#### Now is key to solve US-Latin American Relations

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Hugo ChaÏvez lies in tomb at Venezuela’s military aca≠demy, Cuba’s economy creaks unsteadily open, and Washington’s loyal friend Mexico stands poised to reassert its influence across Latin America. American students of foreign policy see a window of opportunity, and they are clamoring for stepped up US involvement with its neighbors to the south. The New America Foundation’s Parag Khanna has urged US policymakers to “look south, not east”; New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman and American Interest co-­founder William Russell Meade are just two of the notables who have echoed that view.1 But in doing so, many are also chiding the recent era of “benign neglect” that has characterized US­ Latin American relations. (Coined by Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan to describe inner city violence in the 1960s, “benign neglect” was appropriated by Latin Americanists after an influential 1973 Foreign Affairs article.2) Prominent among them is Foreign Policy magazine CEO David Rothkopf, who warns that because “the D team” of foreign policy has managed President Barack Obama’s Latin America policy the president is “presid[ing] over the descent of US­ Latin America relations to their worst level in years”.3¶ In some respect, he’s right. Washington has no envoy shuttling about Latin America, much less an express initiative aimed at achieving region­-wide peace. Instead of schemes to incite a group of allies to counterbalance a foe, Wikileaks cables showed persistent US indiffe­rence to Latin American affairs. Nearly a decade has passed since the United States expended real effort to create an Alaska ­to­ Argentina free trade zone. Beyond regular dealings with Mexico and Colombia, the State Department and other arms of the US government ex­ pend little energy on Latin America.

#### Plan boosts US credibility in the region and salvages regional cooperation – sends a signal to Latin America that the US is willing to be reasonable.

White 3/7 –([Robert E. White](http://www.ciponline.org/about-us/experts-staff/robert_white), a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy, was the United States ambassador to Paraguay from 1977 to 1979 and to El Salvador from 1980 to 1981, “After Chávez, a Chance to Rethink Relations With Cuba “ NYTimes March 7, 2013 <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/08/opinion/after-chavez-hope-for-good-neighbors-in-latin-america.html?pagewanted=1&_r=0&partner=rss&emc=rss-Accessed-7-9-13-RX>)

Yet for a half-century, our policies toward our southern neighbors have alternated between intervention and neglect, inappropriate meddling and missed opportunities. The death this week of President [Hugo Chávez](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/c/hugo_chavez/index.html?inline=nyt-per) of Venezuela — who along with Fidel Castro of [Cuba](http://www.nytimes.com/info/cuba?inline=nyt-geo) was perhaps the most vociferous critic of the United States among the political leaders of the Western Hemisphere in recent decades — offers an opportunity to restore bonds with potential allies who share the American goal of prosperity.¶ Throughout his career, the autocratic Mr. Chávez used our embargo as a wedge with which to antagonize the United States and alienate its supporters. His fuel helped prop up the rule of Mr. Castro and his brother Raúl, Cuba’s current president. The embargo no longer serves any useful purpose (if it ever did at all); President Obama should end it, though it would mean overcoming powerful opposition from Cuban-American lawmakers in Congress.¶ An end to the Cuba embargo would send a powerful signal to all of Latin America that the United States wants a new, warmer relationship with democratic forces seeking social change throughout the Americas.¶ I joined the State Department as a Foreign Service officer in the 1950s and chose to serve in Latin America in the 1960s. I was inspired by President John F. Kennedy’s creative response to the revolutionary fervor then sweeping Latin America. The 1959 Cuban revolution, led by the charismatic Fidel Castro, had inspired revolts against the cruel dictatorships and corrupt pseudodemocracies that had dominated the region since the end of Spanish and Portuguese rule in the 19th century.¶ Kennedy had a charisma of his own, and it captured the imaginations of leaders who wanted democratic change, not violent revolution. Kennedy reacted to the threat of continental insurrection by creating the [Alliance for Progress](http://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/AllianceforProgress), a kind of Marshall Plan for the hemisphere that was calculated to achieve the same kind of results that saved Western Europe from Communism. He pledged billions of dollars to this effort. In hindsight, it may have been overly ambitious, even naïve, but Kennedy’s focus on Latin America rekindled the promise of the [Good Neighbor Policy](http://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/GoodNeighbor) of Franklin D. Roosevelt and transformed the whole concept of inter-American relations.¶ Tragically, after Kennedy’s assassination in 1963, the ideal of the Alliance for Progress crumbled and “la noche mas larga” — “the longest night” — began for the proponents of Latin American democracy. Military regimes flourished, democratic governments withered, moderate political and civil leaders were labeled Communists, rights of free speech and assembly were curtailed and human dignity crushed, largely because the United States abandoned all standards save that of anti-Communism.¶ During my Foreign Service career, I did what I could to oppose policies that supported dictators and closed off democratic alternatives. In 1981, as the ambassador to [El Salvador](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/elsalvador/index.html?inline=nyt-geo), I refused a demand by the secretary of state, [Alexander M. Haig Jr.](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/21/us/politics/21haig.html), that I use official channels to cover up the Salvadoran military’s responsibility for the murders of four American churchwomen. [I was fired and forced out of the Foreign Service.](http://www.nytimes.com/1981/03/12/world/former-envoy-to-el-salvador-says-his-views-have-led-to-his-ouster.html)¶ The Reagan administration, under the illusion that Cuba was the power driving the Salvadoran revolution, turned its policy over to the Pentagon and C.I.A., with predictable results. During the 1980s the United States helped expand the Salvadoran military, which was dominated by uniformed assassins. We armed them, trained them and covered up their crimes.¶ After our counterrevolutionary efforts failed to end the Salvadoran conflict, the Defense Department asked its research institute, the RAND Corporation, what had gone wrong. RAND analysts found that United States policy makers had refused to accept the obvious truth that the insurgents were rebelling against social injustice and state terror. As a result, “we pursued a policy unsettling to ourselves, for ends humiliating to the Salvadorans and at a cost disproportionate to any conventional conception of the national interest.”¶ Over the subsequent quarter-century, a series of profound political, social and economic changes have undermined the traditional power bases in Latin America and, with them, longstanding regional institutions like the Organization of American States. The organization, which is headquartered in Washington and which excluded Cuba in 1962, was seen as irrelevant by Mr. Chávez. He promoted the creation of the [Community of Latin American and Caribbean States](http://www.celac.gob.ve/index.php?lang=en) — which excludes the United States and Canada — as an alternative.¶ At a regional meeting that included Cuba and excluded the United States, Mr. Chávez said that “the most positive thing for the independence of our continent is that we meet alone without the hegemony of empire.”¶ Mr. Chávez was masterful at manipulating America’s antagonism toward Fidel Castro as a rhetorical stick with which to attack the United States as an imperialist aggressor, an enemy of progressive change, interested mainly in treating Latin America as a vassal continent, a source of cheap commodities and labor.¶ Like its predecessors, the Obama administration has given few signs that it has grasped the magnitude of these changes or cares about their consequences. After President Obama took office in 2009, Latin America’s leading statesman at the time, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, then the president of Brazil, urged Mr. Obama to normalize relations with Cuba.¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ Lula, as he is universally known, correctly identified our Cuba policy as the chief stumbling block to renewed ties with Latin America, as it had been since the very early years of the Castro regime.¶ After the failure of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, Washington set out to accomplish by stealth and economic strangulation what it had failed to do by frontal attack. But the clumsy mix of covert action and porous boycott succeeded primarily in bringing shame on the United States and turning Mr. Castro into a folk hero.¶ And even now, despite the relaxing of travel restrictions and Raúl Castro’s announcement that he will retire in 2018, the implacable hatred of many within the Cuban exile community continues. The fact that two of the three Cuban-American members of the Senate — Marco Rubio of Florida and Ted Cruz of Texas — are rising stars in the Republican Party complicates further the potential for a recalibration of Cuban-American relations. (The third member, Senator Robert Menendez, Democrat of New Jersey, is the new chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, but his power has been weakened by a continuing ethics controversy.)¶ Are there any other examples in the history of diplomacy where the leaders of a small, weak nation can prevent a great power from acting in its own best interest merely by staying alive?¶ The re-election of President Obama, and the death of Mr. Chávez, give America a chance to reassess the irrational hold on our imaginations that Fidel Castro has exerted for five decades. The president and his new secretary of state, John Kerry, should quietly reach out to Latin American leaders like President [Juan Manuel Santos](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/juan_manuel_santos/index.html) of Colombia and [José Miguel Insulza](http://www.oas.org/en/about/secretary_general.asp), secretary general of the Organization of American States. The message should be simple: The president is prepared to show some flexibility on Cuba and asks your help.¶ Such a simple request could transform the Cuban issue from a bilateral problem into a multilateral challenge. It would then be up to Latin Americans to devise a policy that would help Cuba achieve a sufficient measure of democratic change to justify its reintegration into a hemisphere composed entirely of elected governments.¶ If, however, our present policy paralysis continues, we will soon see the emergence of two rival camps, the United States versus Latin America. While Washington would continue to enjoy friendly relations with individual countries like Brazil, Mexico and Colombia, the vision of Roosevelt and Kennedy of a hemisphere of partners cooperating in matters of common concern would be reduced to a historical footnote.

#### Cuba is key to US-Latin American Relations-specifically spills-over to *global* coop on warming- overcomes alt causes

Shifter ‘12 - (Michael is an Adjunct Professor of Latin American Studies at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and writes for the Council's journal Foreign Affairs. He serves as the President of Inter-American Dialogue. “Remaking the Relationship: The United States and Latin America,” April, IAD Policy Report, http://www.thedialogue.org/PublicationFiles/IAD2012PolicyReportFINAL.pdf)

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. Many of the issues on the hemispheric agenda carry critical global dimensions. Because of this, the United States should seek greater cooperation and consultation with Brazil, Mexico, and other countries of the region in world forums addressing shared interests. Brazil has the broadest international presence and influence of any Latin American nation. In recent years it has become far more active on global issues of concern to the United States. The United States and Brazil have clashed over such issues as Iran’s nuclear program, non-proliferation, and the Middle East uprisings, but they have cooperated when their interests converged, such as in the World Trade Organization and the G-20 (Mexico, Argentina, and Canada also participate in the G-20), and in efforts to rebuild and provide security for Haiti. Washington has worked with Brazil and other Latin American countries to raise the profile of emerging economies in various international financial agencies, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. 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 presumptionof 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.

#### That’s key to solve warming

Slaughter‘11 - (Anne-Marie, Bert G. Kerstetter '66 university professor of politics and international affairs at Princeton University, “Problems Will Be Global -- And Solutions Will Be, Too”, Foreign Policy, Sept/Oct, Issue 188, Ebsco)

Driving this massive multilateralization is the increasingly global and regional nature of our problems, combined with an expanding number of countries splitting off from existing states. National governments will remain essential for many purposes, but managing bilateral relations and engaging in successful global negotiations with nearly 200 states will become increasingly unwieldy. So we'll negotiate territorial disputes in the South China Sea in a regional framework and deal with crises in Ivory Coast or Guinea through the African Union or even smaller subregional forums. At the global level, the speed and flexibility necessary to resolve crises require smaller groups like the G-20, while long-term legitimacy and durability still require the representation of all countries affected by a particular issue through large standing organizations. As for individual countries, the states that will be the strongest in 2025 will be those that have figured out how to do more with less. They will be those governments that have successfully embraced radical sustainability -- maintaining vibrant economies through largely renewable energy and creative reuse of just about everything. The leader will be Japan, a great civilization that has for centuries pioneered spectacularly beautiful ways of appreciating and coexisting with nature. As China's youth seek more of everything, Japan's are prepared to embrace a far more sustainable path. Scandinavia, Germany, New Zealand, and possibly South Korea will also be strong; many emerging or even less developed economies have real potential, if they can tap into their indigenous habits of conservation. Embracing sustainable growth will challenge the United States; its national renewal will depend on connecting its traditions of innovation, decentralization, and liberty with a narrative of protecting America's natural bounty. Think America the Beautiful more than the Star-Spangled Banner. But the most dramatic changes between 2011 and 2025 won't take place at the level of statecraft and grand strategy; they are likely to happen as new technologies continue to transform businesses, civic organizations of all kinds, universities, foundations, and churches -- now able to self-organize as never before around issues they care about. The American social revolution that Alexis de Tocqueville observed in the early 19th century, of citizens joining groups of every conceivable kind, is about to go global, forever changing the relationship between citizens and their governments, and governments with each other. The Arab revolutions are but the first taste of this larger change. These predictions may appear rosy. In fact, the enormous changes on the horizon will require major crises, even cataclysm, before they can materialize. It took World War I to generate the political will and circumstances necessary to create the League of Nations; it took World War II to create the United Nations; it took the worst economic crisis since the 1930s to force the expansion of the G-8 into the G-20. Just imagine what it will take to break the decades-old logjam of Security Council reform. And creating and changing multilateral organizations is child's play next to the profound changes in public and private behavior required to move away from the more-is-better economic model to one which accepts that our resources are finite on a planetary scale. Yet the sources of potential crises and disasters of a magnitude sufficient to force systemic change are all around us: Climate change is driving countries closer to the extremes of desert and jungle, droughts and floods, while a global pandemic or a nuclear terrorist attack would have a similar impact. This is not Malthusian gloom, however. As Robert Wright argues in Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny, catastrophe is terrible for individual human beings but beneficial for humanity as a whole. As the full consequences of genuinely global interconnectedness continue to make themselves felt, the world of both states and the societies they represent will have no choice but to adapt.

#### Warming is real and anthropogenic

EDF ‘09 - [Environmental Defense Fund, a US-based nonprofit environmental advocacy group, “Global Warming Myths and Facts,” 1/13/2009, http://mrgreenbiz.wordpress.com/2009/01/13/global-warming-myths-and-facts-2/]

**There is no debate among scientists about the basic facts of global warming**. The most respected scientific bodies have stated unequivocally that global **warming is occurring, and people are causing it** by burning fossil fuels (like coal, oil and natural gas) and cutting down forests. The U.S. National Academy of Sciences, which in 2005 the White House called "the gold standard of objective scientific assessment," issued a joint statement with 10 other National Academies of Science saying "the scientific understanding of climate change is now sufficiently clear to justify nations taking prompt action. It is vital that all nations identify cost-effective steps that they can take now, to contribute to substantial and long-term reduction in net global greenhouse gas emissions." (Joint Statement of Science Academies: Global Response to Climate Change [PDF], 2005) The only debate in the science community about global warming is about how much and how fast warming will continue as a result of heat-trapping emissions. Scientists have given a clear warning about global warming, and we have more than enough facts — about causes and fixes — to implement solutions right now. MYTH Even if global warming is a problem, addressing it will hurt American industry and workers. FACT A well designed trading program will harness American ingenuity to decrease heat-trapping pollution cost-effectively, jumpstarting a new carbon economy. Claims that fighting global warming will cripple the economy and cost hundreds of thousands of jobs are unfounded. In fact, companies that are already reducing their heat-trapping emissions have discovered that cutting pollution can save money. The cost of a comprehensive national greenhouse gas reduction program will depend on the precise emissions targets, the timing for the reductions and the means of implementation. An independent MIT study found that a modest cap-and-trade system would cost less than $20 per household annually and have no negative impact on employment. Experience has shown that properly designed emissions trading programs can reduce compliance costs significantly compared with other regulatory approaches. For example, the U.S. acid rain program reduced sulfur dioxide emissions by more than 30 percent from 1990 levels and cost industry a fraction of what the government originally estimated, according to EPA. Furthermore, a mandatory cap on emissions could spur technological innovation that could create jobs and wealth. Letting global warming continue until we are forced to address it on an emergency basis could disrupt and severely damage our economy. It is far wiser and more cost-effective to act now. MYTH Water vapor is the most important, abundant greenhouse gas. So if we’re going to control a greenhouse gas, why don’t we control it instead of carbon dioxide (CO2)? FACT Although water vapor traps more heat than CO2, because of the relationships among CO2, water vapor and climate, to fight global warming nations must focus on controlling CO2. Atmospheric levels of CO2 are determined by how much coal, natural gas and oil we burn and how many trees we cut down, as well as by natural processes like plant growth. Atmospheric levels of water vapor, on the other hand, cannot be directly controlled by people; rather, they are determined by temperatures. The warmer the atmosphere, the more water vapor it can hold. As a result, water vapor is part of an amplifying effect. Greenhouse gases like CO2 warm the air, which in turn adds to the stock of water vapor, which in turn traps more heat and accelerates warming. Scientists know this because of satellite measurements documenting a rise in water vapor concentrations as the globe has warmed. **The best way to lower temperature and** thus reduce **water vapor levels is to reduce CO2 emissions.** MYTH Global warming and extra CO2 will actually be beneficial — they reduce cold-related deaths and stimulate crop growth. FACT **Any beneficial effects will be far outweighed by damage and disruption.** Even a warming in just the middle range of scientific projections would have devastating impacts on many sectors of the economy. Rising seas would inundate coastal communities, contaminate water supplies with salt and increase the risk of flooding by storm surge, affecting tens of millions of people globally. Moreover, extreme weather events, including heat waves, droughts and floods, are predicted to increase in frequency and intensity, causing loss of lives and property and throwing agriculture into turmoil. Even though higher levels of CO2 can act as a plant fertilizer under some conditions, scientists now think that the "CO2 fertilization" effect on crops has been overstated; in natural ecosystems, the fertilization effect can diminish after a few years as plants acclimate. Furthermore, increased CO2 may benefit undesirable, weedy species more than desirable species. Higher levels of CO2 have already caused ocean acidification, and scientists are warning of potentially devastating effects on marine life and fisheries. Moreover, higher levels of regional ozone (smog), a result of warmer temperatures, could worsen respiratory illnesses. Less developed countries and natural ecosystems may not have the capacity to adapt. The notion that there will be regional “winners” and “losers” in global warming is based on a world-view from the 1950’s. We live in a global community. Never mind the moral implications — when an environmental catastrophe creates millions of refugees half-way around the world, Americans are affected. MYTH Global warming is just part of a natural cycle. The Arctic has warmed up in the past. FACT The global warming we are experiencing is not natural. **People are causing it**. People are causing global warming by burning fossil fuels (like oil, coal and natural gas) and cutting down forests. Scientists have shown that these activities are pumping far more CO2 into the atmosphere than was ever released in hundreds of thousands of years. **This buildup of CO2 is the biggest cause of global warming**. Since 1895, scientists have known that CO2 and other greenhouse gases trap heat and warm the earth. As the warming has intensified over the past three decades, scientific scrutiny has increased along with it. Scientists have considered and ruled out other, natural explanations such as sunlight, volcanic eruptions and cosmic rays. (IPCC 2001) Though natural amounts of CO2 have varied from 180 to 300 parts per million (ppm), today's CO2 levels are around 380 ppm. That's 25% more than the highest natural levels over the past 650,000 years. Increased CO2 levels have contributed to periods of higher average temperatures throughout that long record. (Boden, Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center) As for previous Arctic warming, it is true that there were stretches of warm periods over the Arctic earlier in the 20th century. The limited records available for that time period indicate that the warmth did not affect as many areas or persist from year to year as much as the current warmth. But that episode, however warm it was, is not relevant to the issue at hand. Why? For one, a brief regional trend does not discount a longer global phenomenon. We know that the planet has been warming over the past several decades and Arctic ice has been melting persistently. And unlike the earlier periods of Arctic warmth, there is no expectation that the current upward trend in Arctic temperatures will reverse; the rising concentrations of greenhouse gases will prevent that from happening. MYTH We can adapt to climate change — civilization has survived droughts and temperature shifts before. FACT Although humans as a whole have survived the vagaries of drought, stretches of warmth and cold and more, entire societies have collapsed from dramatic climatic shifts. The current warming of our climate will bring major hardships and economic dislocations — untold human suffering, especially for our children and grandchildren. We are already seeing significant costs from today's global warming which is caused by greenhouse gas pollution. Climate has changed in the past and human societies have survived, but today six billion people depend on interconnected ecosystems and complex technological infrastructure. What's more, **unless we limit the amount of heat-trapping gases we are putting into the atmosphere, we will face a warming trend unseen since human civilization began** 10,000 years ago. (IPCC 2001) The consequences of continued warming at current rates are likely to be dire. Many densely populated areas, such as low-lying coastal regions, are highly vulnerable to climate shifts. A middle-of-the-range projection is that the homes of 13 to 88 million people around the world would be flooded by the sea each year in the 2080s. Poorer countries and small island nations will have the hardest time adapting. (McLean et al. 2001) In what appears to be the first forced move resulting from climate change, 100 residents of Tegua island in the Pacific Ocean were evacuated by the government because rising sea levels were flooding their island. Some 2,000 other islanders plan a similar move to escape rising waters. In the United States, the village of Shishmaref in Alaska, which has been inhabited for 400 years, is collapsing from melting permafrost. Relocation plans are in the works. <continues…> Scarcity of water and food could lead to major conflicts with broad ripple effects throughout the globe. Even if people find a way to adapt, the wildlife and plants on which we depend may be unable to adapt to rapid climate change. While the world itself will not end, the world as we know it may disappear. MYTH Recent cold winters and cool summers don’t feel like global warming to me. FACT While different pockets of the country have experienced some cold winters here and there, the overall trend is warmer winters. Measurements show that over the last century the Earth’s climate has warmed overall, in all seasons, and in most regions. Climate skeptics mislead the public when they claim that the winter of 2003–2004 was the coldest ever in the northeastern United States. That winter was only the 33rd coldest in the region since records began in 1896. Furthermore, a single year of cold weather in one region of the globe is not an indication of a trend in the global climate, which refers to a long-term average over the entire planet. MYTH Global warming can’t be happening because some glaciers and ice sheets are growing, not shrinking. FACT In most parts of the world, the retreat of glaciers has been dramatic. The best available scientific data indicate that Greenland's massive ice sheet is shrinking. Between 1961 and 1997, the world’s glaciers lost 890 cubic miles of ice. The consensus among scientists is that rising air temperatures are the most important factor behind the retreat of glaciers on a global scale over long time periods. Some glaciers in western Norway, Iceland and New Zealand have been expanding during the past few decades. That expansion is a result of regional increases in storm frequency and snowfall rather than colder temperatures — not at all incompatible with a global warming trend. In Greenland, a NASA satellite that can measure the ice mass over the whole continent has found that although there is variation from month to month, over the longer term, the ice is disappearing. In fact, there are worrisome signs that melting is accelerating: glaciers are moving into the ocean twice as fast as a decade ago, and, over time, more and more glaciers have started to accelerate. What is most alarming is the prediction, based on model calculations and historical evidence, that an approximately 5.4 degree Fahrenheit increase in local Greenland temperatures will lead to irreversible meltdown and a sea-level rise of over 20 feet. Since the Arctic is warming 2-3 times faster than the global average, this tipping point is not far away. The only study that has shown increasing ice mass in Greenland only looked at the interior of the ice sheet, not at the edges where melting occurs. This is actually in line with climate model predictions that global warming would lead to a short-term accumulation of ice in the cold interior due to heavier snowfall. (Similarly, scientists have predicted that Antarctica overall will gain ice in the near future due to heavier snowfall.) The scientists who published the study were careful to point out that their results should not be used to conclude that Greenland's ice mass as a whole is growing. In addition, their data suggested that the accumulation of snow in the middle of the continent is likely to decrease over time as global warming continues. MYTH Accurate weather predictions a few days in advance are hard to come by. Why on earth should we have confidence in climate projections decades from now? FACT Climate prediction is fundamentally different from weather prediction, just as climate is different from weather. It is often more difficult to make an accurate weather forecast than a climate prediction. The accuracy of weather forecasting is critically dependent upon being able to exactly and comprehensively characterize the present state of the global atmosphere. Climate prediction relies on other, longer ranging factors. For instance, we might not know if it will be below freezing on a specific December day in New England, but we know from our understanding of the region's climate that the temperatures during the month will generally be low. Similarly, climate tells us that Seattle and London tend to be rainy, Florida and southern California are usually warm, and the Southwest is often dry and hot. Today’s climate models can now reproduce the observed global average climates over the past century and beyond. Such findings have reinforced scientist’s confidence in the capacity of models to produce reliable projections of future climate. Current climate assessments typically consider the results from a range of models and scenarios for future heat-trapping emissions in order to identify the most likely range for future climatic change.

#### Warming kills billions

Cummins ‘10 - (Ronnie, International Director – Organic Consumers Association and Will Allen, Advisor – Organic Consumers Association, writer since 1960s- with extensive experience in environmental campaigns as well as sustainable agriculture he has served as the Director of PFC and GDAAGMO “Climate Catastrophe: Surviving the 21st Century”, 2-14, http://www.commondreams.org/view/2010/02/14-6)

The hour is late. Leading climate scientists such as James Hansen are literally shouting at the top of their lungs that the world needs to reduce emissions by 20-40% as soon as possible, and 80-90% by the year 2050, if we are to avoid climate chaos, crop failures, endless wars, melting of the polar icecaps, and a disastrous rise in ocean levels. Either we radically reduce CO2 and carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e, which includes all GHGs, not just CO2) pollutants (currently at 390 parts per million and rising 2 ppm per year) to 350 ppm, including agriculture-derived methane and nitrous oxide pollution, or else survival for the present and future generations is in jeopardy. As scientists warned at Copenhagen, business as usual and a corresponding 7-8.6 degree Fahrenheit rise in global temperatures means that the carrying capacity of the Earth in 2100 will be reduced to one billion people. Under this hellish scenario, billions will die of thirst, cold, heat, disease, war, and starvation. If the U.S. significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions, other countries will follow. One hopeful sign is the recent EPA announcement that it intends to regulate greenhouse gases as pollutants under the Clean Air Act. Unfortunately we are going to have to put tremendous pressure on elected public officials to force the EPA to crack down on GHG polluters (including industrial farms and food processors). Public pressure is especially critical since "just say no" Congressmen-both Democrats and Republicans-along with agribusiness, real estate developers, the construction industry, and the fossil fuel lobby appear determined to maintain "business as usual."

#### Unilateralism causes great power war via self-sufficient trading blocs

**Kupchan 12** – (Ph.D. in international relations from Oxford, Associate Professor of International Relations @gtown, Senior Fellow and Director of Europe Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, Charles Kupchan, “Sorry, Mitt: It Won't Be an American Century”, FEBRUARY 6, 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/06/it\_won\_t\_be\_an\_american\_century?page=0,2)

In an election season, such talk rolls easily off the tongue. But Romney's hackneyed rhetoric is woefully out of step -- both with an American electorate hungry for a less costly brand of foreign policy and with a world in the midst of tectonic change. A sharp **economic downturn** and **expensive, inconclusive conflicts** in Iraq and Afghanistan have left Americans ready for a focus on the home front. Abroad, the charge for the next U.S. president can hardly be to stick his head in the sand and deny that the global distribution of power is fast changing. On the contrary, it is to react soberly and steadily to the implications of such change and ensure that the United States remains secure and prosperous even as economic and military strength spreads to new quarters. President Barack Obama is on the correct path. Leaving Iraq and overseeing a paced withdrawal from Afghanistan will bring U.S. commitments back into line with U.S. interests. Special operations and drone strikes have proved far more effective in fighting al Qaeda than has occupying countries in the Middle East and South Asia, and an offshore posture in the Persian Gulf is the best way to deal with Iran. Amid **China's rise** and the **economic dynamism** building in its neighborhood, Obama is right to downsize the U.S. presence in Europe and orchestrate a strategic "pivot" to East Asia. The move constitutes a necessary hedge against Chinese ambition and ensures that American workers will benefit from expanding markets in the Pacific Rim. These policies will enable the United States to simultaneously adjust to a shifting global landscape, husband its resources, and grow its economy -- facilitating the president's pledge to focus on "nation-building here at home." Romney has already denigrated Obama's pragmatism, charging that "our president thinks America is in decline." Obama shot back in his State of the Union address on Jan. 24 that "anyone who tells you that America is in decline … doesn't know what they're talking about." Obama decidedly has the upper hand in this back-and-forth. He recognizes that, the country's strengths notwithstanding, U.S. strategy must adjust to a world in which power will be more broadly distributed. And his focus on rebuilding the American economy speaks directly to an electorate yearning for more equity and prosperity at home. According to a recent Pew Research Center survey, **46 percent of Americans** want the United States to "mind its own business," and 76 percent think the country should "concentrate more on our own national problems" than on foreign challenges. These are high numbers by historical standards -- a clear indication that the **electorate** is hurting economically and wary of **strategic overreach**. Romney should take note. His chest-thumping talk of a new American century still plays well in some quarters. But Obama's commitment to nation-building at home will play even better. Even if Romney's rhetoric were to get more domestic traction, it would still bear no resemblance to the new global landscape that is fast emerging. The United States is indeed an exceptional nation -- in its prized geographic location, commitment to freedom and democracy, and brand of international leadership. But the country's exceptionalism should not be used as an excuse to hide from global realities. China's GDP will catch up with America's over the course of the next decade. The World Bank predicts that the dollar, euro, and China's renminbi will become co-equals in a "multi-currency" monetary system by 2025. Goldman Sachs expects the collective GDP of the top four developing countries -- Brazil, China, India, and Russia -- to match that of the G-7 countries by 2032. The United States will no doubt exit the current slump and bounce back economically in the years ahead. Nonetheless, a more level global playing field is inevitable. To be sure, America's military superiority will remain second to none for decades to come. As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have made amply clear, though, military primacy hardly ensures effective influence. And with the **U.S. defense budget poised to shrink** in the service of restoring the country's fiscal health, the United States will have to pick its fights carefully. Shrewd and judicious statecraft will be at least as important as raw power in ensuring the country's security. To acknowledge the need for the United States to adjust to prospective shifts in the global distribution of power is not, as Duke University professor Bruce Jentleson recently pointed out in Democracy, to be a declinist or a pessimist. It is to be a realist. And safely guiding the United States through this coming transition requires seeing the world as it is rather than retreating toward the illusory comfort of denial. Adjusting to the rise of the rest requires, for starters, making more room at the table for newcomers. That process is already well under way. The G-20 has supplanted the G-8, widening the circle for global consultations. In the aftermath of reforms adopted in 2010, developing countries now have enhanced weight at the World Bank and IMF. The enlargement of the U.N. Security Council, though currently bogged down in wrangling, is also in the offing. But making international institutions more representative is the easy part. More challenging will be managing the ideological diversity that will accompany the coming realignment in global power. Precisely because the United States is an exceptional nation, its version of liberal democracy may well prove to be the exception, not the rule. In China, Russia, and the sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf, state-led brands of capitalism are holding their own -- and may well do so for the foreseeable future. The Arab Spring could finally bring democratic rule to at least some countries in the Middle East, but it is also breeding political Islam; democratization should not be mistaken for Westernization. Even emerging powers that are already democracies, such as India, Brazil, and Turkey, are charting their own paths. They regularly break with the United States and Europe on trade, Middle East diplomacy, military intervention, the environment, and other issues, preferring to side with other ascending states, whether democratic or not. Romney's paeans to American power are no excuse for his silence on how he plans to manage these complexities. Promoting international stability will grow more demanding as rising powers bring to the table their differing conceptions of order and governance. The United States has a key role to play in managing such diversity and channeling it toward cooperative ends. Overheated proclamations of American preeminence, however, will do more harm than good. If a new, consensual international order is to emerge, rising powers must be treated as stakeholders in that order, not merely as objects of American power. Shepherding the transition to this more pluralistic world is arguably the defining challenge facing U.S. statecraft in the years ahead. Romney appears ready to pave over this challenge by denying that such change is afoot and attempting to portray Obama's policies as "an eloquently justified surrender of world leadership." Obama should welcome this debate and refuse to let his opponents hide behind the veil of American exceptionalism. Democrats no longer need to feel vulnerable on national security; Obama has demonstrated smarts and strength on many issues, including the degradation of al Qaeda, the pivot to Asia, and the isolation of Iran. He understands that agile, firm diplomacy backed by American power will do much more for the United States than congratulatory talk of American primacy. A smarter, more selective, and less costly U.S. role in the world would not only help the United States get its own house in order, but also give rising powers the wider berth they seek. And good policy would also be good politics; Americans are keen to share with others the burdens and responsibilities of international engagement. The world desperately needs a brand of U.S. leadership that focuses not on ruling the roost, but on guiding a more diverse and unwieldy globe to consensus and cooperation.

####  repeal would represent a commitment to multilateralism for the international community

**Burgsdorff 09 –** (Ph. D in Political Science from Freiburg University, EU Fellow at the University of Miami (Sven Kühn von, “Problems and Opportunities for the Incoming Obama Administration”, <http://aei.pitt.edu.proxy.lib.umich.edu/11047/1/vonBurgsdorfUSvsCubalong09edi.pdf>)//NG)

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 plan fosters a credible conflict resolution model which prevents conflict in Kashmir and the Middle East – status quo policies risk disengagement

**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>) // NG

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 causes extinction

Beck 5/28 – Middle East Analyst at The Commentator, extensive journalism background, two ivy league degrees (Noah, “A nuclear Middle East is doomsday, 5/28/13, [http://www.thecommentator.com/article/3633/a\_nuclear\_middle\_east\_is\_doomsday)//SJF](http://www.thecommentator.com/article/3633/a_nuclear_middle_east_is_doomsday%29//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.

#### Cuban agroecology is at risk – it’s the best model and solves mass food shortages

Raj Patel, Fellow at the Institute for Food and Development Policy, 2012

(April, What Cuba Can Teach Us About Food and Climate Change, www.slate.com/articles/health\_and\_science/future\_tense/2012/04/agro\_ecology\_lessons\_from\_cuba\_on\_agriculture\_food\_and\_climate\_change\_.single.html)

The Studebakers plying up and down Havana’s boardwalk aren’t the best advertisement for dynamism and innovation. But if you want to see what tomorrow’s fossil-fuel-free, climate-change-resilient, high-tech farming looks like, there are few places on earth like the Republic of Cuba. Under the Warsaw Pact, Cuba sent rum and sugar to the red side of the Iron Curtai/n. In exchange, it received food, oil, machinery, and as many petrochemicals as it could shake a stick at. From the Missile Crisis to the twilight of the Soviet Union, Cuba was one of the largest importers of agricultural chemicals in Latin America. But when the Iron Curtain fell, the supply lines were cut, and tractors rusted in the fields. Unable to afford the fertilizers and pesticides that 20th-century agriculture had taken for granted, the country faced extreme weather events and a limit to the land and water it could use to grow food. The rest of the world will soon face many of the same problems: In the coming decade, according to the OECD, we’ll see higher fuel and fertilizer costs, more variable climate patterns, and limits to arable land that will drive cereal prices 20 percent higher and hike meat prices by 30 percent—and that’s just the beginning. Policymakers can find inspirational and salutary ideas about how to confront this crisis in Cuba, the reluctant laboratory for 21st-century agriculture. Cuban officials faced the crisis clumsily. They didn’t know how to transform an economy geared toward sweetening Eastern Europe into one that could feed folk at home. Agronomists had been schooled in the virtues of large-scale industrial collective agriculture. When the “industrial” part became impossible, they insisted on yet more collectivization. The dramatic decline in crop production between 1990 and 1994, during which the average Cuban lost 20 pounds, was known as “the Special Period.” Cubans have a line in comedy as dark as their rum. Cuban peasants proved more enterprising than the government and demanded change. First, they wanted control over land. The state had owned 79 percent of arable land, and most was run in state cooperatives. Initially the government refused to listen, but the depth of the crisis and the demands of organized farmers created some space for change. Through reform, the government decentralized farm management. The land remains in government hands, but now it is also available with “usufruct” rights to tenants, who can invest in the soil and pass the land onto their children. But that took the farmers only so far. So some of the country’s agronomists, plant breeders, soil scientists, and hydrologists (Cuba has 2 percent of Latin America’s population but 11 percent of its scientists) found themselves being put to use by Cuban peasants in the fields. Their task: figure out how to farm without the fossil-fuel products upon which the country’s agricultural systems had become dependent. With no fertilizer, pesticide, or herbicide, and no means to import substitute chemicals, many in the scientific community landed on “agro-ecology.” To understand what agro-ecology is, it helps first to understand why today’s agriculture is called “industrial.” Modern farming turns fields into factories. Inorganic fertilizer adds nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorous to the soil; pesticides kill anything that crawls; herbicides nuke anything green and unwanted—all to create an assembly line that spits out a single crop. This is modern monoculture. Agro-ecology uses nature’s far more complex systems to do the same thing more efficiently and without the chemistry set. Nitrogen-fixing beans are grown instead of inorganic fertilizer; flowers are used to attract beneficial insects to manage pests; weeds are crowded out with more intensive planting. The result is a sophisticated polyculture—that is, it produces many crops simultaneously, instead of just one. In Cuba, peasants encouraged scientists to adopt this approach. One of their most important ideas, borrowed from elsewhere in Central America, was a model of knowledge diffusion called “Campesino a Campesino”—peasant to peasant. Farmers share their results and ideas with one another and with scientists, which has helped agro-ecological systems spread. So has it worked? That’s up for debate. The Cuban vice minister of the economy and planning ministry reportedly said in February 2007 that 84 percent of the country’s food was imported—not terribly encouraging, if we are looking at Cuba to foretell our agricultural future. But a recent paper by UC-Berkeley’s Miguel A. Altieri and the University of Matanzas’ Fernando R. Funes-Monzote suggests that while the country still imports almost all its wheat (a crop that doesn’t do well in the Caribbean), it now produces the majority of its fresh fruit and vegetables—even much of its meat. In 2007, Cubans produced more food while using one-quarter of the chemicals as they did in 1988. Agro-ecology is particularly valuable in years when disaster strikes the island. After Hurricane Ike flattened Cuba in 2008, a research team found that both traditional plantain monocultures and agro-ecological farms were devastated. But there were striking differences: Monocultures lost about 75 percent of tree cover, where agro-ecological farms lost 60 percent. On agro-ecological farms, tall plantains—a staple of the Caribbean diet—were often righted by the families working the land. By contrast, on conventional farms, the seasonal labor force arrived on the scene too late to save the plants. When trees were beyond salvage in the polyculture farms, crops lower down in the canopy thrived. By contrast, in the monoculture, the only things that flourished in the gaps between trees were weeds. About four months after the storm, strongly integrated agro-ecological farms were nearly back to full production. It took conventional farms an additional two months to spring back. Yet all is not well in the Cuban food system. For many, especially government officials, choosing agro-ecology wasn’t a red-blooded Communist decision. It was a practical one. They are quite ready for an industrial-agricultural relapse if the occasion arises. Recently, they have had an unlikely enabler: Hugo Chávez. In exchange for the 31,000 Cuban doctors who are treating Venezuelans, Cuba receives 100,000 barrels of oil a day, plus a great deal of chemical fertilizer. As a result, the parts of the country untouched by agro-ecology are starting to spray and sow like it’s the 1980s again. At odds aren’t just two different farming systems, but two different social approaches. On one hand, in Cuba and around the world, is industrial agriculture. In this top-down, command-and-control model, knowledge, fertilizers, seed, and land are all fed into the black box that is the farm. Wait long enough, and food comes out the other end. On the other hand, there’s agro-ecology, in which farmers are innovators and educators, soil can be built over generations, and the natural environment can be bent with, rather than broken. Climate change has already reduced global wheat harvests by 5 percent, and food prices are predicted to double by 2030. Cuba’s example is both instructive and frustrating. Technical innovations in Cuban agriculture point to the kinds of thinking needed to address the future: moving away from monoculture and understanding the value of complex, integrated systems. The trouble is that this also means a change in the mindset of governments and scientists schooled in last century’s agriculture. If that’s a lesson the rest of the world is ready for, Cuban peasant organizing could well light the way to the future, even if their automobiles are stuck in the past.

#### Access to the US market is key to the continued viability of Cuban organics

Kost 04 - William, Economist at the US Department of Agriculture, (CUBAN AGRICULTURE: TO BE OR NOT TO BE ORGANIC?, <http://www.ascecuba.org/publications/proceedings/volume14/pdfs/kost.pdf>)

For the U.S. organic market, in addition to a lifting of the U.S. embargo, Cuba would have to be certified by a USDA-accredited certification program that assures U.S. markets that Cuban products labeled organic meet all National Organic Program standards and regulations under the U.S. Organic Foods Production Act of 1990. If the U.S. embargo on Cuba were lifted, Cuban exports, once certified, could play a significant role in the U.S. organic market. In this current U.S. niche market, production costs are high. Opening the U.S. market would enable Cuba to exploit its significant comparative advantage in this area. This market could become a quick foreign exchange earner for Cuba. The largest barrier Cuba faces in expanding into the U.S. organic market will be meeting U.S. requirements for organic certification. Tapping the U.S. market may create sufficient price incentives for Cuban producers to take the necessary steps to meet the organic standards of other importing countries. Cuba could then expand production of organic produce geared to these specialty export markets. With sufficiently high prices for organic produce, urban labor may remain active in an organic urban gardening sector. Most likely, the viability of a vibrant organic produce production and processing sector in Cuba will depend on Cuba’s gaining access to the large, nearby U.S. market. Without such access, organic-oriented production of horticultural products in Cuba will likely remain a necessity-driven way to produce food for domestic consumption in an environment where other production approaches are just not available.

#### Economic isolation will force abandonment of Cuban ag

**King ’12 -** M. Dawn King, Professor of Environmental Studies at Brown, 3/21/12 (Cuban Sustainability: The Effects of Economic Isolation on Agriculture and Energy, wpsa.research.pdx.edu/meet/2012/kingmdawn.pdf)

Cuba is well-known for its alternative model of agriculture that focused on diversifying crops, increasing organic production, and localizing the food economy. While Cuba adopted this agricultural model out of necessity due to the massive decline of petroleum imports, their localized, organic food system was heralded world-wide as a model of sustainability. However, a less studied aspect of Cuban sustainability is how limited petroleum imports affected Cuban energy use and energy policy, and how the recent opening of the energy economy affects their organic agriculture model. Despite investments in solar, wind, and hydroelectric projects, Cuba’s main source of renewable energy, sugar bagasse, declined significantly due to the economic collapse of the 1990s and subsequent crumbling of the sugar industry’s infrastructure. Further, Cuba relies heavily on crude and liquid fuels for electricity generation, hardly a sustainable model. This paper argues that Cuba’s economic isolation during the early 1990s led to an environmentally friendly agricultural model, yet this same isolation could cripple the realization of a sustainable energy model and reduce their agricultural sustainability. The recent economic opening of the country to foreign investment could boost Cuba’s potential for increasing renewable energies, but it is also leading to increased chemical fertilizer and fossil fuel use – weakening Cuba’s sustainability.

#### Plan is key to investment in Cuban organoponics, leads to worldwide adoption

Shkolnick ’12 - Jacob, JD Candidate at Drake law school, Fall 2012, (SIN EMBARGO: n1 THE CUBAN AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE UNITED STATES” 17 Drake J. Agric. L. 683, lexis)

While investment in Cuban businesses and sales or purchases of Cuban products must still move through official channels under the joint venture law or other Cuban programs, the time is ripe for organizations in the United States to begin laying groundwork for closer ties with Cuban agricultural entities. Recent regulatory changes implemented by the U.S. government provide a means for individuals and businesses to begin forming the relationships with their Cuban counterparts that will lead to future trade opportunities. As previously mentioned, recent changes in U.S. policy now allow for any individual in the United States, not simply relatives, to donate money to Cuban citizens, though not to exceed $ 500 for any three month consecutive period, with the only restriction being that the recipient is not an official in the Cuban [\*704] government or the Communist Party. n162 Specifically written into these new regulations is the idea that these remittances may be spent "to support the development of private businesses." n163 A five hundred dollar infusion of capital to support a fledging business or farm can be enormously beneficial when the average monthly salary is only 448 pesos, or approximately twenty dollars. n164 Additional capital will enable small Cuban farms to expand operations by hiring additional help or perhaps purchasing additional farm animals. While purchasing a tractor may seem like an obvious choice for a growing farm, Medardo Naranjo Valdes of the Organoponico Vivero Alamar, a UBPC just outside of Havana, indicated that farm animals such as oxen would remain the preferred choice for the foreseeable future on the small and midsized farms that make up the majority of the newer agricultural cooperatives. n165 Not only do farm animals not require gasoline or incur maintenance costs beyond perhaps an occasional veterinarian charge, their waste can be used as fertilizer. Apart from additional labor, funds provided to agricultural cooperatives could be put to use in developing innovative pest control techniques that do not require the use of expensive pesticides or other chemicals. The Vivero Alamar is currently experimenting with a variety of natural pest control techniques such as introducing plants that serve as natural repellents to insects and the introduction of other insects that feed on harmful pests without harming the crops. n166 Investment in agricultural cooperatives done in this manner will likely fail to see much return on the investment for their foreseeable future, until policies in both the United States and Cuba are changed. For a relatively small sum, American investors will get not only the benefit of a close relationship with a Cuban farm that will become a new source of both import and export business in the future, but potentially gain access to innovative agricultural techniques that could be used in the United States immediately. Because the logistical structure needed to transport goods from large rural farms into city markets remains underdeveloped, urban and suburban agriculture makes up a growing portion of the food produced and consumed in Cuba. n169 As in other countries, the population trends in Cuba have continued to shift away from rural areas to more concentrated urban and suburban areas, with about [\*705] three-fourths of Cubans living in cities. n170 With this shift in population has also come a shift in the country's agricultural system. As of 2007, about 15% of all agriculture in Cuba could be classified as urban agriculture. n171 Not only have agricultural practices changed, but eating habits have as well. Without the Soviet Union to provide a ready source of income and the machinery needed to engage in large-scale livestock production, vegetable consumption has increased dramatically. n172 Nearly every urban area has direct access to a wide variety of locally grown, organic produce. n173 Many of the urban farms in Cuba, including the Vivero Alamar, make use of organoponics, a system where crops are produced in raised beds of soil on land that would otherwise be incapable of supporting intensive agricultural production. n174 Many of these raised beds can be constructed in a concentrated area to support a wide variety of produce, with the typical organoponic garden covering anywhere from one half to several hectares in size. n175 The rise of the organoponic production method was a shift away from the earlier centralized production model employed by the state. It has been supported through intensive research and development by a variety of state agencies, such as the National Institute of Agricultural Science, and continued development has been guided through intensive training and educational programs. n176 The organoponic system is not limited in its application to Cuban urban farms, but maintains potential to be applied worldwide, including in the United States. Urban agriculture in Cuba revitalized and put to use previously abandoned and unused land. A similar approach could be applied to the United States as a means to restore blighted areas. Applying Cuban-derived organoponics in U.S. cities could potentially open up an enormous amount of land that was previously unusable. From a business perspective, investing in an organoponic agricultural program in the United States is also a sound decision since the demand for local produce reached $ 4.8 billion in 2008 and is only expected to grow further, potentially reaching $ 7 billion in 2012. n178 [\*706] In an American city beset with high unemployment such as Detroit, Michigan, for example, investing in urban agriculture could potentially generate as many as five thousand new jobs. By utilizing Cuba's system of organoponics, the need to use expensive and complex farm machinery could be significantly reduced. Already companies in the United States, such as Farmscape Gardens in southern California, recognize what Cuba's organoponic system could achieve and have integrated it into their business practices. n180 Rachel Bailin, a partner in the company, indicated that it was Cuba's organic farming practices that helped inspire them to start a company devoted to urban agriculture. n181 They have already used Cuba's organoponic farming methods to produce more than 50,000 pounds of produce since the spring of 2009. n182 The potential for future growth in this industry is huge, as Farmscape Gardens' current levels of production make it the largest urban agriculture company in the state of California. n183 Cuba not only offers attractive prospects for trading in the future, but methods of agriculture pioneered out of necessity have broad prospects if applied to agriculture in the United States. As the demand for locally grown produce continues to increase, a cost-effective and proven agricultural model like Cuba's organoponic system may be just what is needed to allow for urban agriculture to flourish.

#### Cuba is the vanguard of a global model for sustainable agriculture

Ruiz-Marrero 6/9 - Carmelo Ruiz-Marrero is a research associate at the Institute for Social Ecology and director of the Puerto Rico Project on Biosafety<http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/06/07/cubas-other-revolution/>

Cuba is the one country in the world that has made the furthest strides, and in the shortest time, in moving from industrial conventional agricultural production to organic farming. This achievement has been celebrated and documented by numerous experts and observers, including land reform scholar Peter Rosset and agroecologist Miguel Altieri, academic bodies like the Latin American Scientific Society of Agroecology (SOCLA), and NGO’s such as Food First and the Worldwatch Institute, and have been the subject of a 2006 documentary, titled The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil (2).¶ The country was in a very unusual and critical situation at the beginning of the 1990’s. With the implosion of the Soviet block, the subsidies that Cuba received in the form of food and farm inputs ceased overnight, causing an unprecedented crisis. With the Torricelli and Helms-Burton Acts, passed in 1992 and 1996 respectively, the American embargo tightened its noose around Cuba’s economy, further worsening an already dire scenario. But the Caribbean island nation pulled through by way of a successful transformation of its agricultural model, moving it towards agroecological production largely based on small family farms.¶ Back in March in the Colombian city of Medellín I had the great pleasure of spending time with Cuban professors Fernando Funes and Luis Vásquez, both of them scientists of international renown and faculty members of SOCLA’s doctoral program (3). Between long walks through the city center and over beers in the Pilarica neighborhood, we talked at length about the challenges of agriculture, ecology and socialism. This article is based on those conversations and on published writings by Funes and other authors.¶ Funes says that following the withdrawal of Soviet support, “the critical situation created in Cuban agriculture propitiated the transformation of the agrarian structure and the reach of a new technological, economic, ecological and social dimension, with the end of achieving food security with new methods and strategies.” (4)¶ But before seeking to apply the Cuban experiences to other countries and contexts it is necessary to consider the country’s unique and extraordinary circumstances. The 1959 revolution and subsequent sweeping land reform were a unique happening in Latin American history: the landed ruling class was defeated, uprooted and expelled. The country’s wealth and land were redistributed; and as a result, access to land is not a problem, and all farmers in the country enjoy first-rate free education and health care. Latin America’s land-owning elites, assisted by the murderous US counterinsurgency, have not spared any resources, be they financial, ideological or military, to prevent another Cuban-style revolution in the Western hemisphere.¶ Nevertheless, many of Cuba’s lessons can be learned and applied in other countries. One of the key elements in the success of agroecology and food sovereignty in Cuba has been the support of the state. The Cuban experience demonstrates that a successful transition to agroecology requires major involvement by the public sector. The country’s organic revolution contradicts the common image of the Cuban government as bureaucratized and lacking in creativity or imagination. If the Cuban state were as inflexible and inefficient as the revolution’s derisive critics make it out to be, it would not have taken the right measures, and in a rapid and decisive manner, to avert a fatal food crisis.¶ Among the concrete steps taken by the government are the establishment of 276 centers for the reproduction of entomophages and entomopathogens (organisms that are natural enemies of pests), a National Urban Farming Program with 26 subprograms that span the production of vegetables, medicinal plants, condiments, grains, fruit, and animal breeding (hens, rabbits, sheep, goats, pigs, bees and fish) that are developed throughout the country, and a program for the promotion of ecological agriculture within the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP).¶ Funes explains the fundamentals of this ecological agrarian revolution: “These advances went from the use of biopesticides and biological controls, to different applications of biofertilizer, compost, earthworm humus, biosoils, animal traction, etc., on a grand scale and in a rapid manner.” The techniques explored and developed also included polyculture, rotation, intelligent use of nitrogen-fixing legumes, and a great variety of ecological solutions for pest and weed problems.¶ Along with innovation also came full acknowledgement of ancient traditions of great relevance and usefulness. Says Funes of the Cuban campesino sector’s recovery from the crisis:¶ “A mixture of traditional farming practices and organic fertilization common in the Cuban countryside, brought in from Europe by Spanish immigrants centuries back, and appropriate strategies for climate management, phases of the moon and many times even religious beliefs and sayings embedded in peasant wisdom, no doubt permitted this sector to be the one that showed a most convincing recovery- and in the least amount of time- to the crisis of inputs.”¶ But state action by itself, though necessary, is not enough to carry agroecology forward. This has been proven in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, where progressive governments oriented by Bolivariano anti-imperialist ideals fully favor food sovereignty and ecological agriculture and have made of them official state policy. These governments issued directives to this effect to the public universities and agriculture ministries, but nothing happened. Bureaucrats, agronomists and academic scholars raised and formed in the green revolution model of US-style industrial mechanized chemical-intensive farming, simply ignored the dictates from the higher echelons and continued doing what they had always done: promote monocultures and pesticides while ignoring the new agricultural practices and discourses that originated from ecology and grassroots mobilization.¶ Not to say that nothing was achieved there. The Andes region is one of the world’s hotbeds of peasant-based agroecological innovation, and Venezuela hosts the Paulo Freire Latin American Institute of Agroecology (IALA). But bureaucratic resistance from the mid-layers of government has thwarted the potential for a truly profound transformation of agriculture. The achievements of these three South American countries pale in comparison with Cuba’s organic revolution. How did Cuba do it?¶ Cuba prevented its organic agroecological revolution from suffering a bureaucratic death thanks to a combination of decentralization and participatory models. State enterprises were broken up into Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPC). According to Funes, this has given farmers the liberating feeling of being owners of the land they work by giving them real protagonism in decision-making processes, which has resulted in increased productivity. The word he uses is autogestión, a Latin American word that describes processes of self-management and enhanced individual autonomy in small-scale enterprises.¶ One of the hallmarks of Cuba’s agroecological revolution is the development of innovative and novel participatory methodologies of agricultural research with horizontal processes of discussion, validation and adaptation of new ideas and proposals. These methodologies, which owe much to Paulo Freire’s “Pedagogy of the Oppressed”, are known collectively as campesino a campesino (peasant to peasant). Born in the Mesoamerican region in the 1970’s, CAC has revolutionized ecological farming all over Latin America and is spreading all over the world. Its remarkable history is told in Food First director Eric Holt-Giménez’s book Campesino a Campesino: Voices from Latin America’s Farmer to Farmer Movement for Sustainable Agriculture (5).

#### Plan prevents Cuban backsliding

**King ’12** - M. Dawn King, Professor of Environmental Studies at Brown, 3/21/12, (Cuban Sustainability: The Effects of Economic Isolation on Agriculture and Energy, wpsa.research.pdx.edu/meet/2012/kingmdawn.pdf)

Cuba needed an alternative agricultural model when foreign oil imports were cut off significantly at the end of the 1980s, and the partial opening of the Cuban economy, focused on creating more autonomous agricultural cooperatives, in the 1990s helped diversify food crops and set Cuba along a path of increased food security. The Cuban model was initiated out of necessity, not because of any sort of Cuban environmental consciousness, yet better environmental conditions went hand in hand with the new development strategy. Cuba learned the limits of their agricultural model under their socialist economic system and it is in need of further transformation in both the agriculture and energy sectors. A further opening of the economy to joint ventures could help with updating the power grid and providing more sources of renewable energy – potentially expanding Cuba’s potential for a more sustainable means of energy security. Further, Cuba needs foreign investment to update agriculture facilities and take maximum advantage of cogeneration and biofuel potential with sugarcane waste. The strong state control of farming practices, used to successfully jumpstart the alternative model, has hit its limit. The Cuban government must begin loosening its grips on the domestic economy to allow for more competition in the farming sector. Despite the potential to become more sustainable with a purposive and focused opening of the economy, the recent surge in joint venture investment on expanding domestic oil extraction, petrochemical facilities, and oil refinery infrastructure reveals a trend toward decreasing environmental sustainability. Once heralded as the world’s most sustainable country by coupling environmental performance indicators with their human development scores, Cuba is slipping further away from this goal. Perhaps the most distressing part of this current trend is that it took Cuba decades to create a national identity that embraced sustainable environmental practices in both the energy and agricultural sector, and it seemingly took only a couple of years to derail these efforts. Undoubtedly, conservation efforts and sustainable education programs can only satiate citizen’s energy desires to a certain point. In order to further the quality of life in the country, electric production must increase to rural areas with little energy infrastructure and to Havana in order to spur foreign investment and domestic small business growth. Cuba’s trade agreement with Venezuela is bringing in much-needed petroleum for electricity production, but their dependence on a relatively unstable country for crude is trapping them into the same relationship that crippled their economy in 1990 – impairing their original goal of self-sufficiency. Cuba is at a turning point in their path toward environmental sustainability, and the current need for immediate foreign capital and increased energy production seem to be trumping its desire to achieve development sustainably. Cuba still has enough centralized control to leap-frog dirty electric production for cleaner renewable forms of energy and the potential to guide development strategies that emphasize investments in and research on renewable energy. It can utilize its expertise on organic farming strategies to increase sugar production in a much more ecologically friendly manner than their monoculture approach in the 1970s and 80s. Decisions made in the next five years will demonstrate whether Cuba embraces their newly created national identity as a society striving for sustainable development or rejects the goal of sustainable development to increase short-term capital and energy needs.

#### Plan won’t cause Cuban abandonment of agroecology

**Cornell ’09** - Christina Cornell, Research Associate at Council on Hemispheric Affairs, 4/17/09

(Cuba Elevates Urban Gardening to a Cause, <http://www.thecuttingedgenews.com/index.php?article=11525>)

Many worry whether Cuba’s budget and planning services will be able to maintain its commitment to urban agriculture and sustainable methods, as the country enters the global economy and faces pressures to restructure its economic and political system, especially as Washington nears a decision to lift the U.S.- Cuba trade embargo. As the economy opens, the tourism industry and multinational food corporations will compete for urban land and attempt to flood the Cuban market with cheap imported food products that could undermine the urban agricultural system. Havana must develop policies that will protect their growing agricultural sector, but also allow for international influence and trade to flourish. Although the opening of trade relations threatens local food production, Cuba’s success in the agriculture industry makes it a substantial contender in the global market. Its products are competitively priced and thus, have the ability to generate a considerable profit for the island nation. Not only will increased participation in international trade boost revenue, but it could also promote social reform in the country. Cuba’s urban centers, once underdeveloped and filthy, are now encouraging progressive goals, targeting rising living standards and sanitation concerns, while promoting national initiatives that will support future improvements in the urban landscapes. Agriculture for the Future Cuba’s successful implementation of urban agriculture should serve as a model for other developing countries, particularly in Latin America. By embracing more modern and effective methods of farming, countries theoretically have the opportunity to transform their local markets, augmenting the labor force and cultivating capital and infrastructure. Introduction to the global market would allow a country like Cuba to become an important economic actor, ultimately expanding its profits through competitive transactions and trade.

#### Energy intensive agriculture causes environmental degradation

Pfeiffer ’03 - Dale Allen, Geologist, science journalist, and editor of From the Wilderness, 10/3/2003

(Eating Fossil Fuels, [www.organicconsumers.org/corp/fossil-fuels.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/corp/fossil-fuels.cfm))

Just when agricultural output could expand no more by increasing acreage, new innovations made possible a more thorough exploitation of the acreage already available. The process of pest displacement and appropriation for agriculture accelerated with the industrial revolution as the mechanization of agriculture hastened the clearing and tilling of land and augmented the amount of farmland which could be tended by one person. With every increase in food production, the human population grew apace. At present, nearly 40% of all land-based photosynthetic capability has been appropriated by human beings. In the United States we divert more than half of the energy captured by photosynthesis. We have taken over all the prime real estate on this planet. The rest of nature is forced to make due with what is left. Plainly, this is one of the major factors in species extinctions and in ecosystem stress.

#### Ecological collapse risks extinction

Ehrlich & Ehrlich ’13 - Anne Paul Ehrlich, Professor of Biology and Senior Research Scientist at Stanford, 1/9/13 (Can a collapse of global civilization be avoided?,Proceedings of the Royal Society Biological Sciences, Proc. R. Soc. B 2013 280)

But today, for the first time, humanity’s global civilization—the worldwide, increasingly interconnected, highly technological society in which we all are to one degree or another, embedded—is threatened with collapse by an array of environmental problems. Humankind finds itself engaged in what Prince Charles described as ‘an act of suicide on a grand scale’ [4], facing what the UK’s Chief Scientific Advisor John Beddington called a ‘perfect storm’ of environmental problems [5]. The most serious of these problems show signs of rapidly escalating severity, especially climate disruption. But other elements could potentially also contribute to a collapse: an accelerating extinction of animal and plant populations and species, which could lead to a loss of ecosystem services essential for human survival; land degradation and land-use change; a pole-to-pole spread of toxic compounds; ocean acidification and eutrophication (dead zones); worsening of some aspects of the epidemiological environment (factors that make human populations susceptible to infectious diseases); depletion of increasingly scarce resources [6,7], including especially groundwater, which is being overexploited in many key agricultural areas [8]; and resource wars [9]. These are not separate problems; rather they interact in two gigantic complex adaptive systems: the biosphere system and the human socio-economic system. The negative manifestations of these interactions are often referred to as ‘the human predicament’ [10], and determining how to prevent it from generating a global collapse is perhaps the foremost challenge confronting humanity. The human predicament is driven by overpopulation, overconsumption of natural resources and the use of unnecessarily environmentally damaging technologies and socio-economic-political arrangements to service Homo sapiens’ aggregate consumption [11–17]. How far the human population size now is above the planet’s long-term carrying capacity is suggested (conservatively) by ecological footprint analysis [18–20]. It shows that to support today’s population of seven billion sustainably (i.e. with business as usual, including current technologies and standards of living) would require roughly half an additional planet; to do so, if all citizens of Earth consumed resources at the US level would take four to five more Earths. Adding the projected 2.5 billion more people by 2050 would make the human assault on civilization’s life-support systems disproportionately worse, because almost everywhere people face systems with nonlinear responses [11,21–23], in which environmental damage increases at a rate that becomes faster with each additional person. Of course, the claim is often made that humanity will expand Earth’s carrying capacity dramatically with technological innovation [24], but it is widely recognized that technologies can both add and subtract from carrying capacity. The plough evidently first expanded it and now appears to be reducing it [3]. Overall, careful analysis of the prospects does not provide much confidence that technology will save us [25] or that gross domestic product can be disengaged from resource use [26]

#### Polyculture is key to solving water shortages and ocean dead zones

Deway ’07 - James A. Dewar, 2007, [James A. Dewar is the Frederick S. Pardee Professor of Long-Term Policy Analysis at the Pardee RAND Graduate School. For the past 25 years, Dewar's main research interests have been strategic planning, planning methodologies, and policymaking under uncertainty,Rand Institute, ‘Perennial Polyculture Farming Seeds of Another Agricultural Revolution?”, <http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/occasional_papers/2007/RAND_OP179.pdf>]

Freshwater systems are contaminated throughout the world. Agriculture is not the only source of freshwater contamination, but it is a major one. The FAO identifies agriculture “as the single largest user of freshwater on a global basis and as a major cause of degradation of surface and groundwater resources through erosion and chemical runoff.”10 Common contaminants in freshwater systems from agricultural runoff include phosphorus nitrogen, metals, pathogens, sediment, pesticides, salt, and trace elements (e.g., selenium). The agricultural sources of those contaminants are primarily fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. Maps of freshwater contamination would not tell the story of water contamination by agriculture because of the contributions from industry and other sources. There is one area, however, in which the agricultural contribution to water contamination is reasonably clear. That is in the dead zones in the world’s oceans. A dead zone in the ocean is created by nitrogen and phosphorus (found in fertilizers) that wash down rivers and flow into the ocean. The nitrogen and phosphorus ignite algae and phytoplankton blooms. When these blooms die, they drop to the ocean floor and decompose, using up the oxygen of the deeper water. This severe depletion of oxygen—known as hypoxia—kills every oxygen-dependent sea creature in the area. There are now some 146 dead zones in the oceans of the world, and they cover a total area measured in tens of thousands of square miles. The circles in Figure 9 are the major dead zones (as of 2002). The colors indicate whether the dead zones are annual (red), episodic (blue), periodic (pink), or persistent (yellow). Most are annual dead zones that appear in the summer and autumn and disappear over the winter. From the map, it is clear that most of the dead zones are related to intensive agriculture in developed countries, although there are now dead zones in such developing countries as China, Brazil, and Mexico. With continued emphasis on fertilizers for improving productivity of agriculture in developing countries, dead zones are likely to continue to appear and to grow. Agriculture’s contribution to dead zones has been measured for some areas. Sources of nitrogen from the Mississippi River basin, for example, are estimated to include commercial fertilizers (41 percent); legumes (33 percent); animal manure (16 percent); atmospheric deposits (8 percent); and municipal and domestic wastes (1 percent).11 Clearly, if perennial polycultures could significantly reduce (or eliminate) the amount of commercial and animal fertilizers required for food production, the contaminants in freshwater basins would be reduced and the oceans’ dead zones would be significantly reduced. We know that fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, and other chemicals used in modern farming cause further contamination of ground water and waterways, but it is more difficult to say how much the situation would improve if those sources were significantly reduced because of the multisource nature of most water contamination. Nevertheless, in the best of scenarios, perennial polyculture farming could go a long way toward eliminating water and wind erosion, soil degradation, water depletion, and water contamination.

#### The United States federal government should normalize its trade relations with Cuba.

#### Plan solves immediately

Holmes ‘10 (G. Holmes, MA from Georgetown, “SEIZING THE MOMENT,” [https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstj ream/handle/10822/553334/holmesMichael.pdf?sequence=1](https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/553334/holmesMichael.pdf?sequence=1))

From an image stand point repealing the sanctions and removing the embargo is symbolic. It shows Cuba and the world that although the United States is pro democracy, it does not wish to impose its values on other nations. The Cuba Democracy Act was an attempt to force democratic changes in Cuba.10 By repealing the act the United States, illustrates that it respects the sovereignty of nations. Considering that this Act did allow for the application of U.S. law in a foreign country11, repealing it not only sends the message about U.S. views on sovereignty but also shows that the administration is taking steps to ensure that sovereignty is actually respected. Repealing the Helms-Burton Law will certainly stimulate foreign investment in Cuba as well. Many foreign countries were leery of investing in Cuba out of fear of being sued or losing property under the provisions established by the Helms-Burton Act.12 This return of foreign investment will further secure Cuba's place in the global marketplace. It also will help to silence skeptics who will question U.S. intentions. Since the sanctions against Cuba were unilateral U.S. actions, an unsolicited change in course will undoubtedly spark speculation. Allowing all countries to invest in Cuba again underscores the United States' position of desiring for all countries to participate in the global market place. It is difficult to imagine that the benefits of lifting the embargo will not be immediate and substantial in regards to the United States reputation in the world. Looking at the long-term benefits of removing the sanctions, the two benefits that stand out the most are trade and fuel.

#### Links are non-unique

**Taylor, 13** (Guy Taylor, 7/4/13, “Private talks hint at change in U.S.-Cuba relationship”, http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jul/4/private-talks-hint-at-change-in-us-cuba-relationsh/print/)//EM

The State Department has quietly been holding talks with a small but diverse cadre of Cuban natives in Washington — including democracy activists offering insider views of the communist island's politics — that analysts say could send shock waves through the long-standing debate about what a future U.S. policy toward Cuba should look like. Obama administration officials are mum on the closed-door meetings, including one held at Foggy Bottom last week with renowned Cuban hunger-striker Guillermo Farinas, who came bearing a somewhat paradoxical message: Most pro-democracy activists now operating in Cuba, which has been a Communist dictatorship and a U.S. enemy for more than a half-century, oppose lifting the long-standing U.S. embargo on trade with their nation. Such realities may not surprise close Cuba watchers, who say U.S. officials have known for years that ending the embargo might unleash a flow of badly needed foreign cash to the government of President Raul Castro — enhancing its ability to crush the island's fragile pro-democracy movement. But activists like Mr. Farinas are now being allowed to inject their views directly into the heart of Washington's foreign policy establishment, ironically because he and other dissidents have been allowed to take advantage of January's historic lifting by the Castro government of a decades-old ban on travel abroad. "The activists are feeling with their blood and bones the repression of the Cuban security apparatus," said Mauricio Claver-Carone, executive director of the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC in Washington. U.S. policymakers "now get to actually see it and feel it firsthand from the protagonists themselves," he said. "That's extraordinary and it's very helpful." The impact such visits are having on the Obama administration, however, is a subject of debate. Mr. Farinas' visit occurred in the shadow of headlines from a landmark meeting last month between U.S. and Cuban officials, who talked about possibly re-establishing direct mail service between the two nations. The two nations plan to meet July 17 to talk about regulating migration. Together, the negotiations have some in Washington wondering whether the Obama administration is looking to break the stalemate that has defined U.S. relations with Havana since Cuban leader Fidel Castro agreed to house Soviet ballistic missiles in 1961. Mr. Castro, 86, stepped down in 2008, and the top post is now held by his 82-year-old brother, who has allowed such incremental reforms as the easing of the ban on his citizens' travel. Raul Castro has said that he will step down when his five-year term ends in 2018. But Cuba remains on Washington's list of state sponsors of terrorism, and sources close to the Obama administration told The Washington Times that ongoing frustration with Havana's detention of American Alan Gross is likely to prevent the kind of wide-scale redefinition of policy some thought would come during Mr. Obama's presidency. Washington wants the release of Mr. Gross, a subcontractor who was arrested in 2009 while working for a U.S. Agency for International Development-funded program. Cuban authorities accused him of illegally delivering satellite phones to individuals in the nation's Jewish community and gave him a 15-year prison sentence. His detention served only to amplify back-channel tensions with Havana. The Castro government has for its part long complained about U.S. treatment of the "Cuban Five" — a group of Cuban intelligence officers convicted in Miami in 2001 of conspiracy to spy on U.S. military installations, Cuban exiles and anti-Castro politicians. 'Modest thaw' The recent move toward re-establishing direct mail with the U.S. and the upcoming talks on migration might seem insignificant within the context of such tensions. "These talks are not a major breakthrough," said Geoff Thale, a program director at the Washington Institute on Latin America. "But they are one more signal that there is at least a modest thaw in the relationship, a new willingness to talk." But even those modest steps have been criticized by some U.S. lawmakers, most prominently Cuban-American Republicans who represent districts in Florida heavy with anti-Castro exiles.

#### Unilateral lifting crucial - Cuba will use a condition to veto the plan

**Ratliff, 9 -** Research Fellow at the Independent Institute and a member of the Board of Advisors of the Institute’s Center on Global Prosperity. He is also a Research Fellow and Curator of the Americas Collection at the Hoover Institution(William, “Why and How to Lift the U.S. Embargo on Cuba”, 5/7,

http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=2496)

How has the embargo failed? It has not brought down the Castro brothers, advanced democracy, freedom, human rights or prosperity in Cuba, or gotten compensation for Americans whose assets Cuba seized decades ago. It largely denies Americans the freedom to travel to Cuba, or to trade freely and otherwise interact Cubans on the island. And in recent decades it has given Fidel the scapegoat he needs—us—to excuse his economic utopianism and brutality. Supporters of the embargo see it as an expression of America’s moral indignation at Castro’s brutal policies. By limiting the flow of dollars to Cuba we deny some funds to Cuban security forces, as they argue, but we simultaneously withhold support for the daily lives of the Cuban people. For twenty years the embargo placated the very noisy Cuban American community in Florida, but by late 2008 even a majority of Cuban Americans, according to a Florida International University poll, had turned against it. It isn’t that Cuban Americans are going soft on Fidel, but that a majority finally see or admit that this policy is more harmful than positive to its own interests. And it is harmful to U.S. interests as well, which ought to be our primary concern, alienating the Hemisphere and the world as a whole while having only negative impacts in Cuba. The Cuban American National Foundation, long the epicenter of anti-Castroism in the United States, recently admitted that for many years the embargo has been “little beyond posturing for domestic electoral purposes.” How can we best end this policy with a minimum of confrontation, frustration and delay? The only way we can keep full control of the process is by lifting it unilaterally. The State Department recently lauded the normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia. “It has long been and remains the position of the United States that normalization should take place without preconditions,” State said. So why not between the United States and Cuba, where the pain of the past hardly equals that of Turkey and Armenia? Is Castro a brutal dictator? Sure, but his atrocities are hardly worse than those of Robert Mugabe, the thug who rules Zimbabwe, a country we recognize. The United States demands more concessions from Cuba for recognition than from any other country in history. In fact, the Helms Burton Act is blatantly imperialistic, in the spirit of the Platt Amendment to the Monroe Doctrine a century ago, which poisoned U.S. relations with Cuba for decades. Negotiations without preconditions, which Obama says he supports, are the next best though potentially deeply flawed approach. Informal discussions between U.S. and Cuban diplomats already are underway. If Cuban pragmatists, including President Raul Castro, can over-ride Fidel’s anti-American passions, perhaps the United States, if we are very flexible, and Cuba can work out a step-by-step, face-saving plan to reduce tensions and normalize relations. The Obama administration got off to a positive start by dropping the misguided 2004 Bush administration restrictions on remittances and travel to Cuba, but then in public statements fell immediately into the trap of previous administrations by demanding “reciprocity.” This seems a just and reasonable demand, but in the propaganda-filled public arena it is a game-stopper. In practical terms, the public demand for reciprocity hands Cuba a veto over U.S. policy which it has used before to short-circuit emerging U.S. moderation. Cuba will never make tradeoffs on important matters so long as the core of the basically flawed embargo remains in place. Lifting the embargo would unleash a new dynamic and put full responsibility for Cuban rights violations and economic failure squarely on Cuba’s leaders where it belongs. We can hope, but can’t guarantee, that ending the embargo will encourage real domestic reforms in Cuba. We can guarantee that it will rid us of a demeaning, hypocritical and counterproductive policy.

#### Cuba says yes- Raul and economic reforms

**LeoGrande, 13** - professor in the Department of Government, School of Public Affairs at American University in Washington, D.C. (William, “The Danger of Dependence: Cuba's Foreign Policy After Chavez” World Politics Review, 4/2, <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/12840/the-danger-of-dependence-cubas-foreign-policy-after-chavez>)

In Cuba, Raúl Castro's historic economic reforms are moving the island toward a mixed socialist economy, and incipient political decompression is allowing more space for open debate. These changes, undertaken in response to domestic necessity rather than U.S. demands, are nevertheless moving Cuba in directions long cited by Washington as necessary for better relations. To exert any positive influence on the trajectory of Cuba's evolution, however, Washington has to engage not just with Cuban society but with Cuba's government.

Eager to put Cuba on a more solid footing before passing the torch to the next generation of leaders, Raúl Castro seems genuinely interested in opening talks with Washington. Unlike his older brother, Raúl did not make his political career by mobilizing nationalist sentiment against the United States. He has a strong incentive to settle this conflict so he can focus on renovating the Cuban economy and open it up to U.S. trade and investment.