

# Cubans' Rejection of Senator Rubio Demonstrates Their Independent Thinking

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*A recent [New York Times](#) profile of Marco Rubio accurately describes the junior Senator from Florida, and member of the three-ring circus that is the Republican Presidential primary field, as Cuba's "least favorite son." The piece quoted a Havana resident as saying Rubio is "against Cuba in every possible way... Rubio and these Republicans, they are still stuck in 1959." Presumably this view was representative of others that Times writer Jason Horowitz encountered while conducting his research in Cuba. This should not come as a surprise. Rubio is a reactionary fanatic who demagogues incessantly about the evils of the Cuban government. He supports illegal and immoral policies that cause vast damage to the Cuban economy and needless suffering by the Cuban people.*

But Rubio cannot accept that Cubans' nearly unanimous rejection of his right-wing politics might mean he is badly mistaken in his Manichean view of the Cuban socioeconomic system. Rubio wears Cubans' disapproval of him as a badge of honor. For Rubio, Cubans are incapable of independent judgement. If the Cuban people are against him, it means they must be brainwashed by the evil Castro regime.

"If that's the line the Cuban government has taken against me and is trying to indoctrinate their people in that way, it shows that we're on to something," the *Times* quotes Rubio as saying. But instead of acknowledging Rubio's refusal to accept Cuban popular opinion as evidence of his megalomania, the *Times* accepts his delusional dismissal of his critics.

The *Times* notes that Rubio "has been identified in the state-controlled newspaper here as a 'representative in the Senate of the Cuban-American terrorist mafia'." This claim is not analyzed; it is supposed to be self-evident, hyperbolic slander. In reality, Rubio has always marched in lock-step with the Cuban-American community in Miami that portrays Castro as diabolical and advocates for regime change and the overthrow of socialism. That much is beyond dispute. Is calling the Cuban-American community a "terrorist mafia" an exaggeration?

[Terrorists](#) operate freely in and around Miami. The Omega 7, Comandos F4, Brigade 2506, Alpha 66 and other groups have openly declared their intention to use violence to topple the Cuban government while training on U.S. soil. Many have carried out machine gun raids on coastal villages and attacks on Cuban fishing boats. Among many in the reactionary Cuban-American population, terrorist leaders are revered as "freedom fighters."

In its obituary of Orlando Bosch, described by George H.W. Bush's attorney general as "an unreformed terrorist," the [New York Times](#) noted that "his supporters called him a hero, holding rallies for him and lobbying to name a Miami expressway after him." The Miami city commissioners even declared an Orlando Bosch Day. Luis Posada Carriles, Bosch's [partner](#)

in planning the bombing of Cubana de Aviación Flight 455, which killed 73 people including the medal-winning Cuban fencing team, lives freely in Miami to this day. He has [marched](#) with the Cuban opposition group Ladies in White and Gloria Estefan, and taught courses at local colleges.

If it is not exactly precise to say Rubio is a “representative in the Senate of the Cuban-American terrorist mafia,” he does represent the hard-line of refusing to normalize relations with the Cuban government and maintaining punitive policies that harm the Cuban people – positions shared by both terrorists within the Miami Cuban-American community and a broader segment of that community that don’t actively participate in terrorism but support those who do.

The *Times*’ piece notes that a sign on the road in Cuba read “Blockade: The Worst Genocide in History.” A man sitting next to a sign with revolutionary slogans said of Rubio: “He wants to kill us! He’s our enemy!”

Rubio defended himself by saying it was “sad” the government tried to say he intended “to starve the Cuban people.” Rubio says such views of him are evidence of the “information blockade that the people in Cuba are facing,” thereby exonerating his opposition to President Obama’s moves to normalize relations.

In reality, the claims by the Cuban government, and people such as the man interviewed, have merit. The Cuban government says the “[US genocidal blockade](#)” is responsible for “severe adverse effects on the health and wellbeing of the Cuban people.” They justify their language by stating: “the blockade qualifies as an act of genocide by virtue of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948 and as an act of economic warfare according to the declaration regarding the laws of naval war adopted by the Naval Conference of London of 1909.”

While genocide is a legal term that should be examined by the proper legal authorities such as the International Court of Justice or the International Criminal Court, the Cuban government clearly has a legitimate case it could make. Serious study of the consequences of the embargo lend credence to the “severe adverse effects” that the Cuban government describes.

In 1997, a nonprofit charitable organization undertook a year-long research effort to assess the impact of the American policy of embargo on the health of the Cuban population. Their findings conclusively verified the arguments the Cuban government has been making since the embargo was implemented in 1960.

The American Association for World Health has determined that the U.S. embargo of Cuba has dramatically harmed the health and nutrition of large numbers of ordinary Cuban citizens... It is our expert medical opinion that the U.S. embargo has caused a significant rise in suffering – and even deaths – in Cuba,” states their [report](#), Denial of Food and Medicine: The Impact of the U.S. Embargo on Health & Nutrition in Cuba. The study also found that “a humanitarian catastrophe has been averted only because the Cuban government has maintained a high level budgetary support for a health care system designed to deliver primary and preventive health care to all its citizens.

So it is hardly an exaggeration for a Cuban to say Rubio wants to kill him, or to believe that the policy Rubio ardently advocates qualifies as genocide. But the *Times* doesn't bother to examine whether the policies Rubio supports are inhumane and potentially criminal. Rubio defends himself by saying that people are "scared" to oppose the Cuban government line, and that they don't know any better because their country is "dominated by government-controlled media."

The *Times* acknowledges that Cubans have a "uniformity of opinion" about Rubio, but attribute this to the popularity of *Granma*, the official paper of the Communist Party. One man interviewed by the *Times* tells the reporter he is informed, and points to a story "linking the C.I.A. to a notorious Cuban-American extremist suspected of blowing up a Cuban airline filled with passengers." This is implicitly another example of the embellishment and exaggeration of the Cuban government, spreading fantasies and conspiracy theories to turn its people against the United States.

The article most likely mentioned was "United States Considers Posada Carriles Probable Author of Terrorist Act," published in [Granma](#) on June 4, 2015 (about a month before the *Times* profile of Rubio.) The article, by a Cuban news service, reprints an article that appeared in the [Miami Herald](#) the same day.

In fact, there is extensive documentation of the article's claims on the National Security Archive's [Web site](#) that states unequivocally that "the CIA had concrete advance intelligence... on plans by Cuban exile terrorist groups to bomb a Cuban airliner." A section of the site titled "The CIA Connection" includes [multiple documents](#) implicating Posada.

It was previously mentioned that Posada - who nearly 20 years ago acknowledged responsibility in the pages of the *Times* for hotel bombings in Havana that killed an Italian tourist - enjoys sanctuary in Miami and is active among reactionary Cuban-American political groups.

So, rather than allowing Rubio to speculate on how the Cuban government allegedly manipulates Cubans into hating him, the *Times* might ask if it may have something to do with Rubio ignoring the fact that one of his own constituents is implicated in the murder of at least 75 innocent Cuban civilians?

It seems the Cuban public is much more informed about the terrorist activities by the CIA and extremists it was affiliated with than the American public, who will not find out from the *Times* that the allegations printed by *Granma* are substantiated by official declassified U.S. government documents. Neither will the *Times* hold to account a Presidential candidate who allows an unrepentant terrorist to enjoy safe harbor within the state he represents in Congress.

Cubans despise Rubio because he is a belligerent, war-mongering fanatic who panders to a reactionary base that demands the continuation of the most punitive policies of economic warfare in modern history. Instead of allowing Rubio to state unchallenged that he considers this a point of pride, the New York Times - the most prestigious paper in the vaunted American Free Press - should ask what is wrong with the United States itself that someone so contemptuous of humanitarianism, international law and world opinion can be considered a serious candidate for President? And what might that say about which people are really indoctrinated by their government and media?

*Matt Peppe writes about politics, U.S. foreign policy and Latin America on his [blog](#). You can follow him on [twitter](#).*

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