

Lift the U.S. Embargo on Cuba

By [Jacob G. Hornberger](#)

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The U.S. embargo on Cuba has been in effect for 60 years. It's time to end it.

The embargo makes it a criminal offense for any American to spend money in Cuba or to do business in Cuba. If an American travels to Cuba and spends money there or does business there, he is subject to criminal prosecution, conviction, fine, and imprisonment by his own government upon his return to the United States.

The purpose of the embargo is regime change. The idea is to squeeze the Cuban people economically with the aim of causing discontent against Cuba's communist regime. If the discontent gets significant enough, U.S. officials believe, the population will revolt and re-install a pro-U.S. regime into power.

Where is the morality in targeting the civilian population with death and impoverishment with the aim of achieving a political goal? Isn't that why we condemn terrorism?

I say "re-install" because Cuba had a pro-U.S. dictator in power before the Cuban revolution installed Fidel Castro into power. The country was ruled by a man named Fulgencio Batista, one of the most brutal and corrupt dictators in the world. U.S. officials didn't care about his tyranny because he was a pro-U.S. dictator — that is, one who could be counted on to do the bidding of the U.S. government.

But the Cuban people, who were suffering under Batista's regime, revolted against it. Successfully ousting Batista from power, new Cuban dictator Fidel Castro made it clear that he would be no such puppet. In the eyes of U.S. officials, that made him a threat to "national security."

What many Americans fail to realize is that the embargo is actually an infringement on their liberty. Under principles of freedom, people have the natural, God-given right to travel anywhere they want and spend their money any way they want. Freedom of travel and economic liberty are encompassed by the rights of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness that the Declaration of Independence enumerates as rights that preexist government.

When the American people agreed to this fundamental infringement on their rights and liberty, it was at the height of the Cold War. U.S. officials told them that there was a worldwide communist conspiracy based in Russia to take over the world, especially the United States. Cuba, U.S. officials said, was a spearhead in that effort. If a communist regime was permitted to remain in Cuba, which is only 90 miles away from U.S. shores, they said, there was no way to keep America from going Red.

The irony is that America was already going socialist and without an invasion by Cuba. That was reflected by the U.S. embrace of such socialist programs as Social Security, Medicare, public schooling, immigration controls, and a central bank, all of which are core elements of Cuba's socialist economic system.

Terribly fearful of this supposed communist threat to conquer the United States, the American people traded away their rights and liberties for the sake of purported safety and security from communism.

The irony is that Cuba never attacked the United States and never even threatened to do so. Throughout the Cold War, it remained an impoverished Third World nation that never posed any military threat to the United States.

Instead, throughout the Cold War it was always the U.S. government that was the aggressor against Cuba. Not only did the U.S. government target the Cuban people with its embargo, it also secretly partnered with the Mafia to assassinate Castro.

In fact, the reason that Castro invited the Soviet Union to install nuclear missiles in Cuba was not to attack the United States but rather to deter the U.S. government from invading Cuba a second time or to defend Cuba in the event of another U.S. invasion of the island.

The Cold War ended some 30 years ago, but not for the Cuban people. When it comes to freedom and prosperity, they have been left behind, squeezed in a vise that consists of socialism on the one side and the U.S. embargo on the other.

Fidel Castro outlasted the embargo and the U.S.-Mafia murder attempts on his life and ended up dying four years ago. Nonetheless, the embargo goes on.

It's time to bring an end to this sordid, immoral behavior on the part of U.S. officials. Leave the Cuban people alone, and restore freedom to the American people. If Cubans want to end their socialist system, that's up to them to do so. The U.S. government has no legitimate business contributing to their suffering with its brutal economic embargo.

Moreover, the American people have the right to the restoration of their rights of freedom of travel and economic liberty, which should never have been traded away in the first place. The U.S. government has no legitimate authority to be prosecuting and punishing Americans for exercising what are natural, God-given rights.

Lift the embargo, now. It's the morally and economically sound thing to do.

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Jacob G. Hornberger is founder and president of The Future of Freedom Foundation. He was born and raised in Laredo, Texas, and received his B.A. in economics from Virginia Military Institute and his law degree from the University of Texas. He was a trial attorney for twelve years in Texas. He also was an adjunct professor at the University of Dallas, where he taught law and economics. In 1987, Mr. Hornberger left the practice of law to become director of programs at the Foundation for Economic Education. He has advanced freedom and free markets on talk-radio stations all across the country as well as on Fox News' Neil

Cavuto and Greta van Susteren shows and he appeared as a regular commentator on Judge Andrew Napolitano's show Freedom Watch. View these interviews at LewRockwell.com and from [Full Context](#). Send him [email](#).

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