

Mandate of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba

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President George W. Bush mandated that the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba identify additional means by which the United States can help the Cuban people bring about an expeditious end to the Castro dictatorship. [CAFC: 14]

The [Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba](#) sought a more proactive, integrated, and disciplined approach to undermine the survival strategies of the Castro regime. [CAFC: 15]

The Steps for Hastening Regime Change

This comprehensive framework is composed of six inter-related tasks considered central to hastening change: [CAFC: 15]

1. Empower Cuban Civil Society [CAFC: 15] – Encourage Dissidence

\$36 million to the State Department, USAID, and other appropriate U.S. Government agencies [CAFC: 22]:

- We propose...to strengthen...opposition through material assistance and training.[CAFC: 7]*
- Information dissemination ...that will foster democratic change [CAFC: 17]*
- The United States Interests Section (USINT) in Havana is also a vital asset in the effort to aid the Cuban people in their struggle [CAFC: 17]*

...the regime portrays (youth, women, and Afro-Cubans) as pillars of social support and stability for Castro's regime. [CAFC: 18] The US will...fund programs to train, develop and organize these...segments of Cuban society to take greater action [CAFC: xvii]

Outreach to Cuban youth represents one of the most significant opportunities to hasten the end of the regime. More than half of Cuba's population is under age 35...youth have been critical catalysts for regime change in other countries...[CAFC: 18]

Afro Cubans and mixed-ethnicity Cubans comprise 62% of the population. [CAFC: 18] grants of U.S. funds could provide the critical spark to activate more of the Afro Cuban community ... in promoting change in Cuba. [CAFC: 19]... persons of color currently occupy only 33 percent of the seats.... in the National Assembly of People's Power... [CAFC: 19] Currently in the US Senate there are NO African- Americans <http://www.senate.gov/> and in 2002 the House had only 15% minorities in total. <http://www.house.gov/barrett/aboutor.htm>. [Office of Minority Health, US Census 2000; www.cdc.gov/omh/Populations/populations.htm]

2. Break the Information Blockade [CAFC: 8] - Intimidation

\$18 million for...immediate deployment of the C-130 COMMANDO SOLO airborne platform and make available funds to acquire and refit a dedicated airborne platform for the transmission of Radio and Television Martí into Cuba [CAFC: 28]

“August 14, 2004 The US Air National Guard took the first Comando Solo flight hovering on the boundary of US airspace, broadcasting to the Cuban people.” TV and Radio Marti have been broadcasting anti-Castro propaganda to Cuba since 1985. Funding comes from the Broadcasting Board Governors. The signal has been jammed since the early 1990’s.” [Miami Herald Sun, Aug. 22, 2004]

“1995-6 continual breaches of Cuban airspace by anti-Castro Miami Cubans resulted in the shooting down of 2 planes, 4 deaths, the imprisonment of five Cubans in the US, and the tightening of the US blockade against Cuba;” [www.cnn.com/US/9602/cuba_shootdown/25/10am/]

“There are different types of C-130s. The EC-130 (Comando SOLO) is electronically equipped. The AC-130 is armed with devastating firepower; it is one of the most terrifying weapons being used on Iraq. Cubans could never be sure that the EC-130 would not turn out to be an AC-130. This serious provocation could lead to disaster.” [Building a Prison and Preaching Democracy: Bush’s Cuba Obsession, Jane Franklin; ZNet, June 07, 2004 :www.zmag.org/content/print_article.]

“These [AC-130] heavily armed aircraft incorporate side-firing weapons integrated with sophisticated sensor, navigation and fire control systems to provide surgical firepower or area saturation during extended loiter periods, at night and in adverse weather...” [Air Force Link fact sheet: www.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet]

“The right of each government to control telecommunications in its territory is confirmed in the 1982 Nairobi Convention of the United Nations International Telecommunications Union (ITU), which was signed by both Cuba and the United States.”
[www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties/1984/35.html]

3. Deny Revenues To The Castro Regime [CACF 28] - Strangle the Economy

The economic lifelines of the Castro regime are tourism; access to subsidized Venezuelan oil; commodities; and revenues and other support generated by those with family on the island, with the vast majority of such support coming from the United States. [CACF: xiv]

a) Tourism;

- *Eliminate abuses of educational travel by limiting it to undergraduate or graduate degree granting institutions and for full-semester study programs, or shorter duration only when the program directly supports U.S. policy goals;*
- *Support efforts by NGOs in selected third countries to highlight human rights abuses in Cuba, as part of a broader effort to discourage tourist travel.*
- *Eliminate the regulatory provision allowing for the import of \$100 worth of Cuban goods produced by Cuban state entities, including cigars and rum.*
- *Eliminate the general license provision for amateur or semi-professional athletic teams to travel to Cuba to engage in competitions and require that all such travel be specifically licensed.*

- *Eliminate the specific license provision for travel related to clinics and workshops in Cuba, leaving general and specific license categories for professional research and attendance at professional meetings unchanged.*
- See “Tightening Travel Restrictions”, appendix 1

b) *Venezuelan oil;*

- While the CACF goes into great detail on how the other “Revenue” categories will be addressed, the report strangely gives NO indication of the strategy to be used to thwart Venezuelan oil sales to Cuba. However, looking into Cuba/Venezuela relations and US/Venezuela relations, one can see the only path to cutting this oil source is to oust Chavez. The US has been accused of supporting the April 2002 coup attempt against Chavez and continues to demonize the government by accusing them of human trafficking, arms piling, and relationships with Colombian Guerrillas. The NED financially supports the Venezuelan opposition [Venezuela Freedom of Information Act www.venezuelafoia.info],
- In this report, the US questions Chavez commitment to democracy: “...governments that are not ideologically committed to democratic and free market values (e.g., the Chavez government in Venezuela).” [CAFC: 205] US
- *Reports from Venezuela also indicate that Cuban doctors are engaging in overt political activities...as well as more senior political and military advisors to help Chavez strengthen his authoritarian grip on the nation.* [CAFC: 43]
- While the US media focuses on the Oil convention between Venezuela and Cuba claiming that its purpose is to prop up the current Cuban government,(“...53,000 barrels of oil per day ...that Chavez subsidizes for Castro to keep Cuba's moribund economy on life support.” [Will Venezuelan Freedom Survive Chavez? Jonathan Gurwitz, Arizona Daily Star 08.20.2004 <http://www.dailystar.com/dailystar/relatedarticles/35056.php>]) it ignores the fact that the Chavez government is offering the same oil “deal” to all members of the Association of Caribbean States through the San Jose Pact and the Caracas Accord. In addition, a separate accord has been reached with Argentina that exchanges oil for food. [Venezuela Promotes Regional Energy Integration For Developing Nations of Central America and the Caribbean, Venezuela Information Office www.veninfo.org]

c) *Commodities*

- *Neutralize Cuban government front companies by establishing a Cuban Asset Targeting Group, comprised of appropriate law enforcement authorities, to investigate and identify new ways in which hard currency is moved in and out of Cuba.* [CAFC: 44]
- *and revenues and other support generated by those with family on the island, with the vast majority of such support coming from the United States.* [CAFC: xiv]
- *Offer rewards to those who report on illegal remittances that lead to enforcement actions...Direct U.S. law enforcement authorities to conduct “sting” operations against “mule” networks and others who illegally carry money to Cuba as a means to disrupt and discourage the sending of illegal remittances.* [CAFC: xvii]

d) Family travel and Remittances

- The Commission reduces income from tourism by restricting family visits by Cuban-Americans, educational tours and professional travel. [see “Tightening Travel Restrictions”, appendix 1]
- *Remittances, gift parcels and travel-related revenues ...especially (from) those Cubans who have come to the United States since the early 1990s. [CAFC: 9] ...such parcels decrease the pressure on the government to provide the basic needs of its people, enabling it to dedicate more resources to strengthening its repressive apparatus... [CACF: 35]*
- These restrictions are being challenged by Congress. [for current status of legislation see Latin American Working Group; www.lawg.org]

4. Illuminate The Reality Of Castro’s Cuba [CAFC :44] – Accusations of Military Threat

- *We propose increased efforts to illuminate the reality of Castro’s Cuba...and (exposing) the nature of the Castro regime, including its threat potential. [CAFC: 10]*
- *Fund U.S. Embassy public diplomacy sections worldwide to disseminate information abroad about U.S. foreign policy....and the U.S. Government’s belief that Cuba has at least a limited, developmental offensive biological weapons research and development effort. [CAFC: 45]*
- *WASHINGTON, Sept. 17 - The Bush administration, using stringent standards adopted after the failure to find banned weapons in Iraq, has conducted a new assessment of Cuba’s biological weapons capacity and concluded that it is no longer clear that Cuba has an active, offensive bio-weapons program, according to administration officials. [In Stricter Study, U.S. Scales Back Claim on Cuba Arms, By Steven R. Weisman; New York Times, September 18, 2004,]*

5. Encourage International Diplomatic Efforts To...Challenge The Castro Regime [CAFC :10] - Demonization

- *Recognizing the importance of an enhanced public diplomacy effort, the Commission recommends that the U.S. Government make available an additional \$5 million [CAFC: 45]*
- *...expanding coordination with willing friends and allies...encourage...international initiatives to plan for Cuba’s transition. [CACF: 10]*
- *Fund and promote international or third-country national conferences to disseminate information abroad about U.S. policies on transition planning efforts related to Cuba [CAFC: 45]*
- *Deter foreign investment in Cuba in confiscated properties, claims to which are owned by U.S. nationals, aggressively pursue Title IV visa sanctions against those foreign nationals trafficking in (e.g., using or benefiting from) such property, including devoting additional personnel and resources to application and enforcement. [CAFC: 44]*

6. Undermine The Regime’s “Succession Strategy” [CAFC: 11] - Occupation

- *In Cuba's transition to democracy, we envision and welcome an active role for the Cuban American community...Cuban Americans will be able to provide valuable insights, as well as business acumen and capital. [Foreword by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell]*
- *United States is prohibited by law from providing assistance to a post-Castro transition government unless that government... bars Fidel and Raul Castro from any role in a future government. [Foreword by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell]*
- *The Commission recommends: targeting regime officials for U.S. visa denials...visa denial watchlists will be provided to other nations... to ensure that (these officials) cannot find refuge in these regions. [CACF: 11]*
- *establishing a Transition Coordinator at the State Department to... continue regular transition planning and coordination with other U.S. Government agencies. [CAFC: 11]*

Addenda:

The Commission acknowledges that there will be resistance to the transition...a peaceful transition...will therefore require the presence of effective, professional Cuban security institutions that are committed fully to supporting the democratic transition. ...Military modernization will also be important. [CACF: 157]

...prepare to keep all schools open during an emergency phase of the transition in order to keep ... teenagers off the streets ... during this unstable period; [CACF: xxi]

WASHINGTON, Sept. 15 - "With this bill today, and in other bills this year, we will appropriate tens of millions of dollars relating to Cuba. It is fitting that we ask, for what purpose? So that think tanks in Miami can churn out more reports telling the Congress, unsurprisingly, that we ought to continue the current policy, which includes giving them money? So that daily television programs can be produced in Miami that Cubans will never see?" [Jeff Flake, (Rep AZ) Office of Congressman Jeff Flake News Release, Wednesday, September 15, 2004, www.house.gov/flake/]