

Chris and I affirm. Resolved: The United States should lift its embargo against Cuba.

Our only contention is reforming Cuba.

Raul Castro's economic reforms are failing. The Chicago Tribune reports in 2016 that Castro's economic reforms have failed to fix structural problems in Cuba's economy, with only 21% of them ever being implemented. Evan Katz at the University of Georgia furthers in 2016 that current reforms are misdirected and affect the wrong sectors of Cuba's economy, dooming them to failure. Katz continues that absent US involvement in Cuba's transition, these unsustainable reforms would be reversed and Cuba will revert to a completely communist economy. This is why Michael Kline finds in 2010 that Cuba's government has begun to push for remaining international sanctions to be lifted in order to gain access to supplies, finances, and entrepreneurial skills necessary for the reforms to succeed.

Thus, lifting the embargo will foster more reform and economic liberalization in 3 ways.

First, by supporting existing reforms. Timothy Ashby at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs explains in 2013 that removing the embargo would resume bilateral trade, thereby stabilizing Cuba's economy and strengthening current efforts to transition Cuba towards a free market economy. Scott Brown of the Atlantic Council furthers in 2015 that engagement with Cuba would legitimize the current reform process by increasing Cuban economic growth.

Second, by restructuring reforms to be more effective. This happens in two ways.

1. Access to international banks. International law professor Joy Gordon explains in 2015 that the US embargo prevents Cuba from joining international financial institutions like the World Bank. Access to these banks is crucial for Cuba's transition, as Scott Brown at the Atlantic Council finds in 2015 that international financial institutions would provide a sustainable model for economic development, ultimately accelerating economic and political liberalization.
2. Redirecting reforms. Evan Katz explains in 2016 that lifting the embargo would allow the US to provide technical and market expertise, ensuring that Castro's reform efforts are targeted and successful. The embargo prevents other countries from assisting Cuba's reform process too, as Joy Gordon explains in 2016 that the embargo stipulates that any company that wants to do business in the US must boycott Cuba.

Third, by pressuring the regime to reform. This happens in two ways.

1. Increasing leverage. Klaas Hinderdael at the Bologna Center explains in 2011 increased economic ties from lifting the embargo would allow US businesses to leverage Cuba to politically reform to create a sustainable and safe investing environment. Arturo Lopez Levy at the New America Foundation confirms in 2011 that foreign investment would create leverage for change since US companies would become shareholders in Cuba's current economy and future stability.
2. Removing the scapegoat. Lance Koenig at the Army War College explains in 2010 that the embargo boosts Castro's perceived legitimacy because the embargo is blamed for

the country's poor economic performance. Removing the embargo would end this scapegoat, which is why the Cuba Study Group finds in 2013 that ending the embargo would embolden reformers, democracy advocates, and entrepreneurs to pressure the government to change.

The impact is democracy.

Reforms cause democracy for three reasons.

1. Creating the middle class. US Army Strategist Mario Arzeno writes in 2003 that open markets create a middle class that pressures non-democratic governments to open the political process; thus developing democracy.
2. Legitimizing opposition groups. Arturo Lopez Levy explains in 2011 that because economic and political reform in Cuba are closely intertwined, US efforts to promote economic reform in Cuba would cause a proliferation of political changes by legitimizing political opposition groups that can build support using the reforms.
3. Ending toleration of the regime. Economics professor Duncan Thomas finds in 2016 that economic reforms spurred by ending the embargo would decrease the tolerance of Cuba's current political system by making Cuban citizens wealthier, ultimately resulting in internal pressure causing more democratic political reforms.

For these three reasons, Thomas concludes that empirically, the partial political liberalization that has already occurred in Cuba is a result of previous economic reforms. This is true in the general case, as political science professor Steven Fish confirms in a 2007 study of 20 formerly communist nations that economic liberalization substantially increases long term democratization and political freedom.

Ultimately, democracy stops violence, as Sean Lynn-Jones of the Belfer Center finds in 1998 that transitioning to a democracy reduces internal violence with a country by 4 to 10 times because leaders no longer have an incentive to use violence to prolong their rule and are accountable to the people.

Thus, we affirm.