

Cuban Democracy Disadvantage

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Explanation

Background

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, many people argued that the Cuban embargo should be lifted because Cuba's alliance with the Soviets no longer posed a military threat to the United States. In response, supporters of the embargo argued that the trade ban remains necessary to promote democracy and human rights in Cuba. Whether the embargo helps or hurts Cuban democracy has been a frequent topic of debate over the past twenty years.

The Disadvantage

The democracy disadvantage argues that lifting the embargo will cause Cuban democratic movements to fail in their attempts to reform the Cuban government.

The disadvantage has three parts:

1. Uniqueness – Cuba is on the verge of democratic reform due to the work of Cuban pro-democracy activists, who are becoming increasingly powerful. These arguments are made in the Radosh evidence.
2. Link – lifting the embargo stops democratic reform by strengthening the Castro regime and undermining pro-democracy activists. These arguments are also made in the Radosh evidence.
3. Impact – without democracy, Cuba will continue to exist as an oppressive and totalitarian dictatorship. The Cuban people will continue to live in poverty, free speech will be suppressed, and people will be unable to trust each other because they may be arrested by the government for honestly expressing their opinions. These arguments are made in Cuban evidence and the Arendt evidence.

Answering The Disadvantage

The affirmative can attack the uniqueness, the link, and/or the impact to defeat the disadvantage.

1. Uniqueness – the affirmative can argue that democratic movements will not be successful now. If the affirmative successfully makes this argument, it means that lifting the embargo can't make things any worse than they already are.
2. Link – the affirmative can argue that lifting the embargo will help, not hurt, democratic reform in Cuba.
3. Impact – the affirmative can argue that democratic reform in Cuba is not important because the current Cuban government is not especially cruel or oppressive. The affirmative can also argue that, even if promoting Cuban democracy is important, promoting soft power and human rights through the plan is even more important.

Glossary

Communism

Introduced in its modern form by Karl Marx in 1848, communism is a political system based upon the abolition of government, private property, and class inequalities.

A central idea in communist ideology is that the most important social conflict – some communists argue, the only conflict – is class conflict. Communists generally believe that a revolution of working class people (the “proletariat”) against wealthy people (the “bourgeoisie”) is necessary for a communist state to come into existence.

Communist revolutions have taken place in Russia, China, Cuba, and elsewhere. The failure of these revolutions to achieve their stated aims (most notably, the abolition of government and an end to inequality), has led many people to argue that communism in its ideal form cannot exist and its pursuit should be abandoned. Others argue that communist revolutions have not been total failures and that their shortcomings should be studied and used to devise better political systems.

Socialism

The difference between socialism and communism is unclear, and the terms are often used interchangeably. For instance, Fidel Castro's political party is called the “Communist Party,” but he refers to the revolution that put him in power as the “socialist revolution.”

Socialism is sometimes used to describe a “less radical” form of communism. Traditional communism involves a violent revolution that ideally results in a society with no government, no private property, and total equality between people. Socialism, on the other hand, is often understood as involving a strong government, the abolition of most (but not all) private property, and a group of political elites that are “first among equals.” Many socialists, often called “democratic socialists,” also advocate for political change through elections rather than revolution.

Democracy

Meriam-Webster defines democracy as “government by the people.” In practice, though, it can be difficult to decide if a government truly “counts” as democratic. Almost all countries – including Cuba – hold elections, but in many cases these elections may not be fair or represent the will of the people.

Most of the time, when people talk about democracy, they're really talking about “liberal democracy.” The key characteristics of liberal democracy are election of political leaders, freedom of speech, and equality of different racial and ethnic groups under the law.

The United States, Canada, Mexico, and Germany are examples of countries that are generally considered to be liberal democracies.

Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism is a political system that involves heavily centralized political power and restrictions on freedom of speech. Authoritarian states can be run by single individuals (“dictators”), single political parties, or a coalition of military leaders.

China, Saudi Arabia, and Cuba are examples of countries that are generally considered to be authoritarian.

Glossary

Totalitarianism

The American Heritage dictionary defines totalitarianism as “a form of government in which the political authority exercises absolute and centralized control over all aspects of life, the individual is subordinated to the state, and opposing political and cultural expression is suppressed.”

For a brief period in the 1930s, totalitarian governments were relatively widespread. The most well-known example is in Nazi Germany, where the governing Nazi party – led by Adolf Hitler – attempted to control all aspects of German life. In Nazi Germany, young people were required to join the Nazi Youth; working people were assigned jobs by the government, often for life; and secret police arrested people who dissented against the government. Propaganda was widely used to control public opinion and direct private life.

In practice, the difference between authoritarian and totalitarian governments can be unclear. All governments, including liberal democracies, attempt to influence culture and private life to some extent. The difficulty of clearly identifying totalitarian governments have led some to argue that the term is often used as more of an insult than an objective claim about the nature of a government.

Among currently-existing countries, North Korea most clearly qualifies as totalitarian. There is strong disagreement on whether and to what extent Cuba is currently totalitarian.

Cold War

After Germany's defeat in World War 2, the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as the world's two largest military powers. There are many reasons why the U.S. and Soviet Union became rivals, but a critical factor was ideology. Because the Soviet Union adopted a socialist economic and political system and promoted communist ideology, many in the U.S. feared that the Soviet Union would direct communist revolutions in countries around the world, including the United States. Although the U.S. and Soviet Union never fought a formal war, the countries competed for influence from 1945 until the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991. Wars in Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba during this time period have been called “proxy wars”: wars fought indirectly between the two powers in pursuit of global influence.

Cuba's Role In The Cold War

In 1959, Fidel Castro led a successful socialist revolution in Cuba. Fearing that Castro's example would lead to other socialist revolutions in Latin America, the U.S. backed a failed revolution against Castro in 1961 that became known as the “Bay of Pigs.” Over the next several decades, the U.S. repeatedly attempted to remove Castro from power both directly (e.g. through repeated assassination attempts) and indirectly (e.g. through the economic embargo).

In 1962, the Soviet Union stationed nuclear weapons in Cuba less than 100 miles from the coast of Florida. Over the next thirteen days, a time period that eventually became known as the “Cuban Missile Crisis,” the U.S. and Soviet Union came extremely close to nuclear war, so much so that U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara would later attribute the peaceful resolution of the crisis to “luck.” Throughout the Cold War, Cuba also provided military and economic aid to socialist revolutions around the world, leading to further U.S. attempts to overthrow the Castro government.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, most observers agreed that Cuba no longer posed a military threat to the U.S. (though a few people still do make this claim). The common belief that Cuba no longer holds the strategic importance it did during the Cold War is one reason why many have called for the U.S. to lift the economic embargo.

Glossary

Raul Castro

In 2006, Fidel Castro resigned as Cuban President and transferred power to his brother, Raul. Although Fidel remains very involved in Cuban politics and foreign policy, Raul is now responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Cuban government.

Since assuming power, Raul has decreased a number of restrictions on the Cuban economy. Cubans are now free to purchase computers, cell phones, and farm supplies, and some Cuban farmers are now allowed to own private property. More recently, Raul has decreased restrictions on Cubans' ability to travel abroad. Some argue that these reforms are positive signs indicating greater economic and political openness, while other call them "cosmetic" and argue that the Cuban government remains fundamentally oppressive.

Civil society

Dictionary.com defines civil society as "non-governmental organizations and institutions that manifest interests and will of citizens; individuals and organizations in a society which are independent of the government." In other words, civil society refers to the associations that people have outside of the government. Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Boy Scouts, and debate leagues are all examples of civil society in the U.S. Many people argue that a strong and diverse civil society is a critical element of democracy because it affords people space to organize and advocate for their beliefs without interference from the state.

Because the Cuban government exerts so much influence in Cuba, many people argue that Cuban civil society is extremely weak. Also, because the Cuban government restricts free speech, some forms of civil society that exist in the U.S. are illegal in Cuba. This has led some observers to describe Cuban society as "atomized," reasoning that people are unable organize around common interests and therefore cannot form true communities or participate in democratic decisionmaking.

Economic, social, and political rights

Cuba's government heavily restricts political rights such as the right to free speech and a free press, and these restrictions are one reason why many accuse the Cuban government of authoritarianism and totalitarianism. On the other hand, Cuba guarantees a set of rights, often referred to as "economic" and "social" rights, that are controversial in the U.S. and many other liberal democracies: most notably food, housing, employment, education, and healthcare.

People who defend the Cuban government generally argue that social/economic rights are equally or more important than political rights. By this logic, restrictions on free speech and travel are a reasonable price to pay for guaranteed food, shelter, and so forth. Others argue that political rights are fundamental and that the Cuban government has not concretely delivered on its economic and social promises.

Glossary

Economic liberalization

“Economic liberalization” refers to decreased state control over the economy. This includes the reduction or elimination of state-owned businesses, decreased regulation of private businesses, and lower taxes on individuals and corporations. Although the Republican Party is often associated with deregulation in the United States, there is general agreement among both major American political parties that developing countries should pursue economic liberalization. The notion that liberal democracies should work to economically liberalize other countries is sometimes referred to as “neoliberalism.”

There is significant debate over the relationship between economic and political liberalization. Many people, especially conservatives, argue that political liberalization (that is, guarantees of free speech, a free press, and civil rights) require economic liberalization. Some conservatives even argue that economic liberalization inevitably leads to political liberalization, so that promoting the former is the best strategy for producing the latter. Many left-wing movements, by contrast, argue that political liberalization does not require economic liberalization, and that economic liberalization can prevent political equality by increasing the power of businesses and decreasing the power of the working class.

For some observers, whether Cuba economically liberalizes is an even more important question than whether it decreases restrictions on free speech. Many of Cuba's recent reforms involve economic liberalization, but it is still unclear whether this process will continue into the future.

What is a Disadvantage?

Disadvantages (also called “disads” or “DAs”) are negative arguments that prove the effects of the plan would be bad--or disadvantageous.

Disadvantages are compared to the advantages of the affirmative plan to decide whether the effects of the plan are *more advantageous than disadvantageous*. There are many different parts to a disad and most disads have some or all of these parts. These parts are:

Uniqueness

The uniqueness of the disadvantage states that this bad effect *will* happen in the future, or that it *is* happening now. This is referred to as the status quo, or what is going on right now.

If the disadvantage is going to happen whether the plan is adopted or not, then there is no reason for the judge to consider the disadvantage in their decision.

Link

The link to the disadvantage states why the affirmative plan *causes* the disadvantage to happen. The negative usually reads a piece of evidence saying why the affirmative plan causes changes that lead to the disadvantage.

If the affirmative does not cause the disadvantage to happen, if it does not link to the affirmative, then there is no reason for the judge to consider the disadvantage in their decision.

Impact

The impact describes the problem that will happen and why it is bad. This impact is usually something very large and harmful. The negative uses this impact to say that the affirmative plan should not be done because although the plan might cause something good to happen, the problems the plan causes are worse than the problem it solves.

If the bad things the plan causes are not worse than the good that the plan causes, then the plan is still better than how the world is without the plan. In that case the judge will usually vote for the plan.

	UNIQUENESS	LINK	IMPACT
CHINA DISADVANTAGE	China Has influence in Latin America now (A. subpoint: XiaoXia evidence)	Increased US influence in Latin America trades off with China influence (B subpoint: Watson evidence)	Chinese influence in Latin America is key to China economy and Chinese regime stability (C subpoint: Ellis and Rensing evidence)
DEMOCRACY DISADVANTAGE	Cuba is on the verge of Democracy reform now (Radosh evidence)	Lifting embargo helps Cuban government and hurts democratic reformer (Radosh evidence)	Without democratic reform, Cuba will remain a totalitarian government (Cuzan and Arendt evidence)

How to Use The Disadvantage Packet

The First Negative Speaker

The first negative should introduce the disadvantage at the very beginning of their first speech. They need to read three arguments to make the disadvantage complete. Uniqueness, link, and impact.

If they are reading the China disadvantage, they should read all three pages Labeled “1NC-Shell 1-3).

If, reading the Cuban democracy disadvantage, they should read all three pages Labeled “1NC-Democracy DA”

The Second Affirmative Speaker

The second affirmative speaker must answer the disadvantage in their speech. They should argue that the disadvantage is not unique, that the plan does not cause the disadvantage, that the plan is the good impacts of the plan are actually better than the bad impacts of the plan. To do this, they should make arguments as to why the advantages of the affirmative case are more important than the disadvantage is.

When answering the China disadvantage:

The 2AC can use the pages labeled “2AC Answers 1/5”. We encourage the affirmative to make at least one each of the following arguments labeled: “non-unique”, “no link”, “no internal link” and “no impact”. The 2AC might also make the argument labeled “impact turn-hegemony.” This argument says that if the plan did decrease China influence in Latin America that this would actually be good, not bad. This argument says that US influence in Latin America is better than Chinese influence in Latin America. The affirmative does not have to make this argument, but it is a way to argue that the disadvantage is actually a good thing rather than a bad thing.

When answering the Democracy Disadvantage:

The 2AC has three kinds of arguments that it can read against the democracy disadvantage. They have evidence that says that there is no democracy in Cuba now, that the plan causes democracy, and that Cuba is not totalitarian. They should read at least one argument and piece of evidence that says that there is no democracy in Cuba now. This argument means that the disadvantage is not unique. The affirmative might also argue that the plan causes democracy rather than prevents it. This argument says that the plan will actually be good for democracy rather than bad for democracy. (Debaters call this kind of argument a “link turn”). Finally, the affirmative might argue that the current Cuban government is not totalitarian. This argument denies the impact to the disadvantage by saying that Cuba is not totalitarian.

The Second Negative Constructive/First Negative Rebuttal Speaker

The negative can choose to “extend” the disadvantage in either the 2NC or the 1NR. If the negative chooses to do this, they have several responsibilities. They should begin by pointing

out why the disadvantage is more important than, or outweighs the impact of, the affirmative advantage. Then, they need to answer the affirmative arguments made by the 2AC being sure to make it clear that the disadvantage is unique, links to the affirmative plan, and has a substantial impact to compare to the affirmative advantage. The negative must choose the best evidence not yet read in the debate to support these claims as well as extend relevant evidence read in the 1NC.

The First Affirmative Rebuttal Speaker

Because the 1AR has less time to make their arguments, they need to make smart choices about what they believe the best answers remain for the disadvantage. The 1AR is unlikely to have time to read more evidence, so this speaker should focus on the best arguments the affirmative has against the disadvantage and explain why they are sufficient to answer the argument. If the affirmative believes that they can win any single type of argument that disproves the disadvantage, they should feel free to extend that one type of argument alone. Remember, if the disadvantage is not unique, that means that it will happen anyway whether the judge votes for the plan or not. If the plan does not link to the disadvantage or there is no internal link to the impact of the disadvantage, then voting for the plan will never cause the bad impacts to happen. And, if the case outweighs the disadvantage then that answer should be sufficient to defeat the disadvantage.

<i>Affirmative Answer</i>	<i>Implications</i>
Not Unique	The disadvantage impact will happen whether the judge votes for the plan or not.
No Link	The plan does not cause the disadvantage to happen.
No Internal Link	The impact of the disadvantage will not happen even if the judge votes for the plan.
Case outweighs/No Impact	Even if the disadvantage happens, the impact of the affirmative case is greater than any impact caused by the disadvantage.
Link Turn	The link turn says that the plan will prevent the disadvantage impact from happening.
Impact Turn	The disadvantage might happen but that will be good, not bad.

Second Negative Rebuttal Speaker

The 2NR also has little time and will probably be unable to read more evidence. Their primary responsibility on extending the disadvantage is explaining why the disadvantage outweighs the affirmative case and answering any answer that the affirmative tried to use to answer the disad in the 1AR. Any arguments that the 2NR can use to argue that the affirmative advantage is not that great, or that says that the plan cannot solve the advantage, will help them to explain why the disadvantage outweighs the case advantage.

Second Affirmative Rebuttal Speaker

The 2AR also should not read more evidence. There is little time and most judges will think it is unfair to read more evidence since the negative does not have an opportunity to respond to it. Instead, they should focus on the best arguments that were made in the 1AR and explain why the case impacts are more important and stronger than the disadvantage impacts.

Online Resources and Further Reading

Online resources

Documentary on daily life in Cuba: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVRlhgPF2U4>

Freedom House reports on democracy in Cuba: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/country/cuba>

Twitter of Yoani Sanchez, famous Cuban dissident: <https://twitter.com/yoanifromcuba>

Fidel Castro interview:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRkLnA0seA8&list=PL04A3FDA2F75FE977>

Further reading

The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx – the most important founding statement of communist principles.

1984 by George Orwell – the most well-known book about totalitarianism. A fictional but fascinating description of a future totalitarian society.

Cuba: What Everyone Needs To Know by Julia E. Sweig – a balanced, readable, and comprehensive overview of Cuba's past and present.

The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara (documentary) – a series of interviews with former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, including conversations about the Cuban Missile Crisis.

*****1NC*****

1NC – Democracy DA

Uniqueness and link - Cuban activists are on the verge of winning democratic reform – ending the embargo strengthens Castro and ensures a totalitarian regime

Radosh, 13 (Ron, professional historian, adjunct fellow at the Hudson Institute. 3-18-13. “The Time to Help Cuba’s Brave Dissidents Is Now: Why the Embargo Must Not be Lifted” <http://pjmedia.com/ronradosh/2013/03/18/the-time-to-help-cubas-brave-dissidents-is-now-why-the-embargo-must-not-be-lifted/?singlepage=true>)

What these liberals and leftists leave out is that this demand - lifting the embargo - is also the number one desire of the Cuban Communists. In making it the key demand, these well-meaning (at least some of them) liberals echo precisely the propaganda of the Cuban government, thereby doing the Castro brothers’ work for them here in the United States. And, as we know, many of those who call for this actually believe that the Cuban government is on the side of the people, and favor the Cuban Revolution which they see as a positive role model for the region. They have always believed, since the 1960s of their youth, that socialism in Cuba has pointed the way forward to development and liberty based on the kind of socialist society they wish could exist in the United States. Another brave group of Cuban opponents of the regime has actually taped a television interview filmed illegally in Havana. “Young Cuban democracy leader Antonio Rodiles,” an American support group called Capitol Hill Cubans has reported, “has just released the latest episode of his civil society project Estado de Sats (filmed within Cuba), where he discusses the importance U.S. sanctions policy with two of Cuba’s most renowned opposition activists and former political prisoners, Guillermo Fariñas and Jose Daniel Ferrer.” The argument they present is aimed directly at those on the left in the United States, some of whom think they are helping democracy in Cuba by calling for an end to the embargo. In strong and clear language, the two dissidents say the following: If at this time, the [economic] need of the Cuban government is satisfied through financial credits and the lifting of the embargo, repression would increase, it would allow for a continuation of the Castro’s society, totalitarianism would strengthen its hold and philosophically, it would just be immoral ... If you did an opinion poll among Cuban opposition activists, the majority would be in favor of not lifting the embargo. Next, they nail the claim that travel without restrictions by citizens of our country to Cuba would help spread freedom. The men respond: In a cost-benefit analysis, travel to Cuba by Americans would be of greatest benefit to the Castro regime, while the Cuban people would be the least to benefit. With all of the controls and the totalitarian system of the government, it would be perfectly able to control such travel. We know this, as I reported a few months ago, about how a group of Americans taking the usual state-controlled Potemkin village tour came back raving about how wonderful and free Cuba is, and how Cuban socialism works. Finally, the two former prisoners made this point about lifting the embargo: To lift the embargo at this time would be very prejudicial to us. The government prioritizes all of the institutions that guarantee its hold on power. The regime’s political police and its jailers receive a much higher salary and privileges than a doctor or engineer, or than any other worker that benefits society. We’ve all seen municipalities with no fuel for an ambulance, yet with 10, 15, 20, 50 cars full of fuel ready to go repress peaceful human rights activists. Indeed, just this past week, more evidence came out substantiating how the secret police killed Cuba’s leading political opponent Oswaldo Paya, and sought to blame it on a car crash for which he and those with him were responsible. Last week, the Washington Post in a tough editorial made the point: Mr. Payá, who pioneered the Varela Project, a petition drive in 2002 seeking the guarantee of political freedom in Cuba, was killed in a car wreck July 22, along with a youth activist, Harold Cepero. The driver of the vehicle, Ángel Carronero, a Spaniard, was convicted and imprisoned on charges of vehicular homicide; in December, he was released to Spain. He told us in an interview published on the opposite page last week that the car carrying Mr. Payá was rammed from behind by a vehicle with government license plates. His recollections suggest that Mr. Payá died not from reckless driving but from a purposeful attempt to silence him — forever. This is the kind of treatment effective opponents of the regime get from Cuba’s secret police, measures taken upon orders of Raul Castro, whom useful idiots like Danny Glover and Sean Penn regularly visit. They fawn at his feet and those of his ailing brother, Fidel Castro. This week, Sanchez and her colleague come to testify before Congress. They will speak as well at a public forum today, Tuesday, at the Cato Institute. You can watch on a live stream at 12:30 p.m. on the organization’s website. The Cuban people have suffered long enough at the hands of a regime that came into power promising freedom and democracy, and instead inflicted on the Cuban people a totalitarian government modeled on that of the old Soviet Union. Cuba is finally on the verge of change, and it is time the people of our country give whatever support we can to those within Cuba bravely working for the creation of a real democracy in Cuba, and an end to the decades of rule by the Castro brothers.

1NC – Democracy DA

The impact - Castro's regime is brutal – millions suffer from poverty, corruption, and inequality. Free speech restrictions force Cubans to live a lie and undermine basic trust between people

Cuzan, 12 (Alfred, Chairman of the Department of Government at the University of West Florida. "Totalitarianism in the Tropics: Cuba's 'Padilla Case' Revisited" Cuban Affairs, Vol. 7, Issue 3. <http://uwf.edu/govt/documents/III.A.11.-Cuzan-2012-Totalitarianism%20in%20the%20Tropics-Cubas%20Padilla%20Case%20Revisited.CubanAffairs.Quarterly%20Electronic%20Journal,%20Vol.7%20Issue3,2012.pdf>)

A case in point: For over half a century ordinary Cubans have endured dilapidated housing, shortages of consumer goods, shoddiness in those that are available and usually after queuing up sometimes for hours, assignments to dead-end jobs at low wages, inadequate transportation, long waits to see a physician, arbitrariness and pettiness by some bureaucrats and imperiousness on the part of others, intrusive meddlesome by neighborhood "defenders of the Revolution," being excluded from stores, neighborhoods, and resorts reserved for foreigners and members of the ruling elite; having to enroll their children in Communist Party youth organizations if they wanted them admitted to the better schools or the university, to sacrifice some of the little leisure time they have to do "volunteer" labor on this or that project or campaign with nothing to show for it; to attend boring Communist Party or block meetings, recite mind-numbing slogans,¹¹⁰ and listen for hours, either glued to the television or the radio or standing under a boiling sun in a mass rally, there to applaud "the interminable speeches and the infinite and ever more delirious insanities"¹¹¹ of a seemingly eternal tyrant; fear of punishment for laughing at the wrong joke or discussing taboo subjects, waste, corruption, scandalous inequalities,¹¹² injustice, and so on and on. The contrast between the mirages portrayed by the regime and the reality experienced in everyday life cannot escape them. People do not need a novel, play, or film to make them aware of it all. So what is it, then, that dictators in totalitarian regimes fear, if that is, in fact, the passion that motivates them to control the culture, to wage a war on writers and other members of the intelligentsia who will venture beyond the barbed wires of what the party-state will tolerate? What they fear is public negation of the Lie. These regimes are constructed on a mountain of lies, lies that their rulers not only propagate, but force the population to assent to, to pretend to believe.¹¹³ The principal lie, the lie of all lies that constitutes the keystone of the regime, is the claim that it is not a dictatorship at all, but a real, a true democracy where the people and the government are one, unanimous as they march arm in arm into a happy future that is reserved for them by "History." How many Cubans could really believe Fidel Castro when he said, as he did in the "First Congress of Education and Culture" (of which there was little of either), held only a few days after Padilla's farcical self-degradation at the UNEAC assembly, where all "resolutions" were approved by unanimity, that "Various opinions were advanced with absolute frankness, with absolute freedom—such as is inconceivable in any other society except a socialist one"? People are forced to live a lie, to adopt a double moral, as they say in Cuba, to wear a mask of obedience or even enthusiasm that shields expressions of indifference, apathy, weariness, disbelief, frustration, disgust, or anger.¹¹⁵ But because everyone wears a mask, people cannot tell who is telling the truth and who is not, who is for real and who is not, who is a true believer, who an opportunist, and who is simply hiding behind a mask. Suspicion and distrust of one another keep most people isolated.¹¹⁶ Society is atomized. Under those conditions, freely combining with others for political or any other public purpose is very difficult. Nearly everyone is afraid¹¹⁷ to protest or oppose the regime because, in the absence of others joining them in large numbers, the lone protestor faces the certainty of punishment.

1NC – Democracy DA

Totalitarian governments destroy all human bonds of trust and friendship – they're an insult to human dignity and must be rejected

Arendt, 54 (Hannah, philosopher, expert on totalitarianism, lecturer at The New School in Manhattan; Yale University; and, the Center for Advanced Studies at Wesleyan University. “On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding”)

But terror by itself is not enough - it fits but it does not inspire. If we observe from this perspective the curious logicity of the ideologies in totalitarian movements, we understand better why this combination can be so supremely valuable. If it were true that there are eternal laws ruling supreme over all things human and demanding of each human being only total conformity, then freedom would be a mockery, some snare luring one away from the right path; then homelessness would be only a fantasy, an imagined thing, which could be cured by the decision to conform to some recognizable universal law. And then – last not least – not the concert of human minds, but only one man would be needed to understand these laws and to build humanity in such a way as to conform to them under all changing circumstances. The “knowledge” of one alone would suffice, and the plurality of human gifts or insights or initiatives would be simply superfluous. Human contact would not matter; only the preservation of a perfect functionality within the framework established by the one initiated into the “wisdom” of the law would matter.

[Several paragraphs later...]

We said at the beginning of these reflections that we shall be satisfied with having understood the essence or nature of political phenomena which determine the whole innermost structure of entire eras only if we succeed in analyzing them as signs of the danger of general trends that concern and eventually may threaten all societies – not just those countries where they have already been victorious or are on the point of becoming victorious. The danger totalitarianism lays bare before our eyes – and this danger, by definition, will not be overcome merely by victory over totalitarian governments – springs from rootlessness and homelessness and could be called the danger of loneliness and superfluity. Both loneliness and superfluity are, of course, symptoms of mass society, but their true significance is not thereby exhausted. Dehumanization is implied in both and, though reaching its most horrible consequences in concentration camps, exists prior to their establishment. Loneliness as we know it in an atomized society is indeed, as I tried to show by the quotation from the Bible and its interpretation by Luther, contrary to the basic requirements of the human condition. Even the experience of the merely materially and sensually given world depends, in the last analysis, upon the fact that not one man but men in the plural inhabit the earth.

*****2NC/1NR*****

2NC – Cuban Democracy Coming Now

Cuban activists have the moral high ground – the government can't control them

Gershman, 12 (Carl, President, the National Endowment for Democracy.

“The Sharpening Crisis in Cuba” 8-2-12. <http://www.ned.org/about/board/meet-our-president/archived-presentations-and-articles/the-sharpening-crisis-in-cuba>)

I believe that the answer is clear. Boitel will win because the Cuba system is now in the throes of a terminal economic, political and ideological crisis. Fidel Castro himself has said, in his famous interview with The Atlantic, that “the Cuban model doesn’t even work for us anymore.” It will end, as President Reagan said of Marxism-Leninism in his famous Westminster Address, “on the ash heap of history” along with “other tyrannies which stifle the freedom and muzzle the self-expression of the people.” Just look at the continued activism of the five Cuban dissidents who received the NED Democracy Award in 2009. Ivan Hernandez Carrillo is out of prison and now is the spokesman for the coalition of independent trade unions in Cuba. Antunez and his wife Iris remain militant activists in Central Cuba, while the intellectual Librado Linares and the Catholic activist Jose Daniel Ferrer are also both out of prison and fighting with renewed determination. Ferrer, the leader of the Union Patriotica de Cuba (UNPACU), an island-wide resistance movement, had been arrested earlier this week in the eastern province of Holguin, but he was released yesterday without any charges being pressed. His quick release is a sign of the erosion of the regime’s system of control and its inability to suppress a growing movement of civic resistance. We can see evidence of that movement in many areas: human rights defense; independent journalism; growing labor unrest and the networks of independent trade unionists that Anibal Cabrera will be discussing later in this conference; independent bloggers and underground rock musicians; youth activists; and activists in professional associations of lawyers, academics, doctors, and intellectuals. Change is coming, and it’s important that we start preparing now for the post-Castro future. While the struggle for a democratic breakthrough is still the highest priority, it’s necessary now to start thinking about and preparing for the process of democratic transition, which as we know from other contemporary experiences – think of Nicaragua, or Egypt, or Ukraine – will not be easy.

2NC – Cuban Democracy Coming Now

Cuba will become democratic – activist movements are gaining strength

Simonyi and Otero, 13 (Andras Simonyi, Managing Director of the Center for Transatlantic Relations at Johns Hopkins. Jaime Otero, former Ambassador of Bolivia to the United States. "Cuba's Future Transition to Democracy Can Be a Success" 3-12-13. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/andras-simonyi/cubas-future-transition-t_b_2859520.html)

Cuba is ready for change. In spite of the efforts by the regime to paint a rosy picture, eye witnesses tell a sad story. Living conditions are bad, the economy survives only at the mercy of Venezuela. The Inter-American Human Rights Commission, in its 2012 a report on Cuba, speaks of "permanent and systematic violations of the fundamental rights of Cuban citizens." Ironically, however while the Cuban people suffer, the regime is internationally stronger than ever. Progressive rock musicians, like Gorki in the band Porno Para Ricardo, are prevented from writing and performing freely. The international pressure for the respect for human rights is weak and inefficient. It seems like the ethic conscience of the west is comfortable with the situation. It shouldn't be. Solidarity with the people submitted to human rights violations by dictatorships is a moral imperative. However, the opposition movement is gaining voice, even in face of a forgetful international community. They are increasingly self-confident. Oswaldo Paya is now dead, but others, like Yoani Sanchez stepped into his place. Courageous people, who defy threats and speak more and more openly about the true state of the country. They deserve all the support they ask for. Cuba is ripe for change. To understand today's Cuba, one must better study the history of communist Eastern Europe, rather than that of Latin America. The resemblance is striking. The inner workings of the regime are similar to the more conservative countries of the former communist bloc in 1989. Halfhearted, thus unsuccessful economic reforms, the total control of the media, isolating the population from the world, harassment of the political opposition and the communist elite clinging to power. At the same time a disenchanted population, including a big part of the party membership, the majority of which does not any longer believe in the ideology or the future of the system. It is more like East Germany or Romania, rather than Hungary or Poland of the day. However, the leaders of Cuba surely understand, that the desire for change swept away even the harshest regimes of Eastern Europe.

Internet access and a younger population will cause democratic reform

Erickson, 09 (Daniel, senior associate for U.S. policy and director of Caribbean programs at the Inter-American Dialogue in Washington D.C. "The Cuba Wars: Fidel Castro, the United States and the Next Revolution" http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/studio/multimedia/20090113/index.html:pf_printable)

Today in Cuba you have a transition as well, as Fidel Castro steps down from power and Raoul Castro takes over. Whatever the future of Raoul Castro's government may be, my guess is he's not going to be there for 49 years. So I think you could see an accelerated pace of change taking place within Cuba. You have a generation of young people in Cuba who are becoming increasingly interconnected with the world on their own terms through email, through text messaging, through blogging. There was a very interesting confrontation which took place last year, in February 2008, between a young student in Cuba who challenged one of the top Cuban officials. He said, "Why do we need to work two or three days just to earn enough money to buy a toothbrush? Why do we need to get the permission of the government in order to leave Cuba?" I think these questions are going to become increasingly pressing. And indeed, 70 percent of the Cuban population was born after Fidel Castro came to power. So I think that all of this does perhaps portend that there will be more change taking place in the future. I think that certainly the fates of 11 million people, a diverse and divided people, hang in the balance. It is certainly my hope that the Cuba wars are not going to be the inheritance of future generations.

2NC – Cuban Democracy Coming Now

Economic pressure will force Cuba to democratize now

Piccone, 12 (Ted, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. “Cuba Is Changing, Slowly but Surely” 1-19-12.
<http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2012/01/19-cuba-piccone>)

As a relative newcomer to the intricacies of the Cuba question, I was immediately struck by Cuba’s unique blend of decaying splendor, cultural prosperity, restricted freedoms and relative poverty. As everyone knows, Cuba’s highly centralized system, with its impressive achievements in health, education and the arts, is still recovering from the loss of massive Soviet subsidies, hurricanes and a steady outflow of its well-educated workforce. Creditors in China and elsewhere are growing tired of underwriting Cuba’s struggling economy as it tries to move away from its ossified past and into the 21st century. So something had to be done about liberalizing the economy. A closer look, however, reveals something more profound—a wholesale mental shift, outlined clearly by President Raul Castro over the last two years, that the time has come to move the Cuban people from wholesale dependence on the state to a new era of individual responsibility and citizenship. This is going to take time. The economic reforms or “updating” of Cuba’s Soviet-style economic system, approved last spring at the Communist Party’s first National Congress in 14 years, are just beginning to be enacted. They include an expansion of licenses for private enterprise (over 350,000 have been granted), opening more idle land to farmers and cooperatives, allowing businesses to hire employees, empowering people to buy and sell their houses and cars, and opening new lines of credit with no legal ceilings on how much Cubans can borrow. Non-state actors are allowed now to sell unlimited services and commodities directly to state-owned enterprises and joint ventures, thereby opening new channels of commercial activity between farmers and tourist hotels, for example. Think Viet Nam or China. The reforms include tough measures too, like shrinking the buying power of the longstanding ration card that every Cuban gets to purchase subsidized basic goods, cutting unemployment benefits, and eventually dismissing anywhere from 500,000 to one million employees from the state sector as bureaucratic middlemen become obsolete and tax revenues rise. These changes, while painful, are reason enough to be optimistic about Cuba’s economic future. But something much more fundamental is at work—a turn away from government control of pricing and subsidizing products throughout the economy to a more decentralized framework of subsidizing persons based on need. At heart, the Castro government is prepared to move Cuba from a society based on equity of results to equality of opportunity, infused with a culture of humanism. Not that Cuba’s system ever offered true equality, as one taxi driver reminded me as we drove down Havana’s famous seaside Malecon. The door, however, is now opening wider to the inevitable rise in inequality that comes from capitalism, even restrained forms of it. Whether one is able to prosper as a self-employed restaurateur, or is the beneficiary of generous relatives sending remittances and goods home from Miami, new gradations in Cuba’s economic and social strata are on the way. As long as someone arrives at their wealth legally and pays their taxes, assured one senior party official, they are free to become rich.

2NC – Plan Stops Democracy

The embargo is critical to pressure Castro into pro-democratic reform

Suchlicki, 13 (Jaime, one of the world's foremost scholars on Latin America, professor of history at the School of International Studies at the University of Miami. 4-4-13. "What if...the U.S. Ended the Cuba Travel Ban and the Embargo?" <http://devresearchcenter.org/2013/04/12/what-if-the-u-s-ended-the-cuba-travel-ban-and-the-embargo/#more-219>)

Conclusions* If the travel ban is lifted unilaterally now or **the embargo is ended** by the U.S., what will the **U.S. government have to negotiate with a future regime in Cuba and to encourage changes in the island?** These policies could be an important bargaining chip with a future regime willing to provide concessions in the area of political and economic freedoms. The travel ban and **the embargo should be lifted as a result of negotiations between the U.S. and a Cuban government willing to provide meaningful and irreversible political and economic concessions** or when there is a democratic government in place in the island.

Castro will only allow trade that strengthens the regime

Chang, 08 (Gordon, lawyer and author. "Contentions In Defense of the Cuban Embargo," Commentary Magazine, 2-20-08. <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2008/02/20/in-defense-of-the-cuban-embargo/>)

Even if we lift the embargo, Castro's successors will not allow their economy to be overrun by American tourists, investors, and corporate executives. Fidel's legitimacy, we should remember, is largely founded on his ridding the island of foreign exploiters and his creating home-grown socialism. Cuban leaders, in any event, would allow only enough commerce to maintain their regime, just as North Korea's Kim Jong Il is doing today. It is a Fukuyama-induced fantasy to think that history has ended and that we can rid ourselves of despicable autocrats with just letters of credit and bills of lading. The Castro boys, Fidel and successor Raul, have survived just about everything during five decades and are not about to surrender to globalization.

Trade gives the Cuban government access to U.S. dollars – these are valuable and will be used to fund political repression

Torres, 99 (Alexis, attorney, Cuban living in exile. "Keep the Embargo on Cuba Until Castro Opens the Doors" 12-27-99. <http://articles.latimes.com/1999/dec/27/local/me-47927>)

Time to debunk some myths: The embargo hurts only the people of Cuba, not the government. The embargo actually prevents the Cuban government from doing business with Cuba's natural market, the United States. This in turn deprives the Cuban ruling circles of easy access to hard currency, which is used to protect fugitives from U.S. justice and to keep up a very efficient repressive apparatus. The Cuban people are increasingly less dependent on their government for everyday needs. Indeed, Cuba's dollar economy now accounts for more goods and services than the moribund peso economy. Black market transactions are rampant, as is corruption among officials in the privileged tourism industry. Lifting the embargo may well help the Cuban government obtain financing abroad for infrastructure projects, but it would have minimal impact on the lives of ordinary Cubans.

2NC – Plan Stops Democracy

Cubans distrust American policy – U.S. attempts to promote democracy strengthen Castro and undermine opposition

Weeks and Fiorey, 12 (Associate professor of political science and director of Latin American Studies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte; M.A. Candidate. Gregory Weeks and Erin Fiorey, Policy Options for a Cuban Spring, May-June 2012, MILITARY REVIEW http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20120630_art014.pdf)

If there is a Cuban Spring, then its emergence and ultimate success will hinge on its domestic wellsprings. In fact, this echoes the policy position of the administration of Barack Obama. As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton put it in 2011, “These revolutions are not ours. They are not by us, for us, or against us, but we do have a role. We have the resources, capabilities, and expertise to support those who seek peaceful, meaningful, democratic reform.”¹⁷ Even the Catholic Cardinal in Cuba, Jaime Ortega, has cautioned against “a type of U.S. subculture which invades everything.”¹⁸ He was referring not only to culture, but also to politics. What the wariness entails is an increased risk of backlash if the United States injects itself too forcefully. The United States faced a similar dilemma in the Arab Spring Middle Eastern transitions. Widespread perception that the United States is attempting to direct events fosters distrust and provides leverage to pro-regime forces or at the very least puts leaders on the defensive who might otherwise welcome assistance from the United States. This is commonly referred to as “blowback,” and over the long term, it could greatly reduce U.S. influence.

Increased American tourism will only benefit Castro

Suchlicki, 13 (Jaime, one of the world’s foremost scholars on Latin America, professor of history at the School of International Studies at the University of Miami. 4-4-13. “What if...the U.S. Ended the Cuba Travel Ban and the Embargo?” <http://devresearchcenter.org/2013/04/12/what-if-the-u-s-ended-the-cuba-travel-ban-and-the-embargo/#more-219>)

Ending the embargo and lifting the ban for U.S. tourists to travel to Cuba would be a major concession totally out of proportion to recent changes in the island. If the U.S. were to lift the travel ban without major reforms in Cuba, there would be significant implications: Money from American tourists would flow into businesses owned by the Castro government thus strengthening state enterprises. The tourist industry is controlled by the military and General Raul Castro, Fidel’s brother. American tourists will have limited contact with Cubans. Most Cuban resorts are built in isolated areas, are off limits to the average Cuban, and are controlled by Cuba’s efficient security apparatus. Most Americans don’t speak Spanish, have but limited contact with ordinary Cubans, and are not interested in visiting the island to subvert its regime. Law 88 enacted in 1999 prohibits Cubans from receiving publications from tourists. Penalties include jail terms. While providing the Castro government with much needed dollars, the economic impact of tourism on the Cuban population would be limited. Dollars will trickle down to the Cuban poor in only small quantities, while state and foreign enterprises will benefit most. Tourist dollars would be spent on products, i.e., rum, tobacco, etc., produced by state enterprises, and tourists would stay in hotels owned partially or wholly by the Cuban government. The principal airline shuffling tourists around the island, Gaviota, is owned and operated by the Cuban military.

2NC – Cuba Is Totalitarian

Cuba is totalitarian – the government has total control over people's lives

Hodgson, 13 (Fergus, research director with the Pan American Post and policy adviser with the Future of Freedom Foundation. “Undoing Totalitarian Indoctrination” 2-19-13. <http://thestatelessman.com/2013/02/19/cuba/>)

After four days with Cuban exiles in Miami this month, I can confidently say that Cuba is a totalitarian police state. From almost nonexistent internet access and surveillance committees on every block to a seven-year jail term for reporting an accurate news story, the more I read and heard, the worse it got. With first-hand accounts, these exiles, both recent and from before the Cuban revolution, laid to waste the benign view that many people still have of the island nation of 11 million people. Consider this heartfelt perspective from Mario Martínez—a defector from Fidel Castro’s army, veteran of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, and director of the Cuba Corps. Although a resident of the United States for decades now, his passion for a free Cuba remains strong, and he has a hard time holding back tears when speaking in public. I get the impression he’d be willing to participate in another attempt to overthrow Fidel Castro and what he describes as a “total distatorship.” (Please pardon the video quality, as I only had a cell-phone camera but didn’t want to miss the opportunity.) “They control everything,” he says. “They control where you go, what you eat, who you talk to.” The event I’m referring to, a Liberty Camp at the Institute for Cuban and Cuban American Studies, brought together approximately 50 people, including 20 to 30 recent exiles. With translations in English and Spanish, the Language of Liberty Institute and the Cuba Corps provided speakers for a swift and deep examination of what freedom means for those who have been subject to intense government propaganda and indoctrination their whole lives. Local Cubans also came along in the evenings to offer mentoring for the new arrivals. Liberty Camp Group Photo The theme of perhaps greatest importance was freedom of thought—as one of the speakers, Andy Eyschen, explained (four minutes): In order to determine what is the truth... we should have the ability to verify what other people tell us is the truth. If we do not have the freedom to verify, then we are subject to accepting the lies that may be told to us. And when we look at history in almost every dictatorial society, truth is the first victim, and people are subjected to the lies, to the propaganda of the government.... The Cubans who are here in Miami and in the U.S. in general, I think they realize that when they escape, when they leave Cuba, they realize that they are leaving a land of lies behind them. In fact, some of them, they sense it inherently, that what they are being told is not exactly true. They are supposed to be living in paradise, but their day-to-day standard of living [an average salary of about \$US 20 per month] doesn’t live up to that ideal of paradise.... They’ve been promised this 50 years ago, in 1959, and they say, “When are the good times coming?” Robin Koerner, of the Language of Liberty Institute and the original Blue Republican, appealed to students to do just that, to verify the content they were hearing. As an attendee, I can also attest to plenty of healthy debate, including between the speakers. Jose Azel One such speaker who caught my attention was Jose Azel, a senior research associate with the Institute for Cuban and Cuban American Studies and an insightful contributor with the Miami Herald (pictured right). As part of the first briefing, he chronicled the rapid demise of what was once a jewel of Latin America. He also joined The Stateless Man this week and, among other things, explained the perverse impacts on the values and thinking of the residents of Cuba, after so many years of totalitarian rule. (Hear him from 10:25.) One of the most terrible legacies of these now 53 years of totalitarian rule is that Cuban civil society... has basically disappeared. Under Cuban law, for example, for more than three people to gather is against the law.... There are very few people, only elderly people, that remember republican Cuba and have even any notion of what a free market is and how a free market economy works... So the disappearance of the values is perhaps the most terrible legacy. People have learned to lie, cheat, and steal as a matter of survival, because everything belongs to the state. This raises challenges for any potential return of Cuba to relatively greater freedom. Azel foresees, like in Eastern Europe after the break up of the Soviet Union, a vacuum for endemic corruption. At least for the stateside attendees, though, the event appeared to be an awakening experience and a great success. One man, for example, stood up abruptly and wanted to share that in twenty years as a lawyer in Cuba, not once had he even heard of classical liberalism or the notion of liberty as presented at this camp.

2NC – Cuba Is Totalitarian

Recent reforms are misdirection – Cuba is more repressive than ever

Miami Herald, 13 (Editorial Board. “Human rights under abuse in Cuba” 4-22-13.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/04/22/3358813/human-rights-under-abuse-in-cuba.html>)

The State Department’s latest report on human-rights practices effectively puts the lie to the idea that the piecemeal and illusory changes in Cuba under Gen. Raúl Castro represent a genuine political opening toward greater freedom. If anything, things are getting worse. The report, which covers 2012, says the independent Cuban Commission on Human Rights and Reconciliation counted 6,602 short-term detentions during the year, compared with 4,123 in 2011. In March 2012, the same commission recorded a 30-year record high of 1,158 short-term detentions in a single month just before the visit of Pope Benedict XVI. Among the many abuses cited by the 2012 report are the prison sentences handed out to members of the Unión Patriótica de Cuba, the estimated 3,000 citizens held under the charge of “potential dangerousness,” state-orchestrated assaults against the Damas de Blanco (Ladies in White), the suspicious death of dissident Oswaldo Payá and so on. As in any dictatorship, telling the truth is a crime: Independent journalist Calixto Ramón Martínez Arias, the first to report on the cholera outbreak in Cuba, was jailed in September for the crime of desacato (insulting speech) and remained there until last week. The regime is willing to undertake some meek economic reforms to keep people employed. It has even dared to relax its travel requirements to allow more Cubans to leave the country if they can get a passport. Both of these are short-term survival measures, designed as escape valves for growing internal pressure. But when it comes to free speech, political activity and freedom of association — the building blocks of a free society — the report is a depressing chronicle of human-rights abuses and a valuable reminder that repression is the Castro regime’s only response to those who demand a genuinely free Cuba. Fundamental reform? Not a chance.

2NC – Cuba Is Totalitarian

Prefer our evidence – the Castro government threatens reporters to produce news favorable to the regime

O'Grady, 12 (Mary, editor of the Wall Street Journal. "Cuba and the Castro News Filter" 1-29-12. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204573704577185691721279390.html>)

Tourism, aka "cultural exchanges," out of the U.S. to the island is on the rise, leading some observers to conclude that the dictatorship is kinder and gentler than it used to be. But all visitors, and those they interact with in Cuba, are as carefully watched as they were in the first days of the revolution. In the news business, reporters are not permitted to travel freely, and it is verboten to damage the image of the Castro government. Penalties can be severe. This reality came to mind last week when we learned of the death of another dissident at the hands of the regime. Thirty-one-year-old Wilman Villar Mendoza, who was arrested in November, had been on a hunger strike for at least 50 days. His imprisonment was part of a wider wave of state repression that has been under way for more than a year amid a rising number of public protests, particularly by young people. Yet while Raúl Castro's announcements about "reform" have made headlines and topped television news around the globe, we had hardly heard of Villar Mendoza or the resistance movement he belonged to. Apologists for the status quo will tell you that Cuba's democracy movement is not news because the number of Cubans who would rebel given the right encouragement is insignificant. But if Cuba is an island of contentment, why do the Castro brothers go to such lengths to make an example of dissidents like Villar Mendoza and pressure local news bureaus to ignore the repression? There is a reason journalists who want to stick around know they'd better find something else to write about. Villar Mendoza's case was especially hard to learn about because he lived in the eastern province of Santiago de Cuba. The east is one of the most repressed areas of the county, perhaps because it is where, historically, uprisings in Cuba have originated. Now, despite the tight grip, it is again becoming the hotbed of antigovernment protests, united by a coalition known as the Eastern Democratic Alliance. But since there are no embassies there and reporters may not leave Havana without permission, the magnitude of the eastern rebellion is not recognized by the outside world. The story has gotten out thanks to Cuba's independent journalists and human-rights advocates, operating on a shoestring and at great personal risk. They use cellphones and sometimes computers when they can sneak under the radar. They've reported that on Nov. 14 Villar Mendoza was beaten and arrested for his part in a peaceful protest march in his hometown of Contramaestre. Ten days later, in a summary trial, he was sentenced to four years in prison. When he was refused an appeal, again without due process, he began a hunger strike. His jailers at Aguadores prison responded by stripping him, throwing him in a dank solitary confinement cell, and denying him water. He came down with pneumonia and died of sepsis. Given the history, the account sounds plausible and gains credibility from the regime's intensive damage-control efforts. The Castros allege that Villar Mendoza was a common criminal. This is standard procedure: In fact the regime claims there are no "political" prisoners in Cuban jails—only criminals. Former Cuba correspondent for Spanish Television, Vicente Botín, describes how hard it is to report the truth from the island in his 2009 book "Funerales de Castro." He reminds readers that in 1997 Fidel expelled a French journalist for writing that Cuban chickens were not meeting their government egg-laying quotas. In 2007, the regime withdrew the credentials of three foreign correspondents from the Chicago Tribune, the BBC and the Mexican daily El Universal for lack of "objectivity." "The three journalists were scapegoats used to warn their colleagues in the foreign press of the dangers they run if their 'objectivity' does not coincide with that of the government," Mr. Botín notes. Sebastián Martínez Ferraté didn't fare so well. In 2008 he used a hidden camera to document Cuba's epidemic of childhood prostitution, and the report aired in Spain. When he returned to the island in 2010, he was arrested and sentenced to 17 years in prison. Spain only recently negotiated his release. As Mr. Botín explains, the regime goes out of its way to make sure that journalists know that they are being watched and no one working in Cuba is under any illusion about a free press. Yet when foreigners watch "news" from the island they are likely, through force of habit, to put their trust in the messenger. Maybe the news organizations should start running that disclaimer.

2NC – Democracy Is Good

Democracy and political freedom are natural human rights – alternative forms of government are worse at everything

Rummel, 09 (Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Hawaii. Rudy (R.J.) Rummel, Democracy, Democratic peace, freedom, globalization, This entry was posted on Sunday, January 18th, 2009 at 4:02 pm, <http://democraticpeace.wordpress.com/2009/01/18/why-freedom/>)

The people of these countries, and all people everywhere have the right to freedom of speech, religion, organization, and a fair trial, among other rights, and one overarching right to be free subsumes all these civil and political rights. This right overrules sovereignty, which is granted according to tradition based on a system of international treaties, not natural law. Freedom, by contrast, is not something others grant. It is a right due every human being. For too many intellectuals, however, it is not enough to point out that a people have a right to be free. They will counter by arguing that freedom is desirable, but first people must be made equal, given food to eat, work, and health care. Freedom must be limited as a means to good ends, such as the public welfare, prosperity, peace, ethnic unity, or national honor. Sometimes the intellectuals who go about creating such justifications for denying people their freedom are so persuasive that even reasonable people will accept their convoluted arguments. Need I mention the works of Marx and Lenin, for example, who provided “scientific” excuses for the tyranny of such thugs as Stalin, Mao, and Pol Pot? To many compassionate people, such intellectuals, arguing that freedom must be sacrificed for a better life, have had the best of the argument and the moral high ground. These intellectuals have tried to show that freedom empowers greed, barbaric competition, inefficiency, inequality, the debasement of morals, the weakening of ethnic or racial identity, and so on. To be defensive about freedom in the face of such justifications is morally wrong-headed. No moral code or civil law allows that a gang leader and his followers can murder, torture, and repress some at will as long as the thugs provide others with a good life. But even were it accepted that under the cover of government authority, a ruler can murder and repress his people so long as it promotes human betterment, the burden of proof is on those who argue that therefore those people will be better off. There is no such proof. Quite the opposite: in the twentieth century, we have had the most costly and extensive tests of such arguments, involving billions of people. The Nazis, Italian fascists under Mussolini, Japanese militarists, and Chinese Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek have tested fascist promises of a better life. Likewise, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, and Pol Pot have tested the utopian promises of communism, to mention the most prominent communist experiments; and Burma, Iraq, and Syria, among others, also have tested state socialism. All these vast social experiments have failed, utterly and miserably, and they have done so at the vast human cost that has included global social upheaval, the displacement of millions, the impoverishment of billions, and the death of tens of millions from famine, extreme internal violence, and the most destructive wars—not to mention the many hundreds of millions murdered outright. These social experiments have involved the mass murder of 262,000,000 Russians, Chinese, Cambodians, Poles, North Koreans, Cubans, Vietnamese, and others, such that were their souls to comprise a land of the dead it would be among the world’s top three in population. In sharp contrast, there are the arguments for freedom. Not only is a right certified in international law (e.g., the various human rights multinational conventions), but a supreme moral good in itself. The very fact of a people’s freedom creates a better life for all. Free people create a wealthy and prosperous society. When people are free to go about their own business, they put their ingenuity and creativity in the service of all. They search for ways to satisfy the needs, desires, and wants of others. The true utopia lies not in some state-sponsored tyranny, but the free market in goods, ideas, and services, whose operating principle is that success depends on satisfying others.

2NC – Answer To: “Cuba Is Good For Economic Rights”

Cuban socialism has failed to help ordinary people – wages are low and cities are crumbling

Kadlec, 13 (Dan, journalist who has written about personal finance for TIME and other outlets for 25 years. “Lessons in Socialism: How Cuba Can Become Relevant Again” 2-6-13. <http://business.time.com/2013/02/06/lessons-in-socialism-how-cuba-can-become-relevant-again/>)

Socialism here has managed to raise the living standards of the destitute, the bottom 20%. But virtually all others have fled or been dragged lower. Whatever leadership succeeds Fidel and Raul, it will have to confront the basic question of whether raising the living standards of the very poorest is worth the toll it has taken on the rest, as well as the toll it's taken on the country's infrastructure and even its fertile landscape—much of which is now grown over with weeds. Even dictators want some level of popular support. Castro earned his by lifting the poorest and stirring nationalist emotions in a historically colonized land. But **the physical decay is so extreme** that it is difficult to imagine any new leader succeeding without reinvigorating an economy that has been bled dry. Perhaps the post-Castro government will consider whether a more open economic policy might lift all boats. **Even the poor benefit from greater growth, as empowered capitalists have started to show in China.** Traveling in and around Havana offers stark lessons in the futility of socialism. Billboards are non-existent; there is nothing to advertise except “La Revolución” and “Más Socialismo,” largely self-explanatory terms you find painted on fences and printed on banners on many city blocks, promoting the government. **Castro elevated health care, education, and the arts. But he did so in part by diverting pesos from sorely needed infrastructure rebuilding. All of Havana is literally crumbling.** Stunning facades have fallen in heaps. Throughout this city, brilliant but severely worn architecture lies masked behind the drying laundry of impoverished families crowded into space that at one time bustled with trade and the activities of the well-to-do. **There are jobs for everyone;** unemployment stands at less than 2%. **But wages are so low that little gets done.** **Cuba's productivity per person ranks among the lowest 3% in the world.** A popular refrain heard throughout this city: “Fidel pretends to pay us and we pretend to work.” **The only jobs that matter are those where you can pilfer goods from the workplace** or which give you access to tourist money. Tour guides and artists who sell to visitors command enviable incomes. Butchers earn more than doctors. The country's GDP is \$60 billion, about the same as the state of New Hampshire. California alone produces \$2 trillion annually.

2NC – Answer To: “Stopping War Is More Important”

Wars won't happen – too many incentives for countries to cooperate

Deudney and Ikenberry, 09 (Professor of Political Science at Johns Hopkins AND **Albert G. Milbank Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University [Jan/Feb, 2009, Daniel Deudney and John Ikenberry, “The Myth of the Autocratic Revival: Why Liberal Democracy Will Prevail,” Foreign Affairs])

This bleak outlook is based on an exaggeration of recent developments and ignores powerful countervailing factors and forces. Indeed, contrary to what the revivalists describe, the most striking features of the contemporary international landscape are the intensification of economic globalization, thickening institutions, and shared problems of interdependence. The overall structure of the international system today is quite unlike that of the nineteenth century. Compared to older orders, the contemporary liberal-centered international order provides a set of constraints and opportunities-of pushes and pulls-that reduce the likelihood of severe conflict while creating strong imperatives for cooperative problem solving. Those invoking the nineteenth century as a model for the twenty-first also fail to acknowledge the extent to which war as a path to conflict resolution and great-power expansion has become largely obsolete. Most important, nuclear weapons have transformed great-power war from a routine feature of international politics into an exercise in national suicide. With all of the great powers possessing nuclear weapons and ample means to rapidly expand their deterrent forces, warfare among these states has truly become an option of last resort. The prospect of such great losses has instilled in the great powers a level of caution and restraint that effectively precludes major revisionist efforts. Furthermore, the diffusion of small arms and the near universality of nationalism have severely limited the ability of great powers to conquer and occupy territory inhabited by resisting populations (as Algeria, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and now Iraq have demonstrated). Unlike during the days of empire building in the nineteenth century, states today cannot translate great asymmetries of power into effective territorial control; at most, they can hope for loose hegemonic relationships that require them to give something in return. Also unlike in the nineteenth century, today the density of trade, investment, and production networks across international borders raises even more the costs of war. A Chinese invasion of Taiwan, to take one of the most plausible cases of a future interstate war, would pose for the Chinese communist regime daunting economic costs, both domestic and international. Taken together, these changes in the economy of violence mean that the international system is far more primed for peace than the autocratic revivalists acknowledge.

2NC – Answer To: “Stopping War Is More Important”

Nuclear war won't happen – the costs are too high

Tepperman, 09 (Jonathan Tepperman, Deputy Editor of Newsweek, Member of the Council on Foreign Relations, now Managing Editor of Foreign Affairs, holds a B.A. in English Literature from Yale University, an M.A. in Jurisprudence from Oxford University, and an LL.M. in International Law from New York University, 2009 (“Why Obama Should Learn to Love the Bomb,” The Daily Beast, August 28, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2009/08/28/why-obama-should-learn-to-love-the-bomb.print.html>)

A growing and compelling body of research suggests that nuclear weapons may not, in fact, make the world more dangerous, as Obama and most people assume. The bomb may actually make us safer. In this era of rogue states and transnational terrorists, that idea sounds so obviously wrongheaded that few politicians or policymakers are willing to entertain it. But that's a mistake. Knowing the truth about nukes would have a profound impact on government policy. Obama's idealistic campaign, so out of character for a pragmatic administration, may be unlikely to get far (past presidents have tried and failed). But it's not even clear he should make the effort. There are more important measures the U.S. government can and should take to make the real world safer, and these mustn't be ignored in the name of a dreamy ideal (a nuke-free planet) that's both unrealistic and possibly undesirable. The argument that nuclear weapons can be agents of peace as well as destruction rests on two deceptively simple observations. First, nuclear weapons have not been used since 1945. Second, there's never been a nuclear, or even a nonnuclear, war between two states that possess them. Just stop for a second and think about that: it's hard to overstate how remarkable it is, especially given the singular viciousness of the 20th century. As Kenneth Waltz, the leading "nuclear optimist" and a professor emeritus of political science at UC Berkeley puts it, "We now have 64 years of experience since Hiroshima. It's striking and against all historical precedent that for that substantial period, there has not been any war among nuclear states." To understand why—and why the next 64 years are likely to play out the same way—you need to start by recognizing that all states are rational on some basic level. Their leaders may be stupid, petty, venal, even evil, but they tend to do things only when they're pretty sure they can get away with them. Take war: a country will start a fight only when it's almost certain it can get what it wants at an acceptable price. Not even Hitler or Saddam waged wars they didn't think they could win. The problem historically has been that leaders often make the wrong gamble and underestimate the other side—and millions of innocents pay the price. Nuclear weapons change all that by making the costs of war obvious, inevitable, and unacceptable. Suddenly, when both sides have the ability to turn the other to ashes with the push of a button—and everybody knows it—the basic math shifts. Even the craziest tin-pot dictator is forced to accept that war with a nuclear state is unwinnable and thus not worth the effort. As Waltz puts it, "Why fight if you can't win and might lose everything?" Why indeed? The iron logic of deterrence and mutually assured destruction is so compelling, it's led to what's known as the nuclear peace: the virtually unprecedented stretch since the end of World War II in which all the world's major powers have avoided coming to blows. They did fight proxy wars, ranging from Korea to Vietnam to Angola to Latin America. But these never matched the furious destruction of full-on, great-power war (World War II alone was responsible for some 50 million to 70 million deaths). And since the end of the Cold War, such bloodshed has declined precipitously. Meanwhile, the nuclear powers have scrupulously avoided direct combat, and there's very good reason to think they always will. There have been some near misses, but a close look at these cases is fundamentally reassuring—because in each instance, very different leaders all came to the same safe conclusion.

*****Affirmative Answers*****

Aff – Case Outweighs The Disadvantage

The case impacts are more important than Cuban democracy because

_____ – that's our _____ evidence from
the 1AC.

Lifting the embargo solves Cuban democracy because

_____ – that's our _____ evidence from
the 1AC.

Aff – No Democracy Now

No Cuban democracy – the military will crush opposition and activists are weak and isolated

Azel, 13 (José, senior scholar at the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami and the author of the book *Mañana in Cuba*. “The Illusion of Cuban Reform: Castro Strikes Out” *World Affairs*, July/August 2013. <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/illusion-cuban-reform-castro-strikes-out>)

General Castro has led the Cuban armed forces for more than fifty years. In this period he has taken full advantage of the opportunity to appoint his military officers to positions of command in government and industry. The Cuban military elite control more than sixty percent of the economy. The breadth and depth of this control, over the country’s key sectors, is astonishing. GAESA, the holding company for the Cuban Defense Ministry, is involved in all key sectors of the economy. Enterprises with innocuous-sounding names such as TRD Caribe S. A., Gaviota, S. A., and Aerogaviota are all part of the vast economic holdings of Cuba’s army, navy, air force, and paramilitary forces—the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR). There is every reason to expect that Castro will continue to promote the monopolistic control of the economy by his armed forces, as he has since the Soviet Union collapsed in the late 1980s. Accordingly, the most likely “after Raúl” scenario will feature a strong military presence in the country’s civil and economic sphere, as exists in China, with Raúl’s loyalists adhering to the Castro regime’s ideology and methods, with perhaps some minor tinkering around the edges. The likely succession scenario in the short term will follow the lines of a more or less classical military dictatorship, but perhaps led by a triumvirate or some “first among equals” approach. It is hard to imagine a Cuban Gorbachev emerging before the country runs through the remnants of this aging generation of revolutionaries. It is entirely possible that Raúl, or his immediate successor, will eventually introduce partial but somewhat genuine “reforms” to avoid economic collapse. In that case, the reforms will not be designed or intended to better the lot of everyday Cubans. Rather, he will opt for a variation of the Chinese, Vietnamese, or Russian model in order to prolong the dictatorship and at the same time enrich himself and his comrades by privatizing the country and morphing his revolutionary officers into revolutionary businessmen. In the current system, where enterprises are state owned and managed, military officers enjoy the privileges of an elite ruling class. Their standard of living is higher, they live in better homes, and they have access to luxury consumer goods. But today’s benefits are minuscule when compared with the future opportunities for self-enrichment in positions of equity ownership of the enterprises under their managerial control. A defining feature of Cuban totalitarianism has been the intrusive use of pervasive repression to atomize society. This process has eliminated political competition, destroyed economic performance, and rendered civil society weak, ineffective, and debilitated by fear. By and large, the politically demoralized—and by now apathetic—Cuban population will not view these ownership changes as particularly undesirable or nefarious. They may even view them mistakenly as a positive transition toward a market economy and prosperity. The irony will be that, believing that they are experiencing democracy and free markets when actually they are not, Cubans will come to despise a new system that serves only to enrich the governing elite. This may set the conditions for a new round of Cuban revolutionary cycles, akin to 1933 and 1959. Cuba today is not yet post-Castro, but ideologically it is post-communism. When Raúl goes, there may be the appearance of a political “opening” in which other parties may be permitted to exist so long as they don’t challenge official party domination. In this disheartening endgame scenario, the generals oversee a hegemonic party system offering a patina of political legitimacy, and the international community acclaims the generals, or their civilian front men, as agents of change bringing a market economy to Cuba. The post-Castro regime will then present a facade of political normalcy that will enable the generals to monetize their behind-the-scenes power. It will not be important who fills the civilian poster-boy roles. After all, the Roman emperor Caligula made his favorite horse a consul—to show that even a beast could perform a senator’s duties.

Aff – No Democracy Now

No momentum for political change – prefer this evidence based on extensive interviews with Cubans

Freedom House, 09 (Human rights/democracy NGO. “Another “Special Period” in Cuba? How Citizens View Their Country’s Future” 3-20-09.

http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/AnotherSpecialPeriodinCubaReport_EN.pdf

Freedom House conducted interviews with 160 Cubans on the island in September and October 2008. These interviews sought to determine how the transfer of power from Fidel to Raúl Castro and subsequent announcements of various economic and agricultural reforms have affected ordinary Cubans. The interviews suggest that the announced reforms have had little effect on most Cubans. Some of these reforms, such as the government’s decision to allow the purchase of cell phones, have had little impact on the daily lives of ordinary Cubans since most Cubans still cannot afford the phones and the usage charges. Other reforms, including various agricultural initiatives, had been announced but were not yet implemented by October. Cubans struggle to survive from day to day, and their struggle has intensified following a severe hurricane season. They are particularly concerned about food shortages and rising prices, and worry that hurricane damage and the global financial crisis will make their situation worse. Many respondents fear that Cuba might be entering another “Special Period,” a sharp economic decline similar to the one Cuba experienced during the 1990s after Soviet subsidies ended. At a time of increased food shortages, agricultural reform was a topic of discussion in nearly all interviews. However, few of the Cubans interviewed knew of the changes in agricultural policies, though they had been officially announced. When asked about the government’s initiative to give out small plots of land to individual farmers, a handful of respondents wondered why the government had waited so long, since large tracts of land are now overrun with marabú, a thorny shrub that is difficult to eradicate. In the wake of the hurricanes, the government introduced a ban on street vending. The ban was intended to prevent price gouging but instead had immediate adverse effects, eliminating an important source of income for many Cubans and making food harder to find. While food shortages and prices were Cubans’ overriding concerns, respondents also expressed discontent with the country’s education and healthcare systems. As evidenced by some of the responses, Cuba’s vaunted healthcare system appears to be highly overrated. A professor of cardiology said that many of his students graduate without being able to read an electrocardiogram (EKG). “I am not training doctors,” he exclaimed. “I am cranking out whitecoats!” Cubans say they still feel unable to organize popular responses to government abuses, thought here is some evidence that people are less willing to put up with aggressive government authorities than they were a few years ago. One researcher, for example, watched a young man in Havana knock down a policeman after the policeman hassled him about his identification card. Citizens nonetheless remain fearful of retaliation against public expressions of opposition to the government. One woman warned that “if you walk outside with a sign against Fidel, you will never see the light of day again.” The government’s neighborhood watch organizations, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs), continue to have a strong hold on power at the local level. While fear of reprisal prevents open criticism of CDR leaders, some respondents expressed clear dislike of them, calling them “morons” and “government lapdogs.” The interviews indicated that most Cubans have little confidence that change will come from within Cuba. Respondents know little about opposition groups on the island, and Cuban youth are apathetic and seem uninterested in participating in a future transition. Few interviewees expect the Catholic Church to contribute to political change. While the Catholic Church plays a significant role in providing social services, it is not seen as a locus of political dissent. Many Cubans are resigned to the current situation and continue to live day to day. A doctor from Santiago, for example, said that no ordinary Cuban could do much to change the system. “Que puedo hacer? Resignarme. Resignarme y tratar de vivir mejor.” (What can I do? Be resigned and try to live better.) He said most Cubans want more money and a better economic situation; they are not thinking about freedom.

Aff – Plan Causes Democracy

The Cuban government blames its failures on the embargo – removing it proves them wrong and strengthens the opposition

Bandow, 12 (Doug, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. “Time to End the Cuba Embargo” 12-11-12. <http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/time-end-cuba-embargo>)

The policy in Cuba obviously has failed. The regime remains in power. Indeed, it has consistently used the embargo to justify its own mismanagement, blaming poverty on America.

Observed Secretary of State Hillary Clinton: “It is my personal belief that the Castros do not want to see an end to the embargo and do not want to see normalization with the United States, because they would lose all of their excuses for what hasn’t happened in Cuba in the last 50 years.”

Similarly, Cuban exile Carlos Saladrigas of the Cuba Study Group argued that keeping the “embargo, maintaining this hostility, all it does is strengthen and embolden the hardliners.” Cuban human rights activists also generally oppose sanctions. A decade ago I (legally) visited Havana, where I met Elizardo Sanchez Santa Cruz, who suffered in communist prisons for eight years. He told me that the “sanctions policy gives the government a good alibi to justify the failure of the totalitarian model in Cuba.” Indeed, it is only by posing as an opponent of Yanqui Imperialism that Fidel Castro has achieved an international reputation. If he had been ignored by Washington, he never would have been anything other than an obscure authoritarian windbag.

Lifting the embargo promotes foreign contact and trade and leads to democracy – the Cuban government won't be able to repress it

Vásquez and Rodríguez, 12 (Ian Vasquez is the director and L. Jacobo Rodriguez is the assistant director of the Project on Global Economic Liberty at the Cato Institute. “Trade Embargo In and Castro Out” <http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/trade-embargo-castro-out>)

Proponents of the Cuban embargo vastly underestimate the extent to which increased foreign trade and investment can undermine Cuban communism even if that business is conducted with state entities. Cuban officials appear to be well aware of the danger. For example, Cuba’s opening of its tourism industry to foreign investment has been accompanied by measures that restrict ordinary Cubans from visiting foreign hotels and tourist facilities. As a result, Cubans have come to resent their government for what has become known as “tourism apartheid.” In recent years, Cuban officials have also issued increasing warnings against corruption, indicating the regime’s fear that unofficial business dealings, especially with foreigners, may weaken allegiance to the government and even create vested interests that favor more extensive market openings. Further undercutting the regime’s authority is the widespread dollar economy that has emerged as a consequence of the foreign presence and remittances from abroad (those from the United States now banned by the Helms-Burton bill). The dollarization of the Cuban economy—which the Cuban government has been forced to legalize as a result of its inability to control it—has essentially eliminated the regime’s authority to dictate the country’s monetary policy. Replacing the all-encompassing state with one that allows greater space for voluntary interaction requires strengthening elements of civil society, that is, groups not dependent on the state. That development is more likely to come about in an environment of increased interaction with outside groups than in an environment of isolation and state control.

Aff – Plan Causes Democracy

Sanctions empirically fail – lifting the embargo causes trade and economic growth which lead to democracy

Griswold, 05 (Daniel, director of the Center for Trade Policy Studies at the Cato Institute. “Four Decades of Failure: The U.S. Embargo against Cuba” 10-12-05. <http://www.cato.org/publications/speeches/four-decades-failure-us-embargo-against-cuba>)

Economic sanctions rarely work. Trade and investment sanctions against Burma, Iran, and North Korea have failed to change the behavior of any of those oppressive regimes; sanctions have only deepened the deprivation of the very people we are trying to help. Our research at the Cato Institute confirms that trade and globalization till the soil for democracy. Nations open to trade are more likely to be democracies where human rights are respected. Trade and the development it creates give people tools of communication-cell phones, satellite TV, fax machines, the Internet-that tend to undermine oppressive authority. Trade not only increases the flow of goods and services but also of people and ideas. Development also creates a larger middle class that is usually the backbone of democracy.

Keeping the embargo causes poverty – Cubans are more concerned with survival than political rights – the plan leads to democracy

Perez, 10 (Louis A. Perez Jr., the J. Carlyle Sitterson professor of history and the director of the Institute for the Study of the Americas at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. “Want change in Cuba? End U.S. embargo” 9-21-10. <http://www.cnn.com/2010/OPINION/09/20/perez.cuba.embargo/index.html>)

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.

Aff – Cuba Not Totalitarian

Cuba is not totalitarian – public debates are vigorous and many people criticize the government

Diaz, 10 (Emilio Duharte, professor of Political Science and Applied Ethics at the University of Havana. “Cuba at the Onset of the 21st Century: Socialism, Democracy and Political Reforms” *Socialism & Democracy*. Mar2010, Vol. 24 Issue 1, p49-69)

Political debates have been abundant over the last two years (2007–09). A recurrent theme is rejection of the deep-rooted but long-questioned thesis of the irreversibility of socialism. Until recently it was still taboo to challenge this thesis in Cuba, despite experts' repeated calls for discussion. In 2005, then President Fidel Castro himself put it “on the agenda” in his speech at the Aula Magna of the University of Havana on November 17, stating that the Cuban revolutionary process could be reversed not necessarily by external factors, but rather as a result of internal errors (F. Castro 2005). President Raúl Castro has also taken up the matter. The purpose and length of this article preclude detailing shortcomings, although we mention the most relevant ones, and some of the reforms we discuss respond to them. Projections of possible new reforms also reveal shortcomings, either explicitly or implicitly.²¹ Our objective here is to understand the development of the reforms in terms of the totality of the process, viewing the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions in their interaction with one another. Further improvement of Cuba's political system could generate new reforms, along the following lines: 1. Gradually increase the still insufficient real power and authority of municipal and provincial delegates and national deputies, which should be more broadly and clearly reflected in the country's laws and political practices. Municipal delegates should attain greater professionalism in government and a higher level of specialization and expertise. Delegates must receive adequate training as well as the time and the financial support to carry out their duties. This would reinforce the municipal assemblies of people's power as the highest local expression of state authority and the only one authorized by law to nominate candidates for election to provincial and national government. 2. Improve the mechanisms of public participation so that the people not only vote, but also share in developing and making all the country's strategic policy decisions, including economic policy, and in proposing and adopting key laws, without excessive formality or interference on the part of leaders and officials. How will the effectiveness of participation be determined? That is an issue left essentially unresolved by liberal theories and the capitalist system. Marxist political science and socialist experiences have not completely solved it either, although they have offered some advanced theories and practical examples in the pursuit of that political ideal. Cubans' previous experiences of national debate include the discussions used to approve the Socialist Constitution (1975–76), to prepare for the historic IV Party Congress (1990–91), and to organize workers' assemblies (1994). All were landmark experiences of political participation. The workers' assemblies of 1994 were held at the behest of the National Assembly in an effort to build consensus on implementation of the major economic reforms of the 1990s. For the first time, the Assembly deputies could not reach consensus on the reforms. Opinions were so divided and polarized that they were forced to deepen the debate and study the matter further. This showed the deputies' political maturity and ought to be a more regular feature of parliamentary practice. Instead of using “shock therapy” – fashionable at the time, but not typical of a socialist regime – the national parliament delegated some of its functions to workplace assemblies. Once consensus was reached among them, a special session of the National Assembly was convened to pass the reforms accepted by the majority of the country's workers. The other two aforementioned experiences were of similar scope, but are little spoken of abroad and even within Cuba itself. Taking into account the unique qualities of political and mass organizations, agencies and institutions, as well as the enormous potential and often ignored abilities of men and women at the grassroots, Cuban political scientists should identify future opportunities for such participation. It should be regularly encouraged in future debates on national strategies. All sectors and social groups have much to say on these matters. Initiatives “from above” (Party or government leadership) should be more strongly integrated with proposals “from below.” Through organizations and associations, the general population should be involved in making decisions, promoting new laws and repealing or modifying obsolete ones, as well as posing solutions to not only local problems but also national ones, such as designing the economic model and restructuring the government. Particularly interesting is the aforementioned national political debate convened by President Raúl Castro to discuss the main points of his July 26, 2007 speech. That debate involved more than five million people, and nearly 50% of the proposals expressed a critical stance toward the country's problems. Those proposals are being taken into account in newly suggested legislation. Equally important was the national discussion by all workers regarding the 2008 draft Social Security Law, which Parliament approved.

Aff – Cuba Not Totalitarian

Cuba's human rights record is better than America's – Cubans have world-class education and healthcare while the U.S. suffers from huge inequalities. Their authors falsely privilege political rights over economic rights

Freeman, 09 (Nefta, Director of IPS' Social Action & Leadership School for Activists, an activist in the internationalist and Pan-Africanist movements and a founding organizer for the No War On Cuba Movement. 4-9-09. "The US, Cuba and Moral Authority" <http://www.blackagenda.com/?q=content/us-cuba-and-moral-authority>)

When the intersection between human rights and economic justice is considered, the comparison between Cuba and the US reveals some interestingly stark contrasts. One cannot ignore that unlike in the US, Cuba regards education, healthcare and employment as rights, not privileges. It is fairly common knowledge that Cuba provides free education, from pre-k up to the university level, and healthcare to all its citizens is completely free of charge. Additionally, according to the World Health Organization and UNESCO these services are among the highest quality in the world. Conversely the US has many obscenely under-funded and poorly resourced public schools especially in neighborhoods with majorities of African/Black and Latino youth. The state of healthcare in the US is infamous, with an estimated 47 million citizens having no health insurance and another 25 million underinsured. "Millions of Americans never read another book after leaving school." Cuba's literacy and education ranks second highest in the world at a noteworthy 99.8 percent. Although the United States ranks seventeenth at 99.0 percent, it must be understood that US literacy rates are manipulated by various definitions. The government may label individuals who can read a couple thousand simple words they've learned by sight in the first four grades in school as literate; but the most comprehensive study of US adult literacy ever commissioned by the government argues that such adults are "functionally illiterate." That is they cannot read well enough to hold a good job. That study involved lengthy interviews of over 26,700 adults statistically balanced for age, gender, ethnicity, education level, and location (urban, suburban, or rural) in 12 states across the US. Designed to represent the US population as a whole, it showed that 21% to 23% of adult Americans were not "able to locate information in text," could not "make low-level inferences using printed materials," and were unable to "integrate easily identifiable pieces of information." Another study by the Jenkins Group showed that millions of Americans never read another book after leaving school. This in what is regarded as the most "developed" nation in the world. A World Bank-sponsored study records Cuban education "as outstanding: universal school enrollment and attendance; nearly universal adult literacy; proportional female representation at all levels, including higher education; a strong scientific training base, particularly in chemistry and medicine; consistent pedagogical quality across widely dispersed classrooms; equality of basic educational opportunity, even in impoverished areas, both rural and urban. In a recent regional study of Latin America and the Caribbean, Cuba ranked first in math and science achievement at all grade levels, among both males and females. In many ways, Cuba's schools are the equals of schools in OECD countries, despite the fact that Cuba's economy is that of a developing country." OECD's are the countries signed onto the Convention on the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, none of which are in Africa, Latin America or the Caribbean. "In a recent regional study of Latin America and the Caribbean, Cuba ranked first in math and science achievement at all grade levels, among both males and females." In relation to foreign policy, Cuba sends thousands of doctors and teachers to serve the oppressed in countries around the world, while the US has sent exponentially more soldiers to "serve" as occupiers and invaders than they have doctors or teachers. US propaganda mostly reduces human rights to things like freedom of speech and association. But what good is the "freedom" to speak out when the state can completely ignore you and in spite of the most blatant of abuses – like the war, electoral improprieties, racism and other inequalities?

Aff – Cuba Not Totalitarian

Cuban doesn't have political prisoners – jailed Cubans are guilty of treason for collaborating with U.S. attempts to overthrow the government

Freeman, 09 (Nefta, Director of IPS' Social Action & Leadership School for Activists, an activist in the internationalist and Pan-Africanist movements and a founding organizer for the No War On Cuba Movement. 4-9-09. "The US, Cuba and Moral Authority" <http://www.blackagendareport.com/?q=content/us-cuba-and-moral-authority>)

Much is propagated about political prisoners in Cuba. The way this is mentioned by US government officials and the "news media" one would think there are no political prisoners in the US. How much has the public spoken out for the release or at least a fair trial for Mumia Abu Jamal? Leonard Peltier, freedom fighter for American Indian Movement has languished in prison for 32 years with calls for his release coming from all corners of the world. There are no less than 70 political prisoners in the US and speculations that the number is actually twice as high. In Cuba, however those being called political prisoners or prisoners of conscience have been proven otherwise in Cuban courts and convicted of what is essentially treason. The evidence and records of the trial proceedings are a matter of public record in Cuba. Like every country Cuba has laws against treason. Unlike most countries Cuba has the compounded challenge of US laws created against it, which are designed to strangle the country into submission. These are violations of the UN Charter and an offense to Cuba's right to national self-determination. The UN General Assembly has for years consistently condemned the US blockade in votes with only the US, Israel and various third countries casting dissenting votes. In response Cuba enacted laws to address the US policies against it, such as Law No. 88 on the Protection of National Independence and the Economy of Cuba, an antidote to the US's Helms-Burton Act. Article 6.1 of Cuba's Law No. 88 stipulates that "He who gathers, reproduces, disseminates subversive material from the government of the United States of America, its agencies, representative bodies, officials or any foreign entity to support the objectives of the Helms-Burton Act, the Blockade and the war, shall incur a sanction of deprivation of liberty." To criticize Cuba for their handling of these "political prisoners", is to dismiss Cuba's right to defend itself against the pervasive and immoral methods of the US government.

Aff – Cuba Not Totalitarian

Prefer our evidence – the U.S. government funds anti-Cuban reporting

BBC News, 06 (“US ‘paid anti-Cuba journalists’” 9-8-06. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/5329394.stm>)

At least 10 Florida-based journalists were paid by the US government to contribute to anti-Cuba propaganda broadcasts, the Miami Herald says. Three writers have been sacked by the Miami Herald newspaper group for an alleged conflict of interest. **One was paid \$175,000** (£98,000) for hosting shows on the US-funded channels TV and Radio Marti, the paper says. The channels are broadcast to Cuba but their programmes cannot be transmitted in the US under anti-propaganda laws. Pablo Alfonso, who writes an opinion column for El Nuevo Herald, the Spanish-language sister paper of the Miami Herald, was paid almost \$175,000 to present TV and radio programmes. The paper's reporter Wilfredo Cancio Isla was paid \$15,000 and freelancer Olga Connor \$71,000. All were sacked by the Herald. None made any comment. Jesus Diaz Jr, president of Miami Herald Media, said the payments violated a "sacred trust" between journalists and the public. "Even the appearance that your objectivity or integrity might have been impaired is something we can't condone, not in our business," he said. Castro row. **The Cuban government has long alleged that journalists writing on US-Cuban politics were in the pay of the US government.** In July a row erupted in Argentina between Cuban President Fidel Castro and Juan Manuel Cao, a reporter for Miami's Spanish-language Channel 41. Mr Cao put Mr Castro on the spot and the president replied by asking if anyone was paying him to ask that question. Mr Cao has now admitted being paid by the US government, the Herald reports.