

THE EMBARGO AGAINST CUBA

A TIMELINE

1960 March 17. President **Eisenhower approves a covert action plan against Cuba** that includes the use of a "powerful propaganda campaign" designed to overthrow Castro. The plan includes:

- a) the termination of sugar purchases
- b) the end of oil deliveries
- c) continuation of the arms embargo in effect since mid-1958
- d) the organization of a paramilitary force of Cuban exiles to invade the island.

October 19. U.S. imposes a **partial economic embargo** on Cuba that excludes food and medicine.

1961 September 4. THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1961 passes in the U.S. Congress. It prohibits aid to Cuba and authorizes the President to create a "total embargo upon all trade" with Cuba.

Louis A. Pérez, Jr., from his book *Cuba, between Reform and Revolution, 2nd Edition* Pg. 346

"The U.S. trade embargo after 1961 had jolting effects. By the early 1960s, conditions in many industries had become critical due to the lack of replacement parts. Virtually all industrial structures were dependent on supplies and parts now denied to Cuba. Many plants were paralyzed. Havoc followed. Transportation was especially hard hit: the ministry was reporting more than seven thousand breakdowns a month. Nearly one-quarter of all buses were inoperable by the end of 1961. One-half of the 1,400 passenger rail cars were out of service in 1962. Almost three-quarters of the caterpillar tractors stood idle due to a lack of replacement parts."

1962 February 7. President **Kennedy broadens the partial trade restrictions** imposed by Eisenhower to a ban on all trade with Cuba, except for non-subsidized sale of foods and medicines.

March 23. President **Kennedy expands the Cuban embargo** to include imports of all goods made from or containing Cuban materials, even if made in other countries.

August 1. The FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT is amended to prohibit aid to "any country" that provides assistance to Cuba.

October 2. The U.S. government cables all LATIN AMERICAN governments and NATO countries new measures to tighten the economic embargo against Cuba. As of today, the transport of U.S. goods is banned on ships owned by companies that do business with Cuba.

1963 February 8. The **Kennedy administration** prohibits travel to Cuba and makes financial and commercial transactions with Cuba illegal for U.S. citizens.

May 14. The U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE announces the



April 17. Cuban exiles, trained, armed and funded by the CIA, invade Cuba at **Bay of Pigs** (known in Cuba as Playa Girón). After three days of fighting the invading force is defeated by the Cuban army.

October 14. The **Cuban Missile Crisis** begins when U.S. reconnaissance aircraft photograph Soviet construction of intermediate-range missile sites in Cuba.

requirement of specific approval for exports of all food and medicine to Cuba.

November 17. **President Kennedy** asks French journalist Jean Daniel to tell Castro that he is *now ready to negotiate normal relations and drop the embargo*. According to former Press Secretary **Pierre Salinger**, "**If Kennedy had lived I am confident that he would have negotiated that agreement and dropped the embargo** because he was upset with the way the Soviet Union was playing a strong role in Cuba and Latin America..."



December. The FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT is amended to prohibit U.S. aid to countries that continue to trade with Cuba.

December 12. Less than one month after President **John F. Kennedy's** assassination, U.S. Attorney General **Robert F. Kennedy** seeks to end the travel ban to Cuba in a memo to Secretary of State **Dean Rusk**. He refers to the ban as "inconsistent with traditional American liberties," and difficult to enforce. The memo is not released to the public until June 29 2005.

December 13. **Robert F. Kennedy's** memo of December 12 is discussed at a State Department meeting (to which RFK is not invited) and UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE **George Ball** rules out the possibility of ending the travel ban to Cuba. [The ban continues until 1977 when the **Carter Administration** opens travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens. The Reagan Administration reinstates the ban in 1981.]

1964 February 25. Asked why the US trades with the Soviet Union but not with Cuba, Secretary of State **Dean Rusk** answers that the Soviet government is a "permanent" government, and the US views Castro as "temporary."

July 26. The ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS) adopts mandatory sanctions against Cuba, requiring all members to sever diplomatic and trade relations. Only Mexico refuses to comply.

1975 February 9. In a TV interview from Mexico City, U.S. Senator **Edward M. Kennedy** urges the U.S. government to lift the embargo and normalize relations with Cuba. "I believe the idea of isolating Cuba was a mistake," says Kennedy. "It has been ineffective. Whatever the reasons and justifications may have been at the time, now they are invalid."

July 28. The Organization of American States (**OAS**) votes to end political and economic sanctions against Cuba. This opens the way for each member nation to decide whether to have diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba, which many had already established.

August 21. The U.S. announces that it will allow foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies to sell products in Cuba, and that it would no longer penalize other nations for trade with Cuba.

November 15. In Washington, Representative **John B. Breaux** and senator **J. Bennett Johnston Jr.**, Democrats from Louisiana, argue that it is in the national interest for Louisiana to be allowed to sell rice to Cuba. Mr. Breaux is quoted in the *New York Times*: "...my constituents say that if the United States can sell grain to the Soviet Union and China, why can't they sell rice to Cuba?"

1976 April 5. U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE **Henry Kissinger** states that there is no possibility of U.S. relations with Cuba while Cuban troops are in Africa.

- 1977** March 19. U.S. **President Carter** drops the ban on travel to Cuba and on U.S. citizens spending dollars in Cuba.
- Wayne Smith**, DIRECTOR OF CUBAN AFFAIRS at the DEPARTMENT OF STATE under U.S. President **Jimmy Carter**: “There were three major fields or issues that had to be addressed before there could be a substantial improvement in relations. Number one: Cuban troops had to begin to leave Africa. Number two: There had to be some improvement in Cuba’s human rights performance, and specially in terms of releasing political prisoners. And number three: A reduction in Soviet-Cuban military ties.”
 – From the book: “Cuba, Voices of Change,” by **Lynn Geldof**.
- May 25. The U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT warns that Cuba’s recent deployment of military advisors in Ethiopia could “impede the improvement of U.S.-Cuban relations.”
- 1978** February 27. U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE, **Cyrus Vance**, states that he does not foresee the normalization of relations with Cuba due to the presence of Cuban troops in Africa.
- The **Carter Administration** relaxes laws to allow U.S. residents to send money to relatives in Cuba.
- 1979** January 1. Cuban-Americans are permitted to visit their families in Cuba. More than 100,000 visit in the coming year.
- June 19. In the U.S., Rep. **Ted Weiss** (D-NY) introduces unsuccessful legislation to end the U.S. trade blockade against Cuba and re-establish diplomatic relations.
- 1981** January. **Ronald Reagan** is inaugurated as U.S. president, and institutes the most hostile policy against Cuba since the invasion at BAY OF PIGS. Despite conciliatory signals from Cuba, the new U.S. administration announces a tightening of the embargo.
- 1982** April 19. The **Reagan Administration** reestablishes the travel ban, prohibits U.S. citizens from spending money in Cuba, and allows the 1977 fishing accord to lapse.
- 1985** October 4. U.S. **President Reagan** bans travel to the U.S. by Cuban government or Communist Party officials or their representatives. It also bars most students, scholars, and artists.
- 1989** November 20. According to new regulations by the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY, U.S. citizens who travel to Cuba can only spend a maximum of \$100 per day.
- 1990** October. In alliance with conservative Republicans, Cuban émigrés and the U.S. Congress pass the **Mack Amendment**, which prohibits all trade with Cuba by subsidiaries of U.S. companies located outside the U.S., and proposes sanctions or cessation of aid to any country that buys sugar or other products from Cuba.
- 1992** February 5. U.S. Congressman **Robert Torricelli** introduces the Cuban Democracy Act, and says **the bill is designed to "wreak havoc on the island."**
- June 15. From an editorial in the *NY Times*:
 "...This misnamed act (the CUBAN DEMOCRACY ACT) is dubious in theory, cruel in its potential practice and ignoble in its election-year expediency... An influential faction of the Cuban American community clamors for

sticking it to a wounded regime... There is, finally, something indecent about vociferous exiles living safely in Miami prescribing more pain for their poorer cousins."

October 15. U.S. Congress passes the CUBAN DEMOCRACY ACT, which prohibits foreign-based subsidiaries of U.S. companies from trading with Cuba, travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens, and family remittances to Cuba. The law allows private groups to deliver food and medicine to Cuba. (At this time, 70% of Cuba's trade with U.S. subsidiary companies was in food and medicine. Many claim the CUBAN DEMOCRACY ACT is in violation of international law and United Nations resolutions that food and medicine cannot be used as weapons in international conflicts.)

October 23. President Bush signs the CUBAN DEMOCRACY ACT. Congressman **Toricelli says that it will bring down Castro "within weeks."**

November 24. The UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY votes heavily in favor of a measure introduced by Cuba asking for an end to the U.S. EMBARGO. The vote is 59 in favor, 3 against (the U.S., ISRAEL and ROMANIA), and 79 abstentions. STATE DEPARTMENT spokesman **Joe Snyder** in the *LA Times*; "The Cuban government, in violation of international law, expropriated billions of dollars worth of private property belonging to U.S. individuals and has refused to make reasonable restitution. The U.S. embargo – and I point out it's not a blockade – is therefore a legitimate response to the unreasonable and illegal behavior of the Cuban government."

1993 November 11. The UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY adopts a resolution on the "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba." The vote is 88 for the resolution, 4 against, with 47 abstentions.

"I believe very few Americans realize what our country is trying to do down there - - starve people into submission and deprive children and old people of medicine."

- Dr. Benjamin Spock

From "Dr. Spock Takes Aid to Cuban Kids,"
American Medical News, 2/22/93

1994 October 26. For the 3rd year in a row, the UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY votes overwhelmingly for a measure to end the U.S. Embargo of Cuba. The vote is 101-2, with 48 abstentions, and only ISRAEL votes with the U.S.

1995 October 5. The **Clinton Administration** announces a new people-to-people-contact plan.

November 2. The UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY recommends an end to the embargo (for the fourth consecutive year) by a vote of 117 to 3 (38 abstentions). Only ISRAEL and UZBEKISTAN join the U.S. in saying no. Since then, **each time the vote comes up at the UN, the number of nations voting against the embargo increases.**

1996

March 12. President Clinton signs the **Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act** (also known as the **Helms-Burton Act**) which imposes penalties on foreign companies doing business in Cuba, permits U.S. citizens to sue foreign investors who make use of American-owned property seized by the Cuban government, and denies entry into the U.S. to such foreign investors.

July 16. President Clinton suspends enforcement of Title III provisions of the HELMS-BURTON ACT.

November 12. By a vote of 137 to 3, the UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY recommends, for the 5th consecutive year, that the U.S. end the embargo against Cuba.

"I call on this country to respect international law and self-determination, and to normalize relations with the Cubans. Surely, it is time to end the Cold War in this hemisphere. Let trade and travel grow."

- Rev. Jesse Jackson

1997

January 3. President Clinton again suspends enforcement of Title III provisions of the HELMS-BURTON ACT.

February 12. The CLINTON ADMINISTRATION approves licenses for U.S. news organizations to open bureaus in Cuba. (The Cuban government allows only CNN into the island.)

July 16. President Clinton again suspends enforcement of Title III provisions of the HELMS-BURTON ACT.

November 5. The UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY passes a resolution to end the Cuban embargo. The vote is 143 to 3.

1998

January. President Clinton again suspends enforcement of Title III provisions of the HELMS-BURTON ACT.

January 13. In Washington, the organization AMERICANS FOR HUMANITARIAN TRADE WITH CUBA is formed to allow humanitarian trade with the island.

March 13. In Boston, Roman Catholic Cardinal **Bernard Law** urges US President **Bill Clinton** to end the 36-year-old embargo. "It is impossible to reasonably support the embargo against Cuba while at the same time granting **Most Favored Nation Status** to the PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA..." says Law.

March 20. U.S. regulations on Cuba are amended as follows:
- U.S. citizens may send up to \$1,200 annually to relatives in Cuba.
- Direct passenger flights are permitted, although implementation of these amendments is not immediate.

July 16. President **Clinton** again suspends enforcement of Title III provisions of the HELMS-BURTON ACT.

July 21. The US TREASURY DEPARTMENT denies PWN permission to participate in EXPOCUBA, an exhibition of pharmaceuticals in Cuba.

October 16. The UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY adopts a resolution against the U.S. embargo on Cuba for the 7th consecutive year. The vote is 157 to end the embargo and 2 (U.S. & Israel) to keep it.

October. The US TREASURY DEPARTMENT investigates two US organizations for traveling to Cuba without a license; GLOBAL EXCHANGE

"The Cold War is over. The democratic process is under way everywhere in the former Soviet Union, Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, and Cuba alone seems to be isolated from that process by the embargo."

- Mikhail Gorbachev, October, 1998

and PASTORS FOR PEACE.

September 11. After returning home from a visit to Cuba, ex world boxing champ **Muhammad Ali** calls for an end to the trade embargo against Cuba.

December 6. From Havana, US Senator **Christopher Dodd**, a member of the U.S. SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE urges his government to establish a “new conversation for the new millennium” with Cuba.

1999 January. The **Clinton** administration announces changes to the embargo, which include:

- Sales of some food and agricultural products to private individuals and non-governmental organizations,
- An increase in the number of charter flights to Cuba,
- Allows anyone (not just CUBAN-AMERICANS) to send up to \$1,200 per year,
- Allows major league team, the BALTIMORE ORIOLES, to arrange two exhibition games, one in Cuba, the other in the U.S., and
- Increases the amount of money a U.S. visitor can spend on the island from \$100 per day to \$185 per day.

January 16. President **Clinton** again suspends enforcement of Title III provisions of the HELMS-BURTON ACT.

February 18. Six members of the **U.S. Congressional Black Caucus** visit Cuba to evaluate the U.S.-imposed embargo. Among the visitors: **Maxine Waters** and **Barbara Lee** of California, **Sheila Jackson-Lee** of Texas, **Julia Carson** of Indiana and others.

February 23. The COALITION OF AMERICANS FOR HUMANITARIAN TRADE WITH CUBA joins the UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS to call on the Clinton administration to end the embargo on food and medicines to Cuba. "The U.S. embargo on Cuba is the single most restrictive policy of its kind. Even Iraq is able to buy food and medicine from U.S. sources," says **George Fernandez**, Executive Director at AHTC. "As a Cuban American, I speak for the vast majority of us who do not think the U.S. should be in the business of denying basic sustenance to families and children in Cuba."

July 16. President **Clinton** again suspends enforcement of Title III provisions of the HELMS-BURTON ACT.

November 9. A resolution is passed in the UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY on the need to end the U.S. embargo against Cuba. The vote is 155 in favor and 2 against (U.S. and ISRAEL). This is the 8th time in as many years that the resolution is passed.

2000 January 15. President **Clinton** again suspends enforcement of Title III provisions of the HELMS-BURTON ACT.

March 17. US SECRETARY OF STATE, **Madeleine Albright**, announces the first easing of sanctions on **Iran** (which began in 1979 after students seized the US embassy in Tehran). “We’re looking for ways to

“If the United States wants to demonstrate the value of our Stars and Stripes to the people of Cuba, we must permit them to see the flag, to touch the flag and, most important, to speak with those who are represented by the flag. The flag is our people, our spirit, our values, our culture and, yes, our products and services.”

- Dwayne O. Andreas,
Chairman Emeritus,
Archer Daniels
Midland Company
Cigar Aficionado,
May/June 1999

respond to changes in Iran,” said State Department spokesman **James B. Foley**, “and to advance prospects for a better relationship. It is something that is under consideration – how to best respond.”

May 7. In a more symbolic than legal decision, Cuban courts order the US to pay \$121 billion in damages for the 4-decade-long embargo. A similar lawsuit in November 1999 found the US government liable for deaths and damage from “aggressive policies towards Cuba,” in the amount of \$181 billion. Observers content that both lawsuits came about in response to a ruling by a US federal judge in Miami ordering Cuba to pay \$187 million to families of pilots shot down by Cuban fighter planes in 1996.

October 19. At a meeting of the International Chamber of Commerce, American Businessman and ICC Vice-President **Richard D. McCormic**, calls for an end to the US trade embargo of Cuba. “...embargoes don’t work,” said McCormick. “They are counterproductive; they just hurt the people who are in the least position to help themselves. I think that after 38 years it is time for this embargo to be ended. Unilateral sanctions don’t work.” (Mr. McCormic serves on the boards of UAL CORPORATION (UNITED AIRLINES), WELLS FARGO AND COMPANY, UNITED TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION, and CONCEPT FIVE TECHNOLOGIES.

November 9. The UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY passes a Cuban-drafted resolution calling for an end to the US-Cuba embargo. The vote is 167 in favor, 3 against, and 4 abstentions. Voting with the US against the resolution are the MARSHALL ISLANDS and ISRAEL.

November 29. A 23-member task force in the U.S., made up of liberals and conservatives, calls for an end to the embargo to “help the island's transition to a post-Castro era and reduce the chances of U.S. military intervention.”

2001 April 18. In Washington, the CUBA POLICY FOUNDATION releases a poll in which a **majority of Americans support the idea of doing business with Cuba** and allowing travel to the island. Most agree with the decision to reunite **Elián González** with his father in Cuba.

August 23. Organizers of the LATIN GRAMMY AWARDS announce that they will change the location of this year’s event from Miami to Los Angeles fearing violent protests from anti-communist exiles.

November 28. For the 10th consecutive time the UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY votes to condemn the 4-decade-old trade embargo by a vote of 167 to 3, with three nations abstaining. Voting for the embargo: U.S., Israel and the Marshall Islands.

November 30. The U.S. government turns down a Cuban offer to compensate Americans for properties confiscated by the Revolution 40 years ago.

2002 April 5. In Philadelphia, businessman **James Sabzali** is found guilty of violating the US embargo against Cuba.

May 13. From HAVANA’S CENTER FOR GENETIC ENGINEERING AND BIOTECHNOLOGY, **Jimmy Carter** says: “With some degree of reluctance I would also like to comment on the allegation of bioterrorism. I do this because these allegations were made maybe not coincidentally just before our visit to Cuba.

In preparation for this unprecedented visit, I requested, and we all received, intense briefings from the State Department, the intelligence agencies of my country, and high officials in the White House. One purpose of this briefing was for them to share with us any concerns that my government had about possible terrorist activities that were supported by Cuba. There were absolutely no such allegations made or questions raised. I asked them specifically on more than one occasion is there any evidence that Cuba has been involved in sharing any information to any other country on Earth that could be used for terrorist purposes. And the answer from our experts on intelligence was 'no.'

I think it's very significant though that this allegation was made, and I'm grateful for a chance to come here at the center of this effort on behalf of Cuba."

June. **Matt Welch** writes in *Foul Ball* (Reason Online), "Even though the [Cuban] people are generally smart and jaded enough to tune out the government's propaganda, they don't have much of anything to replace it with, except for the odd BBC broadcast—and contact with foreign tourists. Every conversation with an American about the U.S. undermines Fidel Castro by definition, because it surely contradicts the banal lies he and his media mouth on a daily basis."

July 23. In Washington, the US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES votes 262 to 167 to end the travel ban and allow the sale of American goods to Cuba. 73 Republicans vote against the embargo.

July 28. From an editorial in the *New York Daily News*: "...slowly but surely, the tide is turning in favor of lifting travel and trade sanctions against Cuba. More and more Republicans are not willing to let the larger interests of the U.S. and their own constituents be sacrificed to the gods of electoral politics.

"As Rep. **Jeff Flake**, the ARIZONA REPUBLICAN who led the effort to repeal the travel ban, said: "This is all about freedom. Our government shouldn't tell us where to travel and where not to travel."

July 29. From an editorial in the *Boston Herald*: "The more travelers there are (to Cuba) the more the truth will spread, and that can only help the transition of Cuba out of tyranny when the tyrant dies."

August 7. In Washington, House Majority Leader **Dick Armey** (R-Texas) says the U.S. should open trade with Cuba.

August 7. From an editorial in the *Boston Globe*: "As for human rights, opening travel and trade to the island would improve the monitoring of human rights abuses and expose more Cubans to American values. Bush ought to put the interests of both Cubans and Americans before his domestic political needs."

November 13. For the 11th straight year, the UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY overwhelmingly approves a resolution asking the US to end the 40-plus-years embargo against Cuba. The vote is 173 in favor of the resolution and 3 against (US, ISRAEL, MARSHALL ISLANDS), with no abstentions. European nations expressed objection to the embargo, citing US penalties on countries and companies doing business with Cuba as "extraterritorial," and saying that the embargo is a bilateral issue between the US and Cuba and should not be imposed on others.

"I did not come here to interfere in Cuba's internal affairs, but to extend a hand of friendship to the Cuban people and to offer a vision of the future for our two countries and for all the Americas."
- Jimmy Carter
May 14, 2002

2003

March 12. U.S. Senators **Max Baucus** (D-MT) and **Chuck Hagel** (R-NE) introduce a bill in CONGRESS (UNITED STATES-CUBA TRADE ACT OF 2003) that seeks to lift the embargo.

March 12. **Stephan Vitvitsky** writes in *Tufts Daily*; "...the Cold War ended in 1991 when the Soviet Union ceased to exist. There is no more communist threat and the United States is the lone superpower of the world. So the embargo does not make sense in the post-COLD WAR world as it has outlived one of its main objectives by twelve years, quarantining countries allied with the Soviet Union.

March 21. Ten U.S. Senators from both political parties form the CUBA WORKING GROUP, to promote an end to the embargo. Members include **Max Baucus**, Democrat from Montana, and **Pat Roberts**, a Republican from Kansas. "We believe that the American people can have greater influence on Cuban society by developing a relationship with the Cuban people," the senators say in a letter to senate leaders.

September 15. The US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES approve a bill ending travel restrictions to Cuba for US citizens. The bill, authored by Jeff Flake, wins by a vote of 227 to 188. [Like similar bills on the embargo passed by the House, this one will die in the Senate.]

September 30. The U.S. TREASURY DEPARTMENT'S OFFICE FOR FOREIGN ASSETS CONTROL (OFAC) passes a regulation that bans publication of scientific articles from regimes subject to sanctions by the U.S. government, as is Cuba. (The measure is repealed on April 5, 2004)

October 10. U.S. President **George W. Bush** establishes the COMMITTEE FOR ASSISTANCE TO A FREE CUBA, and further enforces the ban on travel to the island.

October 20. About 3 dozen US travel industry executives spend the day in Cuba to consider "future business potential." At the end of the day they return to a resort in CANCUN, MEXICO, where the first US-Cuba travel conference is held.

October 24. The U.S. SENATE votes (59 to 36) in favor of lifting the ban on travel to Cuba. The result is similar to a vote at the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES last month. This is a major "rebuff" of President Bush's policy towards Cuba. (The travel ban was introduced by President **John F. Kennedy** in 1963.)

November 4. The UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY votes overwhelmingly against the U.S. economic embargo of Cuba for the 12th consecutive year. Only 3 nations vote for the embargo: the U.S., ISRAEL and the MARSHALL ISLANDS.

2004

February 26. President Bush signs *PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION 7757*, which bans vessels from traveling to Cuban ports from U.S. ports.

April 30. According to a letter sent by the U.S. OFFICE OF FOREIGN ASSETS CONTROL (OFAC) to the U.S. CONGRESS late last year (and now provided to the *ASSOCIATED PRESS*) the TREASURY DEPARTMENT had 4 full-time employees dedicated to investigating **Osama bin Laden** and **Saddam Hussein**, and over 2 dozen assigned to

"We believe that the American people can have greater influence on Cuban society by developing a relationship with the Cuban people."

- From a letter by members of US Senate Cuba Working Group, March 21, 2003

"If Bush is serious about fostering change in Cuba, he will end both the restrictions that keep most Americans from traveling to Cuba and the long US economic embargo."

"Even many of the dissidents and so-called independent journalists I've talked to in Cuba oppose the embargo. While it offers false hope to the aging vanguard of anti-Castro Cubans in South Florida, the embargo holds little promise of ever actually dislodging the island's communist government."

- DeWayne Wickham, USA Today, 2003

investigating Cuban Embargo violations.

The letter reveals that over \$8 million were collected in embargo violation fines since 1994, and over 10,683 “enforcement investigations” opened since 1990. Relating to terrorism, the OFAC opened 93 “enforcement investigations” between 1990 and 2003.

October 28. For the 13th consecutive year, the UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY votes overwhelmingly against the U.S. embargo on Cuba. The vote is 179 to 4, with 1 abstention. Voting with the U.S. for the embargo are ISRAEL, PALAU and the MARSHALL ISLANDS. In the only speech loudly applauded on the assembly floor, Cuba’s Foreign Minister **Felipe Perez Roughe** states: “The U.S. government has unleashed a world wide genocidal economic war against Cuba. It is the government of a large and mighty empire, but it is afraid of the example of a small rebellious island.”

December 16. A number of U.S. lawmakers and food firms meet in Havana. By the end of the week, Cuba has agreed to purchase about \$125 million in farm goods from U.S. companies.

2005 June 21. The U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE approves an amendment that rolls back a rule issued by the TREASURY DEPARTMENT last February that requires that Cuba pay for food imports from the U.S. before they leave port. The full HOUSE and SENATE must approve the amendment before it becomes law.

June 29. The NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHIVE releases a memo written by Attorney General **Robert F. Kennedy** on December 12 1963 (less than a month after President Kennedy’s assassination), in which he seeks to lift the travel ban to Cuba. He refers to the ban as “inconsistent with traditional American liberties.” Also released is a memo about a December 13 1963 meeting at the STATE DEPARTMENT (to which Kennedy was not invited), in which UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE **George Ball** rules out the possibility of ending the travel ban.

November 8. For the 14th straight year, the UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY votes to end the US embargo against Cuba. The vote is 182 in favor, 4 against (US, ISRAEL, the MARSHALL ISLANDS, PALAU) and 1 abstention (MICRONESIA).

2006 July 11. US President **G.W. Bush** approves \$80 million to be used for “boosting democracy in Cuba.” The fund is the result of proposals from a commission (members of which include **Condoleezza Rice** and Commerce Secretary **Carlos Gutierrez**) exploring “US policy towards Cuba after the eventual death of **Fidel Castro**.” The Cuban government refers to this as an “act of aggression,” and Cuban dissident-journalist **Oscar Espinosa Chepe** considers the fund “...counterproductive. I believe Cubans have to be the ones who love our problems and any interference serves to complicate the situation,” he says.

November 8. For the 15th straight year, the UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY votes overwhelmingly on a resolution to demand an end of the US embargo against Cuba. The vote is 183 in favor of the resolution (to end the embargo) and 4 against, with the nation of MICRONESIA abstaining. Voting with the U.S. is ISRAEL, the MARSHALL ISLANDS and PALAU.

2007 March 1. US Senator **Michael B. Enzi** introduces the *FREEDOM TO TRAVEL TO CUBA ACT* on the floor of the senate: “If you keep on doing what you have always been doing,” he says, “you are going to wind up getting what you already got. ... We are not hurting the Cuban government; we are hurting the Cuban people. ... It is time for a different policy.”