



## Obama State Department Removes Cuba From State Sponsor of Terrorism List

The State Department announced on May 29 that Secretary of State John Kerry had made his final decision to rescind Cuba's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, effective on that date.



The announcement stated that President Obama had instructed Kerry last December to launch a review of Cuba's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, and provide a report to him within six months regarding Cuba's support for international terrorism. On April 8, 2015, Kerry completed that review and recommended to the president that Cuba no longer be designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism.

Obama submitted the statutorily required 45-day, pre-notification report to Congress on April 14, and the decision was implemented immediately upon the end of that period.

The State Department announcement, issued by Jeff Rathke, Director of the department's Office of Press Relations, said:

The rescission of Cuba's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism reflects our assessment that Cuba meets the statutory criteria for rescission. While the United States has significant concerns and disagreements with a wide range of Cuba's policies and actions, these fall outside the criteria relevant to the rescission of a State Sponsor of Terrorism designation

During a press briefing on the 29th, Rathke was asked by a reporter if the latest decision was part of a process whereby the United States and Cuba would reopen embassies, reestablishing diplomatic relations. Rathke replied that the removal of Cuba from the state sponsor of terrorism list and reestablishing diplomatic relations were separate processes.

When the reporter pressed Rathke to provide a schedule for when diplomatic relations between the two countries might be restored, he replied that it is "hard to put a timeline on it."

The reporter then asked Rathke what the practical effects of removing Cuba from the sponsor of terrorism designation might have, such as the comprehensive trade and arms embargo on the communist nation.

Rathke refused to link the two, and replied:

Rescinding of the designation against Cuba is an important step. Let me highlight, though, that the embargo, which is a separate matter and which is to a large degree a statutory matter — that is, legislation — that remains in effect. So the lifting of the state sponsor of terrorism designation does not lift the embargo.



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on June 2, 2015

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Cuba, of course, is a one-party communist nation, headed by Raúl Castro (shown), the younger brother of former dictator Fidel Castro, who led the revolution that brought communism to Cuba in 1959. The elder Castro, then 81 years old and in failing health, announced his resignation February 2008, after which younger brother Raúl took control. The secession continued not only a family dynasty, but 56 years of communist rule. During that time, Cuba has maintained close ties with other communist or Marxist nations, such as the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, and Venezuela under Marxist strong man Hugo Chávez (1999-2013).

Following the administration's announcement on May 29, several Cuban-American members of Congress asked the administration to keep Cuba on the State Sponsor of Terrorism list.

Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) made a statement that noted, in part:

Cuba should not have been removed from the State Sponsor of Terrorism list since one of the many reasons for its inclusion are its links to repressive regimes around the world such as Iran, Syria, and Russia. Additionally, Castro continues to provide a safe haven to terror groups like the Colombian FARC and Spanish ETA and harbors fugitives from American justice. The Castro regime's responsibility in the Brothers to the Rescue shoot down, the unresolved claims stemming from its illegal confiscation of property from American citizens and businesses, and its continual use of repressive tactics to silence any opposition to the tyrannical regime are further evidence that Cuba should not have been removed from the SSOT.

Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) stated:

President Obama and his administration continue to give the Cuban regime concession after concession, in exchange for nothing that even remotely resembles progress towards freedom and democracy for the Cuban people, or assurances that the regime will discontinue working against America's national security interests.

And another senator from a Cuban background, Bob Menendez (D-N.J.) issued a statement reading, in part:

The fact is, the Castro regime has not shown one iota of change in its actions that earned it a spot on the State Sponsor of Terrorism list. Cuba still provides sanctuary to Joanne Chesimard who remains on the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorism List for the murder of New Jersey State Trooper Werner Foerster, it recently was caught sending arms to North Korea in the single largest violation of United Nations Security Council sanctions, and also received a shipment from a Chinese arms manufacturer that was seemingly headed for Colombia's terrorist organization FARC. Yet today Cuba was somehow delisted from this dishonorable list of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

Other Cuban Americans, including Frank De Varona, a Cuban-born American who fought to free Cuba in the Bay of Pigs invasion and was captured and imprisoned after the United States, which had organized the invasion, withdrew its air support and left the patriots stranded on the beach, told *The New American* in April that the Cuban regime, through its close ally Venezuela, was providing intelligence to the Middle East terrorist organizations Hamas and Hezbollah.

The Castro regime also struck a deal with Russia's Putin to establish military, intelligence, and naval bases that "will threaten the national security of the United States," said De Varona, a former university professor, author, and expert on Cuba.

In an age that is focused more on Islamic terrorist groups such as ISIS, most Americans have forgotten



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the threat to their national security posed by communist regimes around the world. During the 1960s, when the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba became known, spurring the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, the recognition of international communism's goal of world domination were apparent. Today, few remember that Russian President Vladimir Putin was once a Soviet KGB officer and that his cooperation with Cuba poses the same type of threat today that the old Soviet-Cuban alliance during the days of Nikita Khrushchev and Fidel Castro presented during the Cold War.

Even fewer Americans are aware that the transformation of Cuba into a communist dictatorship was brought about due to U.S. policy, so — as is often the case — we created our own threat. The story of how this U.S. support for Castro's coup helped Cuba become communist was documented in an article posted by *The New American* last December, "[The Betrayal of Cuba.](#)"

Among the techniques used to accomplish this objective was a cooperative effort between *New York Times* reporter Herbert Matthews, our State Department, and the CIA, all of whom worked to keep Castro's communist affiliations hidden from the public. At the same time, these propagandists helped portray Cuban autocrat Fulgencio Batista — who, though no humanitarian, allowed a far greater degree of freedom in Cuba than Castro subsequently would — as the devil incarnate. (Batista was also very favorable to U.S. business interests in Cuba, which, most people would logically assume, might have provided our government with motivation to look more favorably on him.)

As Michael E. Telzrow, author of the article noted:

Through the concerted efforts of the U.S. State Department and Herbert Matthews of the *New York Times*, Batista's government was undermined both politically and publicly. While State Department policy regarding nonintervention prevented Ambassador Smith from providing support to the Batista government, the State Department looked the other way while pro-Castro groups operated freely in Miami. These pro-Castro groups worked actively to secure supplies, money, and weaponry for Castro's ragtag revolutionaries. Meanwhile Batista came up empty when the United States, historically Cuba's closest ally, refused to ship armored cars purchased by the Cuban government. This action emboldened Castro's forces and demoralized the national government. It can be said that the United States effectively intervened on the side of Castro by working to bring about the fall of Batista.

The U.S. State Department also successfully undermined the Cuban anti-communist Dr. Andres Rivero Aguero, who was elected president of Cuba in November 1958, but was unable to assume office. After our government made it clear that it would not support Aguero, he — along with Batista — fled Cuba, creating a vacuum which Castro filled by default.

Cuba had become another communist dictatorship!

Speaking before the U.S. Senate in 1960, U.S. ambassador to Cuba, Earl E.T. Smith, said that in his opinion: "Without the United States, Castro would not be in power today."

The U.S. role in helping to turn Cuba into a communist tyranny was not unprecedented, however. When civil war raged in China between forces loyal to the government of the Republic of China led by Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (KMT) and Mao's Communist Party of China (CPC) forces, the Soviets turned over to the CPC an enormous stockpile of weapons abandoned by the Japanese in Manchuria.

As the well-armed communist forces pressed their advantage against the Nationals, the plight of the Nationalist forces was doomed by betrayal. Chiang's forces were denied weapons through an embargo declared by General George Marshall of the United States. Marshall boasted of having disarmed 39 of



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Chiang's divisions "with a stroke of his pen.

The Chinese would later help the communists take control of the Northern half of Korea and all of Vietnam, as tens of thousands of U.S. soldiers died to thwart debacles that began with the betrayal of a once-free nation by the United States.

If communist Cuba now represents a threat to us because of its cooperation with terrorists, we have our government's pro-communist policies to blame. But removing Cuba from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism will not undo the damage; it will only compound it.

Photo of Raul Castro: AP Images

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