### 1AC Plan

Plan --- The United States federal government should normalize its trade relations with Cuba

### 1AC Relations

Contention 1 --- Relations

US-Latin American relations are low – new regional ties are key to solve

Inter-American Dialogue 12 - the Inter-American Dialogue is the leading US center for policy analysis, exchange, and communication on issues in Western Hemisphere affairs(“Remaking the Relationship The United States and Latin America”, April 2012, http://www.thedialogue.org/PublicationFiles/IAD2012PolicyReportFINAL.pdf)

What is at stake is the future of inter-American relations, which today are generally cordial but lack vigor and purpose . Efforts at hemispheric integration have been disappointing . Effective cooperation in the Americas— even on widely shared problems like energy security, organized crime and the drug trade, and international economic volatility—remains limited and sporadic .

It is the good news of Latin America’s progress that has most altered hemispheric relations . In the past decade, the region has posted its best economic performance in a generation and managed largely to sidestep the world financial crisis in 2008–2009 . The ranks of the middle classes have swelled . The region’s political structures have also opened up, giving way to growing participation by women, indigenous and Afro-descendant populations, and other once-excluded groups . All Latin Americans across a broadening spectrum have greater access to education and health services, consumer goods, and foreign travel . They now have real and rapidly expanding stakes in their societies.

These advances have also led to new social stirrings which, along with demands and expectations, are notably on the rise . There are more and more pressures for further change and improvements .

Impressive economic, political, and social progress at home has, in turn, given Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and many other countries greater access to worldwide opportunities . Indeed, the region’s most salient transformation may be its increasingly global connections and widening international relationships .

Brazil’s dramatic rise on the world stage most visibly exemplifies the shift. But other countries, too, are participating actively in global affairs and developing extensive networks of commercial and political ties. China is an increasingly prominent economic actor, but India and other Asian countries are intensifying their ties to the region as well .

The United States has also changed markedly, in ways that many find worrisome. The 2008 financial crisis revealed serious misalignments in and poor management of the US economy—which, four years later, is still struggling to recover . Inequality has significantly widened in the United States, while much-needed improvements in education and infrastructure are ignored. The most ominous change in the United States has taken place in the political realm. Politics have become less collaborative . It is increasingly difficult to find common ground on which to build solutions to the critical problems on the policy agenda . Compromise, the hallmark of democratic governance, has become an ebbing art, replaced by gridlock and inaction on challenges that would advance US national interests and well-being.

In part as a result of these shifts, US-Latin American relations have grown more distant . The quality and intensity of ties have diminished. Most countries of the region view the United States as less and less relevant to their needs—and with declining capacity to propose and carry out strategies to deal with the issues that most concern them.

In the main, hemispheric relations are amicable. Open conflict is rare and, happily, the sharp antagonisms that marred relations in the past have subsided . But the US-Latin America relationship would profit from more vitality and direction . Shared interests are not pursued as vigorously as they should be, and opportunities for more fruitful engagement are being missed . Well-developed ideas for reversing these disappointing trends are scarce.

Cuba policy is the vital internal link – greater economic engagement is the litmus test for spillover to all of Latin America

Perez, 10 ­– JD, Yale Law (David, “America's Cuba Policy: The Way Forward: A Policy Recommendation for the U.S. State Department” 13 Harv. Latino L. Rev. 187, Spring, lexis)

Anti-Americanism has become the political chant de jour for leaders seeking long-term as well as short-term gains in Latin American elections. In Venezuela, the anti-American rhetoric spewed by Hugo Chavez masks his otherwise autocratic tendencies, while countries like Bolivia and Ecuador tilt further away from Washington, both rhetorically and substantively. The former expelled the U.S. Ambassador in October 2008, and the latter has refused to renew Washington's lease on an airbase traditionally used for counter-narcotics missions. The systemic neglect for eight years during the Bush Administration meant that political capital was never seriously spent dealing with issues affecting the region. Because of this, President Bush was unable to get much headway with his proposal to reform immigration, and his free trade agreement with Colombia encountered significant opposition in Congress. Recent examples of U.S. unilateralism, disregard for international law and norms, and a growing financial crisis, have all been seized by a new generation of populist Latin American leaders who stoke anti-American sentiment.

The region, however, is absolutely critical to our national interest and security. Over thirty percent of our oil comes from Latin America - more than the U.S. imports from the Middle East. Additionally, over half of the foreign-born population in the United States is Latin American, meaning that a significant portion of American society is intrinsically tied to the region. n1 These immigrants, as well as their sons and daughters, have already begun to take their place amongst America's social, cultural, and political elite.

Just south of America's borders, a deepening polarization is spreading throughout the entire region. In the last few years ideological allies in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela have written and approved new constitutions that have consolidated the power of the executive, while extending - or in Venezuela's case eliminating - presidential term limits. In Venezuela the polarization has been drawn along economic lines, whereby Chavez's base of support continues to be poor Venezuelans. In Bolivia the polarization has been drawn along racial lines: the preamble to the new Bolivian constitution, approved in January 2009, makes reference to the "disastrous colonial times," a moment in history that Bolivians of Andean-descent particularly lament. Those regions in Bolivia with the most people of European or mixed descent have consistently voted for increased provincial autonomy and against the constitutional changes proposed by President Morales. Perhaps due to its sweeping changes, the new Constitution was rejected by four of Bolivia's nine provinces. n2 Like Bolivia, Latin America is still searching for its identity.

 [\*191] Traditionally the U.S. has projected its influence by using varying combinations of hard and soft power. It has been a long time since the United States last sponsored or supported military action in Latin America, and although highly context-dependent, it is very likely that Latin American citizens and their governments would view any overt display of American hard power in the region negatively. n3 One can only imagine the fodder an American military excursion into Latin America would provide for a leader like Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, or Evo Morales of Bolivia. Soft power, on the other hand, can win over people and governments without resorting to coercion, but is limited by other factors.

The key to soft power is not simply a strong military, though having one helps, but rather an enduring sense of legitimacy that can then be projected across the globe to advance particular policies. The key to this legitimacy is a good image and a reputation as a responsible actor on the global and regional stage. A good reputation and image can go a long way toward generating goodwill, which ultimately will help the U.S. when it tries to sell unpopular ideas and reforms in the region. n4

In order to effectively employ soft power in Latin America, the U.S. must repair its image by going on a diplomatic offensive and reminding, not just Latin America's leaders, but also the Latin American people, of the important relationship between the U.S. and Latin America. Many of the problems facing Latin America today cannot be addressed in the absence of U.S. leadership and cooperation. Working with other nations to address these challenges is the best way to shore up legitimacy, earn respect, and repair America's image. Although this proposal focuses heavily on Cuba, every country in Latin America is a potential friend. Washington will have to not only strengthen its existing relationships in the region, but also win over new allies, who look to us for "ideas and solutions, not lectures." n5

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

That’s key to the spread of democracy – promotion is inevitable, it’s a question of effectiveness

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The democratic outlook in the Americas is on balance positive, particularly when compared with previous periods and to the rest of the world . Free, competitive elections are regularly held and, happily, the massive human rights violations associated with earlier periods of authoritarian rule have passed .

Nonetheless, there are fundamental challenges that, if unaddressed, could spread and become far more serious . These problems need to be dealt with collectively through established regional mechanisms. Among these is the defense of democracy, an important area for greater cooperation among the United States, Canada, and Latin America.

Today, threats to democratic rule from the actions of the military, as occurred in the June 2009 coup in Honduras, are rare . More commonly, elected executives, once in office, centralize power and assume increasing control of critical institutions, public and private. Checks on presidential authority are, thereby, weakened or eliminated.

Governments in Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Ecuador have all followed this pattern, undermining press freedom and other basic rights . Although the Inter-American Democratic Charter calls for collective action to prevent and repair such transgressions, they have, in fact, been met with relative silence . Indeed, the charter has rarely been invoked . This inaction stems from the lack of consensus in the hemisphere about what constitutes violations of democratic principles and how best to respond to them . The charter should be reformed to establish mechanisms for redress when elected executives run roughshod over independent institutions.

Although unlikely to be accomplished in the near future, the long-term goal of the United States and other hemispheric governments should be agreement on collective actions to hold nations to the standards of the charter. The United States and Canada cannot be effective if they are the only voices calling for action to defend democracy and enforce the charter. The United States should pursue a longer-term strategy of consulting and finding common ground with Latin American and Caribbean governments on the appropriate use of the charter, which should play an important role in hemispheric affairs.

Cuba, too, poses a significant challenge for relations between the United States and Latin America. The 50-year-old US embargo against Cuba is rightly criticized throughout the hemisphere as a failed and punitive instrument . It has long been a strain on US-Latin American relations. Although the United States has recently moved in the right direction and taken steps to relax restrictions on travel to Cuba, Washington needs to do far more to dismantle its severe, outdated constraints on normalized relations with Cuba. Cuba is one of the residual issues that most obstructs more effective US-Latin American engagement.

At the same time, Cuba’s authoritarian regime should be of utmost concern to all countries in the Americas . At present, it is the only country without free, multi-party elections, and its government fully controls the press . Latin American and Caribbean nations could be instrumental in supporting Cuba’s eventual transition to democratic rule . An end to the US policy of isolating Cuba, without setting aside US concern about human rights violations, would be an important first step.

Latin American democracy key to global democracy

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Latin American experiences, especially in the areas of democratization and human rights protection, are particularly relevant for developing countries that are attempting to build stable political and economic systems in order to provide a decent standard of living and incorporate previously excluded populations into the national mainstream. The past record, of course, is far from acceptable. The advent of the twenty-first century, however, appears to be a time of great potential progress for the institutionalization of democratic human rights regimes that would reduce human pain and suffering. The number of countries in Latin America and elsewhere that are experimenting with democracy has never been greater. Clearly, the path toward fulfilling the expectations raised by these experiments is not an easy one; it is fraught with difficult obstacles deriving from the historical legacy as well as contemporary challenges. Nevertheless, democracy and human rights have definitively entered the political lexicon and discourse throughout the world.

Solves extinction and is an impact filter

Diamond, 95 - Hoover Institute Senior Fellow (Larry, “Promoting Democracy in the 1990s,” http://wwics.si.edu/subsites/ccpdc/pubs/di/fr.htm)

This hardly exhausts the lists of threats to our security and well-being in the coming years and decades. In the former Yugoslavia nationalist aggression tears at the stability of Europe and could easily spread. The flow of illegal drugs intensifies through increasingly powerful international crime syndicates that have made common cause with authoritarian regimes and have utterly corrupted the institutions of tenuous, democratic ones. Nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons continue to proliferate. The very source of life on Earth, the global ecosystem, appears increasingly endangered. Most of these new and unconventional threats to security are associated with or aggravated by the weakness or absence of democracy, with its provisions for legality, accountability, popular sovereignty, and openness. The experience of this century offers important lessons. Countries that govern themselves in a truly democratic fashion do not go to war with one another. They do not aggress against their neighbors to aggrandize themselves or glorify their leaders. Democratic governments do not ethnically "cleanse" their own populations, and they are much less likely to face ethnic insurgency. Democracies do not sponsor terrorism against one another. They do not build weapons of mass destruction to use on or to threaten one another. Democratic countries form more reliable, open, and enduring trading partnerships. In the long run they offer better and more stable climates for investment. They are more environmentally responsible because they must answer to their own citizens, who organize to protest the destruction of their environments. They are better bets to honor international treaties since they value legal obligations and because their openness makes it much more difficult to breach agreements in secret. Precisely because, within their own borders, they respect competition, civil liberties, property rights, and the rule of law, democracies are the only reliable foundation on which a new world order of international security and prosperity can be built.

Latin American relations are key to global cooperation to solve dissemination of nukes to terrorists

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In addition to economic and financial matters, Brazil and other Latin American nations are assuming enhanced roles on an array of global political, environmental, and security issues . Several for which US and Latin American cooperation could become increasingly important include:

As the world’s lone nuclear-weapons-free region, Latin America has the opportunity to participate more actively in non-proliferation efforts. Although US and Latin American interests do not always converge on non-proliferation questions, they align on some related goals. For example, the main proliferation challenges today are found in developing and unstable parts of the world, as well as in the leakage—or transfer of nuclear materials—to terrorists. In that context, south-south connections are crucial. Brazil could play a pivotal role.

Many countries in the region give priority to climate change challenges . This may position them as a voice in international debates on this topic . The importance of the Amazon basin to worldwide climate concerns gives Brazil and five other South American nations a special role to play. Mexico already has assumed a prominent position on climate change and is active in global policy debates. Brazil organized the first-ever global environmental meeting in 1992 and, this year, will host Rio+20 . Mexico hosted the second international meeting on climate change in Cancún in 2010 . The United States is handicapped by its inability to devise a climate change policy. Still, it should support coordination on the presumption of shared interests on a critical policy challenge.

Latin Americans are taking more active leadership on drug policy in the hemisphere and could become increasingly influential in global discussions of drug strategies. Although the United States and Latin America are often at odds on drug policy, they have mutual interests and goals that should allow consultation and collaboration on a new, more effective approach to the problem.

Otherwise an attack on the US is inevitable, causing retaliation and extinction

Ayson, 10 – Director, Centre for Strategic Studies, Victoria University of Wellington (Robert, “After a Terrorist Nuclear Attack: Envisaging Catalytic Effects,” Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, Volume 33, Issue 7, pp. 571-593, 6/21, http://dl2af5jf3e.search.serialssolutions.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/?sid=sersol%3ARefinerQuery&citationsubmit=Look+Up&url\_ver=Z39.88-2004&l=DL2AF5JF3E&rfr\_id=info%3Asid%2Fsersol%3ARefinerQuery&SS\_LibHash=DL2AF5JF3E&SS\_ReferentFormat=JournalFormat&rft\_id=info%3Adoi%2F10.1080%2F1057610X.2010.483756&rft.genre=article&SS\_doi=10.1080%2F1057610X.2010.483756&rft\_val\_fmt=info%3Aofi%2Ffmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Ajournal)//SY

But these two nuclear worlds—a non-state actor nuclear attack and a catastrophic interstate nuclear exchange—are not necessarily separable. It is just possible that some sort of terrorist attack, and especially an act of nuclear terrorism, could precipitate a chain of events leading to a massive exchange of nuclear weapons between two or more of the states that possess them. In this context, today's and tomorrow's terrorist groups might assume the place allotted during the early Cold War years to new state possessors of small nuclear arsenals who were seen as raising the risks of a catalytic nuclear war between the superpowers started by third parties. These risks were considered in the late 1950s and early 1960s as concerns grew about nuclear proliferation, the so-called n+1 problem.

It may require a considerable amount of imagination to depict an especially plausible situation where an act of nuclear terrorism could lead to such a massive inter-state nuclear war. For example, in the event of a terrorist nuclear attack on the United States, it might well be wondered just how Russia and/or China could plausibly be brought into the picture, not least because they seem unlikely to be fingered as the most obvious state sponsors or encouragers of terrorist groups. They would seem far too responsible to be involved in supporting that sort of terrorist behavior that could just as easily threaten them as well.

Some possibilities, however remote, do suggest themselves. For example, how might the United States react if it was thought or discovered that the fissile material used in the act of nuclear terrorism had come from Russian stocks, 40 and if for some reason Moscow denied any responsibility for nuclear laxity? The correct attribution of that nuclear material to a particular country might not be a case of science fiction given the observation by Michael May et al. that while the debris resulting from a nuclear explosion would be “spread over a wide area in tiny fragments, its radioactivity makes it detectable, identifiable and collectable, and a wealth of information can be obtained from its analysis: the efficiency of the explosion, the materials used and, most important … some indication of where the nuclear material came from.” 41

Alternatively, if the act of nuclear terrorism came as a complete surprise, and American officials refused to believe that a terrorist group was fully responsible (or responsible at all) suspicion would shift immediately to state possessors. Ruling out Western ally countries like the United Kingdom and France, and probably Israel and India as well, authorities in Washington would be left with a very short list consisting of North Korea, perhaps Iran if its program continues, and possibly Pakistan. But at what stage would Russia and China be definitely ruled out in this high stakes game of nuclear Cluedo?

In particular, if the act of nuclear terrorism occurred against a backdrop of existing tension in Washington's relations with Russia and/or China, and at a time when threats had already been traded between these major powers, would officials and political leaders not be tempted to assume the worst? Of course, the chances of this occurring would only seem to increase if the United States was already involved in some sort of limited armed conflict with Russia and/or China, or if they were confronting each other from a distance in a proxy war, as unlikely as these developments may seem at the present time. The reverse might well apply too: should a nuclear terrorist attack occur in Russia or China during a period of heightened tension or even limited conflict with the United States, could Moscow and Beijing resist the pressures that might rise domestically to consider the United States as a possible perpetrator or encourager of the attack?

Washington's early response to a terrorist nuclear attack on its own soil might also raise the possibility of an unwanted (and nuclear aided) confrontation with Russia and/or China. For example, in the noise and confusion during the immediate aftermath of the terrorist nuclear attack, the U.S. president might be expected to place the country's armed forces, including its nuclear arsenal, on a higher stage of alert. In such a tense environment, when careful planning runs up against the friction of reality, it is just possible that Moscow and/or China might mistakenly read this as a sign of U.S. intentions to use force (and possibly nuclear force) against them. In that situation, the temptations to preempt such actions might grow, although it must be admitted that any preemption would probably still meet with a devastating response.

### 1AC Multilateralism

Contention 2 --- Multilateralism

US leadership is unsustainable **without a highly visible commitment to mulitlateralism**

Lake, 10 – Professor of Social Sciences, distinguished professor of political science at UC San Diego (David A., “Making America Safe for the World: Multilateralism and the Rehabilitation of US authority”, <http://dss.ucsd.edu/~dlake/documents/LakeMakingAmericaSafe.pdf>)//NG

The safeguarding of US authority requires multilateralism that is broader and certainly deeper than in the 1990s—more like NATO than the ad hoc coalitions of the new world order. Indeed, absent the constraints exerted by competition with the Soviet Union, the institutional fetters through which the United States must bind its own hands will have to be even stronger than those in NATO. 47 The great paradox of contemporary international politics is that the unprecedented international power of the United States requires even more binding constraints on its policy is fit to preserve the authority that it has built over the last half-century and extend it to new areas of the globe.

The advanced military capabilities of the United States will make it a key actor in any such multilateral institution and will allow it to set the collective agenda. Since it is highly unlikely that anything will happen in the absence of US involvement, as in Bosnia where the Europeans dithered until the United States stepped to the fore, 48 Americans need not be overly concerned about “runaway” organizations or global mission creep. At the same time, if any organization is to be an effective restraint on the United States, other countries will have to make serious and integral contributions to the collective effort. Both sides to this new multilateral bargain will need to recognize and appreciate the benefits of a stable international order to their own security and prosperity and contribute to its success - 480 Making America Safe for the World. The United States will need to continue to play a disproportionate role in providing international order, even as it accepts new restraints on its freedom of action. Other countries, however, must also contribute to the provision of this political order so that they can provide a meaningful check on US authority.

Americans are likely to resist the idea of tying their hands more tightly in a new multilateral compact. After six decades, US leadership and its fruits— security, free trade, economic prosperity—have developed a taken-for-granted quality. It is hard for average Americans to tally the myriad benefits they receive from the country’s position of authority, but it is relatively easy for them to see multilateral institutions constraining the country’s freedom of action. Precisely because unipolarity makes coercion and unilateralism possible, and for some attractive, any constraints on US foreign policy may appear too high a price to bear. 49

 But if the United States is to remain the leader of the free world and possibly beyond, it must make its authority safe for others. To sustain US authority over the long term, it must be embedded in new, more constraining multilateral institutions. Americans trust their government only because of its internal checks and balances. Although there may be disagreements on exactly where the appropriate scope of government authority ends, nearly all Americans agree that limited government is the best form of government. This same principle extends abroad. If the United States is to exercise authority over other states, and enjoy its fruits, that authority must be checked and balanced as well. The height of hubris is not that the United States might govern the world, at least in part. This is a fact of international politics. Rather, hubris arises in the belief that the virtue of its people and leaders will restrain the United States sufficiently such that other peoples will voluntarily cede a measure of their sovereignty to it. 50 Politicians and peoples may occasionally be saintly, but it would be folly to rely on this quality at home or abroad. Recognizing the universal need to restrain authority, the United States should, in its own self-interest, lead the way to a new world order.

The plan is a powerful symbol of that commitment

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6.3 How would the international community react? At international level all major actors would clearly welcome an end to the embargo. While the sanctions policy allowed European, Canadian and, more recently, Venezuelan, Chinese, Brazilian and Russian to become more involved with Cuba in the absence of competitors from the US (with the exception of agriculture produce), most of the foreign powers, and in particular the EU and Latin American countries, would clearly support a definite lifting of the coercive measures. Ending the embargo would be perceived as a decision carrying a momentum of powerful symbolism since it would signal a newly found willingness in Washington to reconsider the usefulness of acting unilaterally and outside the international legal framework. As a matter of fact, together with other measures such as closing Guantanamo, signing up to the Kyoto Protocol and putting into practice the succeeding agreement under the Bali conference, and possibly, joining the International Criminal Court as well as ratifying further international human rights treaties such as the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child, it would be interpreted by the international community as steps towards effective multilateralism.

The alternative to multilateralism is unilateral militarism – the plan establishes a model for hemispheric diplomacy that sustains US leadership

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Washington’s relations with Latin America—particularly in terms of the gap between what its policy toward the region is and what it could be—precisely measure the degree to which domestic ideologies, narrow corporate and sectional interests, and a sclerotic political system are hastening the decline of the United States as a global power. As a result, the U.S. is deepening its dependence on unstable policies in order to leverage its dwindling influence in the hemisphere. It is easy to imagine an improved U.S. diplomacy toward Latin America, designed not to advance a set of altruistic ideals but merely to defend its interests—broadly defined to mean stable politics and economies that are open to U.S. capital and commodities—and to achieve what those in the liberal wing of the foreign policy establishment have long advocated:  a maximization of U.S. “soft power.” Harvard’s Joseph S. Nye defines soft power as “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion,” through an enhanced understanding and utilization of multilateral institutions, mutually beneficial policies, cultural exchanges, and commercial relations.1 There are no immediate threats to the U.S. in Latin America. A majority of the region’s political elite—even most of its current govern- ing leftists—share many of the same values the United States claims to embody, even more so following the election of the first African-American president, who is wildly popular in Latin America. As a result, there is no other place in the world that offers U.S. president Barack Obama the opportunity to put into place the kind of intelligent foreign policy that he and his closest advisors, such as United Nations (U.N.) ambassador Susan Rice, believe is necessary to stop the hemorrhaging of U.S. prestige—one that would both improve Washington’s ability to deploy its many competitive advantages, while removing key points of friction. Here’s what such a policy could look like: Washington would concede to longstanding Brazilian demands by reducing tariffs and subsidies that protect the U.S. agricultural industry, opening its market to Brazilian com- modities, especially soy and sugar, as well as value-added ethanol.  It would yield on other issues that have stalled the proposed Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), such as a demand for strident intellectual property rights enforcement, which Brazil objects to because it would disadvantage its own pharmaceutical industry and hinder its ability to provide low-cost medicine to those infected with the HIV virus.  Such concessions would provide an incentive for Brasilia to take the lead in jumpstarting the FTAA, a treaty that would ultimately benefit U.S. corporations, yet would be meaningless without Brazil, South America’s largest and most dynamic economy.

The U.S. would scale back its military operations in Colombia—including recent con- troversial plans to establish a series of military bases which have raised strong criticisms from the governments of Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela.  Brazil’s president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva—who is entering the last year of his second and last term—has become the spokesperson for the collective discontent, an indication of his country’s regional authority. In exchange for the U.S. dialing down its military presence, a soon-to-be post-Lula Brazil might find it convenient to tilt away from Venezuela and toward the United States. Washington would also drop the five-decade-old trade embargo on Cuba, thus burying a Cold War relic that continues to tarnish the U.S. image.  Normalizing relations with Cuba would create an additional enticement for Brazil to cooperate with the U.S., since its formidable agro-industry is beginning to invest in Cuba and is therefore well-placed to export to the U.S. market.  Politically, Washington would formally recommit to a multilateral foreign policy, even as it set up a de facto arrangement with Brazil to administer the region.  This would mean demonstrating its willingness to work through the Organization of American States (OAS).  More importantly, it would mean leashing the quasi-privatized “democracy promotion” organizations—largely funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the Agency for International Development, and run by the International Republican Institute—that have become vectors of trans- national, conservative coalition building throughout the hemisphere. These groups today do overtly what the CIA used to do covertly, as NED's first president, Allen Weinstein, admitted—they fund oppositional “civil soci- ety” groups that use the rhetoric of democracy and human rights to menace Left govern- ments throughout the region, including the promotion of an aborted coup in Venezuela in 2002 and successful ones in Haiti in 2004 and Honduras in 2009.2  Similar destabilization efforts tried to topple Bolivia’s Evo Morales in 2008 but failed, at least partly because Brazil and Chile let it be known that they would not accept those kinds of machinations in their backyards.  It would be easy for the Obama administration to rein these groups in, and to agree to Latin American demands to make their funding more transparent and their actions more accountable. Washington would also take a number of other initiatives to modernize hemispheric diplomacy, including deescalating its failed “War on Drugs,” as Latin America’s leading intellectuals and policymakers—including many former presidents—are demanding; in the last few months, both Mexico and Argentina have legalized some drug use and possession, including small quantities of cocaine and heroin.3 The U.S. would renew its assault weapons ban, as Mexico—battered by over five thousand narcotics-related murders a year, many of them committed with smuggled U.S. guns—is begging.   It could also pass meaningful immigration reform, providing a path to U.S. citizenship for the millions of undocumented Latin Americans, mostly from Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and the Andes, but also Brazil.  Such a move would go a long way toward improving relations with south- ern neighbors. It would also be good domestic politics for the Democrats, guaranteeing the loyalty of the Latino vote in 2012 and moving Texas, by creating millions of new vot- ers, closer to swing-state status. It could also provide progressives and the Democratic Party with a real wedge issue: Catholics, increasingly pulled into the con- servative camp by issues such as abortion and gay rights, overwhelmingly favor immigration reform. Any one of the above steps would go far in reestablishing U.S. legitimacy in Latin America. Taken together they could serve as a diplomatic revolution, one which would not weaken U.S. power but consolidate it much the way the Good Neighbor Policy did, allowing Washington to project its power in the region through stable multilateral mechanisms freed from the burdens of confrontation and militarism.  A retooled FTAA, updated for the post-Great Recession world and stripped of the ideologi- cal baggage of failed neoliberal globalization, might provide a blueprint for a sustainable regional economy, one that balances national development and corporate profit.4 And like the Good Neighbor Policy, a reinvigorated hemispheric diplomacy could serve as a model for the rest of the world, a design for a practical twenty-first century multilateralism, capable of responding to transnational problems—both those that concern liberals, such as climate change, poverty, and migration, and those that concern conservatives, such as crime and ter- rorism—while respecting, at least rhetorically, the sovereignty of individual nations. In short, the Western Hemisphere offers an unparalleled opportunity to realize the vision of Barack Obama’s September 2009 address to the United Nations—hailed by many as a clarion call for a new internationalism—to, in his words, “embrace a new era of engagement based on mutual interest and mutual respect.” It’s not going to happen. Efforts to implement any one of the above policy changes would be blocked by powerful domestic interests. Take biofuels. The idea to liberalize the U.S. agricultural market—and have the rhetoric of free trade somewhat match the reality—is recommended by all mainstream think tanks, including the Council on Foreign Relations and the Brookings Institution, as an important step to win back Brazil. Obama recognizes the importance of Brazil, having nominated George W. Bush’s outgoing assistant secretary of state for Latin America, Thomas Shannon—respected in establishment circles as, according to the journal Foreign Policy, “the most talented and successful individual” to serve as Washington’s envoy to Latin America “in at least two decades”—as its ambassador. Yet Shannon’s confirmation had been threatened by Senator Chuck Grassley, representing the agro-industry state of Iowa, who objected to the then-nominee’s comment during his confirma- tion hearings that removing a fifty-four-cent per gallon tariff on imported ethanol would be good for U.S. foreign policy. The White House immediately declared that it had no plans to change tariff policy, and Grassley allowed the confirmation to proceed.5 The White House’s quick buckling probably has to do with its fruitless attempt to win over Grassley for health care reform, a further indicator of how foreign policy is held hostage by domestic politics. Similar obstacles stand in the way of other foreign policy reforms. The Cuban lobby, along with the broader conservative Right, prevents a normalization of relations with Havana. Fear of the National Rifle Association halts a renewal of the assault weapons ban. As to the “War on Drugs,” the Democratic Party is deeply committed to “Plan Colombia,” the centerpiece of that war. It is, after all, a legacy of Bill Clinton’s foreign policy, and much of the $6 billion spent to fight it thus far goes directly into the coffers of corporate sponsors of the Democratic Party like Connecticut’s United Technologies and other northeastern defense contractors (it was Bill Clinton who in 1997, acting on behalf of Lockheed Martin, lifted a twenty-year ban on high-tech weapons sales to Latin America, kicking off an arms build-up, in which Colombia, Chile, and Brazil have taken the lead).6 As to immigration reform—also recom- mended by influential establishment groups to improve U.S. standing in Latin America— Obama, in Mexico, said it would have to wait until next year. He has a near-filibuster-proof majority in the Senate and a large majority in the House, yet he says there aren’t enough votes and “there is not, by any means, con- sensus across the table.”7 Obama could easily assemble a majority coalition on this issue—comprised of business interests who want cheap labor, Hispanics, progressives, social justice Catholics, and members of the labor movement (who long ago signaled their support for immigration reform)—yet fear of a backlash fueled by a contracting economy has led him to back- burner the issue. The same conditions that make Latin America the best venue in which to modernize U.S. diplomacy—namely that there is no immediate threat emerging from the region, no equivalent of North Korea or Iran on the verge of acquiring a nuclear bomb, no insurgency bogging down U.S. troops as in Afghanistan, and no conflict threatening access to vital resources (Washington’s main antagonist in the region, Venezuela, continues to sell most of its oil to the U.S.)—also mean that there are no real incentives for Obama’s fledgling foreign policy coalition to expend political capital on trying to improve policy there. Analysts of the American empire—from Charles A. Beard in the 1930s to William Appleman Williams in the 1960s and 1970s— have emphasized the U.S.’s unique ability to subsume competing economic, ideological, and sectional interests into a flexible and vital diplomacy in defense of a general “national interest,” which has led America to unprec- edented global power.8 Yet now—confronted with a sustained economic contraction, the fallout from a disastrous overleveraging of military power in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the emergence of a post-Cold War, post-neoliberal world with multiple power centers—expansion has given way to involution. The U.S. political system seems to be literally devouring itself from within, paralyzing the ability of foreign policymakers to adjust to a rapidly changing world. Unable to leverage its soft, smart power even in its own hemisphere, Washington is ever more dependent on the military and corporate mercenary forces that have transformed Colombia into a citadel of U.S. hard power in the Andes. As a candidate, Obama—referring to Bush’s decision to invade Iraq—said he wasn’t opposed to all wars, just stupid ones. Washington’s “War on Drugs” in Latin America is the stupid- est war one can imagine. As the centerpiece of that war, “Plan Colombia”—a program, established by Bill Clinton and extended by George W. Bush and Barack Obama, that has provided Colombia with billions of dollars of aid, mostly for the military’s counternarcotic and counterinsurgent operations—has served to entrench paramilitary power, enrich pri- vate contractors (such as the Virginia-based DynCorp), and turn more than four million Colombians into refugees.9 It has also fore- closed the possibility of a negotiated, regionally brokered solution to the crisis and inflamed a conflict that has already once spilled beyond national borders—in March 2008, Colombian troops launched a military raid into Ecuador to assassinate members of the insurgent Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia. And, while it has not lessened narcotics exports to the United States, the drug war has spread the violence associated with the illegal narcotics trade up through Central America and into Mexico, accounting for the staggeringly high number of homicides in the region. Much like the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, Washington’s militarization of the drug problem in Latin America has worsened what it sought to solve, thus pro- viding an excuse for even more militarism. Thus Southcom—which runs the Department of Defense’s South American operations—is expanding its presence in Colombia, recently brokering a deal that will give the U.S. military access to at least seven bases, running from the Caribbean to the Andes. Colombia and the U.S. insist that this expansion is directed to ensure Colombia’s internal security; but Brazil’s military is concerned that the bases give the U.S. the ability to project its power deep into South America. Colombia serves as the anchor of a broader strategic shift on the part of the U.S., one that reflects its position as a declining hegemon. Throughout much of the twentieth century, the U.S.— confident of its ascension as a world power—treated Latin America largely as a unified region, working through inter-American organizations set up via the Good Neighbor Policy and during World War II, such as the OAS and the Rio Pact (a mutual defense treaty that became the model for NATO). When one or another country tried to break out of its dependent relationship with the U.S.—i.e., Cuba in the 1960s, Chile in the early 1970s, or Nicaragua in the 1980s—the U.S. took independent, often covert steps either to isolate it or bring it back into the fold. Yet throughout the Cold War (and for about a decade following the Cold War), Washington continued to view the region as a single administrative zone. But today, the U.S. is increasingly relying on a strategy of divide and rule. Washington’s relationship with Colombia is the centerpiece of this new approach, and the Andean country functions as something like Latin America’s Israel: a heavily militarized U.S. ally that allows Washington to project its power into a hostile region. Like Israel, its preemptive, unilateral actions are encouraged by Washington in the name of national security. Colombia’s reckless raid into Ecuador in 2008—denounced by every South American country—was endorsed not just by George W. Bush but by then- U.S. presidential candidates Hillary Clinton, John McCain, and Barack Obama. Like Israel, Colombia’s security forces serve as a model and a resource for wars elsewhere. Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has commented that “many of us from all over the world can learn from what has happened with respect to the very successful develop- ments of ‘Plan Colombia,’” and suggested that it be franchised “specifically to Afghanistan.”10 Some of private military contractor Xe’s—née Blackwater—best recruits are retired Colombian soldiers, trained for Middle East operations on Colombian military bases; before taking control of the murderous Iraq Special Operations Forces, U.S. brigadier gen- eral Simeon Trombitas served in Colombia.11 Recently, Colombian paramilitaries have been recruited as mercenaries by Honduran plantation owners, to protect their property in the wake of the crisis unleashed by the coup.12 Colombia also boasts one of the most sophisticated intelligence apparatuses in its region—bolstered by massive infusions of U.S. dollars—capable of carrying out not just widespread surveillance but covert operations, including attempts to destabilize neighboring Venezuela.13 On the diplomatic circuit, an embassy posting in Colombia has become a way station toward a more prominent role in the Great Game. Current ambassadors to Afghanistan and Pakistan—William Wood and Anne Paterson, respectively—previously served as Bush’s envoys to Colombia. Like Israel, Colombia inspires many who see it as an exemplar of how to balance democracy—a place that offers relatively free elections, with three independent (at least in principle) branches of government—and security. “Colombia is what Iraq should eventually look like, in our best dreams,” writes influen- tial Atlantic contributor Robert Kaplan. “Colombian President Alvaro Uribe has fought—and is winning—a counterinsurgency war even as he has liberalized the economy, strengthened institutions, and improved human rights.”14 The Council on Foreign Relations has put aside its earlier strong criticism of “Plan Colombia” and now hails it as a success for having established a state presence in “many regions previously con- trolled by illegal armed groups, reestablishing elected governments, building and rebuilding public infrastructure, and reaffirming the rule of law.” The Council recommends a similar solution for violence-plagued Mexico and Central America.15 Throughout Latin America, a resurgent Right looks to Colombia for inspira- tion and Uribe as its standard bearer, a backstop against Hugo Chávez-style populism. As Forrest Hylton has argued, Uribe’s suc- cess at consolidating power rests on an alliance between death-squad paramilitaries—who have used “Plan Colombia” as a cover to execute an enormous land grab and to establish their rule in the countryside—and drug traffickers who have decided to stop fighting the state and become part of it. Medellín, the showcase city of Latin America’s New Right, has the eighth highest murder rate in the world; Uribe himself has deep ties to both paramilitaries and drug cartels.16 Colombia also serves as an anchor to a new geopolitics, an attempt by Washington to build a “security corridor” running from Mexico, through Central America, and into Colombia. Under the auspices of such programs as the Merida Initiative, “Plan Puebla-Panama,” and the Security and Prosperity Partnership, the objective is to integrate the region’s trans- portation and communications infrastructure, energy production and distribution network, and, most importantly, its military capacities. Call it top-down, transnational state forma- tion, an attempt to coordinate the region’s intelligence agencies, militaries, and police (as well as mercenary corporations like DynCorp), subordinated under the direction of the U.S. military. Thomas Shannon, Bush’s envoy to Latin America and now Obama’s ambassador to Brazil, described it in a moment of candor as “armoring NAFTA.” In other words, the U.S. is retrenching, pulling back from efforts to preside over the entirety of Latin America, instead consolidating its authority over a circumscribed territory, with a deepening reliance on applied military power. This shift is significant, and could unleash a period of heightened instability. One consequence of Washington’s past strategy of treating Latin America as a single unit was that inter-state conflicts were contained; since the 1930s, most bloodletting was internally directed, aimed at trade unionists, peasant activists, intellectuals, reformist politicians, and progressive religious leaders demanding a more equitable share of economic and political power. But now, with a waning superpower banking its authority on “armoring” one region in order to contain another, that might be changing—as evinced by Colombia’s 2008 raid into Ecuador and recent tensions caused by U.S. plans to expand its military footprint in the Andean country. As Adam Isacson, of the Center for International Policy, says of Washington’s new Colombian bases, the U.S. is “creating a new capability in South America, and capabilities often get used.”17 Adding to the potential for instability is the regrouping of the Right. Political scientist Miguel Tinker-Salas notes that “for some time, the Right has been rebuilding in Latin America; hosting conferences, sharing experiences, refining their message, working with the media, and building ties with allies in the United States. This is not the lunatic right-wing fringe, but rather the mainstream Right with powerful allies in the middle-class that used to consider themselves center, but have been frightened by recent Left electoral victories and the rise of social movements.”18 This nascent reaction has been buoyed by the June 2009 Honduran coup, which the right-wing sees as the first successful rollback of populism since the 2004 overthrow of Aristide, as well as by recent victories at the ballot box: in May, a conservative millionaire won the presidency in Panama. In Argentina, Cristina Fernández’s center-left Peronist party has recently suffered a midterm electoral defeat and lost control of Congress. And polls show that presidential elections coming up in Chile and Brazil will be close, possibly dealing further losses to progressives, containing the South American Left to Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador, and the Central American Left to El Salvador and Nicaragua. Two broad arcs of crises have defined U.S.-Latin American relations. The first began in the early nineteenth century and paralleled the first, youthful phase of U.S. territorial and economic expansion. Latin American intellectuals, politicians, and nationalists reacted with increasing hostility toward not only the growing influence of U.S. capital—which both displaced European economic interests and subordinated aspiring domestic elites—but toward ever more frequent and threatening military interventions: the Mexican-American War; the Spanish-American War; the creation of Panama; and invasions and occupations throughout the Caribbean basin. The second round coincided with the advent of the Cold War and marked the U.S.’s maturity as a global power. It intensified with Eisenhower’s over- throw of Guatemala’s democratically elected government in 1954, and continued with the 1959 Cuban Revolution and the series of right- wing coups in the 1960s and 1970s, culminating with the violent repression of Central American insurgencies in the 1980s, which paved the way for the neoliberal restructuring of the 1990s. It seems we are entering a third period of conflict—this time driven less by the tendency toward expansion that marked the U.S.’s global ascension than by a frantic attempt to hold on to what it has left as it enters its senescence—as domestic ideologues, unchecked corporate power, and political paralysis quicken the U.S.’s fall.

Increasing economic engagement with Cuba is the only internal link to establishing a credible commitment to multilateralism and successful conflict resolution - this spills over to conflict prevention in the Middle East and Kashmir

Dickerson 10 – Lieutenant Colonel, US Army, paper submitted in fulfillment of a Master of Strategic Studies Degree at the US Army War College (Sergio M, “UNITED STATES SECURITY STRATEGY TOWARDS CUBA,” 1/14/10, http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a518053.pdf)//SJF

At the international political level, President Obama sees resuming relations with Cuba as a real step towards multilateralism and leadership. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon made the following statement about then President-elect Barrack Obama’s national election. “He spoke about a “new era of global partnership…I am confident that we can look forward to an era of renewed partnership and a new multilateralism." To highlight this point further, U.N. nations have voted overwhelmingly since 1992 to overturn the Cuban Embargo. In 2007, 184 nations voted against the embargo5 - a powerful statement about U.S. unilateralism with regards to Cuba. The argument can also be made that the U.S. has foreign relations with China, Saudi Arabia and other non-democratic governments while applying a different standard towardsCuba. With growing perception that Cuba no longer poses a credible threat to the U.S., it appears that U.S. policy has changed from coercive to punitive following the end of the Cold War. With a renewed focus on multilateralism, President Obama could go a long way to break this image by spreading the seeds of a “new beginning” in U.S.-Cuba relations.

While dismissing Cuba’s immediate security threat to the U.S., we cannot ignore their 90-mile proximity to the U.S. shore. As we struggle to contain the illegal Mexican exodus into the U.S. and all the security concerns it poses, we neglect to see the historical similarities in past encounters with the Cuban government that led to similar incursions. So if we critically reexamine the current U.S. – Cuba embargo, why does the U.S. believe it will only lead to Cuban democratization? What about government collapse? A Cuban government collapse akin to Somalia could create a significant refugee situation not to mention an implied U.S. responsibility to provide humanitarian and even stability operations in Cuba. If catastrophe does occur, a search for causes would certainly lead back to our punitive approaches to U.S. diplomacy towards Cuba.

On the other hand, consider that foreign diplomacy achieves a breakthrough under Raul’s Cuba. It could certainly hedge our influence in Latin America. According to Dr. DeShazo, “close bilateral relationships with Venezuela is a product of Fidel Castro-Hugo Chavez friendship and does not enjoy much popular support in Cuba-nor with Raul.” If true, perhaps having a U.S. - Cuba option can become an alternative to that relationship post Fidel Castro. Loosening or lifting the embargo could also be mutually beneficial. Cuba’s need and America’s surplus capability could be mutually beneficial - and eventually addictive to Cuba. Under these conditions, diplomacy has a better chance to flourish. If negotiations break down and a decision to continue the embargo is reached, international support would be easier to garner.

Almost 21 years since the wall fell in Berlin, it is time to chip away at the diplomatic wall that still remains between U.S. and Cuba. This paper will further define our interests in Cuba and why President Obama should continue his quest for renewed diplomatic relations with Cuba. It will discuss potential risks associated with retaining the current 50-year diplomatic policy and give some broad suggestions regarding a new U.S. – Cuba foreign policy.

Policy and National Interest

Present U.S. policy towards Cuba is economic isolation imposed via embargo to coerce Cuba into establishing a representative government. While the basic policy remains unchanged, the same is not true about U.S. interests in Cuba. During the Cold War, stated U.S. interest was to contain Communism, the leading edge of which was Cuba. More than anything the U.S. wanted Castro’s demise but international support hinged on preventing the spread of communism. After 1989, communism was under siege and capitalism was on the rise. U.S. interests now shifted towards peace and regional stability. Of course, removing the Castro regime was still the preferred method, but without Soviet collusion Castro’s Cuba was no longer a credible threat to the U.S. Not surprisingly, international support quickly dwindled leaving the U.S. as the unilateral enforcer. In hindsight many argued it was the right time to loosen the embargo and seek better relations with Cuba. Instead, a renewed passion to topple Castro and establish democracy fractured any hopes to rekindle relations. In retrospect, Kennedy could not have foreseen a 50-year embargo that survives the Soviet Union’s demise but fails to remove Castro. The same cannot be said about the Obama Administration today. This section will analyze U.S. – Cuba policy, past opportunities and ultimate failure over the past 50 years.

From 1959 to1964, beginning with President Eisenhower but shaped primarily by the Kennedy Administration, U.S. policy was to remove Fidel Castro and establish Democracy in Cuba.6 It can be argued that this policy resonates today but during the early period the U.S. actively pursued removal as the decisive action that would lead to Democracy in Cuba. Political and military efforts to remove Castro in 1961 were reinforced by the initial embargo implementation and tightening that was most effective. Between1965 and 1970, U.S. attempts to maintain a multilateral embargo failed and its effectiveness withered as western governments refused to acquiesce to U.S. - led sanctions. By the time the OAS officially lifted the embargo, Cuba had successfully diversified its trade portfolio and by 1974, 45% of Cuba’s exports came from western governments.7

The period 1965-1972, although officially endorsing the previous administration’s tough stance, largely ignored its neighbor while it dealt with the more pressing conflict in Viet Nam. Containment and a period of Presidential ambivalence towards Cuba allowed tensions to cool between nations. This coupled with a growing fatigue with the Viet Nam War resulted in a renewed engagement to normalize relations with Cuba. A policy of “rapprochement” or normalization began with the Nixon Administration and received promising traction under the Carter Administration in 1977. The rapprochement period, 1973 – 1980, was President Carter’s attempt to curtail communism in Africa and Latin America. By normalizing relations with Cuba, President Carter could leverage this good will to reverse Cuban presence in Ethiopia, Angola and Zaire. Several overt measures were taken to reduce embargo restrictions and in February, 1977 State Department spokesmen Fred Brown “publically acknowledged and accepted a Cuban proposal to begin bilateral talks on maritime boundaries and fishing rights.”8 In June, U.S. National Security Council decided to end the practice of blacklisting foreign ships that called on Cuban ports. Perhaps the most notable improvement that year was to allow foreign diplomats to occupy each other’s embassies. This allowed direct communication between countries; the previous practice had been to use Swiss and Czech proxies.9 Several incidents including the “Soviet Brigade” and the “Mariel Boatlift” in 1980 intensified this opposition and quickly derailed Carter’s initiatives in Congress.

As President Reagan took office in 1980, U.S. – Cuba relations had already soured. The Reagan Administration would reinforce the weakened embargo and a return to a containment strategy under the auspices that Cuba was “promoting terrorism and subversion in virtually every Latin American country”. But strong Congressional opposition against normalizing relations took center stage during the 1980 presidential elections. Several incidents including the “Soviet Brigade” and the “Mariel Boatlift” in 1980 intensified this opposition and quickly derailed Carter’s initiatives in Congress. 10 The White House policy was to “disrupt and destabilize the island’s economy, terminate the Cuban-Soviet alliance, end Cuba’s internationalism, and finally reinsert Cuba within the capitalist politicaleconomic orbit.”11 President Reagan made every attempt to return to an “airtight” embargo but Cuba’s persistent trade with the west subverted the effort. In fact, British and Canadian companies could conduct trade in “America’s back garden without having to compete with U.S. companies.”12 Reagan did however, exact a toll on Cuba’s economy by preventing other nations from allowing Cuba to reschedule its debt: “a process of negotiating new loans to replace existing obligations, either by lengthening maturities, deferring of loan principal payment.”13 This action compelled Cuba to make its most overt concessions towards normalizing U.S. - Cuban relations. Castro removed troops from Africa and reclaimed 2,700 Cuban refugees that had departed to America during the 1980 Mariel Boatlift. Castro even allowed a U.S. Human Rights delegation to visit prisoners in Cuba. In return, the Reagan and Bush Administrations made no significant concessions to Cuba and status quo between countries remained.

The last meaningful opportunity for change occurred after the fall of the Berlin Wall and particularly the window it presented the U.S. following the collapse in Soviet – Cuba relations. During the period 1990 – 1993, internal and economic turmoil following the Soviet Union’s break-up led to a drastic cut in Soviet subsidies and trade relations with Cuba. This action compelled Cuba to make its most overt concessions towards normalizing U.S. - Cuban relations. Castro removed troops from Africa and reclaimed 2,700 Cuban refugees that had departed to America during the 1980 Mariel Boatlift. Castro even allowed a U.S. Human Rights delegation to visit prisoners in Cuba. In return, the Reagan and Bush Administrations made no significant concessions to Cuba and status quo between countries remained. 14 This led to a 34% drop in Cuban economy forcing Castro to renew western trade options and relook his own draconian business and commercial practices. The first Bush Administration passed on this precious opportunity, ignoring Cuba’s overt concessions late in the previous administration and choosing instead to enact the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act reversing Carter’s amendment to allow third country U.S. companies from trading with Cuba.15

By the time President Clinton came to office, momentum had already shifted in Cuba’s favor. Cuba’s economy began to rise in 1994 reaching its apex in 1996 with a 41% increase thanks to foreign investments in tourism. The introduction of the HelmsBurton legislation in 1996 gained Congressional traction after the Cuban Air force shot down two, anti-Castro “Brothers in Rescue,” planes over Cuba. The Helms-Burton Act created unrealistic expectations for the Cuban government before U.S. would loosen restrictions with Cuba. A total of eight requirements had to be met and the most controversial of these included; a transitional government in place unlike the Castro regime; the dissolution of the Department of State; Cuba must hold free and fair elections and a controversial property law that allowed property owners that left Cuba as early as 1959, to make claims in U.S. Courts on that property. With Cuba’s economy on the rise, this new measure to tighten the noose failed terribly and only succeeded in further alienating both governments.

The second Bush Administration did little to engage Cuba and after September 11, 2001, was completely engrossed in the War on Terror. U.S. policy towards Cuba has changed little in 50 years. Although the embargo continues to fail despite our best efforts to tighten it, our policy has remained steadfast and the U.S. is no closer to normalizing relations with Cuba.

A History of Anger and Distrust

After 50 years, deep-seated distrust and anger exists between the U.S. and Cuba. Perhaps an obvious assessment, but one that if ignored could undermine attempts to repair diplomatic relations between countries. Several diplomatic pitfalls developed over the years could hinder any attempt to reestablish relations. They could spell disaster and set an already tenuous relationship back decades. These triggers are subtle but recognizable over a long and tumultuous period in U.S. – Cuba relations. A historical account will help identify these political impasses and create favorable conditions for diplomatic success in future U.S. – Cuba relations.

Experts argue over who’s started the dispute between nations: was it the Cuban Agrarian Reform Act in 1959 that nationalized agrarian land in Cuba to include U.S. owned lands? Could it have been Cuba’s decision to resume trade with the Soviet 9Union that led to a U.S. imposed embargo on Cuba in 1960? Perhaps the bigger issue was how diplomatic, economic and military efforts by both countries continued to aggravate already strained relations.16 In 1961, Cuban exiles supported by the Central Intelligence Agency failed to topple the Castro government. The Bay of Pigs fiasco sent Cuba a clear signal that the U.S. was not interested in negotiation. Castro answered immediately by allowing Soviets to position nuclear missiles in Cuba, threatening U.S. vital security and leading to the Cuban Missile Crises. These intentions have survived to the present undermining any attempt to pursue common interest and reduce tensions. The underlying fear that U.S. remains committed to toppling the Cuban government constitutes the first diplomatic pitfall in U.S. – Cuban relations. For this very reason, democratic reform will not succeed as a diplomatic bargaining tool with Cuba. Suspicions run deep among Cuban leaders and any inferences to government reform, albeit noble, will impede meaningful relations. Human rights advocacy, free trade and limited business opportunities in Cuba may be more plausible and could eventually encourage the long-term changes U.S. wants in Cuba.

The embargo itself remains a perpetual albatross that continues to undermine any real diplomatic progress between nations. A series of coercive measures designed to topple the Castro regime began with U.S. – led efforts to expel Cuba from the Organization of American States (OAS) in January 1962 followed by trade prohibitions on imports and exports to Cuba by the U.S. Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). 17 This was achieved by leveraging an existing 1954 OAS Caracas Resolution designed to prevent trade with communist countries called Trading with the Enemy.18 After bilateral sanctions are established, U.S. pursued broader international support by 10enacting the October 1962 Battle Act prohibiting U.S. assistance to any country that traded with Cuba. An early attempt to persuade the North American Treaty Organization (NATO) nations to comply with the embargo yielded limited success.19 However, a new perceived security threat brought on by the Cuban Missile Crises in late 1962 gave U.S. the leverage it needed in February 1964 to convince NATO nations to effectively cease trade with Cuba. In July 1964, OAS followed NATO’s lead; U.S. had succeeded in isolating Cuba from its western traders.20

Tightening the noose placed extraordinary economic pressure on Cuba considering U.S. multilateral efforts reduced western trade by 73% in 1964. Cuba was obliged to subsidize this deficit with the Soviet Union and China between1961 – 1973. This trend continued by enticing Latin American and other western countries like Canada and England in the 1980s and following the Soviet fall in the 1990s.21Commensurately, Presidential administrations have loosened and tightened the embargo repeatedly as the climate between nations improved or deteriorated. The Cuban Defense Act in 1992 and the Helms Burton Act in 1996 tightened embargo restrictions signaling continued U.S. intentions to remove the Castro regime. But the U.S. - led embargo played right into Castro’s hand. Castro accused the U.S. calling it “another economic aggression” and stating that Cubans would have to undergo “long years of sacrifice.”22 By demonizing U.S. policy, he was able to galvanize Cuban support during the toughest times. The embargo helped create the American enemy, removing any popular support for rebellion and elevating Castro’s struggle to a legitimate Cuban struggle.11Castro was also complicit in the failure to mend U.S. – Cuba relations. Hiscontinued attempts to export communism began in Africa with a total 55,000 troops in Angola and Ethiopia by 1978. He focused efforts closer to Latin America by supporting Puerto Rican independence movement in 1975, the Sandinistas overthrow in Nicaragua in 1979 and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation (FMLN) in El Salvador. Cuba’s support to Columbia’s M19 (Columbian Election Day April 19, 1970) guerilla movement labeled Cuba a “state sponsor of terrorism” in 1982.23 Castro’s expansion efforts fueled U.S. security paranoia and prevented several overt efforts by the Carter Administration to improve relations with Cuba. In April 1980, an incident at the U.S. Mission in Havana led 120,000 Cubans to depart Mariel Port by boat to the U.S.24 The incident better known as the “Mariel Boatlift” became the tipping point that inhibited further relations with Cuba. Despite the growing tensions between the U.S. and Cuba, trade between the west and Cuba increased. NATO compliance with U.S. - brokered trade restrictions broke down after 1966 in particular due to British and Canadian opposition. U.S. efforts to use the OAS embargo to influence the United Nations also failed. In 1974, Latin American leaders pushed to end the OAS embargo. In 1975 the OAS lifted the embargo with Cuba and the embargo returned to a bilateral embargo now condemnedby most western countries.25 In 1982, Cuba’s failing economy led Castro to pursue western trade with a renewed vigor. By “1987, more than 370 firms from twenty-three European, Latin American, and Asian countries participated in Cuba’s largest ever annual trade fair.”26

Castro’s interest in improving U.S. - Cuba relations was perhaps the greatest from 1982-1988. Castro made statements in 1982 to resume talks with the U.S.; he took back more than 1000 Mariel Boatlift criminals that came to the U.S. in 1987 and pulled troops out of Angola in 1988 to mention a few. These rare moments and apparent seams in Castro’s armor were left unanswered by the Reagan and Bush Administrations. Instead renewed efforts to continue ratcheting a now largely ineffective bilateral embargo served only to increase animosity between both countries.

It is difficult to quantify, but essential to note, that U.S. action over the years seems to support a hatred for Fidel Castro that interferes with any attempt to established diplomatic relations with Cuba. If true, to neglect this assumption could undermine any efforts to reverse our seemingly punitive approach. Perhaps it can be traced to his support for a Soviet-style communism. After all, few things in 1960 America were feared and despised more than communism. Any country affiliated with the communist movement became an affront to the American way of life. Furthermore, Americans shed blood in Cuba during the 1898 Spanish American War leading to Cuban Independence in 1902.27 Fidel Castro became evil’s face in Cuba and any attempt to partner with Castro seemed equally tainted. Fast forwarding to the present, with communism no longer a threat, perhaps it’s time to let the anger fade and deal with Cuba for its’ diplomatic merit not past indiscretions. The question remains whether clear objectiveness leads U.S. diplomatic efforts with Cuba? It is important to note that what’s at stake here is U.S. national interests and not the legacy of Fidel Castro.

Another important pitfall is to exploit democracy as a precondition for diplomacy and economic engagement in Cuba. If democracy is virtuous, then why must we exploit it? It casts a negative shadow on a positive change in government. There is a common perception that U.S. policy with regards to security and stability can only exist under the precondition of a “Democratic Cuba”. It has prevented any real progress in U.S. – Cuba relations because of well placed fears that we mean to subvert the Cuban government. A popular Cuban American lobby group, The Cuban American National Foundation summarizes traditional U.S. beliefs towards Cuba. They suggest, “U.S. – Cuba policy should focus on (1) advancing U.S. interests and security in the region and (2) empowering Cuban people in their quest for democracy and prosperity…that these are “intertwined and one cannot be individually accomplished without the other.”28 The recommendation then focuses largely on steps to pursue a democratic Cuba.

To separate security and stability from democratic pursuits in Cuba could benefit both causes. Focusing on better diplomatic relations could further democracy as a byproduct of increased exposure to open markets, businesses and globalization. China is a good example. The U.S. has diffused tensions with China by exposing them to open markets. Although they continue to embrace communism, their version of communism has been somewhat diluted as they modified their business practices, trade and other aspects to compete in the global marketplace. If you take into account that Cuba’s Growth National Product (GDP) decreased by 4% since 2006 while their debt grew by 16% to almost $20B in 2008, Cuba certainly has incentive to do the same.29 By imposing democracy we jeopardize diplomatic avenues to our principal security and stability pursuits. To assuage the Cuban America position on this issue may be simpler today than 10 years ago. Today’s younger Cuban-American generation is more amenable to closer relations with Cuba. The anger carried by their immigrant forefathers14after 50 years may be passing and perhaps the time is right to leverage this new Cuban American generation to open dialogue with Cuba without the democratic preconditions tied to negotiations.

As we pursue diplomatic relations with Cuba we should not expect full disclosure, immediate results and a Cuban government anxious to please the U.S. We should expect a cautious and limited first engagement that appears noticeably weighted in U.S. effort. Let us assume the U.S. makes significant diplomatic and economic concessions but Cuba is less willing to provide some reciprocal offering. U.S. policy could conclude that Cuba has no genuine desire to consummate new diplomatic relations and diplomacy could fail. It is imperative to understand that the U.S. has done most of the “taking” and hence will, at least for the near future, do most of the “giving”. A steady, patient and continued engagement is needed until Cuba has the confidence to commit to further diplomatic relations.

Current U.S.-Cuba Policy Analysis

Understanding the deep-seated animosity and distrust that continues to fuel U.S. - Cuba tensions will aid us in properly analyzing the feasibility, acceptability and suitability (FAS) of current and future U.S. policy with Cuba. Identifying FAS applications to diplomacy, information, military, economic, finance, intelligence and law enforcement (DIME-FIL) will highlight weaknesses in current U.S. – Cuba relations that can be modified for future improvement.

The logical question with regards to current U.S. – Cuba policy is whether it’s feasible to continue the current policy. At least for the foreseeable future, the answer is yes. It equates to doing nothing diplomatically, militarily and economically. Perhaps this 15option is appealing given a robust domestic agenda and U.S. involvement in two wars. According to Professor Schwab and other experts however, the U.S. has lost the information campaign targeted at the Cuban people. It has only, “buttressed Fidel’s popularity in Cuba and elsewhere, which eviscerates the very purposes the embargo was set up for.”30 It’s like the classic biblical story of David triumphing over Goliath – the bigger the oppressor the greater the victory. True or not, Fidel has made the case successfully to the Cuban people. While it’s feasible for the U.S. to pursue the current course there is no evidence it will succeed.

How acceptable is it to U.S. foreign policy? There are three elements of national power that highlight our current policy: diplomacy, economy and law enforcement. It is subjective to evaluate acceptability strictly in terms of current national power invested and subsequent pay offs in foreign policy. U.S. needs international cooperation to achieve the coercive effects that only complete economic strangulation can accomplish. This is tough to do and North Korea and Iran bear this true. If we look at it from a broader international and economic perspective we can begin to see why it’s not acceptable. Take a UN General Assembly vote renouncing the U.S.-led embargo on Cuba for instance; since1992 there has been overwhelming vote to end the embargo.31 In essence, it has garnered sympathy for Castro and encouraged western nations like Canada and Spain to continue open relations with Cuba. Even if the embargo could work, U.S. diplomacy has failed to yield the international tourniquet needed to bring change in Cuba. Applying economic force without first garnering the necessary diplomatic support failed to achieve intended changes succeeding instead in hurting the Cuban people it hoped to protect. Whether or not an embargo can work in Cuba is suspect but succeeding without international support is impossible. Since the embargo hinges on a larger multinational participation, international and not just U.S. acceptability is necessary to achieve U.S. ends in Cuba.

Several embargo refinements over the years like the Libertad Act have further tightened restrictions on Cuba. These restrictions have placed a heavy burden on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) particularly in Miami. A 2007 GAO report highlights these burdens and how they impede other more important Law Enforcement activities in defense of the homeland.32 GAO findings suggest there’s a real need to balance U.S. paranoia for “everything Cuba.” This rebalancing purports an unacceptable cost-benefit to the current law enforcement aspect of the embargo. It diminishes our greater need to defend against terrorist, criminals and other real threats to our national security. In essence, our efforts to impose embargo restrictions are unacceptable tradeoffs for homeland security.

In the final analysis, U.S. – Cuba policy is not sustainable because it has failed to meet desired national ends: Cuban democracy and human rights. Prior to 1989, the U.S. could make the argument that the embargo contained communism and generally marginalized the Castro government. It failed however, to depose Fidel Castro and democratize the Cuban government. A post Cold War Cuba no longer poses a threat to the U.S. - communism is contained and Cuba is still under embargo. Despite a 50-year failure to affect change in Castro’s government, our policy with regards to Cuba remains unchanged. We have foregone diplomatic engagement and chosen coercive economic power as our only political tool.

Does Cuba Pose A Security Threat to the U.S.?

Let’s begin by asking this question: can we afford to escort commerce through Caribbean waters from Cuban pirates? This sounds as farfetched as an attack from an Afghan-based Al-Qaida using commercial airliners to destroy the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. This scenario while unexpected is completely contrary to our policy objectives in Cuba. The greater possibility that “something” unfavorable happens in Cuba that threatens U.S. national interests is certainly more relevant. Although Cuba poses no traditional threats to the U.S., geographically, their 90-mile proximity should concern us. Our proximity to Cuba assures U.S. involvement, be it voluntary or involuntary, in a major crisis. Consider a disease outbreak that begins in Cuba over a break down in hygiene, government pollution or other misfortune attributable to economic strife. The disease has no boundaries and quickly reaches the Florida shores via travelling Cuban American citizens. This scenario could be mitigated or even preventable under the auspices of better relations. Aside from the obvious medical benefits a partnership provides, established communications with Cuba would likely prevent an uncontrolled spread in the U.S. There are definite advantages to having healthy regional partnerships to deal with regional problems.

While economic pressure has failed to bring about government change, it could trigger a government collapse. If Cuba becomes a “failing” or “failed state” we could see a huge refugee flood into the U.S., increased crime and drug trafficking across U.S. borders, and renewed security and stability issue in the region. In 1980, 120,000 Cuban refugees fled Mariel and 20,000 more in 1994 after Cuba declared an open immigration policy.33 From 2004 – 2007, 131,000 Cubans have made residence in the U.S. Almost 38,000 settled in Florida alone in 2006. Although it’s mere speculation to presume Cuba will fail, if it did, there is no question where Cubans would seek refuge. A failed state could eventually draw U.S. involvement into nation building in Cuba taking a greater toll on our national resources. This scenario, while unexpected, is completely contrary to our policy objectives in Cuba. Current U.S. policy is no longer a sustainable option to achieving our national interests in Cuba. Until realignment can bring national policy back in line with national interests, conditions will not exist for real change in U.S. – Cuba relations.

Proposed U.S.-Cuba Policy Analysis

If today marks President Obama’s “new strategy” towards Cuba we must begin with U.S. National interests in the broader Latin American context. Over the past 50 years our approach has been germane to Cuba and not the larger Latin American construct. In so doing we have isolated Cuba from Latin America for coercive reasons yes, but also for the very democratic principles we hoped Cuba would follow.

The State Department’s Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (covers Canada and Cuba) has set the following goals for the region: “Economic partners that are democratic, stable, and prosperous; Friendly neighbors that help secure our region against terrorism and illegal drugs; Nations that work together in the world to advance shared political and economic values.”34 To simplify these goals, let us just say stability, economic prosperity and democracy. Using these as a benchmark, I propose our new diplomatic strategy towards Cuba must be similar - achieve economic stability, security and a representative government as the “end state” goal and not the prerequisite for engagement. President Obama can implement this policy by first building American and Congressional support for engagement. He should establish a formal infrastructure that communicates to Cuba and the International Community at large that we’re serious about diplomatic engagement with Cuba. Finally, we must loosen embargo restrictions and expose Cubans to U.S. open markets, business opportunities and 21st Century living. This combination will improve relations with Cuba by regaining their trust, improving their living conditions and exposing them to the democratic enticements we hope they will emulate.

Achieving Congressional approval will be difficult although not impossible in the present economic recession. The economic benefits associated with new business opportunities in Cuba can encourage skeptics in Congress to mobilize. As a counterargument to a continued embargo, the President can point to the dangers associated with failed states like Somalia inadvertently caused by the very environment sanctions create. A strong communication strategy to gain American support coupled with a softening Cuban American stance, shrouded in economic opportunity, could encourage Congressional dialogue and resolution. President Obama can succeed if he sets realistic goals and expresses these to the American public before the media or his opposition defines these.

We’ve established that coercive means have failed to achieve democracy and economic stability in Cuba. I’m suggesting there is another mutually beneficial alternative. Using China as an example, their exposure and need to compete in free global markets broadened their horizons and shifted their hard line communist approach to international diplomacy. This was a feat that coercive diplomacy has not accomplished in Cuba. Yet we still have civil disagreements with China on human rights issues, Taiwan’s right to independence and other contentious issues without resorting to coercive measures. Why should Cuba receive different treatment? The confusion lies with our tendency to impose democracy as a precondition for diplomatic relations. How can Cuba subscribe to small business practices, a free economy building block, if business opportunities are not available? Diplomatic engagement and economic encouragement has a better chance. Cuba’s economic condition incentivizes their willingness to begin diplomatic negotiations. The U.S. should begin by focusing efforts to establish diplomatic relations through incentives rather than coercion. We must also set the democratic precondition aside to pursue when the relationship matures and trust is reestablished. Exposing them to new opportunities will eventually, through their own discovery and U.S. shepherding, lead them to a more representative government.

If we accept that reestablishing relations with Cuba is the first real step to a democratic end-state then the first action must be to appoint an Ambassador to Cuba. This diplomatic gesture signals that U.S. is serious about foreign relations. The Ambassador’s first actions must include setting the conditions with Cuba to allow a loosening of embargo restrictions. President Obama, in the spirit of multilateralism, should pursue international solidarity since some countries enjoying exclusive trade with Cuba would certainly protest the immediate competition. Choosing a time-phased removal would protect U.S. assets and interests in the remote possibility that Cuba fails to comply with the agreed bi-national or international terms. It might also sooth domestic and partisan anxiety regarding open trade with Cuba. President Obama must accomplish this early in his first term to allow time to reap success or mitigate failure before the next elections.

The U.S. cannot afford to miss another opportunity to normalize relations with Cuba. A Cuba without Fidel is an opportunity – whether it is Raul or his replacement in 2013. The U.S. must lay the foundation today for renewed U.S. Cuba relations. Delaying could also signal the contrary to Raul Castro suspiciously awaiting the true purpose of recent U.S. concessions.

While a long term goal may be to influence change in government, it cannot be the basis for initial success and continued diplomacy. With diplomatic patience and a prosperous Cuba, we have reason to believe, like China and Russia that capitalism will prevail over communism. But new politicians and a younger generation of Americans who measure success between terms and administrations will not understand if results aren’t immediate or commensurate to U.S. efforts. Instead, the strategy pursued must occur with a measured diplomatic optimism that insures immediate setbacks don’t derail the restoration of trust that must occur before complete reciprocation can be expected.

Conclusion

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

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

Middle East war goes nuclear, causing extinction – outweighs every impact and rationality doesn’t check

Beck 5/28 – Middle East Analyst at The Commentator (Noah, “A nuclear Middle East is doomsday, 5/28/13, http://www.thecommentator.com/article/3633/a\_nuclear\_middle\_east\_is\_doomsday)//SJF

As the Obama administration tries to unbury itself from snowballing scandals, my apocalyptic thriller steadily crawls from fiction to fact. The Middle East is an insane place. And it's going nuclear. Yet, too many optimists, isolationists, and self-deluded analysts think that rationality will prevail and keep us all safe.

Is it rational to take out the organs of a man you just killed and eat them on camera, as a Syrian rebel recently did? How about a senior Palestinian Authority official who recently declared on Lebanese television that the PA would nuke Israel if it had nuclear weapons? Jibril Rajoub, the deputy secretary of the Fatah Central Committee and the chairman of the PA Olympics Committee, apparently doesn’t mind that the nuclear mushroom he wants over Israel would also kill millions of Palestinians, just miles away – the main goal is that Israel be nuked.

At best, one can say that there is a “twisted rationality” in the Middle East, as exemplified by Iran’s former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. In a December 2001 speech, Rafsanjani said, “If one day the Islamic world [acquires nuclear weapons], then the imperialists’ strategy will reach a standstill because the use of even one nuclear bomb inside Israel will destroy everything. However, it will only harm the Islamic world. It is not irrational to contemplate such an eventuality. Jews shall expect to be once again scattered and wandering around the globe the day when this appendix is extracted from the region and the Muslim world.”

Despite the above, Rafsanjani is considered such a “moderate” that regime hardliners disqualified him from running in Iran’s presidential election next month. So if Rafsanjani thinks that nuking Israel would be worth a few million Iranians killed by an Israeli retributive nuclear strike, what does that say about the rationality of the current, less “moderate” regime (the one regularly threatening to destroy Israel)?

Could the eschatology of Shia Islam further heighten the risk of Armageddon? If the regime under Supreme Leader Ali Hosseini Khamenei genuinely believes that an apocalyptic war will hasten the advent of the Twelfth Imam (the Islamic messiah), doesn’t that make a nuclear first strike on Israel that much more tempting? Scholars may disagree about the potential impact of messianic ideology on nuclear decisions, but the mere possibility that geopolitical conflicts could be viewed through a theological lens hardly adds rationality to the Middle East.

To spread its radical ideology, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard finances, trains, and arms some of the world’s most dangerous terrorist organizations: Hezbollah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad. These organizations are collectively responsible for thousands of deaths from decades of terrorist attacks and wars in Israel, Lebanon, Europe, and Latin America. Iran has also provided support to the Taliban, Iraqi insurgents, and al-Qaeda. And the Islamic Republic supplies Syria with arms, training, and fighters to help President Basher Assad stay in power by massacring his own people every day.

If this is how the Iranian regime has behaved without the impunity conferred by a nuclear deterrent, what can be expected of the regime once it has nukes?

Equally troubling, if Iran’s large-scale and dispersed nuclear program continues, the regime will be able to produce dozens of nuclear bombs every year. Such massive production only increases the odds of intentional (or unauthorized) nuclear transfers to state or non-state actors, and spurs regional rivals into acquiring or developing a matching nuclear deterrent.

Three trends will make a nuclear Middle East even scarier: 1) technological improvements and miniaturization will make it easier to create and transfer small nuclear devices. 2) Climate change will aggravate water scarcity, which will only intensify generational conflicts in the Middle East. 3) Increasing technological interconnectedness will exacerbate sectarianism (as has been the case in Syria, where atrocities from the civil war are constantly recorded on video and shared, only further radicalizing the belligerents).

Once Iran has nukes, the potential catastrophes are manifold: a Middle East decimated by a far-reaching Sunni versus Shia conflict (sparked in Syria) and/or by a nuclear war between Israel and Iran; a nuclear arms race among other Mideast countries; the end of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; and terrorists who can target major cities with small nuclear devices. However it plays out, oil prices will skyrocket and many will die.

The Iranian nuclear threat is the most important global security issue of this generation. To focus public attention on it, I authored “The Last Israelis” in a breathless ten weeks, hoping to release the book in time to impact the May 2012 “P5+1” talks in Baghdad, when world powers tried yet again for a diplomatic solution. To continue raising awareness before Iran crosses the nuclear finish line, I just released a second edition, and added paperback and audiobook formats to reach more people with my book’s urgent message.

But what happens when it’s too late to stop Iranian nukes? “The Last Israelis” depicts the doomsday scenario resulting from a nuclear-armed Iran, as experienced by 35 ideologically divided and ethnically diverse Israelis aboard the Dolphin submarine. To write the apocalyptic thriller, I dropped everything in my life and secured interviews with veterans of Israel’s elite and secretive submarine force. Imagining 35 submariners confronting the unthinkable as World War III unfolds in their claustrophobic reality was bad enough; watching the world gradually move in the same direction, knowing that it’s not my imagination this time, is far worse.

#### Current conflict resolution in Kashmir is ineffective – new international action is key to prevent nuclear conflict

Zargar 6/7 – Middle East reporter, Greater Kashmir News (Abdul Majid, “Kashmir Vs Global Community,” 6/7/13, http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2013/Jun/8/kashmir-vs-global-community-57.asp)//SJF

Normal relations between India and Pakistan offer tremendous benefits & incentives to the global community. But normalization is itself subject to settlement of core issue of Kashmir between them. Indo-Pak tensions are especially dangerous because they bring two nuclear states face to face and any conflict between the two countries sparked by the dispute could escalate into a catastrophic nuclear war. They distract Islamabad from the urgent task of combating terrorists and militants on its own soil; and they contribute to Pakistani suspicions about India's activities in Afghanistan. Thus, the long-standing dispute over Kashmir is one part of a wider regional dynamic that has direct implications for global community’s ability to support a stable Afghan state and to address the threat posed by extremist groups in South Asia.

For Kashmir, the conflict has been a great tragedy and a disaster in all respects: a large death toll, unabated human rights abuses which in normal course qualify as crimes against humanity or war crimes, displacement of populations, a devastated economy, serious environmental damage, massive military buildup, and severe psychological distress. Above all peoples lack of trust & confidence in the local political system put in place by the New Delhi. And for India Kashmir has been a patient with incurable disease from day one which it manages by shifting alternatively between Intensive care unit (ICU) and general ward depending upon the seriousness of the situation at particular point of time and where the job of the Local attending doctors (Politicians) is limited only to report the situation and take instructions of medicines & diet from New-Delhi. No serious attempt is made for a permanent cure of this patient except throwing billions of rupees in a bottomless pit.

But the big question-Is global community doing enough to address the issue? While US and its surrogates are busy in creating new tensions & disorders in the world, existing long pending disputes like Kashmir & Palestine are hardly attended to. As far as Kashmir is concerned, though the US treats the territory as disputed but its State Department, reportedly treats the Indian repression there as “an internal Indian matter”. A former senior CIA officer, Robert Grenier, sometime back, called this posture by the Obama administration “craven”. When one contrasts this with the legitimate interest that the US showed in human rights in Arab states, and the consequent action it took, one loses all faith in protestations of moral concern underlying American policies and attitudes. And by the way what are the demands of the people of Kashmir for which they are brutalized day in & day out -a right to vote in a plebiscite promised long ago - The same right which the America claims to support in other parts of the world.

 But the recent discourse initiated by Norwegian parliament offers a new ray of hope. It has urged for an early solution to the Kashmir conflict. During discussions, Chairman of the Norwegian Parliamentary Kashmir Committee and Christian Democratic party leader Knut Arild Hareide referred to Kashmir as a regressive wound in the relationship between India & Pakistan and a continuing tragedy for the Kashmiri people. It surely is a comfort to know that the dispute has the attention of European nations.

A mention, in this context, also needs to be made of recent conference held in Islamabad where Mr. V.P.Vaidik an eminent journalist & political thinker (also chairman of Council for Indian Foreign Policy), mooted the idea of total demilitarization of both sides of Kashmir. “Pughwash” is also holding a two day conference in Islamabad starting on 4th July 2013. The event would be drawing regional and international conflict resolution experts, diplomats, besides political elite from both parts of Kashmir, from Pakistan, India, USA, and Britain. In Srinagar, a meaningful lecture was delivered by Praful Bidwai, a noted columnist and political analyst (Also Founder member of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace)on the occasion of release of 10th Volume of Aina-Numa. In his assessment of the things, if India & Pakistan fail to find a solution to the Kashmir issue anytime soon and Indian repression & suppression continues in Kashmir , the whole of South Asia runs the risk of being turned into a nuclear dust because of a lurking danger of a nuclear war between two Countries. In his opinion the two Countries came very close to such a catastrophe twice during Kargil war. Recent reports also suggest that both the countries have increased their nuclear warheads in 2012 roughly by 10% over the previous year( see Stockholm International Peace Research Institute report).

So India, Pakistan & the Global Community need to take a fresh look at Kashmir. Like a festering wound that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light. Injustice must be exposed and options of a final settlement discussed & explored. The global community can ignore the problem at its own peril. If Kashmiris have been suffering for decades, it may take only minutes for the whole world to suffer & suffer irretrievably.

Independently, reliance on unilateralism will collapse US leadership – causes global nuclear war

Montalván, 10 - a 17-year veteran of the U.S. Army including multiple combat tours in Iraq, master's of science from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism (Luis, “Multilateralism is Essential for Peace in the 21st Century” Huffington Post, 4/23, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/luis-carlos-montalvan/multilateralism-is-essent_b_550332.html>)

Unilateralism is the wrong approach for American Diplomacy. There is nothing to suggest its efficacy since 9/11. There is nothing to suggest its usefulness for future conflict. In allowing the US to go it alone, America's partners and allies risk the havoc and catastrophic consequences that will accompany "Imperial Overstretch." The residue of overstretch will include loss of US leadership in the world, an economy whose decline affects billions of dollars in international markets, and certainly emboldens rogue states. The whole world will pay the price if we let unilateralism pervade this century.

As the bloodiest 100 years in recorded history, the 20th Century is replete with examples of how policy and practice intersect to foment war. The proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and the constantly mutating dynamic of terrorism inform our current, dangerous reality.

Amidst this backdrop of destruction, there are lessons for those who are looking for them. Seeds of peacemaking and conflict resolution were planted which we must germinate in order to halt and then reverse the trend toward violence and chaos. Perhaps the 21st Century could be the first 100 years in which nations invest more in building peace than in making war.

In the 20th Century, local conflicts ignited global tensions and genocide on an unprecedented scale, costing incalculable life and treasure. The two world wars and other explosive conflicts erupted over such issues as ethnic disputes, the securing of natural resources, corporate interests, ideology and religion. The international business of war produced economies of scale prompted by the industrial, technological, and communications revolutions.

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife in Sarajevo by anarchist Gavrilo Princip was the spark that ignited WWI. In time, some 15 million people would be killed. The sheer brutality of that war led Woodrow Wilson to issue his "Fourteen Points" in 1918, which included the establishment of a League of Nations "for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike." Just like our present-day difficulties in pursuing compromise, the US Congress politicized the concept, bucked the President, and did not support that initiative. The subsequent failure of the League of Nations to prevent WWII may have galvanized our culture's distrust of multilateralism.

Throughout the 20th Century and until today, nations and other entities have invested precious financial, intellectual, social, institutional and political capital into arming themselves with weaponry, instead of building their capacity for peace. Technologies change and improve with increasing rapidity, but those advances have included improvements in how to kill more people more efficiently and with smaller devices.

WWII was the shining example of multilateralism and its power. Vietnam and Korea were examples of its limitations. South Africa and India demonstrated that the support of the international community could enable countries to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. All these contribute and form the basis of the state of nations today.

The 20th Century left us at a crossroads: will we perpetuate the machinery and culture of war or surpass our greatest dreams by encouraging and enforcing peace policies and practices worldwide?

The 21st Century began ominously with the attacks of September 11, 2001, which ushered in a new era of US foreign policy and global response to war, conflict and terrorism. Rather than engage a sympathetic world in developing multilateral and inclusive strategies similar to the precursors to the 2003 Iraq War and as was done before the Persian Gulf War, the US squandered its global capital to pursue "pre-emptive" unilateral military action. The equal and increasingly matching reaction is a global culture of military aggression and war.

The resulting disintegration of the international community contributed to the most serious economic disaster since the Great Depression. Already struggling to survive amidst broken economies, the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and global terrorism strains multilateralism when it should embolden it. If it is true that every weapon invented is eventually used, we have much to fear if we do not reverse this lethal trend.

Since national conflicts frequently spill over into regional and world-wide conflict, multilateral organizations have been very strong supporters of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. Even the US found a way to first investigate and then come to terms with its terrible policy of putting Japanese-Americans in internment camps during WWII and apologized and paid reparations to survivors and their children. There were important Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in South Africa, supported by the international community. Victims and perpetrators of Apartheid who participated in Truth and Reconciliation Commissions demonstrated in compelling ways the healing and restorative power of those gatherings. Perhaps more importantly, they showed the world that a nonviolent response to unthinkable oppression and injustice can foster the peaceful development of a society intent upon making amends for the past and embarking upon a brighter, shared future. Since conflict-resolution and peacemaking at the local or national level work, why not apply it multilaterally?

Concerned about the resurgence of unilateralism in the US's current Marjeh and Kandahar operations in Afghanistan, former Assistant Secretary of State Gene Dewey recently noted that "it's been very lonely being a leading multilateralist in Washington over the last nine years. Too few policy-makers have sensed where our unilateralism has led, and is leading."

Saudi Arabia and other authoritarian Islamic countries generated the seeds that not only birthed the terrorists who carried out 9/11, but also attacks in Madrid, London, Mumbai and Chechnya. No matter where terrorists are determined to attempt to disrupt the lives of others, it's time for countries to realize that the only way to confront contemporary terrorism is through multilateralism. This must be a multilateralism that is thoroughly infused with peacemaking and conflict-resolution, instead of only "joint forces."

At this crossroads, we can use the knowledge economy, social network and the international community to turn the rhetoric of hope into reality. We sit upon an historical precipice of policies and practices of sustainable, culturally responsive peace-building and violence prevention within and beyond our borders.

Despite their faults, the institutions set up after in response to WWII (UN) and the Cold War (NATO) can be the 21st Century's vehicles for peace. We can use those instruments of multilateralism to build the peacekeeping, disaster relief, and conflict resolution forces that bring countries together.

"Actually, I believe we have strategically shifted from that of a global war on terror (GWOT) to containing violent extremism (CVE). That said, the reason extremists do what they do is because they recruit from amongst the most desperate people on the earth. And, the reasons for desperation are strategic---but not necessarily military in nature. In fact, we have the capability to wage peace that is just as sophisticated as our capability to make war. Water, AIDS, mass migration of people, desertification, poverty, hunger, and disease---What would happen if our National Security Strategy became a multilateral one of economic engagement, and used the brain power and resources available to mitigate these issues?" -- Lt. Col. Matthew Canfield, U.S. Army (Currently on his second tour in Iraq)

Concerns over economic stability, limited resources and security have divided us. Now is the time to create rather than divide common ground.

Effective multilateralism diffuses every conflict scenario

Dyer ‘4– independent journalist, cites Frans de Waal, Ph. D in biology, works at Yerkes National Primate Center (Gwynne, “The End of War: Our Task Over the Next Few Years is to Transform the World of Independent States into a Genuine Global Village”, [http://www.commondreams.org/views04/1230-05.htm)//NG](http://www.commondreams.org/views04/1230-05.htm%29//NG)

About 20 years ago, a disaster struck the Forest Troop of baboons in Kenya. There was a tourist lodge within their range, and the biggest and toughest males in the troop would regularly go to the garbage dump there to forage for food. Subordinate males, however, did not go � so when the brutal and despotic alpha males of Forest Troop all ate meat infected with bovine tuberculosis at the dump and promptly died, the less aggressive 50 per cent of the group's males survived. And the troop's whole culture changed. Male baboons are so obsessed with status that they are always on a hair-trigger for aggression � and it isn't just directed at male rivals of equal status. Lower-ranking males routinely get bullied and terrorized, and even females (who weigh half as much as males) are frequently attacked and even bitten. You really would not want to live your life as a baboon. Yet after the biggest, baddest males of Forest Troop all died off at once, the whole social atmosphere changed. When it was first studied by primatologists in 1979-82, it was a typical, utterly vicious baboon society, but after the mass die-off of the bullies the surviving members relaxed and began treating one another more decently. The males still fight even today � they are baboons, after all � but they quarrel with other males of equal rank rather than beating up on social inferiors, and they don't attack the females at all. Everybody spends much more time in grooming, huddling close together, and other friendly social behavior, and stress levels even for the lowest-ranking individuals (as measured by hormone samples) are far lower than in other baboon troops. Most important of all, these new behaviors have become entrenched in the troop's culture. Male baboons rarely live more than 18 years: The low-status survivors of the original disaster are all gone now. All the current adult males of the Forest Troop are baboons who joined it as adolescents after 1982, so by now the range of male personalities in Forest Troop must have returned to the normal baboon distribution. But the level of aggression has not returned to baboon-normal. "We don't yet understand the mechanism of transmission," said Robert Sapolsky, a biology and neurology professor at Stanford University who co-authored the 2004 report on the Forest Troop phenomenon, "but the jerky new guys are obviously learning: We don't do things like that around here.'" Human beings are less aggressive and more co-operative than baboons or even chimpanzees, and a thousand times more flexible in our cultural arrangements: Most of us now live quite comfortably in pseudo-bands called nations that are literally a million times bigger than the bands our ancestors lived in until the rise of civilization. War is deeply embedded in our history and our culture, probably since before we were even fully human, but weaning ourselves away from it should not be a bigger mountain to climb than some of the other changes we have already made in the way we live, given the right incentives. And we have certainly been given the right incentives: The holiday from history that we have enjoyed since the early '90s may be drawing to an end, and another great-power war, fought next time with nuclear weapons, may be lurking in our future. The "firebreak" against nuclear weapons use that we began building after Hiroshima and Nagasaki has held for well over half a century now. But the proliferation of nuclear weapons to new powers is a major challenge to the stability of the system. So are the coming crises, mostly environmental in origin, which will hit some countries much harder than others, and may drive some to desperation. Add in the huge impending shifts in the great-power system as China and India grow to rival the United States in GDP over the next 30 or 40 years and it will be hard to keep things from spinning out of control. With good luck and good management, we may be able to ride out the next half-century without the first-magnitude catastrophe of a global nuclear war, but the potential certainly exists for a major die-back of human population. We cannot command the good luck, but good management is something we can choose to provide. It depends, above all, on preserving and extending the multilateral system that we have been building since the end of World War II. The rising powers must be absorbed into a system that emphasizes co-operation and makes room for them, rather than one that deals in confrontation and raw military power. If they are obliged to play the traditional great-power game of winners and losers, then history will repeat itself and everybody loses. Our hopes for mitigating the severity of the coming environmental crises also depend on early and concerted global action of a sort that can only happen in a basically co-operative international system. When the great powers are locked into a military confrontation, there is simply not enough spare attention, let alone enough trust, to make deals on those issues, so the highest priority at the moment is to keep the multilateral approach alive and avoid a drift back into alliance systems and arms races. And there is no point in dreaming that we can leap straight into some never-land of universal brotherhood; we will have to confront these challenges and solve the problem of war within the context of the existing state system. The solution to the state of international anarchy that compels every state to arm itself for war was so obvious that it arose almost spontaneously in 1918. The wars by which independent states had always settled their quarrels in the past had grown so monstrously destructive that some alternative system had to be devised, and that could only be a pooling of sovereignty, at least in matters concerning war and peace, by all the states of the world. So the victors of World War I promptly created the League of Nations. But the solution was as difficult in practice as it was simple in concept. Every member of the League of Nations understood that if the organization somehow acquired the ability to act in a concerted and effective fashion, it could end up being used against them, so no major government was willing to give the League of Nations any real power. Instead, they got World War II, and that war was so bad � by the end the first nuclear weapons had been used on cities � that the victors made a second attempt in 1945 to create an international organization that really could prevent war. They literally changed international law and made war illegal, but they were well aware that all of that history and all those reflexes were not going to vanish overnight. It would be depressing to catalogue the many failures of the United Nations, but it would also be misleading. The implication would be that this was an enterprise that should have succeeded from the start, and has failed irrevocably. On the contrary; it was bound to be a relative failure at the outset. It was always going to be very hard to persuade sovereign governments to surrender power to an untried world authority which might then make decisions that went against their particular interests. In the words of the traditional Irish directions to a lost traveler: "If that's where you want to get to, sir, I wouldn't start from here." But here is where we must start from, for it is states that run the world. The present international system, based on heavily armed and jealously independent states, often exaggerates the conflicts between the multitude of human communities in the world, but it does reflect an underlying reality: We cannot all get all we want, and some method must exist to decide who gets what. That is why neighboring states have lived in a perpetual state of potential war, just as neighboring hunter-gatherer bands did 20,000 years ago. If we now must abandon war as a method of settling our disputes and devise an alternative, it only can be done with the full co-operation of the world's governments. That means it certainly will be a monumentally difficult and lengthy task: Mistrust reigns everywhere and no nation will allow even the least of its interests to be decided upon by a collection of foreigners. Even the majority of states that are more or less satisfied with their borders and their status in the world would face huge internal opposition from nationalist elements to any transfer of sovereignty to the United Nations. The good news for humans is that it looks like peaceful conditions, once established, can be maintained. And if baboons can do it, why not us? The U.N. as presently constituted is certainly no place for idealists, but they would feel even more uncomfortable in a United Nations that actually worked as was originally intended. It is an association of poachers turned game-keepers, not an assembly of saints, and it would not make its decisions according to some impartial standard of justice. There is no impartial concept of justice to which all of mankind would subscribe and, in any case, it is not "mankind" that makes decisions at the United Nations, but governments with their own national interests to protect. To envision how a functioning world authority might reach its decisions, at least in its first century or so, begin with the arrogant promotion of self-interest by the great powers that would continue to dominate U.N. decision-making and add in the crass expediency masquerading as principle that characterizes the shifting coalitions among the lesser powers in the present General Assembly: It would be an intensely political process. The decisions it produced would be kept within reasonable bounds only by the need never to act in a way so damaging to the interest of any major member or group of members that it forced them into total defiance, and so destroyed the fundamental consensus that keeps war at bay. There is nothing shocking about this. National politics in every country operates with the same combination: a little bit of principle, a lot of power, and a final constraint on the ruthless exercise of that power based mainly on the need to preserve the essential consensus on which the nation is founded and to avoid civil war. In an international organization whose members represent such radically different traditions, interests, and levels of development, the proportion of principle to power is bound to be even lower. It's a pity that there is no practical alternative to the United Nations, but there isn't. If the abolition of great-power war and the establishment of international law is truly a hundred-year project, then we are running a bit behind schedule but we have made substantial progress. We have not had World War III, and that is thanks at least in part to the United Nations, which gave the great powers an excuse to back off from several of their most dangerous confrontations without losing face. No great power has fought another since 1945, and the wars that have broken out between middle-sized powers from time to time � Arab-Israeli wars and Indo-Pakistani wars, mostly � seldom lasted more than a month, because the U.N.'s offers of ceasefires and peacekeeping troops offered a quick way out for the losing side. If you assessed the progress that has been made since 1945 from the perspective of that terrifying time, the glass would look at least half-full. The enormous growth of international organizations since 1945, and especially the survival of the United Nations as a permanent forum where the states of the world are committed to avoiding war (and often succeed), has already created a context new to history. The present political fragmentation of the world into more than 150 stubbornly independent territorial units will doubtless persist for a good while to come. But it is already becoming an anachronism, for, in every other context, from commerce, technology, and the mass media to fashions in ideology, music, and marriage, the outlines of a single global culture (with wide local variations) are visibly taking shape. It is very likely that we began our career as a rising young species by exterminating our nearest relatives, the Neanderthals, and it is entirely possible we will end it by exterminating ourselves, but the fact that we have always had war as part of our culture does not mean that we are doomed always to fight wars. Other aspects of our behavioral repertoire are a good deal more encouraging. There is, for example, a slow but quite perceptible revolution in human consciousness taking place: the last of the great redefinitions of humanity. At all times in our history, we have run our affairs on the assumption that there is a special category of people (our lot) whom we regard as full human beings, having rights and duties approximately equal to our own, and whom we ought not to kill even when we quarrel. Over the past 15,000 or 20,000 years we have successively widened this category from the original hunting-and-gathering band to encompass larger and larger groups. First it was the tribe of some thousands of people bound together by kinship and ritual ties; then the state, where we recognize our shared interests with millions of people whom we don't know and will never meet; and now, finally, the entire human race. There was nothing in the least idealistic or sentimental in any of the previous redefinitions. They occurred because they were useful in advancing people's material interests and ensuring their survival. The same is true for this final act of redefinition: We have reached a point where our moral imagination must expand again to embrace the whole of mankind. It's no coincidence that the period in which the concept of the national state is finally coming under challenge by a wider definition of humanity is also the period that has seen history's most catastrophic wars, for they provide the practical incentive for change. But the transition to a different system is a risky business: The danger of another world war which would cut the whole process short is tiny in any given year, but cumulatively, given how long the process of change will take, it is extreme. That is no reason not to keep trying. Our task over the next few generations is to transform the world of independent states in which we live into some sort of genuine international community. If we succeed in creating that community, however quarrelsome, discontented, and full of injustice it will probably be, then we shall effectively have abolished the ancient institution of warfare. Good riddance.

#### Only multilateralism allows a diplomatic solution to Syria and prevents a US strike

AIC 9/2 – Alternative Information Center, “an internationally oriented, progressive, joint Palestinian-Israeli activist organization” (“Syria: multilateralism, negotiations key,” September 2 2013, http://www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/politics/opinions/6983-syria-multilateralism-negotiations-key) //JG

Washington’s failure to initiate an immediate military action on Syria over the alleged use of banned chemical weapons has established a before and after in the relations of force in the Middle East.¶ ¶ The Obama administration wanted to teach the Assad regime a lesson it would never forget. However, Washington encountered serious obstacles; its coalition of supporters became a coalition of disapprovers, including the British House of Commons and the American Congress.¶ ¶ In its rush to bomb Syria, the Obama administration attempted to bypass international institutions, rendering the UN Security Council meaningless. However it failed in this attempt because the unilateral post-cold war world is returning to multilateralism, restricting the freedom of action that US led forces previously enjoyed.¶ ¶ People throughout Europe and North America learned their governments won't hesitate to lie and fabricate evidence to justify pre-planned military adventures, such as occurred with the 2004 occupation of Iraq. The interests of western corporations in promoting war became more visible via the attacks on Iraq and, later, on Libya. In Syria, now, neo-conservatives are attempting to revive the concept of humanitarian intervention as an excuse for yet another military escapade.¶ ¶ Turning away a military adventure improves the chances for a political solution to the Syrian crisis. We hope all sides in Syria will take advantage of this renewed opportunity.¶ ¶ The risk for provocations that renew the threat of a military strike on Syria still exists and will continue as long as no negotiated solution for the Syrian conflict is found. It is no secret that Israel and its hawkish colleagues among the North Atlantic powers mourn Obama's failure (so far) to attack Syria and the danger that major political forces will rationally chose the option of negotiations.

#### Syria strike fails and risks US/Russian war

Sanghoee 9/3 – Banker, political, and business commentator for the Huffington Post (Sanjay, “Cold War Chess: Why a Strike on Assad Would be Good for Russia, Bad for America, and Useless for Syria,” Huffington Post, September 3, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sanjay-sanghoee/cold-war-chess-why-a-stri\_b\_3860497.html) //JG

While there is a strong moral argument to be made to attack Assad's regime in Syria in the wake of the chemical attacks that killed hundreds of civilians, America should tread cautiously and pay closer attention to Russia's role in all this.¶ On the face of it, Vladimir Putin's warning to the US against an attack on Syria is par for the course. Russia always hates the idea of its historical enemy exerting its military muscle anywhere, and has supported Assad for a long time. However, beneath the predictable rhetoric lies a dangerous current of neo-Cold War tendencies that seem to be taking hold in the former Soviet Union, and which should worry America very much.¶ Military powers throughout history have required an enemy to generate strong nationalism and to keep the ruling class in business. Prior to the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Russia had just such an enemy in the US, which enabled the Kremlin to keep strict control of its people and wage a global game of high-stakes chess against the West. The Cold War was the perfect cover for those who wanted to rule with an iron fist - because there was a clear (if mostly fabricated) threat to be addressed.¶ But then everything changed, and the ruling bloc in Russia found their influence in the world and their power over their own people declining, mainly because of a lack of a war to be fought and an enemy to be defeated. With capitalist corruption having replaced communist corruption as the poison of choice, the new influencers were the oligarchs, the billionaire industrialists and media tycoons who controlled the nation through their obscene wealth.¶ Enter Putin, a former member of the security services and a stubborn throwback to the old Cold Warriors of Russia, who could not see himself sharing power with nouveau riche businessmen and gangsters, and preferred the tyranny of government to the tyranny of money. But to remain in power in the new Russia, Putin cannot simply unleash the secret police every time he wants (or at least not as freely as his predecessors could during the Cold War) and needs an enemy to fight in order to rally the Russian people behind his government. He needs a basis for his power, and the new enemy, of course, is the old one - the US - and the new conflict, naturally, is the old one.¶ In other words, a return to the Cold War, consisting of a clash of ideologies and global interests.¶ But Putin is no fool. He has no intention of fighting this new conflict on his own shores, or even directly on American soil. Not when he can do it through satellite states like Syria and Iran, a model that the former Soviet Union had perfected during the original Cold War and which also has the benefit of enabling Russia to control the oil supplies in those countries.¶ By supporting the dictatorial regimes in such places and by threatening to side with them during any conflict with the West, Russia has laid a land mine for us. Never mind Putin's words. If the US attacks Syria, it will give the Russian leader the excuse he wants to mobilize his military and political apparatus behind a new Cold War, and that is precisely what he wants.¶ Of course, America cannot and should not be bullied by Russia, and if attacking Syria is the right thing to do then by all means we should. However - and this is a big one - given the stakes here for us, it is worth asking whether such a limited strike against Assad's military capabilities will accomplish anything at all. For one thing our nation has been badly burned by two messy wars, our financial resources depleted, and our military stretched thin, and for another the limited strikes being contemplated, consisting solely of Cruise Missile attacks, will do absolutely nothing to deter Assad. If anything, they will strengthen his resolve and give him further excuse for brutality.¶ Given that, the only thing that we will achieve by attacking Syria at this time is to assuage our national conscience by making a statement about the use of chemical weapons. But that is a statement that the whole world has already made, and Assad has clearly rejected it and shown no intention of adhering to any international laws governing warfare, so how why would he change his mind now? Especially since the current attack would leave his setup more or less intact.¶ So unless America is prepared to wage an all-out conflict in Syria aimed at toppling Assad, deal with the aftermath - which is sure to involve chaos and renewed fundamentalism like in Egypt, and give Putin the excuse to accelerate his timetable of launching a new Cold War, we should hold off on intervention, at least for now.¶ Whether we like it or not, we are now playing a game of diplomatic and military chess in the Middle East, and like any good player, we must think through several moves ahead if we want to have any hopes of winning. So far our government has not done that. There does not seem to be any 'plan' except to launch a largely symbolic attack, which will do nothing except paint us into a corner and limit our future options.¶ Like I said, there is a moral case for intervention in Syria, but even a moral action requires a coherent strategy in order to be effective, and so far the US has none on Syria. Until we have that, making any precipitous move, even with Congressional approval, could have harmful consequences for us and the world.

#### Outweighs every impact

Bostrum ’02 (Dr. Nick, Dept. Phil @ yale, “Existential Risks: Analyzing Human Extinction Scenarios and Related Hazards,” [www.transhumanist.com/volume9/risks.html](http://www.transhumanist.com/volume9/risks.html))

A much greater existential risk emerged with the build-up of nuclear arsenals in the US and the USSR. An all-out nuclear war was a possibility with both a substantial probability and with consequences that might have been persistent enough to qualify as global and terminal. There was a real worry among those best acquainted with the information available at the time that a nuclear Armageddon would occur and that it might annihilate our species or permanently destroy human civilization.[4] Russia and the US retain large nuclear arsenals that could be used in a future confrontation, either accidentally or deliberately. There is also a risk that other states may one day build up large nuclear arsenals. Note however that a smaller nuclear exchange, between India and Pakistan for instance, is not an existential risk, since it would not destroy or thwart humankind’s potential permanently. Such a war might however be a local terminal risk for the cities most likely to be targeted. Unfortunately, we shall see that nuclear Armageddon and comet or asteroid strikes are mere preludes to the existential risks that we will encounter in the 21st century.

Only the plan solves - any step short of unconditional removal of the embargo means won’t create the same symbol of multilateralism

Vivanco 6- LLM from Harvard Law School, Americas director of Humans Rights Watch

(Jose Miguel, “Restraint, not force, will bring change to Cuba”, humans rights watch, 12/22/06, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2006/12/21/restraint-not-force-will-bring-change-cuba>, google scholar)//KW

This reluctance would be understandable but misguided. Most Cubans do want change. If they do not call for it after Mr Castro's death, it will be largely for the same reason they did not during his lifetime: the country's repressive machinery, which ruined countless lives, remains intact today.

If the international community misreads this silence, it will miss a historic opportunity. Immediately after Mr Castro's death, the Cuban government will be more vulnerable to pressure for change than ever before. Raúl Castro, who has already taken over the reigns of power, may wield the same old instruments of repression. But he will not enjoy his brother's revolutionary stature, which at times has been as vital as the repression for perpetuating the regime. This window of opportunity is unlikely to last. Raul Castro may never match his brother's unique combination of personal charisma and political cunning; yet, he could easily acquire the other trait that Fidel exploited so effectively: the heroic image of the Latin American David confronting the US Goliath.

Whether Raúl Castro can claim the "David" role will depend largely on Washington. He will be virtually guaranteed the part if the Bush administration stays the 40–year course of unilateral embargo and unconditional ultimatum. It is hard to think of a policy that has a longer track record of failure. Cuba is no more open now than when the embargo was first imposed four decades ago. If anything, the policy consolidated Mr Castro's hold by giving his government an excuse for its problems and a pretext for its abuses. Moreover, because the policy was imposed in such heavy–handed fashion, it enabled Mr Castro to garner sympathy abroad, neutralising international pressure rather than increasing it. While other governments may have been concerned about political repression in Cuba, they were unwilling to be seen as siding with a bully.

To its credit, the Bush administration responded to news of Mr Castro's decline in August with surprising restraint, with President George W. Bush saying Cuba's citizens should determine their future. But if Washington hopes for influence in Cuba, it must do much more. First, it will need to lift the embargo. Nothing short of this will work, not even the "calibrated response" espoused by the Clinton administration, in which the US would ease the embargo in response to Cuban reforms. Why would the Cuban government make concessions when the embargo helps keep it in power?

Yet, it would be naïve to think the embargo's end would prompt the Cuban government to change its ways. Instead, a more measured and multilateral approach is needed, in which other governments in the region take the lead in pressing Cuba to respect political freedoms. Finding allies willing to assume this role will not be easy. But it may be the only hope for real change. By making the effort, the US could begin to reverse the dynamic that helped keep Mr Castro in power. Only when the US stops acting like Goliath will Cuba stop looking like David.