

US Intervention

A Cuba Solidarity Campaign Fact Sheet 2016



History

Since the Cuban Revolution overthrew the corrupt dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959, successive United States governments have sought to subvert the independence of the Cuban people to determine their own political, economic and social system. Ten US administrations have waged a relentless assault to bring about change in the country using every means political and economic, illegal or criminal, including many coldly planned terrorist attacks.

US-based aggression against Cuba has ranged from military invasion to targeting Cuban leaders for assassination and even unleashing chemical and bacteriological warfare.

Early actions of aggression

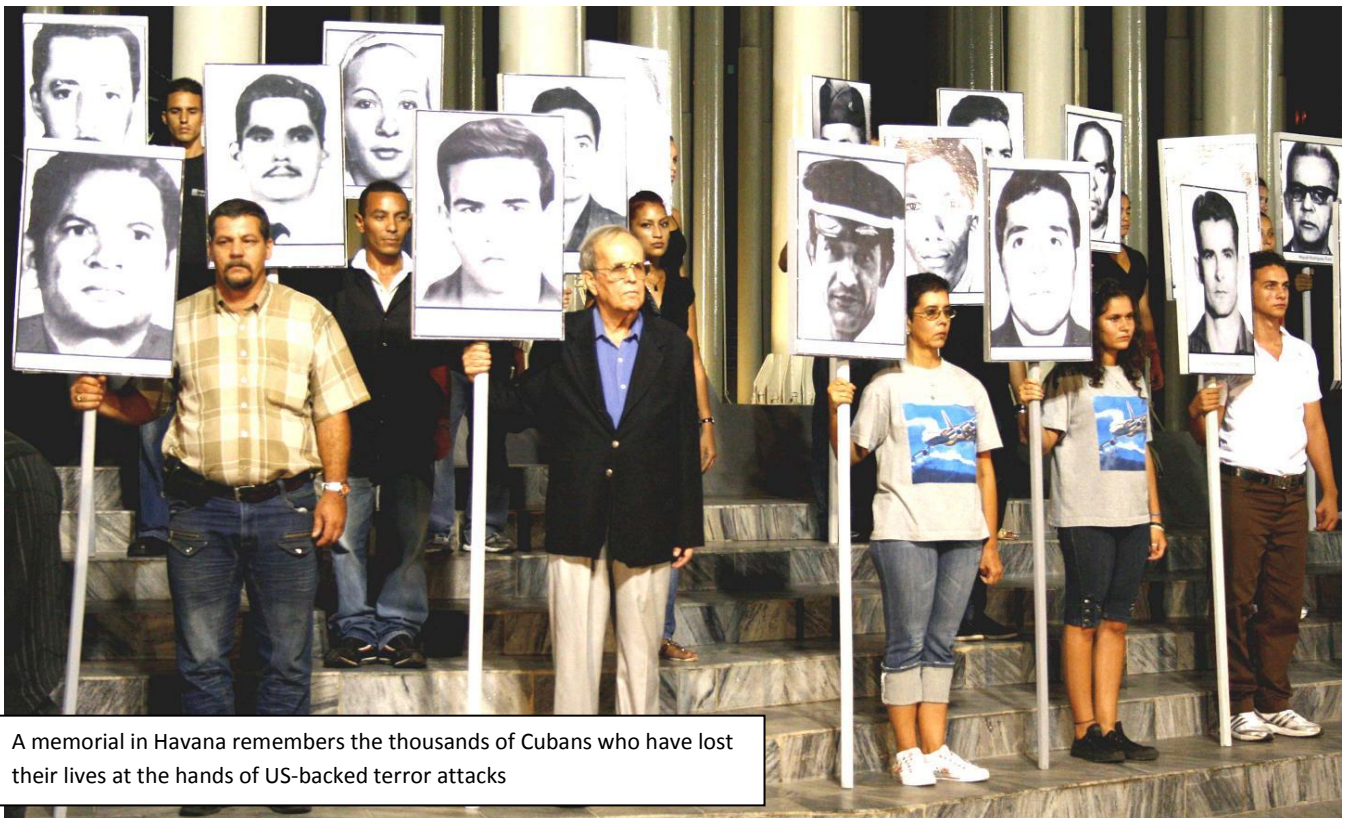
In the space of just two years following the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the US carried out hundreds of unilateral aggressive acts including: ending the sugar quota and shutting the US market to Cuban sugar; approving covert

operations aimed at toppling the Cuban government; banning commercial ships from docking in Cuban ports; suspending US financial credits to Cuban banks; banning US exports to Cuba; and breaking off diplomatic relations.

On 4 March 1960, La Coubre, a Belgian ship carrying French arms purchased by Cuba, exploded in Havana harbour killing more than 100 and injuring another 200 people. This would become the first in a long line of US backed terrorist attacks against the island.

The Bay of Pigs Invasion 1961

These early acts of aggression peaked in April 1961 when the US supplied B-26 bombers to attack Cuban airports to pave the way for an invasion by 1,400 counter-revolutionary forces. The Bay of Pigs invasion by a CIA-sponsored paramilitary group, Brigade 2506, took place on 17 April 1961, and was defeated by the Cuban army within two days.



A memorial in Havana remembers the thousands of Cubans who have lost their lives at the hands of US-backed terror attacks

Find out more at www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk

Acts of Terrorism

Various US agencies (the CIA primarily) have supported or harboured the perpetrators of terrorist attacks. The most infamous of these is ex-CIA agent and Cuban national, Luis Posada Carriles. Carriles was responsible for the bombing of a Cuban airliner in 1976 killing 73 people. During an interview with the New York Times in 1998, he also admitted to organising a series of hotel bombings in Cuba which resulted in 11 injuries and the death of Italian tourist Fabio DiCelmo in 1996. In 2000 he was arrested and jailed in Panama for planning to bomb a university where Fidel Castro was due to speak. He was pardoned by the Panamanian president four years later at the behest of the US government. Carriles now lives in Florida under the de facto protection of the US authorities where he walks free and is a regular guest of TV shows.

Chemical and biological warfare

Less visible but by no means less lethal forms of US warfare have also been used against Cuba. Operation Mongoose (1961-62) sought to cause sickness among Cuban sugar cane workers by spraying cane fields with toxic chemicals. In 1971 the US introduced African swine fever to the island forcing the government to slaughter 500,000 pigs, thus drastically reducing the availability of pork, a staple Cuban food. In the 1980s a virulent strain of dengue fever was unleashed which resulted in 273,000 people contracting the illness – 158 died, including 101 children.

Cuban Adjustment Act

During the Johnson administration the US Congress passed the Cuban Adjustment Act (1966). Still in force today, this act aims to politically destabilise the country by encouraging Cuban citizens to leave illegally in order to obtain permanent residence and US citizenship. Unlike any other nationality in Latin America, any Cuban who arrives in the US is entitled to stay and receive citizenship after one year.

Political Isolation

A central aspect of US intervention has been to use its colossal economic and political might to try and isolate Cuba internationally. In January 1962, using its influence over the oligarch led governments in Latin America, the US was able to successfully 'suspend' Cuba from the Organisation of American States (OAS) – a decision

which has lasted more than 50 years. Cuba was only readmitted to the OAS in 2015.

Radio and TV Martí

In 1983 President Reagan created Radio and TV Martí to illegally transmit crude but intoxicating Cold War propaganda, broadcasting principally a "regime change" message and appealing to Cubans to rise up against the Cuban government. This is state-sponsored political propaganda with the explicit aim to subvert the political institutions and stability of a sovereign state. Both stations are still running and receiving US government funding.

Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba

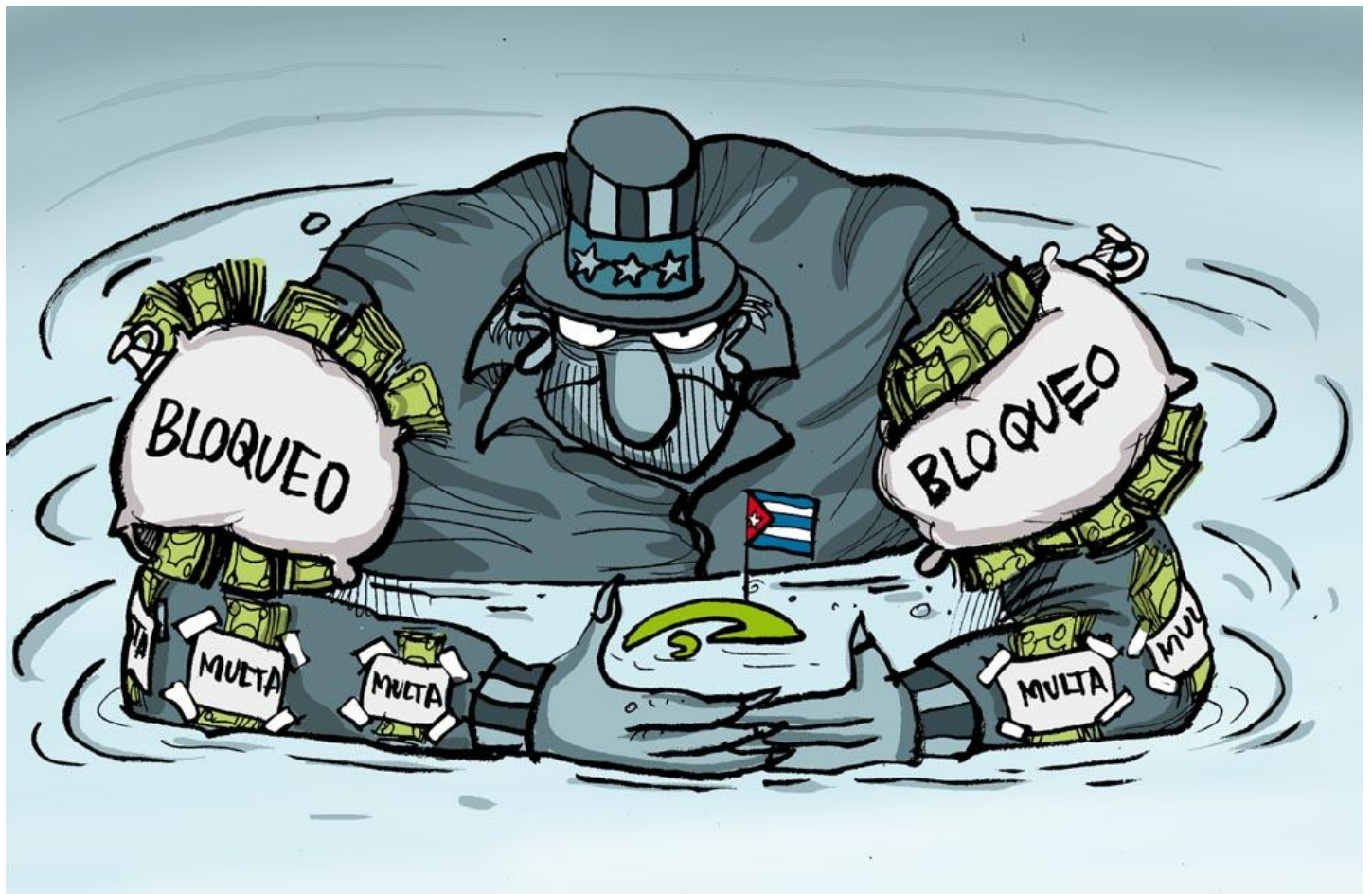
The G.W. Bush administrations (2000-2008) took post Cold War aggression against Cuba to new levels. In May 2002 Bush imposed draconian restrictions on travel and remittances between Cuban-Americans and their families on the island. The establishment of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, the appointment by Bush of a 'Transition Coordinator' and the 452-page Report which it issued became a blueprint for 'regime change' in Cuba.

The Blockade – El bloqueo

The US blockade is by far the most extreme, sustained and cruel example of US intervention in Cuba. It is the longest in history, and the harm and suffering it has caused is tantamount to economic warfare waged against the Cuban people. Cuba estimates that it has cost the country over \$121 billion since 1962. The US Government Accountability Office itself admits that it is "the most comprehensive set of US sanctions on any country."

"The only foreseeable means of alienating internal support is through disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship....every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba. If such a policy is adopted, it should be the result of a positive decision which would call forth a line of action which, while as adroit and inconspicuous as possible, makes the greatest inroads in denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government."

-Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs
Lester D. Mallory (1960)



Terror attacks against Cuba since 1959

“US official documents that have recently been declassified show that, between October 1960 and April 1961, the CIA smuggled 75 tons of explosives into Cuba during 30 clandestine air operations, and 45 tons of weapons and explosives during 31 sea incursions. Also during that short seven-month time span, the CIA carried out 110 attacks with dynamite, planted 200 bombs, derailed six trains and burned 150 factories and 800 plantations.

“Between 1959 and 1997, the United States carried out 5,780 terrorist actions against Cuba – 804 of them considered as terrorist attacks of significant magnitude, including 78 bombings against the civil population that caused thousands of victims.

“Terrorist attacks against Cuba have cost 3,478 lives and have left 2,099 people permanently disabled. Between 1959 and 2003, there were 61 hijackings of planes or boats. Between 1961 and 1996, there were 58 attacks from the sea against 67 economic targets and the population.

“The CIA has directed and supported over 4,000 individuals in 299 paramilitary groups. They are responsible for 549 murders and thousands of people wounded.

“In 1971, after a biological attack, half a million pigs had to be killed to prevent the spreading of swine fever. In 1981, the introduction of dengue fever caused 344,203 victims killing 158 of whom 101 were children. On July 6th, 1982, 11,400 cases were registered in one day alone.

“Most of these aggressions were prepared in Florida by the CIA-trained and financed extreme right wing of Cuban origin” Salim Lamrani article - Fifty years of terrorism against Cuba

Funding and promoting unrest

The US government has never stopped recruiting and financing individuals and groups dedicated to 'regime change' in Cuba. Most recently the focus has moved away from funding violent groups to the covert funding of individuals dedicated to regime change on the island.

Through its Agency for International Development (USAID) the US government has been attempting to build an internal opposition movement by recruiting and training networks of 'independent journalists', anti-revolution activists, and bloggers. Recently exposed programmes by Associated Press include millions of dollars spent to set up a Cuban twitter service 'ZunZuneo' to ferment civil unrest; attempts to infiltrate Cuba's hip-hop scene; and recruiting foreign students to identify potential opposition leaders in the country under the guise of health promotion programmes.

On 17 December 2014, President Obama announced that US policy towards Cuba would change, acknowledging that in doing so, "we will end an outdated approach that, for decades, has failed to advance our interests."

Despite these public pronouncements and the welcome warming of diplomatic relations between the two countries, it should be noted that the US is continuing to fund its USAID programmes in Cuba. As recently as January 2016 USAID announced a further \$5 million for funding regime change activities specifically aimed at building US-backed labour organisations. In September 2015, US government websites were advertising for managers to run its Cuba programmes in areas including "civil society development, community development and youth programs," for which candidates would need to obtain "secret" security clearance. Bills are currently before Congress for an additional \$30 million in 2016 alone.



The US government, through its USAID programme, has funded millions of dollars of regime change programmes aimed to ferment unrest and build a US backed opposition in the country

A multimillion dollar industry exists in Miami made up of US government funded individuals and organisations receiving large salaries to interfere in Cuban internal affairs. Until the US government stops funding and promoting such activities normal relations between the two countries remain unlikely.

Find out more:

Further reading:

Cuba Under Siege: American Policy, the Revolution and its People by Keith Bolender

The Cuba Project: CIA Covert Operations 1959-62 by Fabian Escalante

The Economic War against Cuba by Salim Lamrani
CSC website and magazine archives

Further viewing:

638 Ways to Kill Castro (DVD)

Phillip Agee, the CIA and Cuba (DVD)

The Day Diplomacy Died (DVD)

Full details at www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk

Get involved

Help end the illegal US blockade of Cuba and defend the Cuban people's right to determine their own future free from foreign interference and aggression.

Please support the Cuba Solidarity Campaign

Membership includes quarterly magazine and free 15 track Cuban music CD. £20 waged/£8 unwaged

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