy, and its access to foreign currencies and opportunities to save itself became severely limited. This brought Cuba to immense poverty, in which is known as the Special Period.³¹ The Special Period of Cuba is often regarded with the onset of food and resource rationing.³² Many attribute Cuba's poverty towards the follies of running a socialist economy, and however true that may be, Cuba's internal mismanagement cannot fully explain why economic relations with the rest of the international community was not a viable option.

Presently, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to ravage lives and test the fragility of economies and supply chains worldwide. Although Cuba has found success in its ability to create a homegrown, largely effective vaccine to prevent COVID-19, sanctions, an already constrained supply chain and imposed have compounded to hinder the production and distribution of Cuba's vaccine to its population.³³ UN human rights experts say that the U.S. embargo on Cuba exacerbates immensely the difficulty for Cuba's leaders to procure the resources needed to run an effective vaccination campaign.³⁴ U.S. sanctions have forced a burdensome exportation and re-exportation process that overwhelms an already fragile Cuban economy. Taken with the difficult transitioning to a single currency economy, and it does not become hard to see why Cuban capacity is incredibly strained, and why so many Cubans feel left behind.

U.S. sanctions on Cuba have made life difficult for not only the Cuban government, but also the Cuban people. Meanwhile, sanctions have done naught to inspire or successfully coerce the Castro and Diaz-Canel regimes to democratize the island or stray from authoritarian tactics to maintain power. The U.S. policy of sanctions has done little to advance national interests or even inspire the diffusion of democratic values, and their maintenance will continue to drive Cuba in opposition to U.S. goals of hemispheric security and harmony.

Perpetuating Authoritarianism

President Diaz-Canel does not have the same charisma as did the Castro brothers, partly explaining the veracity of the protests against him in the Summer of 2021.³⁵ Nonetheless, Diaz-Canel's status as a Communist party insider and fealty to the Castro's vision

for the country has led to him utilizing the same tactics and rationale for maintaining power in Cuba. Diaz-Canel, a professed anti-imperialist, recycles the rhetoric of his predecessors.³⁶ U.S. sanctions and Western isolation is the primary explanative for Cuba's impoverished state, according to Diaz-Canel and the most ardent supporters of the Cuban state. Diaz-Canel and the Cuban Communist Party's anti-imperialist rhetoric is successful in abdicating responsibility for the Party's own mismanagement of the Cuban state. Whereas many U.S. policymakers feel justified in putting the pressure on the Cuban Communist Party to change its authoritarian behaviors, sanctions, in fact, have voided Cubans of the ability to hold their leadership accountable. The room for dialogue and genuine reflection on Cuba's internal affairs does not currently exist, and the current U.S. policy leaves Cubans with less options to enact meaningful reforms that improve their lives and foster a more prosperous society. The burden of economic sanctions is pushed to the livelihoods of the Cuban people, and without any real social contract or means of democratic accountability, authoritarian leaders become less amenable to changing their tactics.³⁷

Policymakers resort to imposing sanctions on adversaries and find it as both a simple and politically convenient way to express discontent with another state.³⁸ Prohibiting access to U.S. markets is assumed to be enough incentive to coax adversaries to change behavior, however the volume of academic literature, case studies, and policy research reveal a demonstrated failure for sanctions to change adversarial behavior.³⁹ Peter Beinart's 2018 article in *The Atlantic* makes the compelling point that "...sanctions shift the balance of power in a society in the regime's favor."⁴⁰ An authoritarian regime's matrix for internal and external decision-making is greatly constrained by sanctions and foster a greater dependency on the State to provide for the citizenry.⁴¹

Essentially, sanctions tip the balance of power in a society towards the State and enable authoritarians to hold greater power over their citizens. Sanctions imposed on Cuba are intended to coax out transformational change in Cuban society yet have failed to achieve any short or long-term policy objectives. Apart from one presidential administration, the perpetuation of the embargo and non-existent relationship with Cuba suggests that no real strategy exists

to resolve the relationship and patch up one of the biggest vulnerabilities for hemispheric security.

A Hemisphere Divided

U.S. antagonism of Cuba, paired together with the covert operations against leftist governments during the Cold War leave the hemisphere divided among ideological lines. The Cold War strategy, while ruthless, was effective in helping the U.S. maintain hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. However, the legacy of the Cold War and lack of reconciliation towards the mass atrocities produced by the hemispheric strategy alienate present-day left-leaning leaders in the Americas and Caribbean and leave a fissure between those in partnership with the U.S. and those who are not.⁴²

Regional governance is split into two blocs because of this divide. The U.S. and its centrist and right-wing leaning allies have found the Organization of American States (OAS) the most suitable forum for tackling hemispheric challenges to democracy and order in the Americas.⁴³ Historically and currently barred from participating in the OAS, left-leaning autocracies led by Cuba and Venezuela have fomented the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) as a counterweight to the U.S.-biased dominance of the hemisphere.⁴⁴

In an era of increasing multipolarity, U.S. sanctions and its embargo on Cuba has proven even less successful in pressuring the Cuban Communist Party to change behavior. China and Russia fill in the void left by the lack of U.S. engagement with left-leaning leaders in the Americas.⁴⁵ With Cuba, China and Russia have an ally in the Western Hemisphere and each party seeks to mutually benefit from a parallel political and economic orbit from the U.S.-led international order. An opportunistic China seeks to capitalize off the divisions inherent in the hemisphere and has postured itself to make economic and political gains via its cooperation with CELAC and its extension of an Americas-based Belt and Road initiative.⁴⁶

With the recent Pink Tide of elected leftists in Latin American countries, the United States is positioned to lose out in economic gains and hemispheric influence with its current antagonism towards Cuba and other leftist governments in the region.⁴⁷ Under this current posture, the United States will no longer be able to

guarantee for itself hemispheric security. With an inevitable trend towards great-power competition with China, the U.S.'s current mantra towards the region leaves it vulnerable to a crisis redux from adversaries such as Cuba and Venezuela. Meanwhile, China seeks to make relative gains with its more pragmatic and business-friendly policies that are attractive to both democratic and autocratic nations in the region.

The U.S. must transition its posture towards the hemisphere from an ideological perspective to a more prudent and realist vision that seeks to balance gains and influence accrued by China in the region. Shifting the U.S. relationship with Cuba represents an opportunity to shift gears for a new hemispheric strategy that does not leave the United States behind and vulnerable.

The Case For Re-Engagement With Cuba

The U.S. policy of isolation and sanctions does not produce changed behavior from the Cuban Communist Party or an improvement in the lives of Cubans. In comparison, the Obama administration rightfully considered the possibilities and benefits for U.S. national interests and the livelihoods of Cubans that are associated with normalizing relations.

The benefits for Cubans on the island are obvious. In the interim, an ease on travel restrictions between the U.S. and Cuba can provide a significant boost to a struggling Cuban economy via a booming tourism industry.⁴⁸ Easing up restrictions on remittances, money sent mainly from Cuban Americans to their families living in Cuba, will give the Cuban state greater access to the U.S. dollar and other foreign currencies. Greater access to capital for Cuban citizens could prove beneficial to reducing the dependency many citizens have from the State to provide for their needs and set the stage for Cubans to feel empowered to hold their leadership accountable on their own terms.

The benefits to be gained by the United States are not to be overlooked either. As the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) points out, the past progress made in the U.S.-Cuban relationship is good for U.S. economic interests and further liberalization leaves U.S. businesses much to gain.⁴⁹ Additionally, the U.S. is currently denying itself access to a \$2 billion

agricultural market and close to 20 million job opportunities by choosing an ineffective policy of isolation with Cuba.⁵⁰

Statistics indicate that an overwhelming number of Americans support ending travel restrictions to Cuba, and an increasing number of Cuban Americans are in support of altogether lifting the embargo.⁵¹ Americans want increased engagement with Cuba and the benefits of redirecting the U.S.'s policy towards Cuba unlocks a plethora of benefits that are superior to a decades-long failed strategy of isolation.⁵²

A strategy of engagement has benefits for the internal interests of both the U.S. and Cuba, however, understated are the external benefits of re-engagement. Cuba, despite its history of supporting movements and activity destructive to U.S. interests, can be a constructive partner towards stability in the Americas. For example, in parallel towards the de-thawing of relations between the U.S. and Cuba, Cuba played an influential role in helping broker an unlikely peace deal between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC).⁵³ The failure of the subsequent right-wing government of Colombia – one of the U.S.'s most reliable allies in the Americas – to stay faithful to the Colombian peace deal is the reason for increased violence in the Southern Cone.⁵⁴ The recent call to arms by the FARC has enabled violence and instability and enabled relationships between narcotraffickers and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.⁵⁵

A policy of engagement can orient Cuba to be a constructive partner on shared goals, such as securing a sustainable climate for the Americas, limiting the power of narcotics groups relative to legitimate governments in the region, and even helping broker some form of peace and stability with Cuban-ally Venezuela. Additionally, a de-thawing for relations between the U.S. and Cuba limits China's ability to hedge Cuba as another client state that runs counter to U.S. interests and influence in the region. And while not axiomatic, a policy of engagement removes an excuse for the Diaz-Canel regime to abdicate its responsibility to provide for the needs of its citizens. Removing the U.S. as the anti-imperialist bogeyman can eventually make headway and empower Cubans to take larger ownership of the future of their country.

Recommendations

Conceptualizing a Framework For U.S.-Cuban Relations

The Biden administration has a tremendous opportunity to set the tone on what hemispheric security will look like in the 21st century. Despite the administration's objectives to solidify alliances among the world's leading democracies, political trends and Chinese engagement with the Americas provide U.S. foreign policy the exigence to be prudent. A prudent strategy for the Americas starts with a reset from the grievances and paternalism inherent in the Cold War relationship between the U.S. and the rest of the region. At the heart of the region's Cold War troubles is the fractured relationship between the U.S. and Cuba. Acknowledging Cuba's sovereignty and albeit imperfect progress as a nation-state will be the first step to reconciling the relationship.

Cuba hawks will maintain that improving relations between the U.S. and Cuba will enable an authoritarian legacy with gross human rights abuses.⁵⁶ However, those same hawks disregard U.S. support for authoritarian leaders in allied countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt.^{57,58} The U.S. support for authoritarian regimes is well-known throughout Latin America, where support of right-wing dictators such as Augusto Pinochet during the Cold War make potential allies in the region suspicious of U.S. strategy for hemispheric security.⁵⁹ Choosing to de-thaw relations with Cuba can give the U.S. an opportunity to reset its relations not only with the island, but the entire region. The embargo has failed to catalyze democratic change in Cuba. Cuba Hawks and the Latin American foreign policy community must realize that and shift their thinking on how the U.S. can capitalize most the benefits associated with de-thawing relations with Cuba.

As with the rest of the region, a chief area of cooperation that can and must be addressed for the U.S.-Cuban relationship is the defeat and containment of the COVID-19 pandemic. Cuba's limited and costly options for procurement of resources leaves it vulnerable to the virus and future variants. Political polarization inhibits any U.S. administration from acquiring the votes needed to end the embargo, limiting Cuba's options to defeat the virus on its own. However, the

United States and its surplus of vaccinations can help Cuba fill the distribution gap. Coordination on supplying and distributing vaccines is an easy win for both countries, and the virus can be easily contained in Cuba. Additionally, defeating the virus and providing vaccines provides incentives for easing travel restrictions sooner – connecting Cuban Americans concerned for the well-being of their families living on the island and helping boost a tourism industry which benefits local Cuban entrepreneurs.⁶⁰

Moving on good faith from cooperation on COVID-19, the U.S. can build trust by easing restrictions on travel, commerce, and remittances. The Biden Administration and a State Department-Treasury Remittance Working Group are working through using technology to deliver remittances. Virtual wallets and de-centralized capital transfer via means of the blockchain as a means are innovative and can be used for a variety of contexts. For the administration, these means are an alternative way of getting money to the Cuban people rather than the Cuban government.⁶¹ However, such means will require a development and implementation that is vulnerable for a country that has an extremely monitored internet presence. The economic crisis in Cuba is too severe and Cubans living on the island need access to capital for survival, regardless of their capacity to reach the internet. The re-instatement of the Obama era remittance policy will help many Cuban lives and demonstrate that the U.S. is serious about being a constructive partner.

The earlier the Biden administration can act on a de-thawing, the more pronounced and felt the benefits will be for U.S. businesses, Cuban Americans, and for Cubans living on the island. Making progress in the U.S.-Cuban relationship at the onset can outline the case for policymakers and businesses to eventually lobby for an eradication of the embargo in the future.

Critics of engagement contend that normalizing relations will strengthen the grip of the Cuban Communist Party and dampen the Cuban fight for a democratic future.⁶² As mentioned earlier, sanctions do not compel authoritarians to change behavior, rather, they provide justification for authoritarians to cling for more power.⁶³ The grievances of Cuban protestors are being met with violent suppression, and the U.S. embargo is only helping exacerbate the crises, while

limiting the avenues for Cubans to hold their own government accountable. While proponents of re-engagement like President Obama believe that liberalizing relations can lead Cuba to eventually democratize itself, such expectations remain aspirational.⁶⁴ A prudent strategy can hope for good governance, but not compel one.

Conclusion

The interwoven history between the U.S. and Cuba is paternalistic and helps demonstrate why the Cuban Communist Party is unlikely to kowtow to the wishes of Washington.⁶⁵ While there is a genuine yearning for freedom and prosperity in Cuba, the Biden Administration would be better suited to focus its efforts on empowering the Cuban people through increased humanitarian aid and the benefits of engagement, rather than by imposing on the Cuban people a will to fit the mold of a fragile world order.

The Cold War between the U.S. and Cuba is ripe for conditions to change. The U.S. must redirect its policy towards Cuba if it wants to signal its intent for leadership in the Americas. Amidst the onset of emerging technologies, the risks associated with climate change, and the balance of power with a rising China, the U.S. seeks to gain from a constructive partner in Cuba.

Endnotes

- 1 “U.S.-Cuba Relations,” Council on Foreign Relations (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.), <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-cuba-relations>.
- 2 Rafael Bernal, “Bolton Dubs Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua the ‘Troika of Tyranny’,” The Hill (The Hill, November 1, 2018), <https://thehill.com/latino/414333-bolton-dubs-cuba-venezuela-and-nicaragua-the-troi-ka-of-tyranny>.
- 3 Angus Berwick, “Special Report: How Cuba Taught Venezuela to Quash Military Dissent,” Reuters (Thomson Reuters, August 22, 2019), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-cuba-military-specialreport/special-report-how-cuba-taught-venezuela-to-quash-military-dissent-idUSKCN1VC1BX>.
- 4 Jen Kirby, “Biden’s Cuba Policy Is Suddenly in the Spotlight,” Vox (Vox, July 14, 2021), <https://www.vox.com/22573703/biden-cuba-protests-trump>.
- 5 Steve Holland Jeff Mason, “U.S. Issues New Cuba Sanctions, Biden Promises More to Come,” Reuters (Thomson Reuters, July 31, 2021), <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/biden-meet-cuban-american-leaders-amid-calls-tougher-action-havana-2021-07-30/>.
- 6 Sarah Clifford and Scott N Romaniuk, “Cuban Cold War Internationalism and the Nonaligned Movement,” E-IR (E-International Relations, December 20, 2020), <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/12/19/cuban-cold-war-internationalism-and-the-nonaligned-movement/>.
- 7 “The Rise of Castro and the Outbreak of Revolution,” Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., n.d.), <https://www.britannica.com/event/Cuban-Revolution/The-rise-of-Castro-and-the-outbreak-of-revolution#ref339525>.
- 8 “Cuba Sanctions - United States Department of State,” U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State, August 20, 2021), <https://www.state.gov/cuba-sanctions/>.
- 9 “Presidential Policy Directive -- United States-Cuba Normalization,” National Archives and Records Administration (National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/10/14/presidential-policy-directive-united-states-cuba-normalization>.
- 10 The Monroe Doctrine – Defined as the U.S. policy towards the Western Hemisphere. It sought to prevent European colonialism/intervention in the Americas as a means to establish hemispheric security.
- 11 The Bay of Pigs,” The Bay of Pigs | JFK Library, n.d., <https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/jfk-in-history/the-bay-of-pigs>.
- 12 “Case Study: Ned Programs Focus on Long-Term Effort to Open up Cuba,” NED PROGRAMS FOCUS ON LONG-TERM EFFORT TO OPEN UP CUBA (NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY, n.d.), <https://www.ned.org/about/how-we-work/case-study-ned-programs-focus-long-term-effort-open-cuba/>.
- 13 Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopædia. “Platt Amendment.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, October 24, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Platt-Amendment>.
- 14 Marc Frank, “Explainer: The State of Raul Castro’s Economic Reforms in Cuba,” Reuters (Thomson Reuters, April 17, 2018), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cuba-politics-castro-changes-explaine/explainer-the-state-of-raul-castros-economic-reforms-in-cuba-idUSKBN1HO0CL>.
- 15 Ibid, 1.
- 16 Peter Baker, “U.S. to Restore Full Relations with Cuba, Erasing a Last Trace of Cold War Hostility,” The New York Times (The New York Times, December 17, 2014), <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/18/world/americas/us-cuba-relations.html>.
- 17 Ibid, 9.
- 18 Ibid, 1.
- 19 Ibid, 1.
- 20 teleSUR/ ag-JF, “‘The US Aggressiveness Has No Limits,’ Diaz-Canel Warns,” News | teleSUR English (teleSUR, September 23, 2021), <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/The-US-Aggressiveness-Has-No-Limits-Diaz-Canel-Warns-20210923-0009.html>.

21 Board, The Editorial. “In Cuba, Misadventures in Regime Change.” The New York Times. The New York Times, November 10, 2014. <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/10/opinion/in-cuba-misadventures-in-regime-change.html>.

22 “Sanctions on Cuba Will Only Slow Regime Change,” The Economist (The Economist Newspaper, n.d.), <https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2019/05/16/sanctions-on-cuba-will-only-slow-regime-change>.

23 Nick Schifrin, Layla Quran, and Tommy Walters, “Why Are Cubans Protesting? Examining the Nation’s Disappointment with the Communist Party,” PBS (Public Broadcasting Service, July 12, 2021), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/why-are-cubans-protesting-examining-the-nations-disappointment-with-the-communist-party>.

24 “Leading Senators, Representatives Unveil Bipartisan Resolution Reaffirming Congressional Support for Cuba’s pro-Democracy Movement,” United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, July 15, 2021, <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/chair/release/leading-senators-representatives-unveil-bipartisan-resolution-reaffirming-congressional-support-for-cubas-pro-democracy-movement>.

25 Rebecca Beitsch, “Cuban President Blames Unrest on ‘Economic Asphyxiation’ by Us,” The Hill (The Hill, July 12, 2021), <https://thehill.com/policy/international/562585-cuban-president-blames-unrest-on-economic-asphyxiation-by-us>.

26 Jorge Salazar-Carrillo, “Why Cubans Took to the Streets: 3 Questions about Cuba’s Economic Crisis Answered,” The Conversation, August 12, 2021, <https://theconversation.com/why-cubans-took-to-the-streets-3-questions-about-cubas-economic-crisis-answered-164472>.

27 Dr. Liji Thomas, “Cuba Reports 92.4 Percent Efficacy for 3 Dose Soberana 02 COVID-19 Vaccine,” News, November 4, 2021, <https://www.news-medical.net/news/20211104/Cuba-reports-924-percent-efficacy-for-3-dose-SOBERANA-02-COVID-19-vaccine.aspx>.

28 Jose de Cordoba, “Cuban Protests Demand Freedom, Food, Covid-19 Vaccines,” The Wall Street Journal (Dow Jones & Company, July 12, 2021), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/cuban-protests-demand-freedom-food-covid-19-vaccines-11626045095>.

29 “Cuba: UN Members Overwhelmingly Support End of US Embargo, as Brazil Backs Washington | UN News,” United Nations (United Nations, n.d.), <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/11/1050891>.

30 Ibid, 1.

31 “The Special Period,” Cuba Platform (Cuba Platform, n.d.), <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a137d8aedaed807de3a77b3/t/5bb67912e79c70664782e757/1538685202297/SpecialPeriod-Cuba101.pdf>.

32 Ibid, 31.

33 “US Must Lift Its Cuba Embargo to Save Lives amid Covid-19 Crisis, Say UN Experts,” OHCHR, n.d., <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25848&LangID=E>.

34 Ibid, 33.

35 Ian Bremmer, “What the Protests in Cuba Mean for the Future of Communism,” Time (Time, July 16, 2021), <https://time.com/6080934/cuba-protests-future-communism-u-s-relations/>.

36 Ibid, 25.

37 Susan Hannah Allen, “Political Institutions and Constrained Response to Economic Sanctions,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4, no. 3 (2008): pp. 255-274, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-8594.2008.00069.x>.

38 “What Are Economic Sanctions?,” Council on Foreign Relations (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.), <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-are-economic-sanctions>.

39 Dursun Peksen, “When Do Economic Sanctions Work Best?,” Center for a New American Security (Center for a New American Security, June 10, 2019), <https://www.cnas.org/publications/commentary/when-do-economic-sanctions-work-best>.

40 Peter Beinart, “How Sanctions Feed Authoritarianism,” The Atlantic (Atlantic Media Company, June 9, 2018), <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/06/iran-sanctions-nuclear/562043/>.

41 Ibid, 40.

42 João Carlos Botelho and Vinícius Silva Alves, “The Weight of Ideology on the Attitude of Latin American Countries toward the United States,” *Revista Brasileira De Política Internacional* 60, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-7329201600112>.

- 43 Laura Carlsen, “How the OAS Revived the Cold War in the Americas,” Americas Program, April 23, 2020, <https://www.americas.org/how-the-oas-revived-the-cold-war-in-the-americas/>.
- 44 Brendan O’Boyle, “Explainer: What Is CELAC?,” AS/COA (AS/COA, January 27, 2015), <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/explainer-what-celac>.
- 45 Jose M. Alonso-Trabanco, “The Geopolitics of Cuba Unrest,” Geopolitical Monitor, July 16, 2021, <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/the-geopolitics-of-cuba-unrest/>.
- 46 “Xi Delivers Video Speech to CELAC 6th Summit, Calls for Building Community of Shared Future between China, Latam,” Xinhua, September 19, 2021, http://www.news.cn/english/2021-09/19/c_1310196632.htm.
- 47 Marco Aquino, “Another Pink Tide? Latin America’s Left Galvanized by Rising Star in Peru,” Reuters (Thomson Reuters, June 21, 2021), <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/another-pink-tide-latin-americas-left-galvanized-by-rising-star-peru-2021-06-21/>.
- 48 Arturo Lopez-Levy, “Biden Should Pursue a Full Engagement with Cuba,” Responsible Statecraft (Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, April 15, 2021), <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2021/04/15/biden-should-pursue-a-full-engagement-with-cuba/>.
- 49 Sarah Kinoshian, “Factsheet: Why Engagement with Cuba Benefits the United States,” WOLA (Washington Office on Latin America, December 1, 2016), <https://www.wola.org/analysis/factsheet-engagement-cuba-benefits-united-states/>.
- 50 Ibid, 49.
- 51 Sarah Dutton et al., “CBS News Poll: Resuming Relations with Cuba,” CBS News (CBS Interactive, August 7, 2015), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/cbs-news-poll-resuming-relations-with-cuba/>.
- 52 John F. Stack and Jorge Duany, “Cuba Poll - Cuban Research Institute,” 2016 FIU Cuba Poll, 2016, <https://cri.fiu.edu/research/cuba-poll/2016-cuba-poll.pdf>.
- 53 Alan Gomez, “Cuba Plays Critical Role in Colombia Peace Deal,” USA Today (Gannett Satellite Information Network, August 27, 2016), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2016/08/25/cuba-colombia-farc-peace-deal/87432410/>.
- 54 Carolina Jiménez Sandoval, “Colombia’s Peace Accord Is Not Weak, It’s Duque Who Insists on Weakening It,” WOLA (Washington Office on Latin America , October 7, 2021), <https://www.wola.org/analysis/colombia-peace-accord-is-not-weak-its-duque-who-insists-on-weakening-it/>.
- 55 “Ex-FARC Mafia in Venezuela,” InSight Crime, October 18, 2021, <https://insightcrime.org/venezuela-organized-crime-news/farc-in-venezuela/>.
- 56 A.G. Gancarski, “Marco Rubio Blasts President Obama for Moves to Normalize Cuba Relations,” Florida Politics - Campaigns & Elections. Lobbying & Government., October 14, 2016, <https://floridapolitics.com/archives/224554-as-president-obama-moves-to-normalize-cuba-relations-marco-rubio-blasts-him/>.
- 57 “U.S. Relations with Egypt - United States Department of State,” U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State, May 24, 2021), <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-egypt/>.
- 58 “U.S. Relations with Saudi Arabia - United States Department of State,” U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State, January 15, 2021), <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-saudi-arabia/>.
- 59 Pascale Bonnefoy, “Documenting U.S. Role in Democracy ... - The New York Times,” Documenting U.S. Role in Democracy’s Fall and Dictator’s Rise in Chile (New York Times, October 14, 2017), <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/14/world/americas/chile-coup-cia-museum.html>.
- 60 Crahan, Margaret E., and Soraya Castro. 2016. *Cuba-US relations: normalization and its challenges*.
- 61 Matt Spetalnick and Trevor Hunnicutt, “Biden Policy on Cuba Remittances Needs More Work, U.S. Official Says,” Reuters (Thomson Reuters, November 6, 2021), <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/biden-policy-cuba-remittances-needs-more-work-us-official-2021-11-05/>.
- 62 Angelica Stabile, “Marco Rubio Defends Cuba’s Fight against Failed Socialist Government: Leaders Are ‘Evil,’ ‘Incompetent’,” *Fox News*, July 2021, Marco Rubio defends Cuba’s fight against failed socialist government: Leaders are ‘evil,’ ‘incompetent’. <https://www.foxnews.com/media/marco-rubio-cuba-fight-socialist-government-leaders-evil-incompetent>
- 63 Ibid, 40.

- 64 Matt Spetalnick, Jeff Mason, and Frank Jack Daniel, “Obama Challenges Communist-Led Cuba with Call for Democracy,” Reuters (Thomson Reuters, March 22, 2016), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-cuba/obama-challenges-communist-led-cuba-with-call-for-democracy-idUSKCN0W00EA>.
- 65 Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopædia. “Platt Amendment.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, October 24, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Platt-Amendment>.

