

Cuba Affirmative

Overview

Cuba Affirmative	1
Explanation	2
Glossary	3
Online Resources	4

1AC - Plan and Inherency

Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Plan Text	5
Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Inherency.....	6

Human Rights Advantage:

Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Harms – Human Rights	7-9
Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Solvency – Human Rights	10
Harms – Human Rights – 1AC/2AC Impact Framing.....	11
Harms – Human Rights – Embargo Violates Human Rights	12-14
Harms – Human Rights – Embargo Symbolic	14
Harms – Human Rights – Families	15
Harms – Human Rights – Medicine	16
Harms – Human Rights – Sanctions Undermine Human Rights	17
Harms – Human Rights – Scapegoating.....	18
Harms – Human Rights – They Say “Korean Weapons”	19
Harms – Human Rights – Embargo is Immoral.....	20-22
Harms – Human Rights – Embargo is Immoral and Expensive.....	22
Harms – Human Rights – Human Rights Impact.....	23-25
Harms – Human Rights – US-Cuba War Impact	25
Solvency – Human Rights and Democracy.....	26
Solvency – Human Rights.....	27-30
Solvency – Human Rights – They Say: The Plan is Too Fast	30

Soft Power Advantage:

Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Harms – Soft Power.....	31-36
Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Solvency – Soft Power	36
Harms – Soft Power – Low Now.....	37
Harms – Soft Power – US-Latin America Relations Low Now.....	38-39
Harms – Soft Power – US-Latin America Relations Brink	40-42
Harms – Soft Power – Embargo Hurts Soft Power.....	42
Harms – Soft Power – Soft Power is Key to Hegemony	43-45
Harms – Soft Power – Hegemony Impact	45
Harms – Soft Power – Impact.....	46-48
Harms – Soft Power – Impact – Latin America is Important.....	48
Harms – Soft Power – Impact – Turns the China DA	49
Solvency – Soft Power – Latin America	50
Solvency – Soft Power	51-54
Solvency – Soft Power – Cuba Key.....	54
Solvency – Soft Power – Cubans Want Plan.....	55

Inherency:

Inherency – Embargo Now	56-58
Inherency – Now is Key	58

Explanation

History of the Cuba Embargo

In 1959, Fidel Castro led a successful revolution in Cuba and nationalized U.S.-owned sugar firms, oil refineries, and banks on the island (that is, he forcibly transferred their ownership from U.S. businesses to the Cuban government). In response, U.S. president John F. Kennedy ordered a partial embargo on Cuba in 1960. When Cuba formally allied with the Soviet Union – America's primary international rival – soon afterward, Kennedy ordered a full embargo.

Some form of embargo has remained in place since that time, though the specific policy has frequently changed. In 1966, the U.S. strengthened the embargo by cutting off food aid to any country that traded with Cuba; in 1977, the embargo was loosened when U.S. president Jimmy Carter briefly lifted the ban on U.S. travel to Cuba.

After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, many argued the embargo was no longer justifiable as Cuba no longer posed a threat to U.S. national security. In 1992, however, Congress passed the Cuban Democracy Act, which strengthened the embargo by barring ships that had previously docked in Cuban harbors from entering the U.S. In 1996, the Helms-Burton Act legally codified the embargo (previously the embargo had been enforced by presidential order, and could be removed at any time by the president) and stated that the embargo would not be removed until Fidel and Raul Castro were removed from power.

Current State of the Embargo

In 2000, Congress passed the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act, which allowed some food and medicine to be exported to Cuba. President Obama has also relaxed parts of the embargo, loosening the ban on U.S. travel to Cuba and making it easier for Cuban-Americans to send remittances (cash payments) to their families in Cuba. Most of the embargo, however, remains in place.

A majority of U.S. citizens favor removing the trade embargo. However, it has been difficult for politicians to oppose the embargo due to the large number of pro-embargo Cuban-Americans in Florida, a vital swing state in presidential elections.

The Affirmative

This file contains evidence supporting an affirmative plan that removes the embargo. There are two main strategies you can use to defend the removal of the embargo. Your two options are the Human Rights advantage or the Soft Power advantage. Unless you are exceptionally quick, you should choose one of these advantages and focus your energy on learning how to argue that case. Both of them have their merits, but time constraints will limit you to discussing one. Always remember to include your own analysis in addition to reading evidence. For simplicity's sake, the next part of the explanation will divide based on which advantage you choose.

Human Rights Advantage:

The premise of this advantage is that the US embargo of Cuba is unfair and violates the human rights of people in Cuba (and also reduces the freedoms of American citizens). Cubans are denied access to critical medical supplies and other resources. Teams that choose this advantage will argue that the plan is morally necessary because the embargo punishes the people for the crimes of their government.

Soft Power Advantage:

This advantage is all about image. Soft Power is the component of US leadership derived from the ability to persuade and attract other countries, as distinguished from Hard Power that uses coercive force. A healthy balance of soft and hard power is necessary to maintain strong US leadership. The embargo has been condemned by the United Nations for the past 21 years, and is a source of animosity with our Latin American neighbors. Teams reading this advantage will argue that the plan is important to restore US Soft Power in Latin America and worldwide, and that this soft power will help preserve US leadership and thus prevent violent warfare.

Glossary

Advantage – see harms.

Blockage - see embargo.

Chang Chon Gang – The Chang Chon Gang is the name of a North Korean ship that was stopped in Panama in July. Coming from Cuba, it contained several tons of sugar and a hidden stash of weapons. The Cuban government has claimed that the recovered weapons were obsolete and were merely being sent to North Korea for repairs.

Economic sanctions – Economic sanctions are actions taken by one country to inconvenience or interrupt the flow of trade into and out of another country. One example is the embargo.

Embargo – an embargo is the prohibition of trade with a particular country. In this case, the US has an embargo on Cuba. Also sometimes referred to as the **blockade**.

Hard Power – Power derived from a nation's ability to force and coerce. For example, military force or economic sanctions.

Harms – Harms are the part of the affirmative case that argues what bad things will happen if the judge doesn't vote for the affirmative. Also referred to as advantages.

Hegemony – Hegemony (pronounced Heh-gem-uh-knee) leadership or control. The United States is said to be a world hegemon because it has the most powerful military and large amounts of influence.

Human Rights – unconditional rights to which all human beings are entitled to. The US considers protecting human rights to be a national interest.

Inherency – Inherency is the part of the affirmative case that describes what the world without the plan looks like. Inherency should explain why there's a problem going on and set the stage for the plan.

Moral imperative – a principle that requires action.

Soft Power – Power derived from a nation's ability to persuade and attract. For example, diplomatic effectiveness, how much other countries like us.

Solvency – Solvency is the part of the affirmative case that argues for why the plan solves or addresses the problems outlined in the harms.

Sovereignty – sovereignty is the quality of having independent control and authority over a territory.

Status quo - the world as it is (in debate we often mean a world without the plan).

United Nations (UN) – an international body consisting of representatives from 193 different countries. The United Nations General Assembly has voted against the US embargo of Cuba twenty-one times.

Online Resources

History of Cuba

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-ySzgY5X4s> (7:25) Pretty generic

Cuba Embargo

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5bLckTDbpic> (5:20)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqSwa12jgdY> (8:03)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IH01irI_73U - (about 9 minutes) shorter video clip that looks at the 50 plus years the embargo has been in place and gives some good stats and evidence throughout.

Cuba and Culture

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dd4vudPRHTQ&list=PL170713AA720A3C7B> (14:58) Good one about the Life and Culture in Cuba – would show to give kids a sense of life in Cuba

Video about the Chang Chon Gang:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfoD3RKTyzg>

Video about the UN General Assembly resolutions condemning the embargo:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jTcEiCRR8-M>

Human Rights

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkEX0kp0H6w> (10 min) Must show – really good!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpY9s1Agbsw> (2 min) great short video – goes well with the first video in this section

Text of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

Cuban Missile Crisis

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5H-Byt1GZs> (15 min) pretty good. Part 1 of a 4 part series.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2QS-zTWDxo> (JFK speech)

Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Plan Text

We propose the following plan: The United States federal government should end the economic embargo on Cuba.

Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Inherency

Contention One: Inherency:

Even though the United Nations has condemned it for the past twenty years, the US refuses to lift the Cuban embargo.

RT, November 2012 (RT News Network, “Condemned...again: 'Genocidal' US embargo on Cuba slammed by UN for 21st year”, 11/14/12, <http://rt.com/news/cuba-embargo-un-vote-635/>)

The UN has urged the US to lift the 52-year trade embargo with Cuba in an almost-unanimous vote. Cuba likened the blockade to “genocide” and said it was disappointed that Obama had not taken measures to lift the disputed embargo.

Of the 193 members of the UN assembly, 188 voted to abolish what is widely perceived as an illegal blockade. The only two nations that got behind the US were Israel and the Pacific nation of Palau, while two countries abstained from the vote.

This is the 21st year running that the UN has decried the American economic sanctions against the island nation.

Cuba’s Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez addressed the assembly, voicing Cuban disappointment that despite Obama’s pledge to open a new chapter in Cuban-American relations on assuming office four years ago, no steps had been taken to lift the crippling embargo.

“The reality is that the last four years have been characterized by the persistent tightening of ...the embargo,” he said.

The Cuban government has calculated that since the blockade was enforced in 1960 the total financial damage to Cuba’s economy is around US\$3 trillion.

Rodriguez qualified the maintenance of the embargo as tantamount to “genocide” and a “massive, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights” of the people of Cuba.

He criticized America for what he called a “costly double standard” for wasting “hundreds of millions of dollars from the taxes that are paid by US citizens in the useless and illegal subversion against Cuba.”

US president Barack Obama has taken measures to facilitate US travel to the island nation, but has thus far refrained from taking any further steps to lift the embargo. The US justifies its stance by saying it is waiting for signs of changes in Cuba’s political regime and improvements in the island state’s human rights record.

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Cuba Affirmative

Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Harms – Human Rights

Contention Two: Harms:

Our advantage is human rights:

The US embargo on Cuba is unacceptable – EVERY facet of Cuban society is touched - creating permanent economic hostility and massive suffering and deprivation in Cuba

Kovalik, 2013 (Daniel, **Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Pittsburgh**, writing for counterpunch.org, 6/28/13, “The Unrelenting Economic War on Cuba”,

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/06/28/the-unrelenting-economic-war-on-cuba/>)

Lamrani* concludes that the results of this relentless 50-year blockade have cost Cuba more than \$751 billion, and has “affected all sectors of Cuban society and all categories of the population, especially the most vulnerable: children, the elderly, and women. Over 70 percent of all Cubans have lived in a climate of permanent economic hostility.”

Indeed, the stated purpose of the blockade all along has been to inflict suffering on the Cuban people to achieve the U.S.’s political objective of regime – the sine a qua non of terrorism. Thus, Lamrani quotes Lester D. Mallory, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, who wrote on August 6, 1960:

The majority of the Cuban people support Castro. There is no effective political opposition. . . . The only foreseeable means of alienating internal support is through disenchantment and disaffection and hardship. . . . every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba . . . a line of action which . . . 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.

According to this plan, which continues to this day, the blockade has caused immense suffering amongst the Cuban civilian population. Nowhere is this more evident than in the field of medicine where Cubans are denied critical U.S. pharmaceuticals and other medical supplies – a huge deprivation given that the U.S., according to Lamrani, holds 80% of the patents in the medical sector.

And so, Lamrani sets forth a laundry list of examples in which Cubans have been deprived critical medical aid due to the blockade:

*Cuban children suffering from cancer of the retina cannot receive effective treatment because the surgical microscopes and other equipment needed for this treatment are sold exclusively by the U.S. company, Iris Medical Instruments.*The National Institute of Oncology and Radiobiology in Havana cannot use radioactive isotope plaques for the treatment of retinal cancer as they are sold exclusively by U.S. companies, thereby requiring doctors to remove the affected eyes of children altogether rather than treat and preserve them.*Nearly 1600 Cubans a year are denied effective diagnosis of cancerous tumors because Cuba cannot obtain the necessary German-made optical coherence tomography – an item prohibited by the embargo because it contains some American-made components.*Cubans are denied the drug temozolomide (Temodar) necessary for the effective treatment of tumors of the central nervous system.*Cuban children are denied the benefit of the U.S.-made Amplatzer device which could help them to avoid open heart surgery.*Cubans were denied \$4.1 million for treating AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria when these monies were seized by the U.S. from an NGO which had earmarked those monies for Cuba.*Cubans were denied the funds designated by the United Nations Program for Development for Cuba’s health care system when those monies were seized by the U.S. *Cubans are denied critical drugs for treating bone cancer and HIV AIDS.

*Salim Lamrani is a Lecturer at the University of Paris-Sorbonne and author of several books on the relationship between Cuba and the US.

Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Harms – Human Rights

We have obligation to act - The embargo is a violation of human rights in Cuba – renewed engagement with Cuba is important to improving human rights

Perez, 2010 (Louis A., professor of History and director of the Institute for the Study of the Americas at UNC Chapel Hill, “Want change in Cuba? End U.S. embargo”, <http://www.cnn.com/2010/OPINION/09/20/perez.cuba.embargo/index.html>)

In April 2009, the White House released a presidential memorandum declaring that democracy and human rights in Cuba were "national interests of the United States." Assistant Secretary of State Arturo Valenzuela repeated the message in May of this year to the Cuban-American National Foundation in Miami. The Obama administration, he said, wanted "to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms ... in ways that will empower the Cuban people and advance our national interests." Fine words. But if the administration really wanted to do something in the national interest, it would end the 50-year-old policy of political and economic isolation of Cuba. The Cuban embargo can no longer even pretend to be plausible. On the contrary, it has contributed to the very conditions that stifle democracy and human rights there. For 50 years, its brunt has fallen mainly on the Cuban people. This is not by accident. On the contrary, the embargo was designed to impose suffering and hunger on Cubans in the hope that they would rise up and overturn their government. "The only foreseeable means of alienating internal support," the Department of State insisted as early as April 1960, "is through disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship." The United States tightened the screws in the post-Soviet years with the Torricelli Act and the Helms-Burton Act -- measures designed, Sen. Robert Torricelli said, "to wreak havoc on that island." The post-Soviet years were indeed calamitous. Throughout the 1990s, Cubans faced growing scarcities, deteriorating services and increased rationing. Meeting the needs of ordinary life took extraordinary effort. And therein lies the problem that still bedevils U.S. policy today. Far from inspiring the Cuban people to revolution, the embargo keeps them down and distracted. Dire need and urgent want are hardly optimum circumstances for a people to contemplate the benefits of democracy. A people preoccupied with survival have little interest or inclination to bestir themselves in behalf of anything else. In Cuba, routine household errands and chores consume overwhelming amounts of time and energy, day after day: hours in lines at the local grocery store or waiting for public transportation. Cubans in vast numbers choose to emigrate. Others burrow deeper into the black market, struggling to make do and carry on. Many commit suicide. (Cuba has one of the highest suicide rates in the world; in 2000, the latest year for which we have statistics, it was 16.4 per 100,000 people.) A June 2008 survey in The New York Times reported that less than 10 percent of Cubans identified the lack of political freedom as the island's main problem. As one Cuban colleague recently suggested to me: "First necessities, later democracy." The United States should consider a change of policy, one that would offer Cubans relief from the all-consuming ordeal of daily life. Improved material circumstances would allow Cubans to turn their attention to other aspirations. Ending the embargo would also imply respect for the Cuban people, an acknowledgment that they have the vision and vitality to enact needed reforms, and that transition in Cuba, whatever form it may take, is wholly a Cuban affair. A good-faith effort to engage Cuba, moreover, would counter the common perception there that the United States is a threat to its sovereignty. It would deny Cuban leaders the chance to use U.S. policy as pretext to limit public debate and stifle dissent -- all to the good of democracy and human rights. And it would serve the national interest.

Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Harms – Human Rights

Rejecting the embargo is a moral imperative – on balance, it does more harm than good.

Eisenberg, 1997 (Leon, former Professor Emeritus of Social Medicine and Psychology at the Harvard Medical School, “The sleep of reason produces monsters – human costs of economic sanctions,” The New England Journal of Medicine, 336:17, pgs. 1248-1250, ProQuest)

Thus, three unusual outbreaks of medical conditions — neuropathy, self-inflicted disease, and injuries caused by rioting — stemmed from U.S. economic sanctions. The sanctions may be aimed at Fidel Castro, but the victims are the ordinary citizens of Cuba. Castro looks as well fed as ever. Economic sanctions afflict civilians, not soldiers and not the leaders of autocratic societies. Yet the United States continues to employ such sanctions against dictators (or at least those dictators it suits present policy to condemn). When the sanctions are applied, they are all-encompassing. The interdicted trade with Cuba includes visits by medical delegations and the mailing of medical journals such as this one. Whom do medical journals empower, dictators or doctors? Can freedom be defended by suppressing information any more than by interrupting food supplies or drugs?¶ Iraq is an even more disastrous example of war against the public health. Two months after the end of the six-week war, which began on January 16, 1991, a study team from the Harvard School of Public Health visited Iraq to examine the medical consequences of sanctions imposed after the armed conflict. The destruction of the country’s power plants had brought its entire system of water purification and distribution to a halt, leading to epidemics of cholera, typhoid fever, and gastroenteritis, particularly among children. Mortality rates doubled or tripled among children admitted to hospitals in Baghdad and Basra. Cases of marasmus appeared for the first time in decades. The team observed “suffering of tragic proportions. . . . [with children] dying of preventable diseases and starvation.”⁵ Although the allied bombing had caused few civilian casualties, the destruction of the infrastructure resulted in devastating long-term effects on health.¶ An international group supported by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) carried out a more comprehensive study five months later by interviewing members of households selected to represent the Iraqi population.⁶ The age-adjusted relative mortality rate among children in the eight months after the war, as compared with the five years before the war, was 3.2. There were approximately 47,000 excess deaths among children under five years of age during the first eight months of 1991. The deaths resulted from infectious diseases, the decreased quality and availability of food and water, and an enfeebled medical care system hampered by the lack of drugs and supplies.¶ The Cuban and Iraqi instances make it abundantly clear that economic sanctions are, at their core, a war against public health. Our professional ethic demands the defense of public health. Thus, as physicians, we have a moral imperative to call for the end of sanctions. Having found the cause, we must act to remove it. Continuing to allow our reason to sleep will produce more monsters.

Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Solvency – Human Rights

Contention Three: Solvency

Lifting the embargo would help improve the situation for people in Cuba and boost the US image on human rights issues.

Trani, June 23rd 2013 (Eugene P., president emeritus and University Distinguished Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, “Trani: End the embargo on Cuba”, http://www.timesdispatch.com/opinion/their-opinion/columnists-blogs/guest-columnists/end-the-embargo-on-cuba/article_ba3e522f-8861-5f3c-bee9-000dffff8ce7.html)

If Cuban materials are used in the construction of cars (more than 4% nickel for example), these cars cannot be sold in the United States, a policy which works against the rise of an automobile-based manufacturing segment of the Cuban economy.

The American embargo has had, therefore, very significant impact on different parts of the economy in Cuba. In fact, such varied political leaders as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce; George P. Shultz, former Republican secretary of state; and the late former Democratic presidential candidate, George McGovern, have called for the embargo to be lifted and relations to be renewed between Cuba and the United States. Even polls of Americans show a majority in favor of an end to the embargo and re-establishing of normal relations between the countries.

My own trip to Cuba reinforced the call for such actions. We spent four days visiting with many different kinds of groups in Havana, community projects, senior citizens, a health clinic, youth programs, artist and recording facilities, musical ensembles, historic sites such as Revolution Square and the Ernest Hemingway house and an environmental training facility, and not once did we hear anger toward the United States or the American people.

What we heard was puzzlement about the embargo and strong feelings that it was hurting the people of Cuba. In fact, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the absolute poverty rate has increased significantly in Cuba. It was also evident that there is visible decline in major infrastructure areas such as housing.

Today, there seem to be both humanitarian and economic factors, particularly with the significant growth of the non-governmental section of the economy that could factor in a change in American policy. There is also a major diplomatic factor in that no other major country, including our allies, follows our policy. What a positive statement for American foreign policy in Latin America and throughout the world it would be for the United States to end its embargo and establish normal diplomatic relations with Cuba. We would be taking both a humanitarian course of action and making a smart diplomatic gesture. The time is right and all our policy makers need is courage to bring about this change.

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Cuba Affirmative

Harms – Human Rights – 1AC/2AC Impact Framing

The logic of sacrificing one group to save the whole leads to violence and creates the destruction it tries to prevent. A new approach is necessary.

Santos, 2003 (Boaventura de Sousa, Professor of Sociology at the School of Economics, University of Coimbra in Potugal, “Collective Suicide?”, March 28th, <http://www.ces.uc.pt/opinioao/bss/072en.php>)

According to Franz Hinkelammert, the West has repeatedly been under the illusion that it should try to save humanity by destroying part of it. This is a salvific and sacrificial destruction, committed in the name of the need to radically materialize all the possibilities opened up by a given social and political reality over which it is supposed to have total power. This is how it was in colonialism, with the genocide of indigenous peoples, and the African slaves. This is how it was in the period of imperialist struggles, which caused millions of deaths in two world wars and many other colonial wars. This is how it was under Stalinism, with the Gulag, and under Nazism, with the Holocaust. And now today, this is how it is in neoliberalism, with the collective sacrifice of the periphery and even the semiperiphery of the world system. With the war against Iraq, it is fitting to ask whether what is in progress is a new genocidal and sacrificial illusion, and what its scope might be. It is above all appropriate to ask if the new illusion will not herald the radicalization and the ultimate perversion of the Western illusion: destroying all of humanity in the illusion of saving it.

Sacrificial genocide arises from a totalitarian illusion manifested in the belief that there are no alternatives to the present-day reality, and that the problems and difficulties confronting it arise from failing to take its logic of development to ultimate consequences. If there is unemployment, hunger and death in the Third World, this is not the result of market failures; instead, it is the outcome of market laws not having been fully applied. If there is terrorism, this is not due to the violence of the conditions that generate it; it is due, rather, to the fact that total violence has not been employed to physically eradicate all terrorists and potential terrorists.

This political logic is based on the supposition of total power and knowledge, and on the radical rejection of alternatives; it is ultra-conservative in that it aims to reproduce infinitely the status quo. Inherent to it is the notion of the end of history. During the last hundred years, the West has experienced three versions of this logic, and, therefore, seen three versions of the end of history: Stalinism, with its logic of insuperable efficiency of the plan; Nazism, with its logic of racial superiority; and neoliberalism, with its logic of insuperable efficiency of the market. The first two periods involved the destruction of democracy. The last one trivializes democracy, disarming it in the face of social actors sufficiently powerful to be able to privatize the state and international institutions in their favor. I have described this situation as a combination of political democracy and social fascism. One current manifestation of this combination resides in the fact that intensely strong public opinion, worldwide, against the war is found to be incapable of halting the war machine set in motion by supposedly democratic rulers.

At all these moments, a death drive, a catastrophic heroism, predominates, the idea of a looming collective suicide, only preventable by the massive destruction of the other. Paradoxically, the broader the definition of the other and the efficacy of its destruction, the more likely collective suicide becomes. In its sacrificial genocide version, neoliberalism is a mixture of market radicalization, neoconservatism and Christian fundamentalism. Its death drive takes a number of forms, from the idea of "discardable populations", referring to citizens of the Third World not capable of being exploited as workers and consumers, to the concept of "collateral damage", to refer to the deaths, as a result of war, of thousands of innocent civilians. The last, catastrophic heroism, is quite clear on two facts: according to reliable calculations by the Non-Governmental Organization MEDACT, in London, between 48 and 260 thousand civilians will die during the war and in the three months after (this is without there being civil war or a nuclear attack); the war will cost 100 billion dollars, enough to pay the health costs of the world's poorest countries for four years.

We think this argument applies in this debate because... _____

Harms – Human Rights – Embargo Violates Human Rights

The embargo denies the Cuban people access to basic needs, services, and universally accepted human rights.

Coll, 2007 Professor of Law and President, International Human Rights Law Institute, DePaul College of Law [Alberto R. Coll, Harming Human Rights in the Name of Promoting Them: The Case of the Cuban Embargo, UCLA Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs, Fall, 2007, 12 UCLA J. Int'l L. & For. Aff. 199]

Because the embargo has such far-reaching effects on foreign trade and investment with Cuba, its effects on human rights are similarly far-reaching, encompassing such areas as public health, nutrition, education, culture, and even fundamental family rights. In general, economic sanctions affect education in the sanctioned country by decreasing access to supplies, which ultimately leads to the deterioration of infrastructure. n264

The Cuban government estimates that the embargo has cost Cuba an estimated average of \$ 2.19 billion a year since 1959, a figure that may be quite conservative in light of several factors. n265 First, the embargo is unusually comprehensive and affects every area of Cuba's economic life. Second, it deprives Cuba of the benefits from economies of scale and geographical advantages associated with the U.S. market. Third, the dollar's role as the international currency of choice, the preeminent role of U.S. banks in international trade especially in the western hemisphere, and the embargo's extraterritorial reach combine to [*238] increase substantially the costs to Cuba of trading with many other countries.

The most recent United Nations report on human rights in Cuba referred to the U.S. embargo as one of the "factors hindering the realization of human rights in Cuba," and noted that:

The restrictions imposed by the embargo help to deprive Cuba of vital access to medicines, new scientific and medical technology, food, chemical water treatment and electricity. The disastrous effects of the embargo in terms of the economic, social and cultural rights of the Cuban people have been denounced by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization ... n266

Thus, though the embargo is now promoted as a means of improving human rights, the embargo has had the opposite effect of harming human rights.

Harms – Human Rights – Embargo Violates Human Rights

The embargo fails to promote human rights in Cuba – renewed engagement is important.
Amash, 2012 International Relations at UC San Diego [Brandon Amash, Evaluating the Cuban Embargo, Prospect: Journal of International Affairs at UCSD,
<http://prospectjournal.org/2012/07/23/evaluating-the-cuban-embargo/>]

§ 3.1: The American embargo is not sufficient to democratize Cuba and improve human rights. Without the help and support of multilateral institutions, economic sanctions on Cuba have been ineffective. As other states trade and interact freely with Cuba, the lack of partnership with America is only a minor hindrance to Cuba's economy. Moreover, the sanctions are detrimental to the United States economy, as Cuba could potentially be a geostrategic economic partner. More importantly, since economic sanctions are not directly related to the goal of improved human rights, the effect of these sanctions is also unrelated: continued economic sanctions against Cuba create no incentive for the Cuban government to promote better human rights, especially when the sanctions do not have international support. Empirically, it is clear that since its inception, the policy has not succeeded in promoting democratization or improving human rights. Something more must be done in order to improve the situation.

§ 3.2: American sanctions during the Cold War strengthened Castro's ideological position and created opportunities for involvement by the Soviet Union, thereby decreasing the likelihood of democratization and improvement in human rights. Cuba's revolution could not have come at a worse time for America. The emergence of a communist state in the western hemisphere allowed the Soviet Union to extend its influence, and the United States' rejection of Cuba only widened the window of opportunity for Soviet involvement. The embargo also became a scapegoat for the Castro administration, which laid blame for poor human rights conditions on the embargo policy itself (Fontaine 18 – 22). Furthermore, as Ratliff and Fontaine suggest, isolating Cuba as an enemy of democracy during the Cold War essentially made the goals of democratization in the country unachievable (Fontaine 30). While the embargo may have been strategic during the Cold War as a bulwark against communism, the long-term effects of the policy have essentially precluded the possibility for democracy in Cuba. Even after the end of the Cold War, communism persists in Cuba and human rights violations are systemic; America's policy has not achieved its goals and has become a relic of the Cold War era. The prospects for democracy and improvement in human rights seem as bleak as ever.

Harms – Human Rights – Embargo Symbolic

The embargo is a symbol of US imperialism – it causes unnecessary harm.

Edmonds 12 – Kevin Edmonds, writer for the NACLA, focusing on the Caribbean. (“Despite Global Opposition, United States Votes to Continue Cuban Embargo”, North American Congress on Latin America, November 15, 2012, <https://nacla.org/blog/2012/11/15/despite-global-opposition-united-states-votes-continue-cuban-embargo>, accessed: 7/4/13, LR)

In many ways, the ongoing Cuban embargo is one of the most symbolic policies of U.S. imperial control in the Americas. That said, the impact is much more than merely symbolic for the Cuban people, as according to Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez, the embargo is “an act of aggression and a permanent danger to the stability of the nation.”

While the Cuban embargo was ultimately created to isolate Cuba economically and politically, the routine imposition of harsher conditions has failed to bring down the Castro government. In 1992, President George H. Bush signed the Cuban Democracy Act (also known as the Torricelli Act) into law, which forbids subsidiaries of U.S. companies from trading with Cuba, U.S. nationals from traveling to Cuba and remittances being sent to the country. The Cuban Democracy Act also attempts to limit the amount of interaction the international community has with Cuba by “imposing sanctions on any country that provides assistance to Cuba, including ending U.S. assistance for those countries and by disqualifying them from benefiting from any programme of reduction or forgiveness of debt owed to the USA.” It was widely assumed that after the fall of the Soviet Union it would only be a matter of time before Castro fell as well.

When that prediction didn’t materialize, President Bill Clinton signed the internationally condemned Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act in law (more commonly known as the Helms-Burton Act) in March 1996. This act further deepened the sanctions against Cuba as it sought to “strengthen international sanctions against the Castro government,” and to “plan for support of a transition government leading to a democratically elected government in Cuba.” The Helms-Burton Act allowed for any non-U.S. company that dealt with Cuba to be subjected to legal action and that the respective company’s leadership could be barred from entry into the United States. This essentially meant that many international businesses were blackmailed to choose between operating in Cuba or the United States—which financially speaking isn’t much of a choice in regards to market size.

Like any embargo—whether in Iran, Gaza, or Cuba—it is the regular people who suffer the most. While there is a wide disagreement on the exact amount of harm the embargo has done to the Cuban economy, the estimates range between one and three trillion \$US. In 2008, the Indian Delegation to the United Nations stated that “The negative impact of the embargo is pervasive in the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of human development in Cuba, severely affecting the most vulnerable socioeconomic groups of the Cuban population.”

Harms – Human Rights – Families

The embargo separates families from each other and creates unnecessary suffering.
Coll, 2007 Professor of Law and President, International Human Rights Law Institute, DePaul College of Law [Alberto R. Coll, Harming Human Rights in the Name of Promoting Them: The Case of the Cuban Embargo, UCLA Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs, Fall, 2007, 12 UCLA J. Int'l L. & For. Aff. 199]

D. Right to Family

The right to family, and the obligation of governments to respect the family and refrain from interfering with family life and family relations, is a fundamental human right recognized in numerous international human rights documents and treaties to which the United States is a party. Although these documents focus on the obligations of states toward their own citizens, they also refer to states' obligation to promote the enjoyment of these rights by all. Thus, one of the embargo's chief legal and moral flaws is that, although it purports to promote the human rights of Cubans on the island, it actually harms their rights - as well as the rights of Cuban-Americans in the United States - to family life.

The Bush administration's 2004 amendment to the CACRs were particularly damaging. To review, the amendment tightened travel restrictions by: (1) restricting travel to once every three years; (2) limiting the length of travel to 14 days; (3) requiring special licenses to visit Cuba; (4) eliminating any additional visas; (5) reducing the amount of money travelers could spend during their trip to Cuba; (6) restricting remittance amounts; (7) limiting remittance amounts that travelers could bring with them to Cuba; n325 and (8) redefining "immediate family" to include only "spouse, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, or sibling of that person or that person's spouse, as well as any spouse, widow or widower of the foregoing." n326 This last definition effectively prohibits aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins from traveling to Cuba to visit their families, n327 causing numerous Cubans living in the [*248] United States to suffer immeasurable emotional turmoil. The emotional toll that the embargo imposes is thus extensive and disproportionate to any conceivable policy goal the regulations might serve, such as denying resources to the Castro regime. n328

The human suffering imposed by these restrictions becomes apparent by examining individual stories about their impact. Prior to the implementation of the amended travel restrictions, Marisela Romero, a 53-year old Cuban-American, traveled to Cuba several times a year to visit her 87-year old father who suffers from Alzheimer's disease. n329 The amended travel restrictions now make it impossible for her to visit more than once every three years. The Office of Foreign Asset Control denied her request for permission to travel more often by stating that "it would be inappropriate for you to make application with the Office of Foreign Assets Control for a specific license to visit a member of your immediate family until the required three-year period has passed." n330

Romero's father was the only living member of her "immediate family" in Cuba, and he was "incapable of cashing checks or even signing them over to someone else" due to his illness. n331 Thus, the restrictions not only limited Romero's ability to visit her ailing father but also limited her ability to support him by sending remittances. Moreover, the psychological impact of the travel restrictions was severe for both of them. The father's doctor informed Romero that her father "had become deeply depressed - most likely because of her extended absence - and stopped eating." n332 He subsequently died before Romero was able to visit him.

The restrictions also weigh heavily upon those left behind in Cuba to care for ill relatives. Prior to the implementation of the amended travel restrictions, Andres Andrade, a 50-year old Cuban-American, traveled to Cuba regularly to help his sister care for their aging parents. n333 Because of the amended travel restrictions, Andres' sister was left largely on her own. Andres' mother, who was battling cancer, had to be hospitalized in late 2004 [*249] due to a severe pulmonary complication. n334 Travel restrictions prevented Andres from traveling to Cuba to be at his mother's side and left his sister alone to care for their mother. His sister "spent four straight days without any sleep, sitting on a chair next to her." n335 Andres' sister believed that their mother "was holding onto life because she hoped that he would come ... That day before she died, the screaming was horrible. She wept and cried out his name." n336 The death of Andres' mother took a terrible toll on Andres' father's health. According to Andres' sister:

"Every day he tells me that he is waiting for Andres to come because he has a gift for him that my mom gave him and that only he can tell him... He says that he wants to go join my mom, that he wants to die but that before he goes he wants to see Andres and give him the gift that my mother left him... I pray to God that my dad makes it until 2007 [when Andres can visit Cuba]... But he is already 82-years old, and he is very sick... Sometimes, when I despair, I sit on the patio alone and cry." n337

These accounts evince the deep emotional distress caused by the CACR travel restrictions. Milay Torres, a teenage girl, moved to the United States with her father in 2000. n338 Milay returned to Cuba to visit her family three years later, and she planned to return again in 2004. With the implementation of the stricter travel rules, however, she would have to wait until 2006. n339 Upon learning this, Milay "became very depressed, turned rebellious, and stopped going to school." n340 Milay's mother began to suffer severe anxiety as a result of her daughter's absence. She explained: After she left Cuba, I began suffering more anxiety attacks. After I found out [about the travel restrictions] my anxiety worsened. I am seeing psychologists and psychiatrists, and when I get these attacks, I go to the hospital and they inject me with some sedatives and send me home... When I see the things that are happening there with the travel restrictions ... my condition worsens because I am waiting for her to come, but she doesn't come... Sometimes I tell people that I would give up my life to be able to see my daughter for just five [*250] minutes. n341

Thus, the psychological effects of the CACR restrictions on the multitude of affected families are profound.

Carlos Lazo, a U.S. army Sergeant serving in Iraq, returned to Miami during a leave from service in June of 2004 n342 and purchased an airline ticket to visit his two teenage sons in Cuba. n343 However, "even though his trip would have started before the new travel restrictions took effect, the Bush Administration directed charter aircraft to stop accepting new passengers, to fly to Cuba empty, and to return only with travelers from Cuba." n344 As Mr. Lazo commented, "the administration that trusted me in battle in Iraq does not trust me to visit my children in Cuba." n345 Moreover, Mr. Lazo's inability to visit his sons left him with deep feelings of inadequacy: "I can't help out my sons ... I can't give them human warmth. I can't fulfill my obligation as a father. I can't send money to my uncles because they are no longer part of my family." n346

The following statement by another Cuban-American summarizes the deep heartache caused by the travel restrictions to people on both sides of the Florida straits: Against my will and for decades I have been deprived of attending important happenings in Cuba such as the death and funeral of my father, grandfather, uncles, aunts, cousins, and high school buddies; weddings, births, and baptisms of nephew, niece, grandnephews, grandnieces and cousins. There were the long illnesses of my father, grandfather, uncle, niece, cousin and grandnephew ... Thanks to Washington's restrictions it got very difficult, onerous and lengthy to obtain and deliver vital medications, thus prolonging the suffering and distress of patients and relatives on both sides of the straits. Telling of the cruelty, hurt, and violation of my human rights (and that of my family) caused by the travel ban could go on and on; its hypocrisy and double standard (go not to Cuba, but OK with China, Vietnam, Russia, Saudi Arabia, etc.) are incredible and not worthy of any nation that truly values family and God. n347

[*251] By enforcing an arbitrary definition of "immediate family," and by dictating when Cuban-Americans may visit their sick and dying family members, the embargo's travel restrictions create extreme psychological and emotional distress to those affected by them and violate the basic human right to family. n348

Harms – Human Rights – Medicine

Embargo denies medicine access to Cuban people

Coll, 2007 Professor of Law and President, International Human Rights Law Institute, DePaul College of Law [Alberto R. Coll, Harming Human Rights in the Name of Promoting Them: The Case of the Cuban Embargo, UCLA Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs, Fall, 2007, 12 UCLA J. Int'l L. & For. Aff. 199]

In a widely publicized 1997 report, the American Association for World Health ("**AAWH**") found that the embargo's arduous licensing provisions actively discouraged medical trade and commerce. n289 AAWH further reported that in some cases U.S. officials provided American firms with misleading or confusing information. n290 In addition, it reported that several licenses for legitimate medications and medical equipment were denied as "detrimental to U.S. foreign policy interests." n291 The AAWH concluded that, as a result of inaccurate or confusing information from U.S. officials, [*242] one-half of the firms they surveyed incorrectly believed that the embargo prevented all sales of medications and medical supplies to Cuba. n292

An arduous and confusing process that discourages even legal sales of medication and medical supplies from U.S. companies or subsidiaries harms Cubans' human rights to health and medical care. The licensing procedures often effectively ensure that vital health products are only available to Cubans through intermediaries at prohibitive prices that are much higher than in the American market. n293 The resulting impact of medication shortages in Cuba is well documented. n294 For example, between 1992 and 1993, medication shortages in Cuba accounted for a 48% increase in deaths from tuberculosis; a 67% increase in deaths due to infectious and parasitic diseases; and a 77% increase in deaths from influenza and pneumonia. n295

More recently, the Cuban government has issued reports in the United Nations General Assembly documenting the ways in which the U.S. embargo makes the process of obtaining medications and medical equipment unnecessarily difficult and costly. n296 Two examples include Cuba's unsuccessful attempts to purchase an anti-viral medication called Tenofovir (Viread) from the U.S. firm Gilead and Depo-Provera, a contraceptive drug, from another U.S. firm, Pfizer. Because it would have required an export license from the U.S. government, Gilead was unable to sell Tenofovir, and Cuba was forced to purchase the medication through third-parties at a significantly higher price. The Cuban government cited this as an example of the embargo's negative impact on Cuba's efforts to modernize its HIV/AIDS treatments. n297 In the Depo-Provera example, Cuba reported that, despite Cuba's attempts to purchase the drug as part of a national program associated with the United Nations Population Fund, Pfizer claimed it could not sell the product to Cuba without obtaining a number of licenses, a process which would take several months. n298 Cuba's report to the United Nations [*243] also chronicled obstacles the country faced in obtaining medical equipment from U.S. companies and subsidiaries.

Moreover, Cuba reports that the embargo's restrictions go beyond the purchase of medical equipment and medications but also includes replacement components for equipment it already possesses. n299 The country reported being denied the possibility of purchasing replacement pieces containing U.S.-made components for equipment used in its Oncology and Radiobiology Institute. n300 In another example, Cuba reported that the U.S. Treasury refused to authorize Atlantic Philanthropic, a United States NGO, from donating a molecular biology laboratory to Cuba's Nephrology Institute. This technology would have facilitated successful kidney transplants for a larger percentage of Cuban patients. n301 Additional reported examples include film for x-ray machines used to detect breast cancer, Spanish-language medical books from a U.S. conglomerate subsidiary, and U.S.-made components for respirators. n302 A policy of maintaining an arduous and at times insurmountable licensing procedure for trading health-related products with Cuba harms the health of Cuban citizens. Moreover, the waste of valuable time and the deprivation of necessary medicine and equipment do not make sense morally or politically. In a 1995 speech addressing the use of economic sanctions as a political tool, former United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali explained: "Sanctions, as is generally recognized, are a blunt instrument. They raise the ethical question of whether suffering inflicted on vulnerable groups in the target country is a legitimate means of exerting pressure on political leaders whose behaviour is unlikely to be affected by the plight of their subjects." n303

Harms – Human Rights – Sanctions Undermine Human Rights

Sanctions are human rights violations

Shagabutdinova & Berejikian, 2007 a. member of the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, MA/JD, at the University of Georgia b. Associate Professor of International Affairs, School of Public and International Affairs, at the University of Georgia [Ella Shagabutdinova & Jeffrey Berejikian, Deploying Sanctions while Protecting Human Rights: Are Humanitarian “Smart” Sanctions Effective?, Journal of Human Rights, Volume 6, Issue 1, 2007]

While the use of sanctions is permitted under the principles of international law (UN Charter, Art. 39 & 41, as well as notion of state sovereignty), they often produce consequences that run counter to the obligations of governments to protect human rights. Hence, sanctions constitute violations of human rights to the extent they deny the above-mentioned fundamental basic rights and violated norms of jus cogens. Even the United Nations, often the focal point for a sanctioning effort, now acknowledges that the damage imposed by sanctions can rise to the level of human rights abuses (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 8, 1997). Similarly, the United Nations authorized a number of studies detailing humanitarian impact of sanctions and their devastating effect on human rights (Garfield 1999; Minear 1997). While some disagree that sanctions constitute human rights violations directly (e.g., Marks 1999), there is nonetheless near universal consensus on the main point: economic sanctions, even when used for humanitarian purposes, (often unintentionally) impose significant hardship on innocent populations.

Harms – Human Rights – Scapegoating

The embargo gives the Castro regime a scapegoat to justify brutal treatment of the Cuban people.

Ratliff, 2009 (William, Research Fellow at the Independent Institute, Board of Advisors of the Institute's Center on Global Prosperity, "Why and How to Lift the U.S. Embargo on Cuba," 5/7/09, <http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=2496>)

The embargo made sense during the Cold War, but no longer. A majority of Americans and Cubans now oppose it, including a majority of Cuban dissidents in Cuba and Cuban-Americans in Miami. Only the U.S. Congress still won't move as a body, bound as it is by inertia and domestic political calculations. Alas, its role is critical since the passage of the 1996 Helms Burton Act, which codifies the embargo.

How has the embargo failed? It has not brought down the Castro brothers, advanced democracy, freedom, human rights or prosperity in Cuba, or gotten compensation for Americans whose assets Cuba seized decades ago. It largely denies Americans the freedom to travel to Cuba, or to trade freely and otherwise interact Cubans on the island.

And in recent decades it has given Fidel the scapegoat he needs—us—to excuse his economic utopianism and brutality.

Supporters of the embargo see it as an expression of America's moral indignation at Castro's brutal policies. By limiting the flow of dollars to Cuba we deny some funds to Cuban security forces, as they argue, but we simultaneously withhold support for the daily lives of the Cuban people.

Harms – Human Rights – They Say “Korean Weapons”

The shipment to North Korea is a sign of desperation, not a threat – they were just trading repairs for sugar.

The Takeaway, July 18th 2013 (transcript of radio program produced by Public Radio International, “North Korea may be trading missile upgrades for sugar from Cuba”, <http://www.pri.org/stories/politics-society/government/north-korea-may-be-trading-missile-upgrades-for-sugar-from-cuba-14425.html>)

Panama discovered this week that Cuba may be receiving weapons upgrades from North Korea in exchange for sending the reclusive country sugar. North Korea's trade has been called high-risk, low-reward, however, it could be a sign of just how desperate North Korea is to fix its chronic food shortages.

It's a move that smacks of desperation by two countries whose histories have left them with few international friends.

Spurred by a tip, the Panamanian government stopped a North Korean ship eventually discovered to be carrying outdated missile parts underneath more than 200,000 bags of Columbian brown sugar.

The 35-person crew of the Chong Chon Gang fought Panama's authorities for five days. Meanwhile, the captain, reportedly, had a heart attack and then tried to commit suicide when port authorities finally boarded the ship with the help of the country's marines. That fierce resistance brought heavier attention from Cuban and Panamanian press, who wondered why either North Korean or Cuban officials would risk violating a U.N. arms embargo for seemingly insignificant gains.

Some experts have said that North Korea, which has been experiencing food shortages for years, could have offered to upgrade the pre-Cold War era missile equipment in exchange for the sugar. A recent report by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the U.N. said that in North Korea, "An estimated 2.8 million vulnerable people require food assistance until the next harvest in October."

North Korea is mostly an exporter of missiles, so for them to be importing outdated equipment has left many scratching their heads. On Tuesday, Cuban officials detailed the cargo, which includes aging fighter jets and related parts as well, and said it was being shipped to North Korea for refurbishment and upgrade.

Harms – Human Rights – Embargo is Immoral

The embargo is morally unacceptable and history proves that it won't work even in times of crisis.

Birns and Mills, 2013 (Larry, Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA) director, Frederick, COHA senior research fellow, "BEST TIME FOR U.S.– CUBA RAPPROCHEMENT IS NOW", January 30th, <http://www.coha.org/best-time-for-u-s-cuba-rapprochement-is-now/>)

Besides being counter-productive, there are also strong moral arguments for ending the embargo. From a utilitarian point of view, the policy is objectionable because it has brought about needless suffering without convincing evidence of praiseworthy results. One illustration of this is what happened during what Havana calls the "special period in time of peace." This refers to the economic crisis, hydrocarbon energy shortages, and food insecurity that followed the collapse of Soviet Bloc (1989 – 1991) which was Cuba's main trading partner and the source of vital subsidies. The embargo took an especially harsh toll during the special period. According to a 1997 report *Denial of Food and Medicine: The Impact of the Embargo on Health and Nutrition in Cuba* by The American Association for World Health: "the U.S. embargo of Cuba has dramatically harmed the health and nutrition of large numbers of ordinary Cuban citizens." The report also observed that "the U.S. embargo has caused a significant rise in suffering-and even deaths-in Cuba." The special period, including a serious food shortage in 1993, did not lead to the country's surrender, but to the decisive restructuring of the agricultural sector, a number of economic reforms, and the diversification of trade.

A more recent report by *Human Rights Watch* also points to the needless suffering caused by the embargo:

"The United States' economic embargo on Cuba, in place for more than half a century, continues to impose indiscriminate hardship on Cubans, and has failed to improve human rights in the country." (2012 Report on Cuba)

The embargo, then, has harmed those whom it purportedly meant to benefit—the average Cuban. A benevolent foreign policy towards Cuba would collaterally seek to benefit the Cuban people, not bring hunger, hardship, and in some cases death to an innocent civilian population. Since it is unlikely that the majority of Cubans would willingly impose such adversity *on themselves* or their kith and kin for over fifty years, such a punitive and coercive measure fails another important test of moral acceptability.

Harms – Human Rights – Embargo is Immoral

The embargo is a human rights violation and is morally unacceptable.

Hernandez-Truyol, 2009 Mabie, Levin & Mabie Professor of Law, University of Florida, Levin College of Law [Berta E. Hernandez-Truyol, Embargo or Blockade - The Legal and Moral Dimensions of the U.S. Economic Sanctions on Cuba, 4 Intercultural Hum. Rts. L. Rev. 53 (2009)]

V Conclusion: The Human (Rights) and Moral Dimension

This essay has presented the history of economic sanctions against Cuba, analyzed the questionable legality of the sanctions, and detailed the effects of the sanctions. In conclusion, I want to problematize further the legality of the sanctions under international law. To be sure, the U.S. commitment to the WTO limits its ability to refuse to trade absent a legitimate, allowed concern. To use the national security claim vis-a-vis Cuba simply does not pass the laugh test; although the recent talks with Venezuela and the Russian fleet might cause a reconsideration of that position. Moreover, save for the regulations, which in any case are limited in light of the entirety of the Toricelli and Helms Burton laws, the WTO is a "later in time" statement of the law which should then govern.

The other aspect of legality involves the human rights idea. Here, the real impact on real people of the embargo borders on unconscionable. As the essay has described, the actions have taken a human toll; they affect health, hunger, education, nutrition quite directly. They also affect the right to travel and the right to family life of Cubans in the U.S. who can no longer visit their relatives with regularity nor spend time with them in either times of joy or times of need - although this has been changed dramatically by President Obama's policy shift.

Economic sanctions are valuable tools for protecting human rights. The U.S. has used sanctions to discourage human rights violations. Examples include the U.S. ban of South African gold Krugerrands in 1985 to protest apartheid¹⁴⁸, the blockage of Nicaraguan imports to deter terrorist acts of the Sandinista regime,¹⁴⁹ the prohibition of foreign aid to Burma to oppose the government's use of forced labor,⁵⁰ and the 1989 denial of MFN status against China to protest the killing of pro-democracy protestors in Tiananmen Square to name a few.⁵¹

The U.S. is not alone in this approach. In fact, human rights violations have resulted in states jointly taking economic sanctions through the UN Security Council. Examples include NATO states' 1986 sanctions against Libya as a result of Moammar Ghadafi's support for the terrorist killing of 279 passengers aboard a U.S. airline bombed over Lockerbie and 1990 Iraq sanctions for its invasion of Kuwait.

The Cuba sanctions, however, reflect another aspect of economic sanctions: their deleterious and harmful effects on civil society, the innocent citizenry of the targeted country. By depriving citizens of the benefits of trade, of travel, of family life; by creating circumstances in which people's health, nutrition, standard of living and overall welfare are negatively affected, sanctions have effected serious denials of human rights - a moral if not legal failure.

Harms – Human Rights – Embargo is Immoral and Expensive

The embargo costs the US money and is immoral .

Forbes, 2013 (Daniel Hanson, economics researcher at the American Enterprise Institute, Dayne Batten, affiliated with the University of North Carolina Department of Public Policy, Harrison Ealey, financial analyst, “It's Time For The U.S. To End Its Senseless Embargo Of Cuba”, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2013/01/16/its-time-for-the-u-s-to-end-its-senseless-embargo-of-cuba/>)

Yet, estimates of the sanctions’ annual cost to the U.S. economy range from \$1.2 to \$3.6 billion, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Restrictions on trade disproportionately affect U.S. small businesses who lack the transportation and financial infrastructure to skirt the embargo. These restrictions translate into real reductions in income and employment for Americans in states like Florida, where the unemployment rate currently stands at 8.1 percent.

What’s worse, U.S. sanctions encourage Cuba to collaborate with regional players that are less friendly to American interests. For instance, in 2011, the country inked a deal with Venezuela for the construction of an underwater communications link, circumventing its need to connect with US-owned networks close to its shores.

Repealing the embargo would fit into an American precedent of lifting trade and travel restrictions to countries who demonstrate progress towards democratic ideals. Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary were all offered normal trade relations in the 1970s after preliminary reforms even though they were still in clear violation of several US resolutions condemning their human rights practices. China, a communist country and perennial human rights abuser, is the U.S.’s second largest trading partner, and in November, trade restrictions against Myanmar were lessened notwithstanding a fifty year history of genocide and human trafficking propagated by its military government.

Which, of course, begs the question: when will the U.S. see fit to lift the embargo? If Cuba is trending towards democracy and free markets, what litmus test must be passed for the embargo to be rolled back?

The cost of the embargo to the United States is high in both dollar and moral terms, but it is higher for the Cuban people, who are cut off from the supposed champion of liberty in their hemisphere because of an antiquated Cold War dispute. The progress being made in Cuba could be accelerated with the help of American charitable relief, business innovation, and tourism.

Harms – Human Rights – Human Rights Impact

If we don't have respect for human rights, the species won't be able to survive.

Annas et al 02 Edward R. Utley Prof. and Chair Health Law @ Boston U. School of Public Health and Prof. SocioMedical Sciences and Community Science @ Boston U. School of Medicine and Prof. Law @ Boston U. School of Law [George, Lori Andrews, (Distinguished Prof. Law @ Chicago-Kent College of Law and Dir. Institute for Science, Law, and Technology @ Illinois Institute Tech), and Rosario M. Isasa, (Health Law and Biotethics Fellow @ Health Law Dept. of Boston U. School of Public Health), American Journal of Law & Medicine, "THE GENETICS REVOLUTION: CONFLICTS, CHALLENGES AND CONUNDRAS: ARTICLE: Protecting the Endangered Human: Toward an International Treaty Prohibiting Cloning and Inheritable Alterations", 28 Am. J. L. and Med. 151, L/N]

The development of the atomic bomb not only presented to the world for the first time the prospect of total annihilation, but also, paradoxically, led to a renewed emphasis on the "nuclear family," complete with its personal bomb shelter. The conclusion of World War II (with the dropping of the only two atomic bombs ever used in war) led to the recognition that world wars were now suicidal to the entire species and to the formation of the United Nations with the primary goal of preventing such wars. ⁿ² Prevention, of course, must be based on the recognition that all humans are fundamentally the same, rather than on an emphasis on our differences. In the aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis, the closest the world has ever come to nuclear war, President John F. Kennedy, in an address to the former Soviet Union, underscored the necessity for recognizing similarities for our survival:

[L]et us not be blind to our differences, but let us also direct attention to our common interests and the means by which those differences can be resolved For, in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal. ⁿ³ That we are all fundamentally the same, all human, all with the same dignity and rights, is at the core of the most important document to come out of World War II, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the two treaties that followed it (together known as the "International Bill of Rights"). ⁿ⁴ The recognition of universal human rights, based on human dignity and equality as well as the principle of nondiscrimination, is fundamental to the development of a species consciousness. As Daniel Lev of Human Rights Watch/Asia said in 1993, shortly before the Vienna Human Rights Conference: Whatever else may separate them, human beings belong to a single biological species, the simplest and most fundamental commonality before which the significance of human differences quickly fades. . . . We are all capable, in exactly the same ways, of feeling pain, hunger, [*153] and a hundred kinds of deprivation. Consequently, people nowhere routinely concede that those with enough power to do so ought to be able to kill, torture, imprison, and generally abuse others. . . . The idea of universal human rights shares the recognition of one common humanity, and provides a minimum solution to deal with its miseries. ⁿ⁵

Membership in the human species is central to the meaning and enforcement of human rights, and respect for basic human rights is essential for the survival of the human species. The development of the concept of "crimes against humanity" was a

milestone for universalizing human rights in that it recognized that there were certain actions, such as slavery and genocide, that implicated the welfare of the entire species and therefore merited universal condemnation. ⁿ⁶ Nuclear weapons were immediately seen as a technology that required international control, as extreme genetic manipulations like cloning and inheritable genetic alterations have come to be seen today. In fact, cloning and inheritable genetic alterations can be seen as crimes against humanity of a unique sort: they are techniques that can alter the essence of humanity itself (and thus threaten to change the foundation of human rights) by taking human evolution into our own hands and directing it toward the development of a new species, sometimes termed the "posthuman." ⁿ⁷ It may be that species-altering techniques, like cloning and inheritable genetic modifications, could provide benefits to the human species in extraordinary circumstances. For example, asexual genetic replication could potentially save humans from extinction if all humans were rendered sterile by some catastrophic event. But no such necessity currently exists or is on the horizon.

Harms – Human Rights – Human Rights Impact

A Human rights framework transforms political calculations because it enables solving poverty, violence and disease, and it renders nuclear conflict unthinkable.

Seita, 1997 Professor of law at Albany Law School of Union University [Alex Seita, “Globalization and the Convergence of Values”, 30 Cornell Int'l L.J. 429, L/N]

The convergence of fundamental values through globalization has profound consequences because it increases the chance that a new perspective will develop, one which views membership in the human race as the most significant societal relationship, except for nationality. n104 A person owes his or her strongest collective loyalties to the various societies with which he or she most intensely identifies. Today, this societal identification can be based on numerous factors, including nationality, race, religion, and ethnic group. n105 While it is unlikely that nationality will be surpassed as the most significant societal relationship, globalization and the convergence of values may eventually convince people in different countries that the second most important social group is the human race, and not a person's racial, religious, or ethnic group. n106 One of the first steps in the formation of a society is the recognition by prospective members that they have common interests and bonds. An essential commonality is that they share some fundamental values. A second is that they identify themselves as members belonging to the same community on the basis of a number of common ties, including shared fundamental values. A third commonality is the universality of rights - the active application of the "golden rule" - by which members expect that all must be entitled to the same rights as well as charged with the same responsibilities to ensure that these rights are protected. Globalization promotes these three types of commonalities. Globalization establishes common ground by facilitating the almost universal acceptance of market economies, the widespread emergence of democratic governments, and the extensive approval of human rights. The most visible example is economic. With the end of the Cold War, the free market economy has clearly triumphed over the command economy in the battle of the [*463] economic paradigms. Because some variant of a market economy has taken root in virtually all countries, there has been a convergence of sorts in economic systems. n107 Further, because it often requires exposure to and pervasive interaction with foreigners - many of whom share the same fundamental values - globalization can enlarge the group that one normally identifies with. Globalization makes many of its participants empathize with the conditions and problems of people who in earlier years would have been ignored as unknown residents of remote locations. This empathy often leads to sympathy and support when these people suffer unfairly. Finally, the combination of shared values and identification produce the third commonality, universality of rights. n108 Citizens of one country will often expect, and work actively to achieve, the same basic values in other countries. They will treat nationals of other nations as they would wish to be treated. The effects of shared values, identification, and universality of rights in globalization could have a pivotal long-term effect - the possibility that a majority of human beings will begin to believe that they are truly part of a single global society - the human race. This is not to say that people disbelieve the idea that the human race encompasses all human beings. Of course, they realize that there is only one human species. Rather, the human race does not usually rank high on the hierarchy of societies for most people. Smaller societies, especially those based on nationality, race, religion, or ethnicity, command more loyalty. n109 The idea of the human race, the broadest and all-inclusive category of the human species, is abstract and has little, if any, impact on the lives of human beings. To believe in the singular importance of the human race requires an attitudinal shift in which a person views the human race seriously. [*464] This may occur because the convergence of values does not only mean that the people of different countries will share the same basic values. It may also lead to the greater promotion of these values for the people of other countries. Historically and certainly today, America and the other industrial democracies have attempted to foster democracy and human rights in other countries. n110 While some part of this effort has been attributable to "self interest," it has also been due to the empathy that the industrialized democracies have had for other countries. n111 The magnitude of these efforts in the future, as in the past, will depend not solely upon the available financial and human resources of the industrialized democracies. It will also depend upon their national will - a factor undoubtedly influenced by the intensity with which the people of the industrialized democracies identify with people in foreign lands. The perspective that the human race matters more than its component divisions would accelerate cooperative efforts among nations to attack global problems that adversely affect human rights and the quality of human life. n112 Obviously, there is no shortage of such problems. Great suffering still occurs in so many parts of the world, not just from internal armed conflicts, n113 but also from conditions of poverty. n114 There are severe health problems in much of the world which can be mitigated with relatively little cost. n115 There are the lives lost to the AIDS epidemic, and [*465] the deaths and disabilities caused by land mines. n116 Russia, a nuclear superpower that could end life on this planet, has severe social, economic, and political problems. n117 Making the human race important would not just promote liberal democratic values but would also reduce human suffering and perhaps eliminate completely the risk of nuclear war.

Harms – Human Rights – US-Cuba War Impact

The embargo may lead to a US-Cuba war – lifting the embargo is key to help smooth a future transition.

Amash, 2012 International Relations at UC San Diego [Brandon Amash, Evaluating the Cuban Embargo, Prospect: Journal of International Affairs at UCSD, <http://prospectjournal.org/2012/07/23/evaluating-the-cuban-embargo/>]

§ 3.3: The current policy may drag the United States into a military conflict with Cuba. Military conflict may be inevitable in the future if the embargo’s explicit goal – creating an insurrection in Cuba to overthrow the government — is achieved, and the United States may not be ready to step in. As Ratliff and Fontaine detail, “Americans are not prepared to commit the military resources [...]” (Fontaine 57), especially after unpopular wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Much like America’s current situation with isolated rogue states such as Iran and North Korea, Cuba’s isolation may also lead to war for other reasons, like the American occupation of Guantanamo Bay. These consequences are inherently counterproductive for the democratization of Cuba and the improvement of human rights.

§ 4. Policy Recommendations:

Although America’s previous policies of intervention, use of force and economic sanctions have all failed at achieving democratization in Cuba, not all options have been exhausted. One policy alternative for promoting democracy and human rights in Cuba that the United States has not attempted is the exact opposite of the approach it has taken for the past half century. Namely, the United States should lift the embargo on Cuba and reopen diplomatic relations in order to work internationally on improving human rights in Cuba. Unless Cuba, as a rogue state, is isolated internationally, rather than merely by the United States, the human rights situation in Cuba may never improve. A fresh policy of engagement towards Cuba has been delayed long enough.

Solvency – Human Rights and Democracy

Lifting the embargo would help people in Cuba, boost the US economy, and encourage democracy.

Griswold, 2009 (Daniel, director of the Cato Institute's Center for Trade Policy Studies, "The US Embargo of Cuba Is a Failure", June 15th, <http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/us-embargo-cuba-is-failure>)

The embargo has been a failure by every measure. It has not changed the course or nature of the Cuban government. It has not liberated a single Cuban citizen. In fact, the embargo has made the Cuban people a bit more impoverished, without making them one bit more free. At the same time, it has deprived Americans of their freedom to travel and has cost US farmers and other producers billions of dollars of potential exports.

As a tool of US foreign policy, the embargo actually enhances the Castro government's standing by giving it a handy excuse for the failures of the island's Caribbean-style socialism. Brothers Fidel and Raul can rail for hours about the suffering the embargo inflicts on Cubans, even though the damage done by their communist policies has been far worse. The embargo has failed to give us an ounce of extra leverage over what happens in Havana.

In 2000, Congress approved a modest opening of the embargo. The Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act allows cash-only sales to Cuba of US farm products and medical supplies. The results of this modest opening have been quite amazing. Since 2000, total sales of farm products to Cuba have increased from virtually zero to \$691m in 2008. The top US exports by value are corn, meat and poultry, wheat and soybeans. From dead last, Cuba is now the number six customer in Latin America for US agricultural products. Last year, American farmers sold more to the 11.5 million people who live in Cuba than to the 200 million people in Brazil.

According to the US international trade commission, US farm exports would increase another \$250m if restrictions were lifted on export financing. This should not be interpreted as a call for export-import bank subsidies. Trade with Cuba must be entirely commercial and market driven. Lifting the embargo should not mean that US taxpayers must now subsidise exports to Cuba. But neither should the government stand in the way.

USITC estimates do not capture the long-term export potential to Cuba from normalised relations. The Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Guatemala spend an average of 2.8% of their GDP to buy farm exports from the US. If Cuba spent the same share of its GDP on US farm exports, exports could more than double the current level, to \$1.5bn a year.

Advocates of the embargo argue that trading with Cuba will only put dollars into the coffers of the Castro regime. And it's true that the government in Havana, because it controls the economy, can skim off a large share of the remittances and tourist dollars spent in Cuba. But of course, selling more US products to Cuba would quickly relieve the Castro regime of those same dollars. If more US tourists were permitted to visit Cuba, and at the same time US exports to Cuba were further liberalised, the US economy could reclaim dollars from the Castro regime as fast as the regime could acquire them. In effect, the exchange would be of agricultural products for tourism services, a kind of "bread for beaches", "food for fun" trade relationship.

Meanwhile, the increase in Americans visiting Cuba would dramatically increase contact between Cubans and Americans. The unique US-Cuban relationship that flourished before Castro could be renewed, which would increase US influence and potentially hasten the decline of the communist regime.

Congress and President Barack Obama should act now to lift the embargo to allow more travel and farm exports to Cuba. Expanding our freedom to travel to, trade with and invest in Cuba would make Americans better off and would help the Cuban people and speed the day when they can enjoy the freedom they deserve.

Solvency – Human Rights

Lifting the embargo creates the possibility for real change in Cuba.

Ratliff, 2009 (William, Research Fellow at the Independent Institute, Board of Advisors of the Institute’s Center on Global Prosperity, “Why and How to Lift the U.S. Embargo on Cuba,” 5/7/09, <http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=2496>)

The only way we can keep full control of the process is by lifting it unilaterally.

The State Department recently lauded the normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia. “It has long been and remains the position of the United States that normalization should take place without preconditions,” State said. So why not between the United States and Cuba, where the pain of the past hardly equals that of Turkey and Armenia?

Is Castro a brutal dictator? Sure, but his atrocities are hardly worse than those of Robert Mugabe, the thug who rules Zimbabwe, a country we recognize.

The United States demands more concessions from Cuba for recognition than from any other country in history. In fact, the Helms Burton Act is blatantly imperialistic, in the spirit of the Platt Amendment to the Monroe Doctrine a century ago, which poisoned U.S. relations with Cuba for decades.

Negotiations without preconditions, which Obama says he supports, are the next best though potentially deeply flawed approach. Informal discussions between U.S. and Cuban diplomats already are underway. If Cuban pragmatists, including President Raul Castro, can over-ride Fidel’s anti-American passions, perhaps the United States, if we are very flexible, and Cuba can work out a step-by-step, face-saving plan to reduce tensions and normalize relations.

The Obama administration got off to a positive start by dropping the misguided 2004 Bush administration restrictions on remittances and travel to Cuba, but then in public statements fell immediately into the trap of previous administrations by demanding “reciprocity.”

This seems a just and reasonable demand, but in the propaganda-filled public arena it is a game-stopper. In practical terms, the public demand for reciprocity hands Cuba a veto over U.S. policy, which it has used before to short-circuit emerging U.S. moderation. Cuba will never make tradeoffs on important matters so long as the core of the basically flawed embargo remains in place.

Lifting the embargo would unleash a new dynamic and put full responsibility for Cuban rights violations and economic failure squarely on Cuba’s leaders where it belongs.

We can hope, but can’t guarantee, that ending the embargo will encourage real domestic reforms in Cuba. We can guarantee that it will rid us of a demeaning, hypocritical and counterproductive policy.

Solvency – Human Rights

Lifting the embargo would help boost human rights in Cuba and get the US on board with international consensus.

Coll, 2007 Professor of Law and President, International Human Rights Law Institute, DePaul College of Law [Alberto R. Coll, Harming Human Rights in the Name of Promoting Them: The Case of the Cuban Embargo, UCLA Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs, Fall, 2007, 12 UCLA J. Int'l L. & For. Aff. 199]

CONCLUSION

The Cuban embargo's sole purpose, as articulated officially by the U.S. government, is to promote human rights and democracy on the island. However, because the embargo is comprehensive and indiscriminate, the [*273] embargo adversely affects the human rights of vast numbers of innocent Cubans, especially in the areas of economic, social, and cultural rights. The embargo has also failed since its inception more than four decades ago to contribute to the promotion of human rights on the island, and it continues to retard any possible political opening by fostering a siege mentality among Cuban leadership. Moreover, the embargo disregards the clear wishes of the people of Cuba for closer economic, family and cultural ties to the United States, thereby contradicting its own ostensibly democratic rationale and further detracting from the limited possibilities currently available to Cubans to create a more open society. Moreover, the embargo can be justified legally only by grounding it in the classic state sovereignty paradigm according to which states can refuse to trade with any others regardless of the consequences to the target state's population. This paradigm is completely at odds with the cosmopolitan paradigm which gives states a legitimate interest in the domestic human rights conditions of other states. This latter paradigm is the basis under which the United States has justified its "human rights" embargo against Cuba since 1992. Thus, both philosophically and as a policy instrument, the embargo is incoherent in its very rationale. As an indiscriminate, comprehensive, unilateral peacetime measure taken by the world's most powerful nation against a small developing country, the embargo also has come under the strict legal scrutiny of the international community. Because the embargo is a human rights embargo as opposed to a national security embargo, it is subject to a higher degree of scrutiny in terms of its impact on the human rights of the affected population. For the past ten years, overwhelming majorities at the GA, including all of the United States' closest European, Asian and Latin American allies, have voted against the embargo. Since 2000, the votes in favor of the United States have been reduced to four out of 187: the United States itself, Israel, and two Pacific island mini-states that are heavily dependent on U.S. foreign aid. Even Israel, which ironically maintains full commercial relations with Cuba and allows its citizens to travel and invest there, has explained its vote not as a vote in favor of the embargo but as a vote against condemning the actions of its senior ally. The depth and breadth of the global consensus against the embargo point to serious international doubts regarding its legal permissibility and its appropriateness as an instrument for the promotion of human rights. Thus far, however, Washington shows no signs of paying any heed to this international consensus, just as it ignores what Cubans on the island think of the chief policy instrument through which the United States seeks to bring democracy and human rights to their country.

Solvency – Human Rights

The overwhelming majority of the international community opposes the embargo – lifting it is key to our credibility.

Coll, 2007 Professor of Law and President, International Human Rights Law Institute, DePaul College of Law [Alberto R. Coll, Harming Human Rights in the Name of Promoting Them: The Case of the Cuban Embargo, UCLA Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs, Fall, 2007, 12 UCLA J. Int'l L. & For. Aff. 199]

The overwhelming majority of United Nations members, including all of the United States' major allies, oppose the U.S. embargo against Cuba. As noted earlier in this article, the OAS, the only regional organization in the hemisphere with the legitimate authority to impose sanctions, ended its sanctions against Cuba in 1975, and called upon its members - including the United States - to follow suit. In addition to lacking United Nations and OAS endorsement and being opposed by 183 states in the international community, the embargo has no support from the international human rights community - not even from a single international NGO working on human rights or humanitarian issues. The world's two most prominent international human rights NGOs, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, are sharply critical of the Cuban government's human rights policies. Both strongly oppose the embargo as harmful to human rights in Cuba and as counterproductive to the long-term objective of promoting democracy and human rights on the island. n424 The Roman Catholic Church, which under Pope John Paul II gained wide credibility for its stance on behalf of human rights across the globe, has also been highly critical of indiscriminate sanctions in general and of the Cuban embargo specifically. n425 The embargo's purely unilateral character is highlighted by the fact that, with the exception of the governments of the United States, Israel, Palau and the Marshall Islands, there is not a single credible international actor, governmental or otherwise, [*264] that supports the embargo or has not expressed clear opposition to it. Finally, even within the United States, the embargo's supporters consist of a narrow minority located in a small geographic corner of the United States as well as the successive U.S. administrations and members of Congress that are eager to court their votes and financial backing. A 2006 Gallup poll indicated that two-thirds of the American people, while disapproving of the Castro government, would like to reestablish U.S. diplomatic relations with Cuba. n426 Similarly, a 2007 Zogby poll found that a majority of Americans were in favor of improving relations with Cuba and were against the embargo and its restrictions. n427 Thus, the nearly universal disapproval for the Cuban embargo constitutes a fatal flaw in its legitimacy. The established consensus is that comprehensive human rights embargoes require international support in order to be legitimate and free from the taint of partiality and self-interest. This is also a crucial difference between the Cuban embargo and the earlier sanctions imposed against South Africa in the 1980s. Unlike the Cuban embargo, the South African sanctions were limited, supported by many states within the international community across a wide range of different cultures and economic and political systems, backed by a substantial number of international actors from the NGO and corporate sectors, and endorsed by leading members of the South African opposition, such as Bishop Desmond Tutu. n428

Solvency – Human Rights – They Say: The Plan is Too Fast

Lifting Embargo immediately is best – it's the only way to make change possible.

Ratliff and Fontaine, 2000 (William, Research fellow with PhD in Latin American history, Roger, Former director of Latin American affairs for the national security council, *Hoover Institution*, "End the Embargo Now," 7/30/2000, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/hoover-digest/article/6511>, AFGA).

There are two basic ways to lift the embargo: all at once or piecemeal. Lifting it unilaterally and all at once would be the better way to go. The act should be accompanied by clear statements that Castro has been dropped from America's "Most Wanted" to its "Least Relevant" list. The point is not that declaring a one-sided truce with Castro—by lifting the embargo—will necessarily bring democracy to and improved human rights in Cuba but rather that the embargo has not brought these either and shows no signs whatsoever of being able to do so in the future. Lifting it would also reduce the prospects of assorted actual and potential bad side effects.

Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Harms – Soft Power

Contention Two: Harms:

Our Advantage is Soft Power:

Anti-Americanism is on the rise in Latin America. This trend is a major threat to US influence and security.

Perez, 2010 J.D. Yale Law School. Working with Koh former Dean of Yale Law and Legal Advisor to the State Department [David A. Perez, America's Cuba Policy: The Way Forward: A Policy Recommendation for the U.S. State Department, Spring, 2010, Harvard Latino Law Review, 13 Harv. Latino L. Rev. 187]

Anti-Americanism has become the political chant de jour for leaders seeking long-term as well as short-term gains in Latin American elections. In Venezuela, the anti-American rhetoric spewed by

Hugo Chavez masks his otherwise autocratic tendencies, while countries like Bolivia and Ecuador tilt further away from Washington, both rhetorically and substantively. The former expelled the U.S. Ambassador in October 2008, and the latter has refused to renew Washington's lease on an airbase traditionally used for counter-narcotics missions.

The systemic neglect for eight years during the Bush Administration meant that political capital was never seriously spent dealing with issues affecting the region. Because of this, President Bush was unable to get much headway with his proposal to reform immigration, and his free trade agreement with Colombia encountered significant opposition in Congress. Recent examples of U.S. unilateralism, disregard for international law and norms, and a growing financial crisis, have all been seized by a new generation of populist Latin American leaders who stoke anti-American sentiment.

The region, however, is absolutely critical to our national interest and security. Over thirty percent of our oil comes from Latin America - more than the U.S. imports from the Middle East.

Additionally, over half of the foreign-born population in the United States is Latin American, meaning that a significant portion of American society is intrinsically tied to the region. ⁿ¹ These immigrants, as well as their sons and daughters, have already begun to take their place amongst America's social, cultural, and political elite.

Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Harms – Soft Power

Changing the US relationship with Cuba is key to sustaining influence throughout Latin America.

Perez, 2010 J.D. Yale Law School. Working with Koh former Dean of Yale Law and Legal Advisor to the State Department [David A. Perez, America's Cuba Policy: The Way Forward: A Policy Recommendation for the U.S. State Department, Spring, 2010, Harvard Latino Law Review, 13 Harv. Latino L. Rev. 187]

In order to effectively employ soft power in Latin America, the U.S. must repair its image by going on a diplomatic offensive and reminding, not just Latin America's leaders, but also the Latin American people, of the important relationship between the U.S. and Latin America. Many of the problems facing Latin America today cannot be addressed in the absence of U.S.

leadership and cooperation. Working with other nations to address these challenges is the best way to shore up legitimacy, earn respect, and repair America's image. Although this proposal focuses heavily on Cuba, every country in Latin America is a potential friend. Washington will have to not only strengthen its existing relationships in the region, but also win over new allies, who look to us for "ideas and solutions, not lectures." n5

When analyzing ecosystems, environmental scientists seek out "keystone species." These are organisms that, despite their small size, function as lynchpins for, or barometers of, the entire system's stability. Cuba, despite its size and isolation, is a keystone nation in Latin America, having disproportionately dominated Washington's policy toward the region for decades. n6 As a result of its continuing tensions with Havana, America's reputation [*192] in the region has suffered, as has its ability to deal with other countries. n7 For fifty years, Latin American governments that hoped to endear themselves to the U.S. had to pass the Cuba "litmus test." But now the tables have turned, and the Obama Administration, if it wants to repair America's image in the region, will have to pass a Cuba litmus test of its own. n8 In short, America must once again be admired if we are going to expect other countries to follow our example. To that end, warming relations with Cuba would have a reverberating effect throughout Latin America, and would go a long way toward creating goodwill.

Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Harms – Soft Power

Engagement with Cuba boosts U.S. influence — the plan increases international credibility.

Dickerson, 2010 — Sergio M. Dickerson, Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army, 2010 (“United States Security Strategy Towards Cuba,” Strategy Research Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree at the U.S. Army War College, January 14th, Available Online at <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA518053>, Accessed 05-20-2013, p. 21-22)

Today, 20 years have passed since the fall of the Berlin Wall – it’s time to chip away at the diplomatic wall that still remains between U.S. and Cuba. As we seek a new foreign policy with Cuba it is imperative that we take into consideration that distrust will characterize negotiations with the Cuban government. On the other hand, consider that loosening or lifting the embargo could also be mutually beneficial. Cuba’s need and America’s surplus capability to provide goods and services could be profitable and eventually addictive to Cuba. Under these conditions, diplomacy has a better chance to flourish.

If the Cuban model succeeds President Obama will be seen as a true leader for multilateralism. Success in Cuba could afford the international momentum and credibility to solve other seemingly “wicked problems” like the Middle East and Kashmir. President Obama could leverage this international reputation with other rogue nations like Iran and North Korea who might associate their plight with Cuba.³⁵ The U.S. could begin to lead again and reverse its perceived decline in the greater global order bringing true peace for years to come.

Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Harms – Soft Power

Maintaining a good international image is key to sustaining overall US leadership.

Armitage & Nye, 2007 [Richard and Joseph, Former Deputy Secretary of States, Distinguished Service Professor at Harvard, “CSIS Commission on Smart Power”] Investing in the global good is not charity. It is smart foreign policy. America’s allies look to us for ideas and solutions, not lectures. The goal of U.S. foreign policy should be to prolong and preserve American preeminence as an agent for good. Achieving this goal is impossible without strong and willing allies and partners who can help the United States to determine and act on priorities. America should have higher ambitions than being popular, but foreign opinion matters to U.S. decision-making. A good reputation fosters goodwill and brings acceptance for unpopular ventures. Helping other nations and individuals achieve their aspirations is the best way to strengthen America’s reputation abroad. This approach will require a shift in how the U.S. government thinks about security. We will always have our enemies, and we cannot abandon our coercive tools. Resetting the military after six years of war is of critical importance. But bolstering American soft power makes America stronger. The U.S. government must develop the means to grow its soft power and harness the dynamism found within civil society and the private sector. Implementing a smart power strategy will require a strategic reassessment of how the U.S. government is organized, coordinated, and budgeted. The next president and the 111th Congress should consider a number of creative solutions to maximize the administration’s ability to organize for success, including the appointment of senior personnel who could reach across agencies to better align strategy and resources. We must build on America’s traditional sources of strength in a principled and realistic fashion. With new energy and direction, the United States could use its could use its great power for even greater purposes and, in the process, preserve American values and interests far into the future.

Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Harms – Soft Power

US leadership is crucial is stopping global nuclear war.

Lieber, 2005 [Robert, Professor of Government and International Affairs @ Georgetown. “The American Era: Power and Strategy for the 21st Century,” p. 53-54]

Withdrawal from foreign commitments might seem to be a means of evading hostility toward the United States, but the consequences would almost certainly be harmful both to regional stability and to U.S. national interests. Although Europe would almost certainly not see the return to competitive balancing among regional powers (i.e., competition and even military rivalry between France and Germany) of the kind that some realist scholars of international relations have predicted, elsewhere the dangers could increase. In Asia, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan would have strong motivation to acquire nuclear weapons – which they have the technological capacity to do quite quickly. Instability and regional competition could also escalate, not only between India and Pakistan, but also in Southeast Asia involving Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, and possibly the Philippines. Risks in the Middle East would be likely to increase, with regional competition among the major countries of the Gulf region (Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq) as well as Egypt, Syria, and Israel. Major regional wars, eventually involving the use of weapons of mass destruction plus human suffering on a vast scale, floods of refugees, economic disruption, and risks to oil supplies are all readily conceivable. Based on past experience, the United States would almost certainly be drawn back into these areas, whether to defend friendly states, to cope with a humanitarian catastrophe, or to prevent a hostile power from dominating an entire region. Steven Peter Rosen has thus fit-tingly observed, "If the logic of American empire is unappealing, it is not at all clear that the alternatives are that much more attractive."^{2z} Similarly, Niall Ferguson has added that those who dislike American predominance ought to bear in mind that the alternative may not be a world of competing great powers, but one with no hegemon at all. Ferguson's warning may be hyperbolic, but it hints at the perils that the absence of a dominant power, "apolarity," could bring "an anarchic new Dark Age of waning empires and religious fanaticism; of endemic plunder and pillage in the world's forgotten regions; of economic stagnation and civilization's retreat into a few fortified enclaves.

Cuba Affirmative 1AC – Solvency – Soft Power

Contention Three: Solvency:

The symbolic effect of the plan means it immediately boosts the United States' reputation with Cuba and the rest of the world.

Holmes, 2010 MA The School of Continuing Studies, Georgetown [Michael G. Holmes, SEIZING THE MOMENT, <https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/553334/holmesMichael.pdf?sequence=1>]

From an image stand point repealing the sanctions and removing the embargo is symbolic. It shows Cuba and the world that although the United States is pro democracy, it does not wish to impose its values on other nations. The Cuba Democracy Act was an attempt to force democratic changes in Cuba.¹⁰ By repealing the act the United States, illustrates that it respects the sovereignty of nations. Considering that this Act did allow for the application of U.S. law in a foreign country¹¹, repealing it not only sends the message about U.S. views on sovereignty but also shows that the administration is taking steps to ensure that sovereignty is actually respected.

Repealing the Helms-Burton Law will certainly stimulate foreign investment in Cuba as well. Many foreign countries were leery of investing in Cuba out of fear of being sued or losing property under the provisions established by the Helms-Burton Act.¹² This return of foreign investment will further secure Cuba's place in the global marketplace. It also will help to silence skeptics who will question U.S. intentions. Since the sanctions against Cuba were unilateral U.S. actions, an unsolicited change in course will undoubtedly spark speculation.

Allowing all countries to invest in Cuba again underscores the United States' position of desiring for all countries to participate in the global market place. It is difficult to imagine that the benefits of lifting the embargo will not be immediate and substantial in regards to the United States reputation in the world. Looking at the long-term benefits of removing the sanctions, the two benefits that stand out the most are trade and fuel.

Harms – Soft Power – Low Now

US soft power low – political squabbling and fiscal policymaking hurts influence in international organizations

Neu, February 8th 2013 (Richard, senior economist at RAND Corporation, “U.S. 'Soft Power' Abroad Is Losing Its Punch”, RAND corporation, 2/8/13, <http://www.rand.org/blog/2013/02/us-soft-power-abroad-is-losing-its-punch.html>)

This is a small example of what may be a troubling trend: America's fiscal predicament and the seeming inability of its political system to resolve these matters may be taking a toll on the instruments of U.S. “soft power” and on the country's ability to shape international developments in ways that serve American interests.

The most potent instrument of U.S. soft power is probably the simple size of the U.S. economy. As the biggest economy in the world, America has a lot to say about how the world works. But the economics profession is beginning to understand that high levels of public debt can slow economic growth, especially when gross general government debt rises above 85 or 90 percent of GDP.

The United States crossed that threshold in 2009, and the negative effects are probably mostly out in the future. These will come at a bad time. The U.S. share of global economic output has been falling since 1999—by nearly 5 percentage points as of 2011. As America's GDP share declined, so did its share of world trade, which may reduce U.S. influence in setting the rules for international trade.

And it's not just the debt itself that may be slowing GDP growth. Economists at Stanford and the University of Chicago have demonstrated that uncertainty about economic policy—on the rise as a result of political squabbling over U.S. fiscal policy—typically foreshadows slower economic growth.

Investors may be growing skittish about U.S. government debt levels and the disordered state of U.S. fiscal policymaking. From the beginning of 2002, when U.S. government debt was at its most recent minimum as a share of GDP, to the end of 2012, the dollar lost 25 percent of its value, in price-adjusted terms, against a basket of the currencies of major trading partners. This may have been because investors fear that the only way out of the current debt problems will be future inflation. The dollar has also given up a bit of its dominance as the preferred currency for international reserves among advanced economies. And the renminbi appears to have replaced the dollar as the “reference currency” for most of East Asia. (The good news is that in recent years U.S. banks have increased their share of deposits from foreigners, mostly at the expense of banks in London.)

More troubling for the future is that private domestic investment—the fuel for future economic growth—shows a strong negative correlation with government debt levels over several business cycles dating back to the late 1950s. Continuing high debt does not bode well in this regard.

But perhaps the worst consequences of U.S. debt are actions not taken.

U.S. international leadership has been based, in part, on contributions—political and financial—to major institutions and initiatives—International Monetary Fund, World Bank, General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (and later World Trade Organization), NATO, North America Free Trade Agreement, the Marshall Plan, and so on. These served U.S. interests and made the world better.

But what have we done lately? The Doha round of trade negotiations has stalled. Ditto efforts at coordinated international action on climate change. Countries of the Arab Spring need rebuilding. Little progress is apparent on the Transpacific Partnership, a proposed new free-trade area. And warnings from the U.S. treasury secretary to his European counterparts about the dangers of failing to resolve the fiscal crisis in the eurozone met with public rebukes: Get your own house in order before you lecture us. Have U.S. fiscal problems undermined America's self confidence and external credibility to the extent that it can no longer lead?

And what about unmet needs at home—healthcare costs, a foundering public education system, deteriorating infrastructure, and increasing inequality? A strained fiscal situation that limits resources for action and absorbs so much political energy cannot be helping with any of these matters. But without progress on such things, what becomes of the social cohesion necessary for unified action abroad or the moral authority to lead other nations by example?

America's fiscal predicament is serious. The problem has become obvious in the last few years, but it has been building for decades, largely the result of promises of extensive social benefits without a corresponding willingness to pay for them.

Putting U.S. government financing on a sustainable path will require painful adjustments over a number of years—increased government revenue and painful reductions in government outlays, almost certainly including outlays for defense and international affairs. During the necessary period of fiscal adjustment and constrained government resources, U.S. international influence may decline yet further.

Harms – Soft Power – US-Latin America Relations Low Now

US-Latin American Relations are low

Lehmann, May 30th 2013 [5/30/13, Catalina Lehmann is a reporter for Talk News Radio Service, “Officials: Obama Has Yet To Improve U.S.-Latin America Relations”, <http://www.talkradionews.com/us/2013/05/30/officials-obama-has-yet-to-improve-u-s-latin-america-relations.html#.Udnf9jvqn80>]

Latin America, particularly South America, has experienced unprecedented political change in the past 15 years said officials who discussed the issue during a briefing held by the Center for Economic Policy and Research. The briefing analyzed how the Obama administration has responded to the region’s leftward shifting of political dynamics. In the past, during the Bush administration, efforts were made to isolate and suppress left-leaning political movements in Latin America, said the officials. When President George W. Bush attended the Summit of the Americas in Argentina, his lecture was received with protests against his administration’s policies. When President Barak Obama attended the Summit in Columbia, he spoke about the need for “equal partnerships” and “a new chapter of engagement” with the countries that make up Latin America. Leaders such as President Hugo Chavez had a new sense of hope instilled after President Obama’s remarks, said CEPR Co-Director Mark Weisbrot. “When Latin America’s left presidents watched the campaign of Barack Obama for president in 2008, they thought that they might finally see a U.S. president who would change Washington’s foreign policy in the region,” said Weisbrot. However, panelists claimed that up to this point in time, little has been done to improve U.S.-Latin America relations. “The Obama administration, like that of President Bush, does not accept that the region has changed, Weisbrot stated. “That goal is to get rid of all of the left-of-center governments, partly because they tend to be more independent from Washington.”

Harms – Soft Power – US-Latin America Relations Low Now

US is losing influence in Latin America- the embargo hurts relations

Ben-Ami, June 18th 2013 [6/18/13, Shlomo Ben-Ami is a former Israeli diplomat, politician and historian, "Is US losing Latin America?", <http://www.timesofoman.com/Columns/Article-1173.aspx>]

It is a mantra increasingly heard around the world: US power is in decline. And nowhere does this seem truer than in Latin America. No longer is the region regarded as America's "backyard"; on the contrary, the continent has arguably never been so united and independent. But this view fails to capture the true nature of US influence in Latin America – and elsewhere as well. It is true that US attention to Latin America has waned in recent years. President George W. Bush was more focused on his "global war on terror." His successor, Barack Obama, seemed to give the region little thought as well, at least in his first term. Indeed, at the Summit of the Americas in Cartagena in April 2012, Latin American leaders felt sufficiently confident and united to challenge US priorities in the region. They urged the US to lift its embargo on Cuba, claiming that it had damaged relations with the rest of the continent, and to do more to combat drug use on its own turf, through education and social work, rather than supplying arms to fight the drug lords in Latin America – a battle that all acknowledged has been an utter failure. It is also true that Latin American countries have pursued a massive expansion of economic ties beyond America's sway.

Harms – Soft Power – US-Latin America Relations Brink

U.S. Latin American relations are at a crossroads – fast action is key.

Shifter, 2012 President of Inter-American Dialogue [Michael Shifter, “Remaking the Relationship: The United States and Latin America,” April, IAD Policy Report, <http://www.thedialogue.org/PublicationFiles/IAD2012PolicyReportFINAL.pdf>]

Simply addressing an unfinished agenda is not enough. Both the United States and Latin America need to do more to exploit the enormous untapped opportunities of their relationship in economics, trade, and energy. They need to work together to deal with global and regional problems. And they need to project common values, including peace, democracy, human rights, expansion of equal opportunity, and social mobility. They need to breathe new life and vigor into hemispheric relations.

If the United States and Latin America do not make the effort now, the chance may slip away. The most likely scenario then would be marked by a continued drift in their relationship, further deterioration of hemisphere-wide institutions, a reduced ability and willingness to deal with a range of common problems, and a spate of missed opportunities for more robust growth and greater social equity. The United States and Latin America would go their separate ways, manage their affairs independently of one another, and forego the opportunities that could be harvested by a more productive relationship.

There are risks of simply maintaining the status quo. Urgent problems will inevitably arise that require trust and effective collaboration to resolve. And there is a chance that tensions between the United States and Latin America could become much worse, adversely affecting everyone’s interests and wellbeing. It is time to seize the moment and overhaul hemispheric relations.

Harms – Soft Power – US-Latin America Relations Brink

US leadership in Latin America is low but Obama has the opportunity to restore it.

Erikson, 2010 [April 2010, Daniel P. Erikson is senior associate for U.S. policy at the Inter-American Dialogue think tank, “The Obama Administration and Latin America: Towards a New Partnership?”,

http://www.thedialogue.org/PublicationFiles/Working_Paper%2046.pdf]

Conclusion: In Search of the Elusive Partnership Upon entering the White House in January 2009, the Obama administration had to move quickly to confront a range of pressing challenges. There is little doubt that the new president’s to-do list was to be dominated by the economic crisis, Afghanistan and Iraq. Issues facing Latin America and the Caribbean, though important, were of less immediate concern. That does not mean, however, that Obama has not engaged in serious and substantive work to help repair the damage that the Bush administration has wrought on US-Latin American relations. Moreover, there is now a window of opportunity to push through significant changes and lay the foundation for implementing Obama’s vision for renewing US leadership in the Americas. Indeed, Obama’s election ushered in a welcome honeymoon period for his administration in a region that is strategically important for US interests — and the challenge was to prolong this moment and harness it to rebuild some semblance of hemispheric cooperation. The path ahead will not be easy, but Obama has already substantially recalibrated US-Latin America policy in the direction of engagement in small but important ways. President Obama and members of his cabinet have frequently met with their counterparts throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and emphasized multilateral diplomacy as the central instrument for addressing the region’s concerns. The US supported a resolution backed by Latin American countries to lift Cuba’s suspension from the Organization of American States, and has stood with Latin American countries in calling for the restoration of democratic rule in Honduras. Under Obama, US relations with Latin America appear to be on the mend, but the progress to date is fragile and by no means irreversible. The political situation in Latin America and the Caribbean has shifted considerably in recent years and the new assertiveness of many regional countries, especially Brazil, has created an increasingly complex situation. Although the early hopes for momentous change have begun to dissipate, the presidency of Barack Obama still has the potential to bring about an important restructuring of inter-American relations. In retrospect, the initial warm glow of good feelings was always destined to give way to a more pragmatic understanding on both sides of the relationship regarding the possibilities and limits of what the US and Latin America can expect of each other. But throughout the Americas, the desire remains that Barack Obama will be attentive and respectful to the region’s **concerns**. The 44th president of the United States has already pledged to keep an open mind and demonstrate a willingness to listen. The next step is to advance the strategy of substantive, issue-oriented engagement that can sustain the goodwill that so much of the hemisphere felt upon his election to the White House.

Harms – Soft Power – Embargo Hurts Soft Power

The embargo is not credible and only decreases US influence.

Birns and Mills, 2013 (Larry, Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA) director, Frederick, COHA senior research fellow, “BEST TIME FOR U.S.– CUBA RAPPROCHEMENT IS NOW”, January 30th, <http://www.coha.org/best-time-for-u-s-cuba-rapprochement-is-now/>)

In addition to being counter-productive and immoral, U.S. policy towards Havana is also anachronistic. During the excesses of the cold war, the U.S. sought to use harsh and unforgiving measures to isolate Cuba from its neighbors in order to limit the influence of the Cuban revolution on a variety of insurgencies being waged in the region. That narrative did not sufficiently recognize the homegrown causes of insurgency in the hemisphere. Some argue that it inadvertently drove Cuba further into the Soviet camp.

Ironically, at the present juncture of world history, the embargo is in some ways isolating the U.S. rather than Cuba. Washington is often viewed as implementing a regional policy that is defenseless and without a compass. At the last Summit of the Americas in Cartagena in April 2012, member states, with the exception of Washington, made it clear that they unanimously want Cuba to participate in the next plenary meeting or the gathering will be shut down. There are new regional organizations, such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), that now include Cuba and exclude the U.S. not even America’s closest allies support the embargo. Instead, over the years, leaders in NATO and the OECD member nations have visited Cuba and, in some cases, allocated lines of credit to the regime. So it was no surprise that in November of 2012, the United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly (188 – 3), for the 21st year in a row, against the US embargo. Finally, while a slim majority of Cuban Americans still favor the measure, changing demographics are eroding and outdated this support. As famed Cuban Researcher, Wayne Smith, the director of the Latin America Rights & Security: Cuba Project, at the Center for International Policy, points out, “There are now many more new young Cuban Americans who support a more sensible approach to Cuba” (Washington Post, Nov. 9, 2012).

Harms – Soft Power – Soft Power is Key to Hegemony

Soft power is key to overall US leadership.

Nye, 2002 former Assistant Secretary of Defense and Dean of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government (Joseph, "The Paradox of American Power")

PEERING INTO THE FUTURE The September 2001 wake-up call means that Americans are unlikely to slip back into the complacency that marked the first decade after the Cold War. If we respond effectively, it is highly unlikely that terrorists could destroy American power, but the campaign against terrorism will require a long and sustained effort. At the same time, the United States is unlikely to face a challenge to its preeminence unless it acts so arrogantly that it helps other states to overcome their built-in limitations. The one entity with the capacity to challenge the United States in the near future is the European Union if it were to become a tight federation with major military capabilities and if the relations across the Atlantic were allowed to sour. Such an outcome is possible but would require major changes in Europe and considerable ineptitude in American policy to bring it about. Nonetheless, even short of such a challenge, the diminished fungibility of military power in a global information age means that Europe is already well placed to balance the United States on the economic and transnational chessboards. Even short of a military balance of power, other countries may be driven to work together to take actions to complicate American objectives. Or, as the French critic Dominique Moisi puts it, "The global age has not changed the fact that nothing in the world can be done without the United States. And the multiplicity of new actors means that there is very little the United States can achieve alone."⁷³ The United States can learn useful lessons about a strategy of providing public goods from the history of Pax Britannica. An Australian analyst may be right in her view that if the United States plays its cards well and acts not as a soloist but as the leader of a concert of nations, "the Pax Americana, in terms of its duration, might . . . become more like the Pax Romana than the Pax Britannica."⁷⁴ If so, our soft power will play a major role. As Henry Kissinger has argued, the test of history for the United States will be whether we can turn our current predominant power into international consensus and our own principles into widely accepted international norms. That was the greatness achieved by Rome and Britain in their times.⁷⁵

Harms – Soft Power – Soft Power is Key to Hegemony

Soft power is important in maintaining US leadership.

FRASER, 2003 (Matthew, doctorate in political science from Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris, former Editor-in-Chief of National Post, p. 18, “Weapons of Mass Distraction: Soft Power and American Empire”)

Let's begin with soft power. The term has been championed by Joseph S. Nye, a Harvard professor who served as Assistant Secretary of Defense under President Bill Clinton. Nye has defined soft power as "the ability to achieve desired outcomes in international affairs through attraction rather than coercion." Nye argues, more specifically, that America's global influence cannot depend solely on its economic strength, military muscle, and coercive capacities. Yes, hard power is needed as an implied threat, and should be used when necessary—as was demonstrated in Afghanistan and Iraq. But American leadership in the world must depend on the assertion of soft power—namely, the global appeal of American lifestyles, culture, forms of distraction, norms, and values. In short, American leadership is more effective when it is morally based. Soft power has the advantage of being much less violent than brute force. It can claim, moreover, the not inconsequential virtue of being much less costly. Why keep the peace with ground troops, aircraft carriers, and inter-continental missiles when Big Macs, Coca-Cola, and Hollywood blockbusters can help achieve the same long-term goals? Soft power also includes artistic expression and institutional arrangements—such as travelling exhibitions and scholarly exchange programs—that help export American models. When foreign students undertake studies in the United States, they return to their home countries immersed in American values, attitudes, and modes of thinking.

Harms – Soft Power – Hegemony Impact

The loss of American hegemony will increase the risk of global conflict.

Felzenberg and Gray, 2011 — Alvin S. Felzenberg, Professorial Lecturer at The Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, Presidential Historian and Adjunct Faculty Member at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, holds a Ph.D. in Politics from Princeton University, and Alexander B. Gray, Student at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University and the War Studies Department of King's College, London.

(“The New Isolationism,” National Review, 1-3-2011,
<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/print/256150>)

A world in which the United States willingly ceded power and influence would both be more dangerous and prove less receptive to values that most Americans share, such as respect for human rights, the need to restrain governments through the rule of law, and the sanctity of contracts. By reducing its military strength to alarmingly low levels, the United States would create dangerous power vacuums around the world that other nations, with entirely different values, would be only too happy to fill. That, as history shows, would make war more, rather than less, likely. Congress and the president would do well to reflect on those lessons and remember their duty to provide a dominant American military presence on land, at sea, and in the air.

Harms – Soft Power – Impact

Maintaining soft power is key to effectively utilizing US leadership and responding to worldwide threats.

Nye, 2009 (Joseph, Professor and Former Dean Of Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, “American Power in the Twenty-First Century,” *Project Syndicate*, September 10th, Available Online at <http://www.project-syndicate.org/print/american-power-in-the-twenty-first-century>)
Under the influence of the information revolution and globalization, world politics is changing in a way that prevents America from achieving all its international goals acting alone. For example, international financial stability is vital to Americans’ prosperity, but the US needs the cooperation of others to ensure it. Global climate change, too, will affect Americans’ quality of life, but the US cannot manage the problem alone.
In a world where borders are more porous than ever to everything from drugs to infectious diseases to terrorism, America must help build international coalitions and institutions to address shared threats and challenges. In this sense, power becomes a positive sum game.
It is not enough to think in terms of power over others. One must also think in terms of power to accomplish goals. On many transnational issues, empowering others can help to accomplish one’s own goals. In this world, networks and connectedness become an important source of relevant power.
The problem of American power in the twenty-first century is not one of decline, but of recognizing that even the most powerful country cannot achieve its aims without the help of others.

Harms – Soft Power – Impact

Soft power is key to respond to nuclear threats, diseases, and climate change.

Nye & Armitage, 2007 [Joseph and Richard, Professor and Former Dean Of Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, deputy secretary of state from 2001 to 2005, both are co-chairs of the CSIS Commission on Smart Power, “CSIS Reports – A Smarter, More Secure America”, http://www.csis.org/component/option,com_csis_pubs/task,view/id,4156/type,1/, 11/6]

The information age has heightened political consciousness, but also made political groupings less cohesive. Small, adaptable, transnational networks have access to tools of destruction that are increasingly cheap, easy to conceal, and more readily available. Although the integration of the global economy has brought tremendous benefits, threats such as pandemic disease and the collapse of financial markets are more distributed and more likely to arise without warning. The threat of widespread physical harm to the planet posed by nuclear catastrophe has existed for half a century, though the realization of the threat will become more likely as the number of nuclear weapons states increases. The potential security challenges posed by climate change raise the possibility of an entirely new set of threats for the United States to consider. The next administration will need a strategy that speaks to each of these challenges. Whatever specific approach it decides to take, two principles will be certain: First, an extra dollar spent on hard power will not necessarily bring an extra dollar’s worth of security. It is difficult to know how to invest wisely when there is not a budget based on a strategy that specifies trade-offs among instruments. Moreover, hard power capabilities are a necessary but insufficient guarantee of security in today’s context. Second, success and failure will turn on the ability to win new allies and strengthen old ones both in government and civil society. The key is not how many enemies the United States kills, but how many allies it grows. States and non-state actors who improve their ability to draw in allies will gain competitive advantages in today’s environment. Those who alienate potential friends will stand at greater risk. China has invested in its soft power to ensure access to resources and to ensure against efforts to undermine its military modernization. Terrorists depend on their ability to attract support from the crowd at least as much as their ability to destroy the enemy’s will to fight.

Harms – Soft Power – Impact – Latin America is Important

US influence in Latin America is key to responding to several important national security issues – renewed relations are key.

Shifter, 2012 President of Inter-American Dialogue [Michael Shifter, “Remaking the Relationship: The United States and Latin America,” April, IAD Policy Report, <http://www.thedialogue.org/PublicationFiles/IAD2012PolicyReportFINAL.pdf>]

There are compelling reasons for the United States and Latin America to pursue more robust ties. Every country in the Americas would benefit from strengthened and expanded economic relations, with improved access to each other’s markets, investment capital, and energy resources. Even with its current economic problems, the United States’ \$16-trillion economy is a vital market and source of capital (including remittances) and technology for Latin America, and it could contribute more to the region’s economic performance. For its part, Latin America’s rising economies will inevitably become more and more crucial to the United States’ economic future. The United States and many nations of Latin America and the Caribbean would also gain a great deal by more cooperation on such global matters as climate change, nuclear non-proliferation, and democracy and human rights. With a rapidly expanding US Hispanic population of more than 50 million, the cultural and demographic integration of the United States and Latin America is proceeding at an accelerating pace, setting a firmer basis for hemispheric partnership. Despite the multiple opportunities and potential benefits, relations between the United States and Latin America remain disappointing . If new opportunities are not seized, relations will likely continue to drift apart . The longer the current situation persists, the harder it will be to reverse course and rebuild vigorous cooperation . Hemispheric affairs require urgent attention—both from the United States and from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Harms – Soft Power – Impact – Turns the China DA

Maintaining United States influence is key to peacefully dealing with China.

Wang, 2007

[Yuzhu, associate professor University of Chicago, “Power structure and its stability in North- East Asia,” February 6,

<http://iaps.cass.cn/english/Articles/showcontent.asp?id=831>]

V. The world needs a more generous hegemony. The last but very important point to my argument is I believe that the U.S. government will behave rationally at most situations. Realists argue that great powers consider more about relative gains when dealing with international relations, because in a self-help world this is the rational choice. But I argue here, if they make choice rationally, they will not be offensive, instead, they should be defensive and more generous. First, America is the only hegemony in a globalized world, and there is an international regime led by America, through which America can take some relative gains. Second, bilaterally, realists argue the relative gains concerns make cooperation impossible, but in fact, when one side would like to make concession, cooperation is available. And I think the rising china is one case: although China knows that the U.S. dominant world order is far from justice, it still works positively within this system, because Beijing learned that the only way to get justice treatment is accepting the injustice of the world order and cooperate with the leaders. And this is the real relationship between china and America. Some argues that by engaging china, the united states lose the relative gains, because china’s GDP growth rates is higher than those of America, but only simple calculation can prove this argument is misleading. China should keep a 4-time higher GDP growth rate than America to maintain its GDP gap with America from being widened. Third, though offensive is seemed to be a foolproof method to maintain hegemonic status, its cost may be forbiddingly high, especially when you try to put down a big country like china. Yes, America may win a war on china easily, but how about India, which is also experienced rapid growth, and how about Russia? After all, all countries are growth and become more powerful. America can never have enough power to conquer all these “potential” challengers, and if it really tries to do so, it may decline even quicker. So, the best way should be using the soft power, focus more on the international regime and be a generous hegemony. That means the hegemony should try best to solve international conflicts peacefully, and avoiding push too hard for those offenders. For example, after being labeled “evil”, North Korea bombed its nuclear weapons and Iran began to seek nuclear weapons openly. Kissinger recommended recently that the Bush Administration should to try more diplomatic measures to solve the Iran issue and prepared to sit down to talk with enemy, that shows some people had realized be generous maybe helpful. The United States caught the only hegemony position after the end of the Cold War. It need time to get rid of the cold war thought and learn to be the leader of the world. And I believe they can learn quickly, the frustrating experience in Iraq maybe helpful in this aspect. So, I’m optimistic on the future of Northeast Asia. Yes I can be wrong, but that’s too bad, not for myself, but for the world. Thank you.

Solvency – Soft Power – Latin America

Lifting the embargo would boost US influence in Latin America.

Fitzgerald, 2012 [11/12/12, Denis Fitzgerald is reporter for the UN, “UN to (Again) Call on U.S. to End Cuban Embargo”, <http://untribune.com/post/35579300349/un-to-again-call-on-u-s-to-end-cuban-embargo>]

The United Nations General Assembly will vote Tuesday on a resolution calling on the United States to end its 52-year embargo against Cuba, but there’s little reason to believe the outcome will alter the Obama administration’s Havana policy. The U.S. bans its citizens from travelling to or doing business in Cuba. Ending the embargo is seen as a move that could strengthen Obama’s relationship with his Latin American neighbors who are unanimously against “el bloqeo.”* The resolution has been approved every year since first introduced in 1990. Brazil’s representative said after the vote last year that the embargo “went against international law and inhibited regional relations” while Argentina’s said “it went against the principles of international law and the UN charter.” After Monday’s success in the General Assembly vote for election to the Human Rights Council, which the U.S. topped with 131 votes in the Western Group, Tuesday’s vote is likely to see the U.S in the tiniest minority when the votes are tallied. Last year, 186 countries voted for the text while only Israel joined the U.S. in voting against it. Even Canada, normally a staunch ally of the U.S. and Israel, voted for lifting the embargo. While President Obama has laxed some of the travel restrictions - making it easier for students and religious groups to visit and allowing Cuban-Americans to visit Cuba as much as they want - he has renewed the trade ban each year of his presidency. Cuba is the only country placed on the U.S. Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917 after the removal of North Korea in 2008. There’s speculation that Obama’s strong showing among Cuban-Americans in last week’s election will harbor a change in policy but that’s unlikely to include a lifting of the trade embargo.

* “el bloqeo” means “the blockade”, in reference to the embargo.

Solvency – Soft Power

Lifting the embargo is key to international soft power – our anti-Cuba stance is regularly criticized.

Iglesias, 2012 Commander of the US Navy – Army War College Publication [Carlos Iglesias, United States Security Policy Implications of a Post-Fidel Cuba, 10 March 2012, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA560408>]

***GOC = Government of Cuba**

Unlike the policy implications above, the major hurdle to this interest does not come from any continuation of the GOC, but from the rest of the world. International opposition to the perceived fairness and effectiveness of the economic sanctions has long posed an obstacle for U.S. policy. In the global scale, the problem is epitomized by the twenty consecutive years of near unanimous UN General Assembly resolution votes against the embargo. ⁹⁶ More regionally, Spain and other European Union partners have strongly pushed to loosen sanctions. The arguments are straightforward and pragmatic, “since sanctions in place have not worked, it makes more sense to do things that would work, and (the next obvious one is to) change things.”⁹⁷ Even more locally, Cuba has managed to generally retain positive feelings among the people of Latin America in spite of the country’s domestic realities.⁹⁸ The rise of Raúl and any subsequent successions further complicated the problem of mustering international consensus. Several countries in the hemisphere see any new Cuban leadership as fresh opportunities to engage in common interests. The two largest Latin American countries, Brazil and Mexico, have both ascribed to this approach and have indicated their interests in forging new ties since Fidel’s stepped down.⁹⁹ On the other hand, this international dissention does hold some prospect for leveraging U.S. soft power. An indirect approach would be to coordinate U.S. proxy actions with partner countries interested in Cuba. This has the double benefit of leveraging U.S. soft power without compromising legislated restrictions or provoking hard-line Cuban-American ire. In this approach, burgeoning relations with Brazil and Mexico would be strong candidates. Devoid of the “bullhorn diplomacy” that have marginalized U.S.-Cuban policy efficacy for decades, the U.S. could better engage the island through hemispherical interlocutors. At a minimum, U.S. interests would be advanced through the proxy insights of what is occurring on the island in addition to the potential displacement of anti-American influences (e.g. Chávez).¹⁰⁰ Another potential gain for U.S. interests would be to upgrade its diplomatic presence on the island. For decades, the countries have reciprocated diplomacy marginalization with low-level “interest sections” in each other capitals. The fallback reasoning for the U.S. has always been that it did not want to appear to reward the GOC’s legitimacy with an embassy. This is myopic and inconsistent. The national strategy clearly promotes engagement in order to “learn about the intentions and nature of closed regimes, and to plainly demonstrate to the public within those nations that their governments are to blame for their isolations.”¹⁰¹ Additionally, the diplomatic level is inconsistent with the longstanding U.S. accreditation of ambassadors to both friendly and hostile governments.¹⁰² An embassy in Cuba could support critical awareness and engagements. In the event of an opportunity or crisis, this presence could be the difference between knowing where, when, and with whom to act or just watching from across the Florida Straits.

Solvency – Soft Power

Lifting the embargo solves – the plan gives the US more credibility internationally and helps resolve tensions with Cuba.

Amash, 2012 International Relations at UC San Diego [Brandon Amash, Evaluating the Cuban Embargo, Prospect: Journal of International Affairs at UCSD, <http://prospectjournal.org/2012/07/23/evaluating-the-cuban-embargo/>]

§ 4.3: Lifting economic sanctions will improve economic growth in Cuba, which correlates to democratization. Empirical evidence shows that a strong economy is correlated to democracy. According to the Modernization Theory of democratization, this correlation is a causal link: economic growth directly leads to democratization. Lifting the current economic sanctions on Cuba and working together to improve economic situations in the state will allow their economy to grow, increasing the likelihood of democracy in the state, and thus promoting greater freedom of expression, opinion and dissent.

§ 4.4: A policy of engagement will be a long-term solution to promoting democracy and improving human rights in Cuba. This proposal, unique in that it is simply one of abandoning an antiquated policy and normalizing relations to be like those with any other country, does not present any large obstacles to implementation, either in the short run or the long run. The main challenge is in continuing to support such a policy and maintaining the normal diplomatic, economic and social relations with a country that has been isolated for such a long period of time. Although effects of such a policy may be difficult to determine in the short term, promoting democracy and improving human rights in Cuba are long-term solutions. As discussed above, engagement with the Cuban government and society, along with support from the international community, will provide the spark and guidance for the Cuban people to support and promote democracy, and thus give greater attention to human rights violations.

§ 5. Conclusions:

Instead of continued economic sanctions on Cuba, the United States should reopen diplomatic relations with Cuba, work multilaterally and use soft power to promote democracy and greater attention to human rights. This policy approach will decrease the hostility between the United States and Cuba, and cause Cuba to be more willing to participate internationally with attention to human rights violations. After the end of the Cold War, United States foreign policy has found new directions, and the embargo, as a relic of a different time, must be removed should the United States wish to gain any true ground in promoting human rights in Cuba.

Solvency – Soft Power

Lifting the embargo signals that the US is willing to cooperate – the plan is key to effective US leadership.

Gerz-Escandon 8 — Jennifer Gerz-Escandon, National Scholarship and Fellowship Coordinator for the Honors College at Georgia State University, former chair of the International Relations Degree Program and the Director of the Center for International Programs and Services at Lynn University, former Director of International Studies at the University of Evansville, holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Miami, 2008 (“End the US-Cuba embargo: It's a win-win,” *Christian Science Monitor*, October 9th, Available Online at <http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2008/1009/p09s02-coop.html>, Accessed 06-15-2013)

Supporters of the embargo say it serves as an important symbolic protest of Cuba's deplorable human rights record and its lack of political, civil, and economic freedoms. Yet constructive engagement with the reform-ready regime of Mr. Castro – utilizing a framework based on mutual economic interests similar to US-China relations – could give observers more cause for optimism. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's willingness to speak openly with Newsweek/CNN journalist Fareed Zakaria last month about democratization is evidence of progress.

While phasing out the Cuban embargo won't render a quick solution to fractured US-Cuba relations or end the evaporation of esteem the US is suffering throughout Latin America, it would mark a significant achievement of hemispheric leadership on a divisive issue. By ending the embargo, the US may learn that under the right circumstances, the soft power of diplomacy proves more effective in reshaping America's perception in Latin America than the hard power of economic isolation ever did.

Solvency – Soft Power – Cuba Key

Ending the embargo is vital to U.S.-Latin American relations.

White 13 — Robert E. White, Senior Fellow at the Center for International Policy, served as United States ambassador to Paraguay from 1977 to 1979 and to El Salvador from 1980 to 1981, 2013 (“After Chávez, a Chance to Rethink Relations With Cuba,” *New York Times*, March 7th, Available Online at

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/08/opinion/after-chavez-hope-for-good-neighbors-in-latin-america.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0, Accessed 05-27-2013)

For most of our history, the United States assumed that its security was inextricably linked to a partnership with Latin America. This legacy dates from the Monroe Doctrine, articulated in 1823, through the Rio pact, the postwar treaty that pledged the United States to come to the defense of its allies in Central and South America.

Yet for a half-century, our policies toward our southern neighbors have alternated between intervention and neglect, inappropriate meddling and missed opportunities. The death this week of President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela — who along with Fidel Castro of Cuba was perhaps the most vociferous critic of the United States among the political leaders of the Western Hemisphere in recent decades — offers an opportunity to restore bonds with potential allies who share the American goal of prosperity.

Throughout his career, the autocratic Mr. Chávez used our embargo as a wedge with which to antagonize the United States and alienate its supporters. His fuel helped prop up the rule of Mr. Castro and his brother Raúl, Cuba’s current president. The embargo no longer serves any useful purpose (if it ever did at all); President Obama should end it, though it would mean overcoming powerful opposition from Cuban-American lawmakers in Congress.

An end to the Cuba embargo would send a powerful signal to all of Latin America that the United States wants a new, warmer relationship with democratic forces seeking social change throughout the Americas.

Solvency – Soft Power – Cubans Want Plan

The embargo is ineffective – Cuban people want the US to open trade.

Franks, 2012 (Jeff, staff writer, Feb 7, Cubans say U.S. embargo a failure at 50, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/08/us-cuba-usa-embargo-idUSTRE81700M20120208>)

(Reuters) - The 50th anniversary of the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba on Tuesday was met with little fanfare on the island, where Cubans said it was a failed policy that had succeeded only in making their lives more difficult. They said if the embargo was lifted, they likely would live a little better, but some said it also would increase pressure on the Cuban government to fix problems that for years it has blamed on U.S. sanctions.¶ On February 7, 1962 what had been a partial embargo became a nearly total one as President John F. Kennedy tried to step up pressure on Cuba's fiery young leader Fidel Castro, who at the height of the Cold War had aligned his country with the Soviet Union.¶ The Kennedy administration hoped the trade ban would disrupt the Cuban economy and undermine the Castro government.¶ Half a century and nine U.S. presidents later, Fidel Castro, though mostly retired, is still around, his brother Raul Castro is leading the country and the communist system they created remains in place.¶ But the embargo is still the cornerstone of U.S. policy toward the Caribbean island 90 miles from Florida.¶ The "blockade," as its known in Cuba, failed to achieve its primary objective, but has made things more difficult and more expensive for the average Cuban, said retiree Juan Jorge Castillo, 67.¶ "We know that that the (country) that embargoes us is a power and that the power could sell us (products) more cheaply," he said. "We have to go to other places and acquire them more expensively. The objective is to destroy us, to drown us."¶ Roberto Esteban, a self-employed vendor of Cuban handicrafts, agreed, saying Cuba's chronic economic woes are attributable to the U.S. sanctions.¶ "It does a lot of damage to us. There are many people here who think that's not the case, that it's the country, an internal problem," he said at his stand in central Havana.¶ DOING HARM¶ "I don't think it's an internal problem. The blockade exists and it's doing harm," he said.¶ Communist Party newspaper Granma had nothing about the anniversary on Tuesday, but Cuban television news repeated the government's contention that the embargo has cost the island \$975 billion over the years, a figure that many experts consider inflated.¶ The embargo allows U.S. sales of agricultural goods and medicine to Cuba and U.S. President Barack Obama has loosened travel restrictions to the island.¶ Many Cubans say the persistence of the embargo cannot be blamed solely on the U.S. government.¶ They believe vested interests in the Cuban exile community in the United States want it to continue for their own economic and political interest, and they say their own government finds it a convenient scapegoat.¶ "It's like it's a shield for the bad things they've done here," said vegetable salesman Rafael Garcia. "It influences in part what happens, but it does not determine everything."¶ "I don't think the embargo is killing us or doing as much as the government says," said Rachel, a teacher who did not want to give her full name.¶ "If they did away with the embargo, our government would have no one to blame for the way things are and we would have the possibility to say to the government 'now what are you going to do? How are you going to fix it?'" she said.¶ Dissident economist Oscar Espinoza Chepe said the embargo had only served "to give the Cuban government an alibi to declare Cuba a fortress under siege, to justify repression and to (pass) the blame for the economic disaster in Cuba."¶

Inherency – Embargo Now

The embargo is ineffective but US policymakers are unwilling to discuss changing it. Guzman, 5-9-13 (Sandra, award winning journalist, New Pittsburgh Courier Online, “Jay-Z and Beyoncé's trip to Cuba isn't the problem, the embargo is”, <http://www.newpittsburghcourieronline.com/index.php/opinion/12874-jay-z-and-beyonce-s-trip-to-cuba-isn-t-the-problem-the-embargo-is>)

The few but very influential pro-embargo lobby have put a stranglehold on a lucid discussion surrounding Cuba. Five decades of failed policy later, our nation is being held hostage unable to have a cogent discussion on anything Cuba-related.

The U.S. embargo has not and will not work. Put in place in 1962 by President John F. Kennedy, the policy is stuck in a time warp that has nothing to do with modern-day reality. The most enduring embargo in modern day history is a remnant of a Cold War past when the Soviet Union was the enemy and the world was on the brink of nuclear war. The thinking was that financial sanctions, which included a ban on travel by American citizens, would collapse the island economy and force people to revolt against Fidel Castro.

Over the years, these sanctions have been eased or toughened depending on political winds. In 1992, disgraced New Jersey Rep. Robert Torricelli was behind one the cruelest acts which banned, among many things, food and medicine sales to Cuba and prevented Cuban-American families from sending cash to their relatives. These were tough times and seeing many friends and families suffer because they couldn't visit their elderly mothers more than once every three years, or being prevented from sending them needed supplies, was very painful. Restrictions have eased under President Barack Obama but there is still a major ban. Enter Jay Z and Beyoncé.

It's 2013 and we need to debate Cuban policy earnestly. Members of Congress must stop the cowardice around the issue and stop humoring the delusions of passionate folks stuck in the 1960s for political votes and favor. The pro-embargo folks are ignoring the policy's epic failure and fail to recognize that U.S. policy has played into the hands of the Castro brothers, who have sinisterly used it to make the case to their people that if Cuba is starving and the island economy can't grow, it's because of this U.S. policy.

Inherency – Embargo Now

The embargo on Cuba is outdated – there is an opportunity to revitalize the US image by lifting the embargo.

Hinderdael, 2011 M.A. candidate at SAIS Bologna Center, concentrating in American Foreign Policy and Energy, Resources, and Environment [Klaas Hinderdael, Breaking the Logjam: Obama's Cuba Policy and a Guideline for Improved Leadership, by <http://bcjournal.org/volume-14/breaking-the-logjam.html?printerFriendly=true>]

In the context of Raúl shifting course in Cuba, the Obama administration has the opportunity to highlight the benefits of both the use of soft power and a foreign policy of engagement. As evidence mounts that the United States is ready to engage countries that enact domestic reforms, its legitimacy and influence will grow. Perhaps future political leaders, in Iran or North Korea for example, will be more willing to make concessions knowing that the United States will return in kind.

The United States should not wait for extensive democratization before further engaging Cuba, however. One legacy of the Cold War is that Communism has succeeded only where it grew out of its own, often nationalistic, revolutions. As it has with China and Vietnam, the United States should look closely at the high payoffs stemming from engagement. By improving relations, America can enhance its own influence on the island's political structure and human rights policies.

At home, with the trade deficit and national debt rising, the economic costs of the embargo are amplified. Recent studies estimate that the US economy foregoes up to \$4.84 billion a year and the Cuban economy up to \$685 million a year.⁵⁰ While US-Cuban economic interests align, political considerations inside America have shifted, as “commerce seems to be trumping anti-Communism and Florida ideologues.”⁵¹ Clearly, public opinion also favors a new Cuba policy, with 65 percent of Americans now ready for a shift in the country's approach to its neighboring island.⁵²

At this particular moment in the history of US-Cuban relations, there is tremendous promise for a breakthrough in relations. In a post-Cold War world, Cuba no longer presents a security threat to the United States, but instead provides it with economic potential. American leaders cannot forget the fact that an economic embargo, combined with diplomatic isolation, has failed to bring democracy to Cuba for over 50 years.

American policymakers should see Cuba as an opportunity to reap the political, economic, and strategic rewards of shifting its own policies toward engagement. By ending the economic embargo and normalizing diplomatic relations with the island, President Obama would indicate that he is truly willing to extend his hand once America's traditional adversaries unclench their fists.

Inherency – Now is Key

Recent incidents make now a key moment for the US-Cuba relationship – Cuba is desperate for foreign exchange.

O’Reilly, July 18th, 2013 (Andrew, journalist for Fox News Latino, “North Korean Ship Puts U.S.-Cuban Relations On Ice, Experts Say”, <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/news/2013/07/18/north-korean-ship-puts-us-cuban-relations-on-ice-experts-say/>)

Panama’s discovery of the missiles on the North Korean-flagged Chong Chon Gang, however, is real and has drawn real world criticism and comments from both foreign governments and analysts alike. The Cuban government’s acknowledgment of the “obsolete” weapons also throws into question U.S.-Cuban relations at a particularly important time between the Cold War adversaries.

U.S. and Cuban officials met Wednesday in Washington for the first time since 2011 to discuss migration, which before the incident in Panama was labeled as a good chance of improving relations.

“This might put a little of a slowdown with regards to the talks on immigration and resuming mail service to the island,” Peter Hakim, the president emeritus of the Washington D.C.-based think tank The Inter-American Dialogue, told Fox News Latino. “This is one of the dangers that every U.S. president faces when dealing with Cuba.”

Cuba has historically run afoul with the U.S. at times when these discussions were on the table. Most recently U.S. President Barack Obama reestablished the right for Cuban Americans to travel to the island, only to break them off shortly after the detention of American contractor Alan Gross on the island.

While Cuba may still play the hardline Communist nation battling U.S.-style capitalism, the talks – and the infusion of cash that comes with travel and renewed mail service – could help give a much needed financial injection into the country’s ailing economy. Cuba’s sugar output is not bringing in the cash flow that it once did and the country relies heavily on the subsidized oil shipments it receives from ideological-friendly Venezuela – some of which it is believed to sell to other nations.

“Cuba is desperate right now for foreign exchange,” Hakim said. “It’s possible that Cuba has been unloading Venezuelan oil to North Korea.”