



# Trump's Crackdown on Cuban Regime Draws Praise and Fury

While it failed to undo all of the damage unleashed by former President Obama, [President Donald Trump's reversal of the previous administration's unilateral concessions to the Communist Castro regime ruling Cuba](#) drew widespread praise. From Cuban-born Americans and opponents of communism to prominent members of Congress concerned with liberty and human rights, Trump's decision to crack down on the murderous dictatorship was hailed as a major step forward in eventually liberating Cuba. However, not everyone was happy. The Cuban regime, of course, was foaming at the mouth with outrage, vowing to continue oppressing the people of Cuba regardless of what Trump says or does. Even some liberty-minded voices in the United States suggested Trump was engaged in foreign interventionism. By contrast, some Trump supporters argued that the president did not go far enough.



Among those praising Trump's actions was a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers with ties to Cuba. In [an op-ed](#) published by the *Miami Herald*, U.S. Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), Senator Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), and U.S. Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.) welcomed the reversal of Obama's scheming. Blasting the "ruthless, tyrannical dictatorship" that violates the "God-given rights" of the Cuban people, the bipartisan group of lawmakers noted that Obama's supposed agenda of helping the people of Cuba had never materialized. "In fact, many Cubans say human rights conditions on the island have worsened since President Obama's visit to the island in March 2016," the lawmakers said, pointing to the estimated 500 political arrests during Obama's trip [during which he promoted the communist vision of "rights" while handing the Castro regime a desperately needed lifeline](#). There were 10,000 political arrests in 2016 alone, they added.

And Obama is at least partly to blame for the brutality. "Unfortunately, the previous administration's policy is currently funding this brutality and repression," the lawmakers explained, highlighting how the communist regime was making a fortune off of Obama's concessions. "This flow of funds has only given the Castro regime additional resources to oppress those who dare to freely express themselves.... President Trump understands this, and his new Cuba policy will ensure that the United States truly empowers the Cuban people instead of the dictatorship. The changes he announced will assist Cubans struggling for liberty by ensuring that U.S. policy toward Cuba actually benefits the Cuban people.... The days of the Castro regime are numbered, and soon the Cuban people will be free. Until that day, the United States will stand in solidarity with the long-suffering Cuban people until they finally enjoy the



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liberties and respect for basic human rights to which every individual is entitled.”

The Castro regime, by contrast, was outraged by the announcement and the policy changes. Castro “Foreign Minister” Bruno Rodriguez, who was in Vienna, blasted Trump and his announcement. He called Trump’s speech “a grotesque spectacle that came out of the Cold War” and blasted the Cuban-born Americans in attendance as “terrorists” and “mercenaries.” “There will not be a presidential directive from the U.S. that will alter the direction of Cuba,” Rodriguez fumed. “We have gone through everything, our people have gone through everything. What could they menace us with now that they haven’t before and failed?” In a statement, the regime also blasted Trump for allegedly “hostile” rhetoric and for taking “a backward step in the relationship between the two countries.” The regime, like many other autocracies, likes to equate itself with the nation and people it enslaved.

On the other hand, prominent Cuban-born American patriots who helped get Trump elected were happy about the changes, although they did not believe Trump went far enough. Frank De Varona, for example, who sat in the front row for Trump’s announcement and who invaded Cuba as part of the Bay of Pigs operation in 1961, said Trump should go further in undoing the damage unleashed by Obama. “Freedom-loving Cubans in the island and Cuban Americans in the United States are very grateful to President Donald J. Trump for the first steps taken to partially reverse the shameful unilateral concessions given by President Obama to the Cuban communist regime without a Quid Pro Quo or nothing in return,” said De Varona, who ran one of Trump’s three Miami victory offices and had an opportunity to present Trump with an award on behalf of Bay of Pigs veterans.

“Today in Cuba there is more repression, beatings of peaceful opponents, and arbitrary arrests than before the restoration of United States diplomatic relations with the communist regime and the many concessions given by President Obama,” continued De Varona, who spent two years in appalling conditions in a Cuban gulag after what he believes was the deliberate betrayal of the Cuban freedom fighters by subversive establishment forces in the U.S. government. “The strengthening of the United States’ policy toward Cuba is most welcome. As stated earlier, Cuba is a merciless totalitarian state. Cuban Americans were very pleased to hear President Trump blasting the enormous abuses of human and civil rights by the Castro regime. It was reassuring to hear the president saying that the United States commercial embargo would remain in place until the communist oppressive regime take steps to open up Cuba. Upholding the Helms-Burton Law is crucial.”

However, De Varona also expressed some concerns about what was not said. He noted, for example, that despite the Cuban regime’s long history of supporting terrorism and its ongoing support for terror, Trump did not indicate that he would put Havana back on the U.S. government’s list of state sponsors of terrorism. Nor did Trump outline a plan to put the regime back on the list of governments that participate in human trafficking. “It is very important that President Trump takes these two actions very soon,” added De Varona, who pointed out that Cuba’s regime remains a sponsor of global terrorism and is deeply involved in trafficking people as well as drugs and weapons. The constitutionalist activist also blasted the [notion of extending credits to the Cuban regime at U.S. taxpayer expense via the Export-Import Bank](#), saying the institution should instead be abolished.

Finally, De Varona called for action against the regime’s minions. “President Trump needs to sanction economically the high officials in the regime and high ranking military officers of both nations,” he said, referring to the oppressors of both Cuba and Venezuela. “Frequently, these oppressors come to the United States to invest in property with the stolen funds from their nations. Freezing their assets of the high-ranking oppressors in the United States is an effective way to punish those who abuse their fellow



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citizens.” He also said governments around the world should speak out. “It is inhumane for Western nations to remain silent to all the killings, beatings, arrests, and to conduct business as usual with these two unrepentant bloody regimes,” De Varona concluded.

Some critics tried to paint Trump’s announcement as flip-flopping on his pledges to engage in less meddling abroad. However, even on the campaign trail, Trump was clear about his desire to overturn Obama’s concessions to the murderous regime in Cuba. “The United States should not prop up the Castro regime economically and politically, as Obama has done and as Hillary Clinton plans to do,” Trump declared in October at the Bay of Pigs Museum and Library in Little Havana in front of the Brigade 2506’s Veterans Association. “They don’t know how to make a good deal, and they wouldn’t know how to make a good deal if it was staring at them in the face.” For the first time in history, the Cuban veterans group, which De Varona believes was deliberately betrayed by establishment forces in Washington, D.C., endorsed a candidate in a presidential election: Donald J. Trump.

In his speech, Trump also mentioned Berta Soler, the leader of the non-violent Ladies in White (Damas de Blanco), who was denied the right to travel to Miami for the event by the Castro regime. She previously warned Obama that giving the regime what it wanted would not help the Cuban people. And in a letter sent to Trump just weeks before his announcement, she noted that, unsurprisingly, she was correct. “These days, Mr. President, when most of the World responds with a deafening silence to the harassment, arbitrary detentions, beatings, house searches, and robberies against peaceful opponents, human rights activists and defenseless women, your words of encouragement are most welcomed,” she wrote to Trump. “Taking advantage of the lack of pressure from the United States, the Castro regime increased its repressive actions to levels not seen since the Black Spring of 2003 when 75 peaceful dissidents were sentenced to terms of imprisonment of up to 25 years.” After Trump’s announcement, she again praised Trump and said there should be conditions to U.S. engagement with Cuba.

Not all liberty-minded voices in the United States were enthusiastic about the developments, though. Former Congressman Ron Paul, a Republican from Texas as well as a fierce defender of liberty and the Constitution, expressed dismay over the move, calling it a return to Cold War thinking. “President Trump’s shift back to the bad old days on Cuba will not have the desired effect of liberalizing that country’s political environment,” Paul, a staunch non-interventionist, said in his widely read weekly column. “If it did not work for fifty years why does Trump think it will suddenly work today? If anything, a hardening of U.S. policy on Cuba will prevent reforms and empower those who warned that the U.S. could not be trusted as an honest partner.”

Whether the enforcement of U.S. laws dealing with the Cuban dictatorship or restricting its funding sources will actually help bring down the autocracy remains unclear. What has been clear for decades, though, is that [subversive elements within the United States put the murderous Castro regime in power to begin with](#). In fact, the U.S. Ambassador to Cuba at the time, Earl Smith, [outlined the betrayal of the Cuban people](#) by the U.S. establishment in a book. Top establishment media propagandists such as Herbert Matthews at the [New York Times](#) painted Castro as a freedom fighter, even when honest analysts such as [John Birch Society founder Robert Welch pointed out that the barbarian was obviously a communist](#).

It is time for the forces that put Castro in power to begin with — and helped murder tens of thousands of innocent Cubans by extension — to be exposed. Those include the establishment swamp known as the [Council on Foreign Relations](#), which [continues to betray freedom-loving people in the United States and around the world to this day](#). Aside from Cuba, numerous other nations have been betrayed and



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enslaved with help from the enemies of freedom. The betrayed nations and peoples have included [China](#), [Ukraine](#), [Hungary](#), [Iran](#), [Poland](#), and many more. Only when that totalitarian-minded globalist establishment is exposed and thereby neutralized will liberty be safe in America and around the world.

*Photo of President Trump showing executive order on U.S.-Cuba relations: AP Images*

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