

U.S-Cuba Relations and the Long Road to Nowhere. “Regime Change is on the Table”

Will Obama’s Cuba Initiative Lead to Peace and Prosperity or an Orchestrated Coup?

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The much anticipated U.S-Cuba talks continues this week as Reuters reported *“Cuba and the United States meet for talks on restoring diplomatic relations on Monday, seeking more progress toward an agreement while not allowing differences over Venezuela to impede their historic rapprochement.”* The meeting will be held in Havana between Assistant U.S. Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson and the Cuban foreign ministry’s chief of U.S. affairs Josefina Vidal that will continue into mid-week.

Excuse me for being pessimistic, but all of the talk about *“normalizing relations”* between the U.S. and Cuba will be a major disappointment for those who were rather more optimistic about the Obama administration’s new approach to the Cuban government.

In the end, it will be business as usual for Washington. The Obama administration’s announcement to restore diplomatic relations with Cuba last December is about regaining a foothold on the island-nation. The U.S. wants Cuba to change its political and economic structure for its own interests, therefore regime change is on the table.

These new diplomatic overtures to the Cuban government in the last two-years of the Obama’s Presidency seems like an attempt to undermine Cuban President Raul Castro. Many of Obama’s supporters still hope that he can fulfill his remaining campaign promise to restore ties between the U.S. and Cuba. At this point in time, Obama has nothing to prove. His true colors are out in public. People around the World see Obama’s foreign policies similar or even worse than his predecessor George W. Bush. Obama has two-years left. He is not up for reelection, so for Obama *the gloves are off.*

Obama seeks a new war powers bill from congress so that he can declare war against ISIS and other terrorist groups in the Middle East. It would also allow Obama to authorize the U.S. military and its intelligence agencies to implement regime change or military action against governments he deems necessary. Secretary of State John Kerry had previously said that the War Powers bill Obama was seeking *“will provide a clear and powerful signal to the American people, to our allies and to our enemies”* according to USA Today. Reuters noted that the Obama administration declared that Venezuela is a *“national security threat”* in a statement by White House spokesman Josh Earnest who said that

“Venezuelan officials past and present who violate the human rights of Venezuelan citizens and engage in acts of public corruption will not be welcome here, and we now have the tools to block their assets and their use of

U.S. financial systems.”

Venezuela is a threat to U.S. national security?

Let me get try to get this straight. The U. S. has the largest and most expensive military in the world armed with nuclear weapons, drones and high-tech surveillance capabilities with bases and CIA black sites in more than 130 countries and still has Puerto Rico, the last remaining “colony” in Latin America under its “sphere of influence.” So who is the threat? Cuba will offer its “*unconditional support*” to the Maduro government making talks with the U.S. more difficult.

The Obama administration knows very well that Venezuela and Cuba are staunch allies. It is a well-calculated effort to destabilize Venezuela’s economy. They want to replace President Nicolas Maduro with someone that would cater to U.S. interests. If President Maduro is removed from power and replaced with a pro-US president, it would only mean that Cuba and every other Latin American nation who oppose U.S. hegemony on the continent would be targeted for regime change or even a military intervention.

Washington’s has several conditions for the diplomatic relations to work. and so does Cuba. Cuba wants to be taken off the State Department’s list of state sponsors of terrorism. Reuters noted one of the conditions set forth by Washington in a report last month ‘*Exclusive: U.S. pressing Cuba to restore diplomatic ties before April - officials*’ and said:

To finalize Cuba’s removal, Obama would need to submit to Congress a report stating Havana had not supported terrorism-related activities for six months, and that Cuba has provided assurances that it will not support terrorism in the future. Cuba would be automatically dropped from the list 45 days later.

This demand seems like Cuba would be admitting to the world that they are guilty of terrorism. But Let’s look at the terror networks Washington has historically supported straight out of Florida in an effort to destabilize the Cuban government. Cuba experienced various terrorist attacks since the failed Bay of Pigs invasion which has been orchestrated by the CIA, for example in 1997; an Italian tourist was killed due to a terrorist attack on Cuban hotels committed by Anti-Castro groups.

According to numerous reports, the terrorist attack was traced back to Miami, Florida where Luis Posada Carriles, a Bay of Pigs veteran who worked for the CIA, financed criminals from El Salvador to carry out the attack. The story does not end there. Mr. Carriles had been held for the Cubana airliner bombing in 1976 in a Venezuelan prison which killed more than 73 people with help from Jorge Mas Canosa, a Miami businessman who was the head of the Cuban-American National Foundation (CANF). In 1977, Posada and Freddy Lugo (a Posada affiliate involved in the bombing) escaped from prison.

Posada fled Venezuela to El Salvador, where he organized terrorist attacks against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua to support the Contras under U.S. Marine Corps lieutenant colonel Oliver North. Posada also worked with another known terrorist from Miami named Orlando Bosch, an associate working for the CIA but was convicted in the US for his involvement in a bomb attack on a Cuba-bound freighter. Both worked in Venezuela to coordinate terrorist attacks against Cuba. However, Bosch himself was considered a “mastermind” of the

Cubana airline bombing and was responsible for more than thirty acts of terrorism according to FBI records. Bosch was granted a presidential pardon in 1989 by the George H.W. Bush which was influenced by Republican and Presidential hopeful Jeb Bush and South Florida Cuban-American leaders.

Washington wants a U.S. embassy in Havana, Cuba wants Guantanamo Bay Returned

One of the other demands put forward by Washington is for Cuba to open a six-story U.S. embassy in Havana. Reuters also reported that *“Converting the six-story U.S. interests sections in Havana into a full-fledged embassy after 53 years would require ending restrictions on the number of U.S. personnel in Havana, limits on diplomats’ movements and appointing an ambassador. It would allow the U.S. to renovate the building and have U.S. security posted around the building, replacing Cuban police.”* I could just imagine the type of operations that would be carried out at the embassy to destabilize Cuba. Cuba has its own demands as BBC News reported earlier this year that Raul Castro wants the U.S. to return Guantanamo Bay to Cuba to begin a normalization process which will lead to better relations for both countries. The article titled *‘Castro demands Guantanamo Bay in return for US-Cuba diplomatic deal’* and said:

His brother Raul, who succeeded him as president in 2008, made his demands at the summit of Community of Latin American and Caribbean States in Costa Rica. *“The reestablishment of diplomatic relations is the start of a process of normalising bilateral relations,”* he said. *“But this will not be possible while the blockade still exists, while they don’t give back the territory illegally occupied by the Guantanamo naval base.”* The land on which the base stands was leased to the US government in 1903 by Cuba’s then-rulers.

Both demands will be difficult to achieve. The U.S. wants a military presence in Cuba with Guantanamo Bay as a post and a six-story embassy in Havana with its “unrestricted” personnel that will travel freely throughout Cuba. What agencies would operate in the U.S. embassy? Will it be the CIA, USAID, DHS or even the FBI? Or maybe newly funded terrorists straight out of the Middle East who look like Latinos? That is a tough task to swallow for the Cuban government especially after their experiences with the U.S. behind the terrorist attacks that occurred in their territory over the last five decades. It will take a very long time to build trust between both nations before any of these demands are met.

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There is distrust between both nations. Does Cuba trust Washington? I don’t think so. The Cuban government and the people are not oblivious to the fact that the U.S. government’s numerous attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro, the CIA backed ‘Bay of Pigs invasion’ or the economic embargo despite Obama’s promise to end it, is a part of history that is hard to forget. Obama’s offer to end the embargo comes with tough conditions. Cuba is extremely cautious with U.S. foreign intervention policies which is now directed towards Venezuela. The decline of oil prices clearly orchestrated by Saudi Arabia and the U.S. was to weaken the economies of both Venezuela and Russia who do rely on high oil prices.

Russian President Vladimir Putin once said that *“we all see the lowering of oil prices. There’s lots of talk about what’s causing it. Could it be an agreement between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia to punish Iran and affect the economies of Russia and Venezuela? It could.”* It makes all the sense now for the U.S. to aggressively use sanctions against Venezuela.

Cuba still receives its largest oil imports from Venezuela. I can assure you that if Maduro is overthrown and replaced with a new pro-US figure, the oil contracts will dramatically change or would even come to a stop and that would most likely have a devastating effect on the Cuban economy.

The U.S. would hope that it will strangle the Cuban economy to the point where the people would get angry at the Castro government causing civil unrest. The Cuban people have endured a lot of pain and struggle since the revolution began and I believe that they will overcome any hurdle that comes their way. But I do not see a breakthrough for Cuba or the U.S. despite the fact that legitimate Cuban and American businesses, farmers and the tourism industry would benefit each other. But the U.S. wants Cuba to become a corporate haven filled with fast food companies, GMO foods and casino's filled with prostitutes run by organized crime and corrupt politicians similar to the Batista era before 1959.

Demands from both the U.S. and Cuba will not be met by the end of Obama's term. If a Jeb Bush, or a Hillary Clinton or any other future candidate who is "selected" (Yes, I meant "selected" not "elected") for the Presidency because he or she would most likely be hawkish on foreign policy. Most of the candidates for 2016 Presidential elections are war mongers whether Democrat or Republican including Hillary Clinton and Jeb Bush. Any candidate who becomes president would be bad for U.S-Cuba relations.

Either way, all I see is a long and dangerous road that will lead to nowhere. The obvious is that Obama is more aggressive in his foreign policy by calling out Venezuela as a threat to U.S. national security. It is a sign that the Obama administration's last two years in office will create more instability and war. Venezuela is sure on the list for regime change, once again. If that happens, Cuba will prepare its military and intelligence apparatus to repel any attempt by the U.S. to destabilize its country.

The talk about U.S-Cuba relations warming up will get cold pretty fast, because it is just talk. If Obama was serious about closing Guantanamo Bay's torture chamber, he would use his executive powers (which he constantly uses for domestic purposes) to immediately shut down the facility, but he won't, nor will the next President. Its time to face the possibility that the new U.S-Cuba talks will fail until trust is rebuilt between the two nations and that is something that is extremely hard for the Cuban government to do. Who can blame them?

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