

The Revolution Against Civilization: A Critical Analysis of the 2026 State Department Report on Cuba

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Media Statement

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A new critical analysis examines the 2026 State Department report on Cuba—the most comprehensive U.S. government account of Cuban subversion ever published—and finds that while its factual claims about Cuban espionage, foreign alliances, and influence networks are substantially grounded, its analytical framework is internally circular, politically instrumental, and dangerously incomplete. Drawing on the author's scholarship, the analysis reveals what the report obscures: that the U.S.-Cuba conflict is not a one-directional assault but a sixty-seven-year dialectic of mutual regime change in which both sides have corrupted the other while failing to transform it. Most provocatively, the analysis identifies the report's deepest political function—not merely cataloging Cuban threats, but characterizing the American left as the symptomatic carrier of a foreign ideological infection, thereby supplying the Cuba chapter of a broader narrative about the corruption of American democracy. The report's portrait of Cuba as "less a nation-state than an all-encompassing intelligence and subversion operation" is powerful but unfalsifiable; my counter-portrait of a rigid Leninist party-state trapped in a "stable state of misery" is more analytically precise but less politically actionable. The full picture requires holding both simultaneously—and confronting the uncomfortable possibility that American policy may inadvertently reinforce the very system it claims to oppose. The analysis is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand what the Trump Administration's Cuba policy is actually about.

Table of Contents

1. **Executive Summary for Policymakers and General Readers**
 2. **Summary of the State Department Report on Cuba**
 - Structure and Principal Claims
 - The Interlacing Structure: How the Eight Parts Form a Single Argument
 - Source Base and Methodology
 3. **Critical Analysis**
 4. Analytical Framework: Security Narrative vs. Ideological Analysis
 5. The Problem of Monocausal Explanation and the "Political Terrorism" Campaign
 6. The "Embargo Mentality," Mutual Constitution, and the Stable State of Misery
 7. The Question of Cuba's Medical Missions and Labor
 8. Human Rights as Political Instrument
 9. Third Worldism: Weapon or Ideology?
 10. The "America First" Frame, the Venezuela Template, and the War on Gangs
 11. What the Analysis Missed: The American Side of the Mirror
 - A. The Corruption of the American System
 - B. The Dialectic of Mutual Regime Change
 12. What Both Accounts Share—and What Remains Unresolved
 13. The Characterization Dichotomy: Sharpened
 14. The Ambiguity That Persists
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Executive Summary for Policymakers and General Readers

This analysis examines a 2026 State Department report on Cuba and subjects it to critical scrutiny drawing on the author's scholarship on Cuban governance, ideology, and U.S.-Cuba relations.

What the State Department report argues: Cuba is not merely a poor Caribbean island but an integrated intelligence-and-subversion apparatus whose singular purpose since 1959 has been to undermine the United States. The report traces Cuban influence through revolutionary ideology, espionage, guerrilla networks, domestic activist organizations, and alliances with Russia, China, Iran, and terrorist groups. It concludes that Cuba is "less a nation-state than an all-encompassing intelligence and subversion operation."

What the critical analysis finds:

15. **The report is internally circular.** Its eight sections form a self-reinforcing loop in which every Cuban institution—medical programs, academic exchanges, solidarity committees—is interpreted as subversion because the framework has already defined Cuba as nothing but a subversion apparatus. This makes the argument powerful rhetorically but difficult to test empirically.
16. **The report serves a specific policy function.** It provides the ideological-threat narrative that legitimates the January 2026 executive order imposing petroleum tariffs and the

administration's pursuit of a "Venezuelan solution" for Cuba—removal of Cuba's president while negotiating with the military establishment.

17. **Cuba's resilience cannot be explained by espionage alone.** Backer's scholarship shows that Cuba has developed a "stable state of misery"—a governance mechanism in which managed deprivation, moral framing of sacrifice, and periodic controlled openings keep the system functional. External pressure may strengthen rather than weaken this system by reinforcing the siege narrative.
18. **Both accounts agree on key facts.** Cuban intelligence operations are real. Cuban human-rights conditions are severe. Cuba maintains significant relationships with U.S. adversaries. The Cuban people suffer material deprivation. The disagreement is over *characterization*: is Cuba primarily a hostile intelligence service, or primarily a rigid ideological state whose international activism cannot be reduced to espionage?
19. **The analysis initially missed two critical dimensions.** By accepting the report's invitation to focus on Cuba, both the report and the initial critique obscured (a) the degree to which Cuban ideological projection has *corrupted the American political system itself*—becoming indigenous, self-sustaining, and politically indistinguishable from the domestic commitments of portions of the American left—and (b) the *symmetrical dialectic of mutual regime change* in which both sides have spent sixty-seven years seeking to corrupt the systemic integrity of the other while deploying characterizations of the other that are simultaneously accurate descriptions of real pathologies and strategic weapons in the conflict.
20. **The policy stakes are high.** If the report is correct, engagement is naïve and pressure is imperative. If the author is correct, the report may inadvertently reinforce the system it claims to oppose. The possibility that both characterizations capture partial truths—that Cuba is simultaneously a genuine ideological state and one that instrumentalizes every institution for strategic advantage—is the most intellectually honest conclusion, though the least satisfying for policy.

Summary of the State Department Report on Cuba

The attached State Department report (Cuba-Report.pdf) is a lengthy national-security assessment—approximately 100 pages—that advances a single overarching thesis: Cuba is not merely a poor or failing Caribbean state but rather an integrated intelligence, subversion, and ideological-warfare apparatus whose primary target since 1959 has been the United States. [1] [2] The report does not contain a separately labeled executive summary, formal methodology section, or enumerated set of recommendations. Instead, it is organized into historical and thematic chapters that collectively present Cuba as the "beating heart" of a global revolutionary network. [3]

Structure and Principal Claims

The report proceeds through approximately eight major sections:

I. The Revolutionary State frames Cuba's campaign against the United States as "irregular and covert," built around "espionage, infiltration, sabotage, proxy networks, and a revolutionary infrastructure designed to turn America against itself". [4]

II. Birth of a New Left traces the Cuban Revolution's role in creating Third Worldism—a new revolutionary identity forged at the 1966 Tricontinental Conference in Havana. The report argues that Cuba "decolonized Marxist thought" by recasting the class struggle as a civilizational conflict between the colonized peoples of the Global South and "Western civilization itself". [\[5\]](#)

III. Exporting Revolution catalogs Cuban support for guerrilla movements and insurgencies across Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East—from the Sandinistas in Nicaragua to the Macheteros in Puerto Rico, the Tupamaros in Uruguay, and revolutionary groups in Venezuela, Colombia, and Argentina. [\[6\]](#) [\[7\]](#) [\[8\]](#) [\[9\]](#)

IV. An Espionage Empire profiles Cuba's intelligence service (Dirección de Inteligencia) and presents case studies of long-term Cuban penetration of the U.S. government, including the fifty-year espionage of Victor Manuel Rocha, Ana Belén Montes, the Walter Kendall Myers couple, and the Wasp Network. [\[10\]](#) [\[11\]](#) [\[12\]](#) [\[13\]](#)

V. Revolutionary Tourism examines the Venceremos Brigade, which the report describes as "among the most extensive and dangerous infiltration operations ever undertaken by a foreign power against the United States," and alleges that it served as a recruitment pipeline for espionage and domestic terrorism. [\[14\]](#) [\[15\]](#)

VI. Racial Revolution discusses Cuba's cultivation of relationships with Black Power leaders, the Black Panther Party, and later movements including Black Lives Matter. [\[16\]](#) [\[17\]](#)

VII. Front Groups and Fellow Travelers targets ICAP, the National Network on Cuba, IFCO/Pastors for Peace, the National Lawyers Guild, the People's Forum, Code Pink, and the Democratic Socialists of America as elements of Cuba's U.S.-facing influence network. [\[18\]](#) [\[19\]](#) [\[20\]](#) [\[21\]](#)

VIII. Anti-American Internationale discusses Cuba's post-Cold War partnerships with Russia, China, Iran, and Palestinian organizations, including the construction of Chinese SIGINT facilities on the island. [\[22\]](#) [\[23\]](#) [\[24\]](#) [\[25\]](#)

The **Conclusion** states that "Cuba's assault on the United States was never, at root, a quarrel over economic policy or sovereignty or even ownership of a particular territory. It was a revolution against Western civilization itself" and that modern Cuba serves as "connective tissue" linking Russia, China, Iran, and domestic radical movements. [\[26\]](#) [\[27\]](#)

The Interlacing Structure: How the Eight Parts Form a Single Argument

The report's eight sections are not merely sequential chapters; they form a tightly interlaced argumentative web in which each section depends on and reinforces the others. The ideological history of sections I and II (The Revolutionary State; Birth of a New Left) provides the motivational engine that explains why Cuba allegedly built the espionage apparatus described in section IV (An Espionage Empire) and the revolutionary-tourism pipeline described in section V. The guerrilla and proxy networks of section III (Exporting Revolution) are presented as the operational predecessors of the domestic front groups cataloged in section VII (Front Groups and Fellow Travelers)—the suggestion being that organizations like the Venceremos Brigade, ICAP, and the National Lawyers Guild are the institutional descendants of the same infrastructure that once armed the Tupamaros and trained the Macheteros. [\[28\]](#) [\[29\]](#) [\[30\]](#) [\[31\]](#)

Section VI (Racial Revolution) functions as the bridge between the foreign-facing intelligence operations and the domestic influence narrative: Cuba's cultivation of Black Power leaders and later activist movements is presented as the mechanism by which revolutionary ideology was transmitted into American domestic politics, creating the link between Havana and contemporary movements like Black Lives Matter and campus activism. This domestic penetration, in turn, is the platform on which section VIII's anti-American coalition (Russia, China, Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, PFLP) can allegedly operate within the United States—using Cuba as what the report calls "connective tissue" between foreign adversaries and domestic radical movements. [\[32\]](#) [\[33\]](#) [\[34\]](#)

The circularity is deliberate and structural: ideology motivates espionage; espionage enables front groups; front groups recruit activists; activists become agents or fellow travelers; the resulting network serves foreign adversaries; and those adversaries reinforce Cuba's capacity to continue the cycle. [\[35\]](#) [\[36\]](#) [\[37\]](#) [\[38\]](#) The report's conclusion draws all threads together in the proposition that Cuba is not a state that also conducts subversion, but rather a subversion operation that incidentally occupies a territory—"less a nation-state than an all-encompassing intelligence and subversion operation, focused around its existential revolution against the United States."

This interlacing has analytical consequences. Because each section references and depends on the others, challenging any single factual claim threatens the entire structure. [\[39\]](#) But equally, because the argument is circular—each element explained by reference to the others—it becomes nearly unfalsifiable from within its own frame. Every Cuban institution, program, or international engagement is read as evidence of subversion precisely because the framework has already established that Cuba is, at root, nothing but a subversion apparatus.

Source Base and Methodology

The report relies on declassified U.S. intelligence memoranda, congressional and Senate reports, FBI and DOJ materials, statements from Cuban intelligence defectors, court cases, media reporting, nonprofit filings, and open-source analyses. [\[12\]](#) [\[40\]](#) [\[41\]](#) [\[42\]](#) It does not present a systematic methodology, evidentiary hierarchy, uncertainty scale, or criteria for evaluating competing explanations. All sources are marshaled to support a single interpretive frame.

Critical Analysis

For this analysis the author draws on his 2018 monograph *Caribbean Marxism: Essays on Cuba in the Post Fidel Castro Era*, his 2025 *Penn State Journal of Law & International Affairs* article "Cuba's Stable State of Misery," his 2026 essay "The Conceptual Architecture of America First—Ideological Transactionalism and the Case of Cuba," and numerous posts on his blog *Law at the End of the Day* (lbackerblog.blogspot.com) tracking real-time developments in U.S.-Cuba policy.

1. Analytical Framework: Security Narrative vs. Ideological Analysis

The most basic difference is methodological. The State Department report operates within a national-security/counterintelligence frame: Cuba is a "threat," its organizations are "fronts," its

solidarity networks are "fifth columns," and its ideology is a "weapon." [43] [44] [45] [46] Every institution—medical programs, academic exchanges, solidarity committees, cultural organizations—is presented as a component of an integrated subversion apparatus. [47] [48] [49] [50]

Backer, by contrast, argues that Cuba can only be understood by engaging seriously with its internal logic—its "Caribbean Marxism" as a distinct ideological system with its own premises about the relationship between the state, the economy, labor, markets, sovereignty, and international engagement. [51] [52] [53] He warns that importing liberal-market or Western-constitutional assumptions into the analysis of Cuban political language produces distortion rather than understanding. [54] The State Department report arguably exemplifies exactly this analytical error: it assumes that because Cuban institutions do not operate according to liberal-democratic principles, they must be fraudulent coverings for intelligence operations.

2. The Problem of Monocausal Explanation and the "Political Terrorism"

Campaign

The report presents a comprehensive conspiratorial narrative in which Cuban influence explains an extraordinary range of American social and political developments—"from the George Floyd riots to the rise of Antifa to the explosion of pro-terrorist activism on American college campuses". [49] This framing must be understood within the Trump Administration's larger project of characterizing left-wing domestic activism as a form of terrorism with foreign roots. In July 2026, Secretary Rubio convened a "Ministerial on the Resurgence of Political Terrorism" at the State Department—a conference explicitly dedicated to the proposition that political violence and extremism originating from the left constitutes a distinct and resurgent category of terrorism requiring coordinated international response. In his remarks at the conference, Rubio drew direct lines between foreign revolutionary movements, domestic radical organizations, and what the administration frames as the ideological corruption of Western democratic institutions by forces hostile to liberal civilization. The Cuba report functions as the evidentiary foundation for one chapter of this larger campaign: it supplies the historical genealogy connecting Cuban revolutionary ideology to contemporary American left-wing movements, thereby establishing that domestic political activism the administration opposes is not merely misguided but is the mature product of a foreign terrorist-state's decades-long subversion project. The "political terrorism" frame transforms a policy disagreement into a security threat and a domestic political opposition into an object of counterterrorism.

Backer's scholarship suggests that such monocausal explanations mistake Cuba's genuine international activism for omnipotent manipulation. Cuba, in Backer's account, has indeed achieved disproportionate international influence relative to its size, but this is because it represents an alternative ideological model that resonates with genuine grievances in post-colonial societies—not because it secretly controls American social movements. [55]

Backer recognizes that Cuba's internationalism has always been simultaneously ideological, strategic, and self-interested. [56] [57] [58] But he does not collapse these dimensions into a single intelligence narrative. Cuban medical missions, for instance, are simultaneously humanitarian, commercial, ideological, diplomatic, and geopolitical—not merely espionage cover. [59] [60] [61]

3. The "Embargo Mentality," Mutual Constitution, and the Stable State of Misery

The State Department report treats the U.S.-Cuba conflict as one-directional: Cuba attacks, the United States defends. Backer's scholarship reveals a far more complex dynamic of mutual constitution. He argues that U.S. policy and Cuban policy have become mutually reinforcing ideological performances. The Cuban government uses U.S. hostility to justify internal discipline and political sacrifice; the United States uses Cuban repression to justify continuing sanctions and pressure.

Backer identifies what he calls the "embargo mentality"—the analytical assumption that Cuba's international position is one of isolation. In fact, Cuba has engaged globally on its own terms throughout the embargo period. The State Department report's shock at the extent of Cuban international networks may partly reflect a failure to recognize that the embargo did not isolate Cuba—it reshaped the form of Cuban engagement while inadvertently helping Cuba construct alternative globalization frameworks through ALBA and "just commerce" principles.

Backer's 2025 article deepens this point through his concept of the "stable state of misery." His thesis is that Cuba has not been in perpetual pre-collapse for decades by accident or solely because of external aid. Rather, the Cuban state has developed a system in which managed deprivation functions as a governance mechanism. The system operates through three interlocking elements: (1) a moral ideology that treats material sacrifice as politically and spiritually necessary—consumerism as corruption, austerity as revolutionary virtue; (2) an administrative apparatus that permits limited, temporary, reversible economic openings while preserving centralized Party control; and (3) the instrumentalization of periodic popular protest as a feedback mechanism, allowing the state to gauge the tolerable limits of hardship without those protests necessarily destabilizing the regime.

This framework directly challenges the State Department report's implicit assumption that Cuban misery is merely a byproduct of regime predation and must inevitably produce revolutionary collapse. Backer argues instead that misery is structurally *functional* for the regime—it keeps the population focused on survival, reinforces the narrative of siege and sacrifice, and—critically—suits external actors as well. Foreign lenders, geopolitical rivals, and even the United States each benefit from Cuba's continued miserable stability: lending states develop narratives of crisis without bearing the cost of collapse; ideological allies gain symbolic capital; and the United States retains Cuba as a demonstration of socialist failure.

The 2018 monograph provides the deeper ideological architecture. Backer argues that Cuban economic rigidity is not mere incompetence but reflects what he calls "Caribbean Marxism"—a Marxist-Leninist system adapted to Latin American and Caribbean conditions, built under the shadow of U.S. hostility, and committed to the subordination of economic activity to political objectives, the rejection of market mechanisms, and a distrust of autonomous private accumulation. The system reached institutional maturity around 1976 and has remained substantially static since—not because Cuban leaders are stupid, but because reform threatens the ideological coherence on which Party legitimacy rests. Backer contrasts Cuba unfavorably with China, which managed to separate the Party's vanguard role from administrative governance and develop "socialist modernization," while Cuba remained committed to an increasingly anachronistic orthodox model.

The policy implications are significant: the State Department report assumes that intensified pressure will push Cuba toward collapse or capitulation. Backer's analysis suggests that the Cuban apparatus has been specifically designed to *absorb* external pressure and convert it into legitimating narrative—the very siege conditions the report describes may strengthen rather than weaken the regime's internal justification for continued rule.

4. The Question of Cuba's Medical Missions and Labor

The State Department report briefly mentions Cuban doctors deployed to Venezuela only as part of Cuban state-building and intelligence infrastructure. [\[62\]](#) [\[63\]](#) [\[64\]](#) It does not provide a serious analysis of the medical missions' labor dimensions. Backer, by contrast, has produced the most detailed English-language legal analysis of these programs.

Backer treats Misión Barrio Adentro as a "socio-political barter project" in which Cuba exchanged doctors for Venezuelan petroleum. [\[65\]](#) [\[66\]](#) [\[67\]](#) He takes seriously both the humanitarian achievements—bringing primary care to underserved Venezuelan populations—and the coercive dimensions: Cuban doctors allegedly kept under surveillance, denied freedom of movement, restricted from social interaction, required to work seven days per week, and threatened with punishment for refusal. [\[68\]](#) [\[69\]](#) [\[70\]](#) [\[71\]](#)

His critical conclusion is measured: he does not definitively declare Cuba's labor-export system to be illegal forced labor, but argues that its institutional structure creates a "foreseeable collision with international norms" because in a command economy "the difference between a citizen's duty to the state and involuntary servitude can be quite thin". [\[72\]](#) [\[73\]](#) He notes that ILO Convention No. 29, the OECD Guidelines, and the U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights all present potential bases for challenging Cuban practice. [\[74\]](#) [\[75\]](#) [\[76\]](#) [\[77\]](#)

Critically, Backer also identifies the political context of the U.S. cases against Cuban labor practices. In *Licea v. Curaçao Dry Dock*, the court relied on a U.S. State Department human-rights report whose factual assertions were never contested because the defendant defaulted. [\[78\]](#) [\[79\]](#) Backer warns that "from the Cuban perspective, the United States is in no position to neutrally judge the Cuban state's compliance with international human rights norms" and that the case's sweeping language may carry limited precedential authority outside the United States. [\[80\]](#) [\[81\]](#) [\[82\]](#) [\[83\]](#)

5. Human Rights as Political Instrument

Both the State Department report and Backer recognize that Cuba has serious human-rights problems. But Backer insists that human-rights language in U.S.-Cuba relations is not politically neutral. It serves as an instrument of regime-change policy on the U.S. side and as a defensive shield (invoking U.S. racism, inequality, and treaty non-participation) on the Cuban side. [\[84\]](#) [\[85\]](#) [\[86\]](#) [\[87\]](#)

The State Department report characterizes ordinary Cubans as living in "something akin to modern slavery". [\[88\]](#) Backer uses different but no less critical language—he describes a "stable state of misery" in which the Cuban state has developed the capacity to maintain political order through managed deprivation, moral framing of sacrifice, and periodic tactical openings and closings of private economic activity. [\[89\]](#) [\[90\]](#) [\[91\]](#) [\[92\]](#)

The difference is diagnostic: the State Department frames Cuban governance as purely criminal and predatory; Backer frames it as a system with internal ideological coherence that nonetheless produces predictably miserable material outcomes for the population. [\[93\]](#) [\[94\]](#) [\[95\]](#) Both conclusions are devastating for the Cuban government, but Backer's analysis permits understanding *why* the system persists without needing to attribute that persistence entirely to external support or espionage prowess.

6. Third Worldism: Weapon or Ideology?

The State Department report presents Third Worldism as an ideological weapon developed by Cuba specifically to subvert the United States. [\[96\]](#) [\[97\]](#) [\[98\]](#) [\[99\]](#) Backer, while recognizing its instrumentalization, treats it as a genuinely held worldview with deep roots in anti-colonial thought and with continuing appeal in the Global South. [\[51\]](#) [\[53\]](#) [\[100\]](#) [\[101\]](#)

Backer's account implies that the State Department report commits a fundamental error of perspective: it assumes that because Third Worldist ideology serves Cuban strategic interests, it cannot also be sincerely held or genuinely attractive to others without Cuban manipulation. The report's framing—that American activists who embrace such views must be either manipulated or recruited by Cuban intelligence—fails to account for the possibility that U.S. foreign policy has itself generated authentic opposition both domestically and globally.

7. The "America First" Frame, the Venezuela Template, and the War on Gangs

Backer's 2026 essay introduces the concept of a clash between "merchant/transactional" and "bureaucratic/institutional" cognitive models—what he calls the "merchant" (商) versus the "bureaucrat" (士). The State Department report can be understood as a product of the newer America First transactional frame: Cuba is not merely a threat to liberal-internationalist institutions (the older framing) but a direct threat to U.S. national security, territorial integrity, and domestic social order.

Backer situates the State Department report within the Trump administration's January 29, 2026 executive order on Cuba (EO 14380, "Addressing Threats to the United States by the Government of Cuba"), which characterizes the island as aligned with "numerous hostile countries, transnational terrorist groups, and malign actors adverse to the United States, including the Government of the Russian Federation (Russia), the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Government of Iran, Hamas, and Hezbollah" and as forming part of a "transnational apparatus for the support of terrorism and the destabilization of lawful governments in the region." The report echoes this executive-order language almost verbatim.

The Venezuela Template. Backer's most striking analytical contribution in 2026 is his identification of the "Venezuelan solution" as the operational model being applied to Cuba. On January 3, 2026, the United States forcibly extracted Nicolás Maduro from Venezuela to face criminal indictments. Trump described the aftermath in transactional terms: "Once the attack ended, the attack ended, and they said, 'let's make a deal.' More people should do that." The key policy objectives in Venezuela were not regime transformation in the institutional sense but the elimination of adverse externalities—migration, narco-trafficking, gang activity, and the expulsion of Iranian and Hezbollah presence from the hemisphere. Secretary Rubio articulated this framework: the United States expected Venezuela to "stop the drug trafficking," end "gang

problems," "kick the FARC and the ELN out," and no longer "cozy up to Hezbollah and Iran in our own hemisphere."

The Connection to Domestic Gang Suppression. This framing is critical for understanding the State Department report's emphasis on Cuba's connections to transnational criminal organizations and terrorist networks. The 2025 National Security Strategy identifies "terrorist organizations, transnational criminal networks" as primary threats, and the Western Hemisphere objectives specifically include "suppressing narco-terrorist gangs and cartels." Backer's analysis suggests that the Trump administration's domestic war on transnational criminal gangs and its foreign policy toward Cuba and Venezuela are conceptually unified within the same transactional framework. Both are understood as adverse impacts on U.S. interests requiring forceful remediation—the distinction between "domestic" gang suppression and "foreign" regime pressure dissolves within the merchant cognitive cage. Cuba's alleged harboring of, or cooperation with, transnational criminal and terrorist networks becomes the justification for treating the Cuban state itself as analogous to a criminal enterprise requiring enforcement action.

"Cuba is Next." By late March 2026, Trump stated "Cuba is next" during a Miami speech touting U.S. military successes in Venezuela and Iran. Backer reads this within the Venezuelan template: the United States applies petroleum-supply leverage (the executive order's tariffs on oil-supplying states), negotiates directly with elements of the Cuban military establishment (the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, or FAR), and signals that a "deal" is available if Cuba removes its current president and eliminates its most objectionable external relationships. By March 16, 2026, reporting indicated the administration favored "a Venezuelan style predicate"—toppling a figurehead "while keeping in place the repressive Communist government that has ruled Cuba for more than 65 years."

Backer's blog posts track these developments in real time, including "On the Brink or Blip? Cuba Prepares for..." (January 31, 2026), "Al imperio que nos amenaza le decimos: ¡Cuba somos millones!" (January 19, 2026, concerning Díaz-Canel's wartime-footing speech), and earlier posts on Rubio's "Americas First Foreign Policy" (January 31, 2025) and Biden's terrorism-list removal (January 14, 2025). These blog essays document the whiplash of Cuba's terrorism designation—removed by Biden on January 14, 2025 (after Cuba released 500+ prisoners), reinstated by Trump on January 20, 2025—as itself evidence of how Cuba policy functions as a transactional instrument rather than a stable legal determination.

The State Department Report as Policy Instrument. From Backer's analytical perspective, the State Department report is itself an instrument—a political document designed to justify specific policy actions (tariffs on countries supplying petroleum to Cuba, sanctions on ICAP and related organizations, negotiations with Cuban military leadership for a "Venezuelan solution") rather than a neutral assessment of the Cuban state. The report provides the ideological-threat narrative that legitimates the transactional coercion the executive order operationalizes. In this reading, the report's exhaustive cataloging of Cuban connections to Russia, China, Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the PFLP serves a specific policy function: it establishes the legal and political predicate for treating Cuba as part of the same transnational criminal-terrorist nexus that justifies U.S. operations in Venezuela and domestic gang-suppression enforcement.

8. What the Analysis Missed: The American Side of the Mirror

The preceding analysis—both the report's and ours—accepted the report's implicit invitation to focus on Cuba. That was half wrong. By centering Cuba as the sole active agent, we obscured two dimensions of the problem that are equally essential to any resolution: the role of the United States as a *responsive and transformed* participant in the relationship, and the *process* of mutual subversion that runs in both directions simultaneously.

A. The Corruption of the American System

The State Department report's most politically significant undercurrent is not its account of Cuban espionage or guerrilla networks—those are familiar Cold War tropes. Its near-surface current, the one that gives the document its contemporary political charge, is the proposition that Cuban ideological projection has *corrupted the American political system itself*. The report does not merely argue that Cuba ran spies or funded terrorists. It argues that Cuban ideology—Third Worldism, racial revolution, anti-imperialism, the civilizational rejection of the West—was strategically seeded into American institutions over six decades, where it took root, evolved, hybridized with indigenous grievances, and ultimately became indistinguishable from the domestic political commitments of significant portions of the American left.

This is no longer a story about *intervention*—a foreign hand reaching in from outside. It is a story about *corruption*—a system whose internal immune responses have been so degraded that the foreign pathogen now reproduces autonomously within the host. The Weather Underground was shaped by Cuban contact; but Black Lives Matter, the DSA, campus activism, and anti-ICE organizing are presented as the *mature fruit* of that earlier seeding—no longer requiring Cuban operational control because the ideology has become self-sustaining within American institutions.

This has two immediate political consequences that the report does not state explicitly but that its structure makes unavoidable:

First, it feeds directly into the broader Trump Administration narrative of systemic corruption in American democracy—the "deep state," the institutional capture of universities, media, nonprofits, and government agencies by ideological actors hostile to the American constitutional order. Cuba, in this telling, is one vector among several (alongside domestic progressive movements, academic critical theory, and foreign influence from China and others) through which the corruption was introduced. The report supplies the Cuba chapter of a larger story about how American institutions were turned against the American people.

Second, and more specifically, the report identifies the organized political opponents of the current administration—the American left, progressive nonprofits, socialist organizations, left-aligned labor unions, and by clear implication elements of the Democratic Party itself—as the *carriers* of this corruption. They are not merely political opponents with different policy preferences; they are, in the report's logic, the symptomatic expression of a decades-long foreign infection of the body politic. The Venceremos Brigade alumni who became labor leaders, professors, and government officials; the DSA delegations that debrief with the Cuban Embassy; the members of Congress who wrote to Castro on behalf of Assata Shakur—all are presented not as political actors exercising their rights within a pluralist democracy, but as the living evidence of Cuban neo-colonial success within the American system.

Backer's framework helps identify what is happening here but does not itself fully address it. His concept of mutual constitution—that U.S. and Cuban policies reinforce each other—captures the dynamic at the *state* level. But the report's deeper claim is about *societal* corruption: that critical segments of American political ecology responded to, used, evolved with, and were used by Cuban ideological projection in ways that have permanently altered the American political landscape. Only the last element ("were used") is the report's explicit object. But the others—that Americans *responded to* Cuban ideology because it addressed real domestic grievances, that they *used* it as a framework for their own political projects, that both sides *evolved together* in a dialectical relationship—are equally present in the historical record and equally important for understanding the present.

From an America First perspective, this is arguably the most significant "problem of Cuba"—not the island's intelligence operations or its alliances with Iran, but the degree to which Cuban-seeded ideology has become indigenous to American political life, no longer foreign but now naturalized, no longer an intervention but a permanent feature of the domestic political ecology. The neo-colonial irony is complete: the anti-colonial revolution's greatest success was to colonize the colonizer's own political imagination.

B. The Dialectic of Mutual Regime Change

The second missing dimension is the *process* of U.S.-Cuba interactions understood as a symmetrical dialectic rather than a one-directional assault. Both Cuba and the United States want regime change in the other. Both have been actively pursuing that objective since 1959. And both undertake that objective by seeking to corrupt the systemic integrity of the other, as well as by engaging in the traditional power politics of states—reset for the sensibilities of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century.

The United States has pursued Cuban regime change through embargo, sanctions, diplomatic isolation, the Helms-Burton Act's explicit conditioning of normalization on the removal of the Marxist-Leninist system, support for exile organizations, broadcasting, democracy-promotion programs, the Cuban Medical Professional Parole Program (encouraging defection of doctors), and—most recently—the Venezuelan-template coercion of petroleum denial and direct negotiation with the FAR.

Cuba has pursued American regime change—not in the sense of overthrowing a president, but in the sense of transforming the ideological foundations of American political life—through the mechanisms the report catalogs: cultivation of activists, academic exchange programs, solidarity networks, political education, revolutionary tourism, media relationships, and the strategic exploitation of race, class, and religious tensions within American society.

This dialectic involves intermediaries on both sides. For Cuba: the press and its subvention within the United States, the churches and liberation theology networks, the solidarity committees, the exploitation of racial grievance, academic institutions, and the cultural projection of revolutionary romanticism. For the United States: the Cuban exile community and its political infrastructure in Miami, Radio and TV Martí, USAID democracy programs, the exploitation of economic desperation among Cuban professionals, and—most recently—the direct cultivation of the FAR as a potential agent of internal transformation. Both sides operate

through layers of indirection: bloggers in Cuba, influencers in the United States, NGOs and foundations in both directions, religious organizations serving as bridges.

And both sides engage in what might be called a *dialectics of undermining transformation*—each seeking not merely to weaken the other but to transform the other into something closer to its own image, or at minimum into something that no longer threatens its own systemic integrity. The United States wants Cuba to become a market democracy (or at least to stop being a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist state). Cuba wants the United States to become—or at least to contain within itself—a powerful constituency committed to anti-imperialism, racial justice framed in Third Worldist terms, and the delegitimation of American global hegemony.

Within this dialectic, both sides deploy characterizations of the other that are simultaneously accurate descriptions of real pathologies and strategic weapons in the conflict:

- Cuba engages in what amounts to state slavery of its people—selling their labor, in the manner of North Korea, to raise the revenue that their bankrupt system is otherwise incapable of producing in amounts that exceed the needs of those who siphon the first dollars out for their own use. The report's characterization of Cubans living in "something akin to modern slavery" is not merely rhetoric—it describes a system in which the state captures the surplus value of its citizens' labor abroad while those citizens have no meaningful capacity to refuse, negotiate, or exit.
- The United States is—in the Cuban counter-narrative and in the analysis of many in the Global South—the great contemporary heartless imperialist exploiter, the global robber baron whose activities feed the porcine elements of a population that becomes fat, lazy, decadent, and useless. This is not merely Cuban propaganda; it is a characterization that resonates precisely because it captures something real about the relationship between American consumption, global labor exploitation, and the distribution of the costs and benefits of globalization.

The genius—and the tragedy—of the U.S.-Cuba relationship is that each side's characterization of the other contains enough truth to sustain itself indefinitely, while each side's self-characterization contains enough self-deception to prevent resolution. Cuba is both a revolutionary ideological project and a state that enslaves its people. The United States is both a constitutional democracy and an imperial power whose global reach generates the very grievances that Cuban ideology exploits. Neither side can acknowledge its own pathology without undermining its legitimacy in the conflict.

This processual dimension—the dialectic of mutual regime change, mutual corruption, mutual characterization, and mutual self-deception—is what neither the State Department report nor the initial critical analysis adequately captured. The report sees only Cuban aggression; the initial analysis saw primarily American complicity in maintaining Cuba's misery. The full picture requires seeing both simultaneously: a sixty-seven-year process of mutual subversion in which both sides have succeeded in corrupting the other while failing to transform it.

9. What Both Accounts Share—and What Remains Unresolved

Despite their profound differences in tone, method, and conclusion, both accounts converge on certain points that should not be obscured by the analytical disagreements:

- **Material deprivation is real.** Cuba's political-economic system produces severe and persistent hardship for its population. The report characterizes this as modern slavery imposed by a predatory regime; Backer characterizes it as a "stable state of misery" in which deprivation is structurally functional for a regime committed to an unworkable ideological model. Both agree the Cuban people suffer.
- **Pervasive state control is real.** The Cuban state exercises comprehensive control over economic activity, labor deployment, and civic association. The 2018 monograph acknowledges the subordination of all economic activity to political direction, the hostility to autonomous private accumulation, and the use of administrative discretion as a tool of control.
- **Cuban intelligence operations have been real and consequential.** Neither account denies that Cuba has maintained a sophisticated and effective intelligence apparatus directed against the United States. Backer's 2018 monograph acknowledges Cuba's "internationalism—both diplomatic and military—that allowed Cuba to punch well above its weight."
- **International programs serve multiple purposes simultaneously.** Both accounts recognize that Cuban medical missions, educational exchanges, and solidarity networks are simultaneously humanitarian, commercial, ideological, diplomatic, and strategic. The disagreement is over which dimension dominates and whether the others are genuine or merely cover.
- **The U.S.-Cuba relationship has been mutually constitutive.** The status quo has served elites on both sides more than ordinary Cubans. Cuba obtains narrative justification for domestic repression; the United States obtains a demonstration of socialist failure and a permanent target for sanctions policy.
- **Cuba's foreign relationships with U.S. adversaries are real.** Both accounts accept that Cuba maintains significant operational relationships with Russia, China, and Iran. [\[102\]](#) [\[103\]](#) [\[104\]](#) Backer's 2025 essay acknowledges that Cuba has always been sustained by external patrons—first the Soviet Union, then Venezuela, now China and others—precisely because an unsustainable system "marks a convenient killing ground at the borderlands of empire." [\[102\]](#) [\[105\]](#) [\[106\]](#)

10. The Characterization Dichotomy: Sharpened

The fundamental question separating the two accounts is one of characterization—and it is worth stating with maximum precision:

The State Department report's thesis: Cuba is, at root, an *intelligence and subversion apparatus* that has continuously operated since 1959 with the singular objective of destroying the United States and Western civilization. Its ideology is a weapon; its humanitarian programs are cover; its solidarity networks are fronts; its international relationships are alliances of convenience in a revolutionary war. The Cuban "state" is incidental to the Cuban *operation*. The report states this explicitly: Cuba is "less a nation-state than an all-encompassing intelligence and subversion operation." [\[107\]](#) It follows that engagement is naïve, pressure is imperative, and the

proper analytical category for Cuba is closer to a hostile intelligence service than to a sovereign state.

Backer's counter-thesis: Cuba is a *rigid but ideologically coherent Leninist party-state*—one that has developed sophisticated mechanisms for domestic survival (the stable state of misery) and international projection (ALBA, medical diplomacy, solidarity networks)—but one whose activism cannot be reduced to espionage without evacuating all meaning from the categories of ideology, political organization, and state sovereignty. Cuba's international behavior is simultaneously ideological, strategic, commercial, humanitarian, and self-interested—a complex of motivations irreducible to any single dimension. [\[108\]](#) [\[109\]](#) [\[110\]](#) [\[111\]](#) Moreover, the United States has been not merely Cuba's target but its *co-constituting antagonist*—and U.S. policy instruments (including the State Department report itself) are not neutral analytical documents but elements in an ongoing political contest. [\[112\]](#) [\[113\]](#) [\[114\]](#)

11. The Ambiguity That Persists

And yet the dichotomy, however crisp, does not fully resolve. Several genuine ambiguities remain—and one additional dimension demands attention in light of the administration's broader "political terrorism" initiative.

The State Department's July 2026 Ministerial on the Resurgence of Political Terrorism provides the institutional frame within which the Cuba report achieves its full domestic political significance. That conference—and the policy architecture it represents—establishes an explicit administrative position that left-wing political violence and radical activism constitute a distinct category of terrorism, one with identifiable foreign origins and ongoing foreign support. The Cuba report is the genealogical text for this position: it traces the lineage of contemporary American left-wing movements back through sixty-seven years of Cuban cultivation, recruitment, and ideological seeding. Read within the "political terrorism" frame, the report's catalog of Cuban front groups, solidarity networks, and activist organizations is not merely historical scholarship—it is a *targeting document* for an ongoing counterterrorism campaign directed at the administration's domestic political opponents.

This creates a fourth ambiguity beyond the three identified below: the report may be simultaneously (a) a legitimate account of real Cuban intelligence and influence operations, (b) a political instrument designed to delegitimize domestic opposition by characterizing it as foreign-sponsored terrorism, and (c) both of these things at once—which is precisely what makes it so difficult to evaluate and so politically potent.

With that framing in mind, several further genuine ambiguities remain:

First, the boundary between ideological conviction and operational cover is inherently difficult to locate from the outside. An ICAP representative who genuinely believes in international solidarity and an ICAP representative who is a DI intelligence officer may look identical in their outward conduct. Both accounts recognize this—the report treats it as proof of threat; Backer treats it as evidence that totalitarian states blur the line between state, party, and civil society in ways that defy liberal-democratic categories. [\[115\]](#) [\[116\]](#)

Second, both accounts agree that Cuba's material weakness does not equal harmlessness. The report concludes that "to mistake Cuba's poverty for harmlessness is to misunderstand the threat

entirely." [\[117\]](#) Backer, from an entirely different direction, agrees: Cuba's ideological influence has always exceeded its material capacity precisely because ideology, not material power, is its primary product. [\[118\]](#) [\[119\]](#)

Third, neither account offers a persuasive theory of how the Cuban people—as distinct from the Cuban state—benefit from the current situation. The report's solution (maximal pressure toward regime collapse) and Backer's cautious alternative (managed transactional opening, possibly through the FAR's economic enterprises, building toward a "Caribbean variant of Chinese Socialist Democracy") both acknowledge that the *present* system serves the Cuban population poorly. [\[120\]](#) [\[121\]](#)

The answer to the characterization question has enormous consequences for U.S. policy. If the report is correct, then Cuba is an intelligence threat requiring suppression, and any engagement merely provides resources to a hostile apparatus. If Backer is correct, then the report itself—and the executive-order regime it supports—may inadvertently reinforce the very system it claims to oppose, feeding the siege narrative that legitimates continued Party rule while the Cuban people remain trapped in their state of managed misery. The possibility that both characterizations capture partial truths—that Cuba is *both* a genuine ideological state *and* a state that instrumentalizes every institution for strategic advantage—may be the most intellectually honest conclusion, even as it provides the least satisfying basis for policy.

References

1. I. [The Revolutionary State](#) For nearly seven decades, the Cuban regime has waged a sustained campaign of subversion against the United States. It is a campaign that has infiltrated the highest reaches of the U.S. government, recruited and cultivated generations of American activists, backed an unprecedented wave of left-wing terrorism on American soil, and carried out one of the most durable and damaging foreign intelligence penetrations in American history. The Cuban campaign against America is unique. It is irregular and covert – even at the peak of its military power, Havana never possessed the capacity to defeat the (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 3)
2. [infrastructure designed to turn America against itself. In contrast to every other aspect of Cuba's failed state, this model has yielded remarkable success.](#) For over half a century, this small island nation with a chronically failing economy has operated at the center of a vast hemispheric network. The Cubans trained and armed tens of thousands of left-wing guerillas, oversaw violent insurgencies that plunged multiple continents into chaos, and backed deadly extremist attacks across the United States. The island itself became the premier safe harbor for fugitive American terrorists – fleeing justice for bombings, armed robberies, and murders – (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 4)
3. [Since the 1960s, the regime has served as the beating heart of a new and distinct kind of Marxism, forged around an overriding resentment and fundamental hatred of the United States and the broader West.](#) The Cubans devoted themselves to recruiting, cultivating and mobilizing a global coalition of activists, intellectuals, and political groups around this cause, building a sprawling revolutionary network that shaped a disproportionate share of America's most famous and influential extremist movements, from the Black Panthers and the Weather Underground through to Antifa. Today, that network continues to maintain ties to powerful leftist nonprofits, anti-ICE collectives, (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 4)
4. history. The Cuban campaign against America is unique. [It is irregular and covert – even at the peak of its military power, Havana never possessed the capacity to defeat the United States in a conventional armed conflict.](#) Instead, the Cubans perfected a new model for a long war of attrition, organized around espionage, infiltration, sabotage, proxy networks, and a revolutionary infrastructure designed to turn America against itself. In contrast to every other aspect of Cuba's failed state, this model has yielded remarkable success. For over half a century, this small island nation with a chronically failing economy has (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 4)
5. [The struggle had expanded from a class war to a much larger civilizational conflict, demanding not just economic equality, but social, cultural, and even spiritual transformation.](#) Its advocates spoke the language of a single planetary struggle – stretching from the battlefield to the classroom – between the West and the Third World. In their telling, the revolutionary agent was no longer the industrial proletariat, but the colonized nations and peoples of the Global South. The principal antagonist of world history was no longer "capital," but Western civilization itself. As the socialist magazine Jacobin approvingly recounted earlier this year, (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 11)
6. arrests, and \$100 million in property damage. [19 As a result, the Cuban regime is inextricably tied to a much larger radical network that it has constructed across the Western Hemisphere.](#) For more than six decades, communist Cuba has been the foremost sponsor of revolutionary leftism in the Americas. Nearly all of the notable Marxist

guerilla movements in our hemisphere since 1959 have received some form of support from Havana. Cuba established itself as the nexus of Latin America's revolutionary left in the immediate wake of the Tricontinental Conference, when the conference's 27 Latin American delegations formed the (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 17)

7. as many as 130 bombings between 1974 23 and 1983. [In the mid-1970s, Ríos also reportedly helped to organize the Macheteros, a parallel guerilla cadre that launched its own wave of bombings, robberies, assassinations and other attacks across both Puerto Rico and the United States.](#) In 1979, a cell of AK-47-wielding Macheteros militants staged an armed ambush of a U.S. Navy bus, killing two sailors and wounding nine others. Less than three years later, a Macheteros ambush on four sailors from the U.S.S. Pensacola claimed another American life. FBI files later described extensive contacts between Macheteros leaders and (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 21)
8. [Almost immediately after taking Havana in January 1959, Castro began plotting armed assaults against neighboring governments – launching expeditions against Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Panama in just that year alone.](#) Throughout the 1960s, his regime backed guerilla groups in Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, and the Caribbean. In Uruguay, Cuba trained and armed the Tupamaros – a Marxist guerilla group that carried out deadly attacks against domestic and foreign officials, including the kidnapping and execution of an American security adviser. In Argentina, Castro advised, backed and funded the Montoneros, which launched a campaign of political (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 18)
9. president, Gustavo Petro, was a member of M-19 himself. [20 The Sandinistas The Sandinista Revolution was one of Havana's great victories in the hemisphere.](#) In 1979, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) – named for Augusto Sandino, a Nicaraguan folk hero who led a guerilla war against U.S. occupation in the early twentieth century – overthrew Nicaragua's Somoza regime and established a revolutionary junta. Cuba was the patron of the insurgency, supplying what one 1979 NSC memo described as "an unbelievable amount of arms" to the leftist militants. It also served as a training site, safe haven, and (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 18)
10. oversees all U.S. military activities in Latin America. [Victor Manuel Rocha \(Getty Images\) 34 For roughly 50 years – from 1973 until his arrest in December 2023 – Rocha was a Cuban spy.](#) He was first recruited in 1973 while in Chile, five years before he was naturalized as a U.S. citizen..... (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 32)
11. stream of disinformation crafted by the Cuban regime. [The Dirección de Inteligencia \(DI\), known until 1989 as the Dirección General de Inteligencia \(DGI\), is Cuba's main foreign intelligence agency.](#) To this day, it remains one of the most effective human-intelligence operations in the world. Over the past six decades, the agency has played a central role in a dazzling array of operations, from infiltrating universities and organizing revolutionary movements in the United States to training Palestinian terrorists in South Yemen. Several high-ranking American intelligence professionals who worked against DI have been outspoken about the threat that the agency (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 28)
12. [33 Victor Manuel Rocha \(1973 – 2023\) In December 2023, the Department of Justice charged Victor Manuel Rocha, then 73 years old, with "secretly acting for decades as an agent" of the Cuban government.](#) In April 2024, he was sentenced to 15 years in federal prison after pleading guilty to conspiring to act as an agent of a foreign government. Then-Attorney General Merrick Garland called Victor Rocha's case "one of the highest-

reaching and longest-lasting infiltrations of the United States government by a foreign agent." Rocha, a Colombian-born naturalized U.S. citizen who grew up in Harlem, serves as a (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 31)

13. devious and ruthless, but because they're so good." – James Olson, former Chief of Counterintelligence at the CIA⁸ "The Cuban intelligence service has always been against the United States... Exclusively. All the other countries where they work, they do it to direct the activity against the United States." – Gerardo Peraza, former senior Cuban intelligence official⁹ On June 6, 1987, Major Florentino Aspillaga Lombard drove a government-issued Mazda across the Czechoslovak border and presented himself at the U.S. Embassy in Vienna. He had served with distinction in the highest ranks of Cuban intelligence, receiving a personal commendation from Fidel (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 27)
14. Venceremos Brigade's 50th anniversary delegation in Havana. ⁴⁰ ⁴¹ V. Revolutionary Tourism "Name any disturbance in the United States – on campus, in the streets, anywhere – and I'll name you the leaders of it who have been to Cuba." – Unnamed State Department official, 1970¹¹ Venceremos Brigade The Venceremos Brigade – described in one Senate report as among "the most extensive and dangerous infiltration operations ever undertaken by a foreign power against the United States" – has brought some 10,000 American activists to Cuba since its first contingent in 1969. Its participants have included well-known elected officials, (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 38)
15. communications network" to stay in touch with other cells. Fomenting a revolution within the United States has always been an explicit ambition of Cuban programs like the Venceremos Brigade. Cuban intelligence agents in the United States reportedly used the Brigade to arrange for some young Americans to receive on-island weapons training from Cuban military officers, training select groups in "guerrilla warfare techniques, including the use of arms and explosives." Caucus documents distributed to Brigade committees across the 44 United States outlined efforts to recruit U.S. military veterans – or even active-duty soldiers – to travel to Cuba to (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 42)
16. The Black Alliance for Peace called Shakur's legacy a "blueprint for internationalist solidarity." Black Lives Matter Grassroots published a statement honoring "Mama Assata" – "our beloved comrade, mother, warrior, truest revolutionary, and lover of the people" – and claiming the U.S. government "cornered her, framed her, caged her, made her a fugitive, then named her a terrorist." The group's statement praised the Black Liberation Army and Castro for having "rescued" Shakur and provided her with "protection and sanctuary." Shakur's influence has always been infused into BLM's public language. A quote from Shakur's autobiography – "it is our duty (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 61)
17. Cuba's role in forming this militant Third Worldist consciousness among black radicals was not just ideological but institutional. The regime worked doggedly to build close political relationships with many of the leaders of the Black Power movement as it solidified its place as the world revolutionary capital. (According to some sources, Robert Williams himself was present at the Tricontinental Conference in 1966). Carmichael attended OLAS as an honorary delegate, and received a personal tour of the island by Castro behind the wheel of a jeep. The Cuban leader heaped praise on Carmichael, reportedly introducing him to a 400,000-person (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 56)
18. National Network on Cuba One of ICAP's major U.S. counterparts is the National Network on Cuba (NNOC), a coalition of more than 60 American groups – including the

Democratic Socialists of America, National Lawyers Guild, CodePink, and Communist Party USA – which is formally committed to lobbying for an end to the U.S. embargo and other "imperialist" policies against Cuba. NNOC functions as another key node for coordination between the Cuban regime and the American far left, partnering with ICAP every year to coordinate U.S. delegations to Cuba and conduct "solidarity" conferences in which American activists meet with (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 68)

19. the priority objectives" for Cuban intelligence. [ICAP ultimately serves as the organizational node for the wide range of civil society groups, left-wing activist organizations, and NGOs that collectively comprise a major arm of the Cuban network in the United States.](#) The size and scale of these organizations serve as a force multiplier for Cuba, providing it with far more power, influence and reach than it could ever leverage on its own – and serving as a mechanism by which a sprawling, seemingly decentralized network can be mobilized in service of the Cuban revolutionary state. After decades of (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 67)
20. [IFCO is also the sole U.S. administrator of the scholarship program at the Latin American School of Medicine \(ELAM\) in Havana, offering full-ride scholarships to low-income American students and affiliates of Cuban-aligned solidarity networks at U.S. universities.](#) ELAM graduates are immersed in Cuban revolutionary ideology and introduced to a broader network of U.S.-based activists as well as members of foreign terror networks such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The "one condition" of the IFCO scholarship is that graduates return to the United States. Today, ELAM graduates are reportedly working in over 30 U.S. states. (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 72)
21. American Peoples: A Staff Study, 89th Cong., 2nd sess. [67 ICAP The central nexus of the entire Cuban intelligence and influence network is the Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos \(English: The Cuban Institute of Friendship with Peoples\) – or "ICAP."](#) Founded in 1960 by Fidel Castro, ICAP ostensibly exists to promote goodwill toward Cuba through a global infrastructure of "friendship" and "solidarity" organizations and deep, longstanding ties to U.S. universities, student groups and activist movements. ICAP, which claims to have more than 2,000 solidarity organizations across over 150 countries, serves as the main organizing hub of (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 65)
22. resistance to American hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. [Thirty-four years after the fall of the Soviet Union, Cuba and Russia still maintain strong economic and political ties, which have only deepened amid rising U.S.-Cuba tensions.](#) Today, the relationship is better described as a strategic partnership – one that not only poses a direct threat to the American homeland, but challenges U.S. power and security interests across Latin America. For modern Russia, the Cuban network serves as a key vector for destabilizing and subverting U.S. interests within America's immediate sphere of influence, allowing it to project power into the (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 89)
23. fully restore its intelligence footprint in Florida. [Over the past few decades, however, Havana has leveraged those capabilities to build alliances with a new coalition of anti-American regimes, movements, and actors.](#) Even as it expands and revitalizes its network within the next generation of American left-wing activists, it has also forged new partnerships – or deepened and repurposed old ones – with other foreign governments and movements around the world. China and Russia have both reportedly tripled their

intelligence agents on the island over the past three years. The threats posed by Cuba's network within America is therefore (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 88)

24. [China maintains a persistent intelligence-gathering presence in Cuba, benefiting from its proximity to – and penetration of – the United States.](#) Correspondingly, Cuba benefits from its relationship with China via foreign assistance, canceled debts, and tens of billions of dollars in investments. In 2023, the Wall Street Journal reported that China and Cuba had entered into a secret agreement regarding the construction of a new Chinese SIGINT facility in Cuba in exchange for several billion dollars, providing Beijing's intelligence services with the capacity "to scoop up electronic communications throughout the southeastern U.S., where many military bases are located, (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 90)
25. [Iran also has sought to expand its formal strategic partnerships with Cuba in recent years, including a series of agreements surrounding trade, telecommunications, information technology, port services, and the use of Cuban naval infrastructure.](#) Like Russia and China, Iran has forgiven debts and extended generous lines of credit to Cuba amid efforts to deepen political, commercial, security and intelligence cooperation. In keeping with its "anti-imperialist" posture, Cuba has long supported the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Iranian-backed terrorist groups like Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) – offering them not just (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 91)
26. enemy of the United States that has arisen since. [Today it serves as the connective tissue of a broader anti-American coalition, a staging ground where the ambitions of Moscow, Beijing, and Tehran converge with the radical movements operating inside our own borders.](#) 100..... (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 98)
27. occupying regime, held hostage by their own state. [Cuba's assault on the United States was never, at root, a quarrel over economic policy or sovereignty or even ownership of a particular territory. It was a revolution against Western civilization itself – waged, in part, via the novel and insidious method of persuading the children of the West to turn against their own inheritance.](#) That is the campaign Castro launched in 1959, and it is the campaign his heirs are waging still. And in the institutions of the modern American left – in its universities and its nonprofits, its street (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 98)
28. name you the leaders of it who have been to Cuba." – [Unnamed State Department official, 1970](#) [The Venceremos Brigade](#) – described in one Senate report as among "the most extensive and dangerous infiltration operations ever undertaken by a foreign power against the United States" – has brought some 10,000 American activists to Cuba since its first contingent in 1969. Its participants have included well-known elected officials, labor leaders, academics, activists, and a long list of other influential U.S. progressives. Since its creation, the Brigade has served as a tool for the Cuban regime to sponsor (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 40)
29. advance the revolutionary vision of the "New Cuba." [In 1966, Castro convened the Tricontinental Conference.](#) Among the organizations represented in the audience were the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Viet Cong, Puerto Rico's leftist Pro-Independence Movement, South Africa's African National Congress, and the Zimbabwe African People's Union, whose guerillas – including cadres trained in Cuba – would join forces with ANC militants to carry the African revolution into Rhodesia the following year. The Tricontinental magazine that was born from the conference became a major global

influence in its own right, publishing quarterly issues brimming with radical essays, poetry and (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 16)

30. American Peoples: A Staff Study, 89th Cong., 2nd sess. [67 ICAP The central nexus of the entire Cuban intelligence and influence network is the Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos \(English: The Cuban Institute of Friendship with Peoples\) – or "ICAP."](#) Founded in 1960 by Fidel Castro, ICAP ostensibly exists to promote goodwill toward Cuba through a global infrastructure of "friendship" and "solidarity" organizations and deep, longstanding ties to U.S. universities, student groups and activist movements. ICAP, which claims to have more than 2,000 solidarity organizations across over 150 countries, serves as the main organizing hub of (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 65)
31. in driving recent U.S. protests and street unrest. [National Lawyers Guild The National Lawyers Guild \(NLG\) is one of the most persistently relevant – and insidious – organizations in Cuba's U.S. network.](#) The association of extreme-left lawyers and radical street activists has played a key role in a disproportionate share of the far-left terror and violence that has plagued the United States from the 1960s up to today..... (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 73)
32. present at the Tricontinental Conference in 1966). [Carmichael attended OLAS as an honorary delegate, and received a personal tour of the island by Castro behind the wheel of a jeep.](#) The Cuban leader heaped praise on Carmichael, reportedly introducing him to a 400,000-person crowd in Havana as "one of the most distinguished pro-civil rights leaders in the United States." The next month, he hailed Carmichael's visit as "the strengthening of relations between the revolutionary movement of Latin America and the revolutionary movement inside the United States," predicting that the revolution in America would come from its "Negro sector." (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 56)
33. and provided her with "protection and sanctuary." [Shakur's influence has always been infused into BLM's public language.](#) A quote from Shakur's autobiography – "it is our duty to fight for freedom" – is emblazoned in large text on the front page of BLM's website, and was credited by BLM co-founder Alicia Garza in 2014 as a key influence in her "organizing work." Assata's Daughters, a Chicago-based BLM offshoot, is a police-abolitionist activist group that claims to "develop and train" young black activists "in the spirit of Assata." (Its youth program introduces children ages 6-13 "to Assata Shakur and (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 61)
34. [Cuba's role in forming this militant Third Worldist consciousness among black radicals was not just ideological but institutional.](#) The regime worked doggedly to build close political relationships with many of the leaders of the Black Power movement as it solidified its place as the world revolutionary capital. (According to some sources, Robert Williams himself was present at the Tricontinental Conference in 1966). Carmichael attended OLAS as an honorary delegate, and received a personal tour of the island by Castro behind the wheel of a jeep. The Cuban leader heaped praise on Carmichael, reportedly introducing him to a 400,000-person (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 56)
35. [Today, Cuban agents and operatives maintain a foothold in hundreds of front groups, activist organizations, solidarity centers, and ideological NGO and nonprofit networks.](#) These groups collectively represent one of the single largest, most sophisticated and dangerous vectors for hostile foreign influence in modern American history. Many of the most significant upheavals in recent American political history – from the George Floyd riots to the rise of Antifa to the explosion of pro-terrorist activism on American college

campuses – can be linked, in some way, shape, or form, to Cuban influence. 99 From its perch off the coast of (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 97)

36. role in supporting major foreign terror networks. [At the same time, the regime continues to operate an extensive hard intelligence network in the United States, with significant penetration into sensitive civilian and military institutions on American territory.](#) The danger of this intelligence penetration is only compounded by Cuba's new alliances, as the island hosts a growing number of foreign military, intelligence, and terrorist installations on its own soil – posing a unique threat to American homeland security. These various threads can only be understood through the prism of the Cuban regime's ideological foundation, imbued by its founder with (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 97)
37. commercial, security and intelligence cooperation. [In keeping with its "anti-imperialist" posture, Cuba has long supported the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps \(IRGC\) and Iranian-backed terrorist groups like Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine \(PFLP\) – offering them not just the support of the regime itself, but also a waypoint for expanding their foothold in Latin America.](#) 93 New recruits undergo training in a Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) camp. (Getty Images) Iran features prominently in the so-called "Cubazuela" period, when Venezuela's post-Chavez dictatorship effectively operated as a Cuban client state whose (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 91)
38. intelligence agents on the island over the past three years. [The threats posed by Cuba's network within America is therefore compounded by its network outside of it.](#) The regime continues to act as a force multiplier for a much broader anti-American coalition, positioning itself as a staging ground for a wide range of foreign adversaries to conduct operations against the United States..... (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 88)
39. posing a unique threat to American homeland security. [These various threads can only be understood through the prism of the Cuban regime's ideological foundation, imbued by its founder with the singular goal of conquering the neighboring United States.](#) Since 1959, Cuba has been – and without fundamental, radical reforms, will always be – less a nation-state than an all-encompassing intelligence and subversion operation, focused around its existential revolution against the United States. Amid all this, the Cuban people themselves continue to suffer in hunger and darkness, forced to live in something akin to modern slavery under the occupying (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 98)
40. the United States in a conventional armed conflict. [Instead, the Cubans perfected a new model for a long war of attrition, organized around espionage, infiltration, sabotage, proxy networks, and a revolutionary infrastructure designed to turn America against itself.](#) In contrast to every other aspect of Cuba's failed state, this model has yielded remarkable success. For over half a century, this small island nation with a chronically failing economy has operated at the center of a vast hemispheric network. The Cubans trained and armed tens of thousands of left-wing guerillas, oversaw violent insurgencies that plunged multiple continents into chaos, (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 4)
41. to direct the activity against the United States." – [Gerardo Peraza, former senior Cuban intelligence official](#)9 On June 6, 1987, Major Florentino Aspillaga Lombard drove a government-issued Mazda across the Czechoslovak border and presented himself at the U.S. Embassy in Vienna. He had served with distinction in the highest ranks of Cuban intelligence, receiving a personal commendation from Fidel Castro himself. While stationed in Bratislava, running a Cuban front company, Aspillaga had decided – after

- years of growing disillusionment with Castro's regime – to defect to the United States. As he informed the awestruck U.S. officials in Vienna, (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 27)
42. prepared to give the Americans everything he knew. [Aspillaga was "the most important Cuban agent ever to cross over to the CIA," as one Washington Post report put it the next year.](#) But the even larger bombshell came next: after being flown to a U.S. Army base in Germany for debriefing, Aspillaga disclosed – and the CIA later independently confirmed – that virtually every spy the CIA had recruited inside Cuba since the 8 Will Grant, "The Cuban Spying Case That Has Shocked the US Government," BBC News, January 9, 2024..... (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 27)
43. of Law & International Affairs 2026 VOLUME 14 NO. 2 [THE CONCEPTUAL ARCHITECTURE OF AMERICA FIRST—IDEOLOGICAL TRANSACTIONALISM AND THE CASE OF CUBA](#) By: Larry Catá Backer* I. INTRODUCTION: SITUATING CUBA AND THE CARIBBEAN WITHIN AMERICA FIRST57 II. THE COGNITIVE AND ANALYTICAL AGE THAT IS AMERICA FIRST65 A. Cognitive Typologies Need Archetypes: The "Merchant" (商) and the "Bureaucrat" (士).70 B. The Primary Sources80 i. National Security Strategy of the United States for 2025 (November 2025) [NSS 2025].81 1. Defining/Describing the Cognitive Cage of the National Security Mask of Economic Policy.87 2. What Should (Backer Final Formatted .pdf, Page 0)
44. ["353 The nature of the connections were then described along with a conclusion that from this interconnected network of relations Cuba formed part of a transnational apparatus for the support of terrorism and the destabilization of lawful 349 Parts of this section drawn from Larry Catá Backer, Law at the End of the Day \(Jan. 31, 2026\); available \[https://lcbackerblog.blogspot.com/2026/01/on-brink-or-blip-cuba-prepares-for.html\]. 350 Exec. Order. No. 14380, 91 Fed. Reg. 5085 Jan. 29, 2026\) \(Executive Order: Addressing Threats To The United States By The Government Of Cuba\) available \[https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2026/01/addressing-threats-to-the-united-states-by-the-government-of-cuba/\] \(Hereafter Cuba EO\).. 351 The White House, Fact Sheet: President \(Backer Final Formatted .pdf, Page 121\)](#)
45. [3 See Larry Catá Backer, "Taking Steps to Support the Cuban People": Mr. Biden Removes Cuba From List of State Sponsors of Terrorism and Cuba Frees 553 Prisoners, LAW AT THE END OF THE DAY \(Jan. 14, 2025\), https://lcbackerblog.blogspot.com/2025/01/taking-steps-to-support-cuban-people-mr.html \(on January 14, 2025, President Biden removed Cuba from the list of State sponsors of terrorism\); see also Trump reinstates Cuba as state sponsor of terrorism, reversing Biden's decision, CBS NEWS Jan. 21, 2025\), https://www.cbsnews.com/miami/news/trump-reinstates-cuba-as-state-sponsor-of-terrorism-reversing-bidens-decision/ \(on January 20, 2025, President Trump reversed the recission and placed Cuba, along with North Korea, Iran, and Syria\)..... \(Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 3\)](#)
46. D. The Swinging Pendulum.71 V. CONCLUSION: THE CUBAN ECONOMIC CONDITION— THE ABYSS IS DEFINED BY ITS CONTAINER.....80 2025 Cuba's Stable State of Misery 13:2 3 ABSTRACT The general default position of much commentary on the State of Cuba's

political model tends to be premised on an assumption of instability needing repair. For decades, some of the most creative minds on the planet have devoted a tremendous amount of creative capital on solutions to the Cuban problem. This contribution suggests that what appears to be a state of instability and flux is becoming a stable state of misery..... (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 1)

47. Cuban regime has waged that campaign on every front. [It has armed guerrillas, trained terrorists, sheltered fugitives, infiltrated the U.S. government, cultivated generations of American elites, built influence networks inside our institutions, and opened the Western Hemisphere to a succession of hostile foreign powers.](#) It has sought to undermine, degrade and destabilize America with spies and soldiers, but also with students and intellectuals; with terrorist cells, but also with solidarity committees and nonprofit networks. with intelligence officers operating under diplomatic cover, but also with ostensibly private exchanges, nonprofits, political organizations, and activist networks. This is what makes Cuba (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 95)
48. posing a unique threat to American homeland security. [These various threads can only be understood through the prism of the Cuban regime's ideological foundation, imbued by its founder with the singular goal of conquering the neighboring United States.](#) Since 1959, Cuba has been – and without fundamental, radical reforms, will always be – less a nation-state than an all-encompassing intelligence and subversion operation, focused around its existential revolution against the United States. Amid all this, the Cuban people themselves continue to suffer in hunger and darkness, forced to live in something akin to modern slavery under the occupying (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 98)
49. [Today, Cuban agents and operatives maintain a foothold in hundreds of front groups, activist organizations, solidarity centers, and ideological NGO and nonprofit networks.](#) These groups collectively represent one of the single largest, most sophisticated and dangerous vectors for hostile foreign influence in modern American history. Many of the most significant upheavals in recent American political history – from the George Floyd riots to the rise of Antifa to the explosion of pro-terrorist activism on American college campuses – can be linked, in some way, shape, or form, to Cuban influence. 99 From its perch off the coast of (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 97)
50. cultivate political influence inside the United States. [Cuba did – and does – all these things and more; but the Cuban regime has never recognized the neat distinctions that so often structure the American government's understanding of foreign threats.](#) To Havana, there is no hard line separating these functions. It has integrated all of them into a single revolutionary project, around which every single facet and function of the Cuban state is organized. Even as its economy teeters on the brink of collapse in the wake of decades of corrupt communist rule, the Cuban regime's fundamental objective remains (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 97)
51. Comunista Cubano (PCC)) and government after 2006. [At the core of the essays is ideology.](#) Ideology has always been treated pejoratively in the West, with the sort of dismissal one once encountered among early Christians with respect to the "mythologies" of the pagans they sought to persecute into extinction. And yet, a feel for Cuban ideology is essential in order to understand the forms and trajectories of the last great post-1959 Cuban transformation, as well as for its impact on the world. That impact will be felt both in the context of Cuban external relations, and in the (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 20)

52. excellent work on these essays that make up this book. [Acknowledgements Introduction This book is about ideology.](#) Ideology is the conceptual foundation for the individual and societal self-constitution..... (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 4)
53. [And most importantly, perhaps, it can be understood as the development of a Marxism and a Leninism created under the shadow of, and with a sense of constant threat from the United States, the most successful free market Western liberal state to emerge from the Second World War.](#) Caribbean Marxism, then, is both proactive in its focus on naturalization within a "Latin" and "American" context; but it is also reactive in the sense that it is built with substantial defensive capabilities against the ideological projections of the free market democratic West. Caribbean Marxism is at once both isolationist (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 19)
54. embedding into the global order created around it. [While its ideological position and the implementation choices it has made use many of the same words and concepts that are used elsewhere, they acquire a sometimes substantial difference of meaning when used in Cuba or in the West.](#) Concepts like markets, private sector activity, democratic engagement, the role of labor, the role of the PCC, for example, are operationalized within the Cuban "experiment" in ways that are not necessarily compatible with their understanding elsewhere. It may be useful, then, to consider more deeply the principles that shape these internal (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 16)
55. Cuban engagement has been episodic and opportunistic. [It has been \(and continues to be\) confrontational at times and always ideologically driven in large part, perhaps, because those strategies have worked well for Cuba on the international stage.](#) Since the 1959 Revolution, Cuba has fought a number of wars on multiple fronts in the service of its national interests and internationally significant ideological campaigns. Virtually every lever of state power has been used in these efforts— including military, diplomatic, organizational, economic, media, cultural, religious and ideological efforts. Most of these have used the United States, and its socio-political, economic, (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 739)
56. Cuban state has undertaken two significant efforts. [The first seeks to develop an alternative basis for inter- governmental management of trade through the Alternativa Bolivariana Para los Pueblos de Nuestra América \(ALBA\).](#) (Backer & Molina 2010). The second, realized in large part within the ambit of the first, seeks an alternative basis of the organization of economic activity for the production of goods and provision of services. The basic theory and objectives of the grannacional generally, is offered as a new form of transnational public enterprise, one that is meant to provide a viable challenge to current conventional (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 742)
57. enterprises are still at a very early stage in development. [But all of them share certain characteristics founded on their organizational framework: control by the state, a conflation of labor and capital as components of production and a focus on state policy for the production and distribution of goods and services in the service of state determined economic welfare maximization.](#) Yet, these enterprises, arguably created as a challenge to the conventional global economic framework still must operate within the general parameters of human rights and other norms with respect to which international consensus has been developing, many with (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 744)
58. the production of goods and provision of services. [The basic theory and objectives of the grannacional generally, is offered as a new form of transnational public enterprise, one](#)

that is meant to provide a viable challenge to current conventional global systems of economic organization. These ideas have been articulated as the "concepto grannacional" being given effect through the inter-governmental arrangements of ALBA. Grannacional economic activity, ideologically based, is divided into two categories. The first, proyectos grannacionales (PGs), are inter-governmental in character. These include efforts to create alternatives to dollar-denominated trade transactions grounded in the "sucre" (Venezuela July 9, (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 743)

59. Chávez's ideological and political campaign. (Id.). Thus, MBA functions at a variety of levels. It serves the ideological goals of the Cuban regime. It is an important means of advancing Cuban international relations. It serves as a template for Marxist-Leninist development models. It provides a different basis for state-to-state relations and commerce, based on government directed, non- reciprocal trade in furtherance of divergent objectives. Yet it is also a business. (Pérez & Haddad 2008). For Venezuela, Cuban doctors serve as a valuable input in the business of creating a viable public health sector. For Cuba, it serves as (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 778)
60. But the business of hiring out workers to outsiders—whether to directly advance state objectives, like the MBA program, or merely to serve the economic interests of foreign partners—essentially treats individuals like factors in the production of national wealth. That wealth is produced by the profit generated in those transactions. That profit is related to the differences between the compensation paid by the Cuban state to its employees sent abroad, and the amounts it charges its "clients" for the services of these individuals. "Loaned" individuals do not participate in discussions over the pricing of their services to third (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 779)
61. International missions have allowed Cuba to fulfill dual goals of capitalizing on its highly educated population as a source of export income while pursuing its humanitarian goals of international solidarity. Cuba's model of charging below-market rates for professional health services has expanded exponentially since 2003 in a win-win situation for poor countries with insufficient medical care. Revenues for services earned from international missions (as well as the licensing and export of Cuban biotechnology and medical treatment to foreigners in Cuba) have become a major source of hard currency earnings, surpassing tourism earnings every year since 2005. (Blue 2010). (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 777)
62. Cuban doctors, teachers and social workers became the human capital for a socialist state-building project, overseen and operated by Havana. As Chávez sought to consolidate control and beat back threats to his power, Cuban advisers built him an internal security regime using mechanisms that the Castro regime had spent the past few decades perfecting: launching purges and loyalty vetting, expanding internal surveillance, and transforming the military into the regime's inward-facing police force. A confidential arrangement between Havana and Caracas authorized Cuban officials to train Venezuelan troops and agents, overhaul the nation's intelligence services, and build a vast new (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 23)
63. through a series of successive compacts and agreements. Cubans supplied the personnel, expertise, and intelligence capabilities that helped Chávez build his new regime, exchanging Cuban doctors, trainers, technicians, and political operators for huge quantities of Venezuelan oil. This arrangement was a historic win-win for Havana: Not only was Venezuela's energy a critical lifeline for averting post-Soviet collapse; it also

opened up new pathways for expanding Cuba's foothold in the nation. Tens of thousands of Cuban personnel poured into Venezuelan barrios, ministries, and social programs, forging patronage systems that tied poor communities to the new Bolivarian regime while giving (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 23)

64. through a series of successive compacts and agreements. Cubans supplied the personnel, expertise, and intelligence capabilities that helped Chávez build his new regime, exchanging Cuban doctors, trainers, technicians, and political operators for huge quantities of Venezuelan oil. This arrangement was a historic win-win for Havana: Not only was Venezuela's energy a critical lifeline for averting post-Soviet collapse; it also opened up new pathways for expanding Cuba's foothold in the nation. Tens of thousands of Cuban personnel poured into Venezuelan barrios, ministries, and social programs, forging patronage systems that tied poor communities to the new Bolivarian regime while giving (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 23)
65. Venezuelan petroleum production. (Oletta 2007, at 447). Importantly, Cuba also agreed to the provision, at no cost to Venezuela, of the services of doctors to serve in the health care sector in Venezuela.²¹ (Convenio 2000, art. IV). Under the terms of the Convenio, Cuba was to supply these medical personnel to work in underserved areas of Venezuela, and bear the costs of their salaries. These medical personnel were to provide medical services and training of locals. Venezuela was obligated to pay only the costs of food, lodging and internal transportation of the medical personnel supplied by Cuba.²² These (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 770)
66. proyectos grannacionales and empresas grannacionales. It then focuses on a specific grannacional-related project—the Misión Barrio Adentro (MBA), a socio-political barter project in which Cuba exchanges doctors and other health field related goods and services under its control for Venezuelan goods, principally petroleum. (Convenio 2000). MBA is analyzed as an example of the application of Cuban-Venezuelan approach to economic and social organization through the state. The MBA is also useful as an illustration of the difficulties of translating that approach into forms that might conform with emerging global expectations of economic conduct by private and state actors. The recent (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 746)
67. Bolivariana de Venezuela." (Convenio 2000, art. II). Venezuela agreed to provide petroleum among other goods and services. (Convenio 2000, Art. III). It has been reported that by 2005, the petroleum supply obligations of the Convenio amounted to 2.44% of Venezuelan petroleum production. (Oletta 2007, at 447). Importantly, Cuba also agreed to the provision, at no cost to Venezuela, of the services of doctors to serve in the health care sector in Venezuela.²¹ (Convenio 2000, art. IV). Under the terms of the Convenio, Cuba was to supply these medical personnel to work in underserved areas of Venezuela, and bear (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 770)
68. state-determined compensation for their services. While many thousands of individuals employed by the Cuban state abroad in this program have complied with their obligations, a number of doctors have not.²⁵ "The need for hard currency and their inability to earn it legitimately is clearly a factor in individual health care workers' decisions to endure difficult two-year assignments abroad. When tens of thousands of health workers accepted temporary overseas posts, their absence was acutely felt at home. Though health indicators have not declined, Cubans who were used to the highest and

most accessible doctor-to-patient ratios in the world are (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 780)

69. expanded medical presence abroad." (Blue 2009, 43). [And it was among those doctors dissatisfied with the terms of their service that the possibilities of collision between Cuban medical internationalism and international human rights norms were realized.](#) The issue of compulsion is at the heart of that collision. The loan system conflates notions of individual citizen duty and individual dignity with respect to labor. On the one hand, it appears that, as a formal matter, individuals are not formally coerced to serve the interests of the state's business and political dealings abroad..... (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 780)
70. known regime opponents was especially forbidden. . . . [Had they protested, the doctors explained, they would have been forced to return to Cuba where they would have paid for their insubordination.](#) (Id..... (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 786)
71. corporation, Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA). (Galliot 2010). [The doctors told reporters at a press conference in a Miami suburb on Tuesday that they were forced to enroll in the programme with Venezuela due to dire economic circumstances and political pressure at home.](#) According to several US and Venezuelan media sources, the plaintiffs described being held captive in crowded lodgings or with families affiliated with the Venezuelan regime, and forced to work seven days a week. "We were under strict surveillance at all times. We weren't allowed to go out when we wanted to or interact with Venezuelans other (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 785)
72. grannational projects under these international norms. [The very ideological foundation of the grannational projects serves as the basis for conflict with normative standards in effect elsewhere.](#) In a command economy in which there is no distinction between the political and economic sphere and where the line between obligations of citizens and of workers is blurred, the difference between a citizen's duty to the state and involuntary servitude can be quite thin. It is unlikely that international standards will bend to accommodate substantial deviations where the functional effect of state action appears to substantially impede recognized human rights, as (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 801)
73. ALBA. The result is potentially significant for Cuba. [This is not to suggest that Cuba's system of bartering its labor force for goods and cash is in fact a violation of international norms.](#) But it is to suggest that Cuba's economic activity—whether undertaken in its sovereign capacity or through enterprises—will be increasingly subject to attack on the bases of these norms. Those attacks will become more potent as Cuba emerges more vigorously within networks of global trade..... (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 798)
74. stakeholders worldwide. (OECD 2004, at 3 (Forward)). [The three include the Principles of Corporate Governance \(OECD 2004\), the Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises \(OECD 2000\), and the Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State- Owned Enterprises. \(OECD 2005\).](#)³³ Under these rule frameworks, corporations, including state owned enterprises are obligated to conform to international norms..... (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 795)
75. the kind prohibited under international law. (Id.). [Similar claims might be asserted under the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development \(OECD\) principles and the United Nations business and human rights framework —"Protect-Respect-Remedy" principles.](#) The OECD is an intergovernmental organization representing most developed

states. (OECD and, About OECD). It has developed three principle sets of norms for corporations that might be understood usefully in their constitutive role. These have become "an international benchmark for policy makers, investors, corporations and other stakeholders worldwide. (OECD 2004, at 3 (Forward)). The three include the Principles of Corporate Governance (OECD 2004), the Guidelines (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 794)

76. of this framework within the Human Rights Council. Yet, if read broadly enough, Cuba's barter system and notions of just trade, might contribute to a violation of the (Cuban) state's duty to protect and the state sponsored enterprises responsibility to respect human rights. To the extent that remedies are not available for complaints, both may also breach their obligations to provide a remedial framework for complaints. These emerging frameworks point to a more global future for Cuba as people seek to test the legitimacy of its singular and ideologically driven establishment of trade and commercial relationships and methods. (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 797)
77. The complainant argued that the basis of Cuban state labor policy, and its implementation in its economic regulations and commercial activities, violates ILO Convention Article 29 on forced labor ratified by Cuba in 1958. (Id.) The complainants echoed language from ILO documents that assert that the "prohibition of the use of forced or compulsory labor in all its forms is considered now a preemptory norm of modern international law on human rights." (Id.). The complaint suggested that the Cuban barter system, grounded in a state power to command behavior coupled with the use of that power to engage (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 794)
78. the precedential value of the case may be limited. The court initially entered a default judgment against defendant (id., at note 3), because the Curaçao Dry Dock Company refused to defend the matter. Critical facts leading to the conclusion were never controverted or effectively put at issue either by the Cuban state or by Curaçao Dry Dock. The company eventually offered evidence, though it was only produced during the more limited damages phase of the proceedings (id., at 1357–58).³¹ Yet, despite these caveats, the sweeping language of the court does suggest the potential difficulties of exporting a labor (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 790)
79. by Cuba were not free individuals. (Id., 1359–61). The basis of these conclusions were drawn from a report prepared by the U.S. State Department (United States Department of State 2008), which the court took as uncontroverted because of the procedural posture of the case. Although the violations of international law were committed by the Cuban state, the company was exposed to liability on a complicity theory. The Defendant in this case, one of the largest drydock companies in the Western Hemisphere, with tens of millions if not hundreds of millions of dollars in annual revenues, conspired with the (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 790)
80. either by the Cuban state or by Curaçao Dry Dock. The company eventually offered evidence, though it was only produced during the more limited damages phase of the proceedings (id., at 1357–58).³¹ Yet, despite these caveats, the sweeping language of the court does suggest the potential difficulties of exporting a labor barter system grannacional concept outside of the ALBA zone in a way that would minimize exposure to risk, for Cuba or its trading partners, for lawsuits and claims of this type. This is especially the case for non-ALBA trading partners, or entities involved in GP or EG (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 791)

81. both cases have been brought in the United States. From the Cuban perspective, the United States is in no position to neutrally judge the Cuban state's compliance with international human rights norms. But as important, the United States does not have a strong reputation for adhering to or imposing internally international human rights norms. To use the U.S. courts for the purpose of determining compliance of the Cuban state with international norms with respect to activity that occurs within the territory of a third country suggests a political motive and reduces the authority of the cases, at least (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 784)
82. imposing internally international human rights norms. To use the U.S. courts for the purpose of determining compliance of the Cuban state with international norms with respect to activity that occurs within the territory of a third country suggests a political motive and reduces the authority of the cases, at least outside the United States. And yet, the United States has served as the best site for the vindication of international human rights within the court system of a state..... (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 784)
83. Despite its result, even in the United States, the precedential value of the case may be limited. The court initially entered a default judgment against defendant (id., at note 3), because the Curaçao Dry Dock Company refused to defend the matter. Critical facts leading to the conclusion were never controverted or effectively put at issue either by the Cuban state or by Curaçao Dry Dock. The company eventually offered evidence, though it was only produced during the more limited damages phase of the proceedings (id., at 1357–58).³¹ Yet, despite these caveats, the sweeping language of the court does (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 790)
84. We call for calm and condemn any violence].¹⁵² Note the care in the language that reinforces a nagging sense of complicity in the maintenance of a stable state of misery—the U.S. remains concerned; that concern runs deep in official circles. The concern is for the Cuban people but more so for a quite specific preservation of a set of civil and political rights—the right to assembly that is peaceful. At the same time the U.S. advances the ideal of such civil rights as bounded by calm (apparently transformative events occur only within the rarified space of discourse—except of (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 56)
85. an incitement, or more benignly an encouragement. Those who "stand with" presume to describe the objectives of the Cuban masses as a "clarion call"¹⁵⁴ (again translated to the peculiar internal language of meaning that is meaningful only among elites in the U.S. and their press outlets) for battle—and the only battle of relevance to those "standing with" of course, is one that produces regime change..... (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 57)
86. It can be used as a strategic instrument to blunt the exercise of authority of public power, and it serves as a means of effectively projecting cultural power (including the legitimacy of the exercise of politics on the streets) elsewhere. Most importantly, it serves to develop a coherent counter-narrative to that grounded in "stability and prosperity" principles. In both cases, the great powers will continue to argue that prosperity is the ultimate objective and a necessary consequence, either attainable only through a privileging of stability (Marxist-Leninist states) or of the exercise of peaceful protests (the liberal democratic states). (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 58)

87. the basis for the justification of what comes after. [And yet, those high principles that animate foreign powers do not transpose, except perhaps as rhetoric, to the situation in Cuba.....](#) (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 58)
88. existential revolution against the United States. [Amid all this, the Cuban people themselves continue to suffer in hunger and darkness, forced to live in something akin to modern slavery under the occupying regime, held hostage by their own state.](#) Cuba's assault on the United States was never, at root, a quarrel over economic policy or sovereignty or even ownership of a particular territory..... (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 98)
89. special" period²³ appeared to have the opposite effect. [It set into practice the conditions under which the state apparatus \(and its ideological project\) could survive and thrive in an environment of misery.²⁴ Indeed, one might be tempted to wonder whether, from the first, a dynamic state of misery was the price that had to be paid for the ideological purification of the state.](#) It was to the navigation of that stability and misery that the apparatus eventually appeared to dedicate itself by drawing on the moral implications of the political- economic model, and by colluding with internal and (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 9)
90. shadow of its quite useful relationship with the U.S. [The third then considers the utility of periodic popular explosion as the disciplinary factor for gauging the limits of misery tolerable by the body politic.](#) This inverts the usual discourse of popular protest as a means of governance rather than in its more usual construction as some sort of pre-revolutionary signaling of the end of the current hegemony of the political-economic model that has shaped Cuban governance since the mid-1970s. I..... (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 2)
91. [That stable state, in turn, suggests that control can be maintained as much based on basis prosperity as it can be based on reality of misery just challenging enough to keep a population well managed, and the political system reasonably well ordered.](#) This article examines recent events in Cuba for hints about the nature and character of this stable state. These hints are organized into three parts. First, the ideological element, considers the morality of consumerism. This conceptual framework, developed over the decades by Fidel Castro and incorporated into the organic documents of the Cuban political economic model, (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 2)
92. ideological element, considers the morality of consumerism. [This conceptual framework, developed over the decades by Fidel Castro and incorporated into the organic documents of the Cuban political economic model, helped shape an approach to the role of material goods in a "revolutionary" society in ways that made collective misery—at some level—both tolerable and strategically useful.](#) The second looks to the political-economic element. That is, it considers how the underlying consumerist morality of the political-economic model finds expression in the practices and policies of the State apparatus guided by the Party and its own governance apparatus. The contribution considers (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 2)
93. Still, the overall policy framework remains unchanged. [In Cuba, that involves the preservation of the stability of the State apparatus through the cultivation of the instability of everything else and the strategic use of misery.²¹⁰ "The Cuban system's many dysfunctions do not necessarily mean that it will soon collapse.](#) But they do mean that it is inherently unstable, and that its future is uncertain. At present, Cuba seems to

have no alternative other than a continuation in one form or another of the current regime."211 The Cuban model may not be unique in that respect, but it may (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 77)

94. willingness of the state to ignore the unofficial sector. [And, some alleged, more evidence of the stable state of this self-reflective system facilitated by foreign powers.](#)³⁵ The four elements—apparatus, mass protest, non-state sector regulation, and toleration of the unofficial economy—then serve as the experiential reality of the operation of stability in misery. The object is then quite straightforward: to begin to understand the cognitive basis for the stubborn resistance of the Cuban elites to the reforms that seem both inevitable by outsiders, especially among economists and political scientists and their disciples. The answer appears as straightforward: that starting (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 13)
95. complementarity since the start of the Special Period. [Its object is clear—not to use the private sector to generate wealth, but rather to legalize portions of the non- state \(unofficial\) sector during periods of need.](#) And need is measured against the maximum misery that can be tolerated from time to time. (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 77)
96. longer "capital," but Western civilization itself. [As the socialist magazine Jacobin approvingly recounted earlier this year, it was Cuba that "was seen by many in the Third World as the ideal site for radically rethinking anti-colonialism, anti- imperialism, and decolonization."](#) What Cuba was proposing, Jacobin writes, "was essentially a decolonization of Marxist thought." History, in the classical Old Left view, was the story of class struggle. The proletariat was a universal class – raceless and nationless, at least in principle. The Cuban regime, in contrast, claimed to be speaking for the colonized peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 11)
97. the Algerian insurgent, and the Colombian guerilla. [In Cuba's telling, the oppressed peoples of the world – from Harlem to Hanoi – all shared one enemy.](#) The same racist Yankee imperialism victimizing Africa, Asia, and Latin America was victimizing blacks and other minorities inside the United States. Che Guevara's famous call for "two, three, or many Vietnams" in his 1967 "Message to the Tricontinental" – urging his fellow revolutionaries to open up a hundred fronts of war against the American empire – was not merely addressed to the Global South, but to American radicals in the belly of (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 11)
98. language. The Cubans spoke it as their native tongue. [Whereas the old Soviet left had been built around the party, labor unions, and Marxist theories of economic class struggle, the New Left was animated by Black Power, radical feminism, Third World liberation, and – above all else – the radical rejection of Western culture, history and identity in all its forms.](#) As this report will show, it is nearly impossible to overstate the influence that the Cuban Revolution had on this shift, both in the United States and across the world. As the New Left student activist Allen (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 13)
99. American soil, it was Cuba where they found safe harbor. [It was Havana, not Moscow, that emerged as the capital of the new ideology of revolution.](#) The Soviets would, in time, support many of the Third Worldist insurgencies and revolutionary movements across the Global South, seeing the obvious strategic value in gaining new client states and weakening the global influence of the American capitalist bloc. But the Kremlin's 14 embrace of Third Worldism was always a marriage of convenience, conducted with an

awkward ideological unease; the Soviets could never quite figure out how to square its wild-eyed doctrines (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 12)

100. But Cuba's prominence is not limited to geography. Its arts and letters have had a global impact, its political philosophy has been influential at least in Latin America, and its now fairly ancient and quite public animosity to the United States has propelled it onto the world stage as a proxy (and target) for state and global actors who have constituted Cuba a metaphor for resistance to dominant power. But this external and quite influential face of Cuba--the face that is what foreigners recognize--has an internal dimension that is less often considered. Cuba has tended to look inwards (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 11)
101. structures of Caribbean Marxism as developed for Cuba. Ideology in Cuba remains less open to development with a greater fidelity to its original development and regional features--a fear and loathing of the United States, a focus on sovereignty and regionalism independent of developed states, the subordination of economic activity to serve political objectives, a rejection of the market and market mechanisms, a distrust of private sector activity absent tight management the state, adherence to the implication of class struggle in a rejection of even temporary wealth inequality, and a fidelity both to Leninist political organization (with all political (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 48)
102. the 20th century, suggested that Cuba was special. It was that territory that marked a convenient killing ground at the borderlands of empire—first between the liberal democratic and Soviet Empires, and then between the U.S. (and its dependencies) and China (and its). Lurking on the sidelines always were lesser states with ambitions—Venezuela, Turkey, Iran, Spain and the EU, and the like. Together, the struggles and intrigues of these blocs almost always ensured that unsustainable Cuba would always be sustained..... (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 49)
103. fully restore its intelligence footprint in Florida. Over the past few decades, however, Havana has leveraged those capabilities to build alliances with a new coalition of anti-American regimes, movements, and actors. Even as it expands and revitalizes its network within the next generation of American left-wing activists, it has also forged new partnerships – or deepened and repurposed old ones – with other foreign governments and movements around the world. China and Russia have both reportedly tripled their intelligence agents on the island over the past three years. The threats posed by Cuba's network within America is therefore (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 88)
104. Iran also has sought to expand its formal strategic partnerships with Cuba in recent years, including a series of agreements surrounding trade, telecommunications, information technology, port services, and the use of Cuban naval infrastructure. Like Russia and China, Iran has forgiven debts and extended generous lines of credit to Cuba amid efforts to deepen political, commercial, security and intelligence cooperation. In keeping with its "anti-imperialist" posture, Cuba has long supported the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Iranian-backed terrorist groups like Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) – offering them not just (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 91)
105. 132 Marc Frank, Cuba wins China debt relief, new funds, REUTERS (Nov. 27, 2022), <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/cuba-wins-china-debt-relief-new-funds-2022-11-27/>; see also, Funaiolo, et al., supra note 122. 2025 Penn State Journal of Law & International Affairs 13:2 50 E. Vignette 8: The Hunger Games Part 3—The 'You've Got

a Friend in Me' Edition. Some other folks might be A little bit smarter than I am Bigger and stronger too Maybe But none of them will ever love you The way I do, it's me and you.¹³³ From almost the start of the defeat of the Batista dictatorship in 1959 to the (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 48)

106. Games Part 3—The 'You've Got a Friend in Me' Edition. [Some other folks might be A little bit smarter than I am Bigger and stronger too Maybe But none of them will ever love you The way I do, it's me and you.¹³³ From almost the start of the defeat of the Batista dictatorship in 1959 to the present day, the Cuban state apparatus and its economic system appeared to be on the verge of collapse.¹³⁴ It is an impossible and unsustainable system—in and of itself.](#) But the dictates and behaviors of post global empire, even in its (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 49)
107. goal of conquering the neighboring United States. [Since 1959, Cuba has been – and without fundamental, radical reforms, will always be – less a nation-state than an all-encompassing intelligence and subversion operation, focused around its existential revolution against the United States.](#) Amid all this, the Cuban people themselves continue to suffer in hunger and darkness, forced to live in something akin to modern slavery under the occupying regime, held hostage by their own state. Cuba's assault on the United States was never, at root, a quarrel over economic policy or sovereignty or even ownership of a particular territory..... (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 98)
108. Cuban state has undertaken two significant efforts. [The first seeks to develop an alternative basis for inter- governmental management of trade through the Alternativa Bolivariana Para los Pueblos de Nuestra América \(ALBA\).](#) (Backer & Molina 2010). The second, realized in large part within the ambit of the first, seeks an alternative basis of the organization of economic activity for the production of goods and provision of services. The basic theory and objectives of the grannacional generally, is offered as a new form of transnational public enterprise, one that is meant to provide a viable challenge to current conventional (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 742)
109. [International missions have allowed Cuba to fulfill dual goals of capitalizing on its highly educated population as a source of export income while pursuing its humanitarian goals of international solidarity.](#) Cuba's model of charging below-market rates for professional health services has expanded exponentially since 2003 in a win-win situation for poor countries with insufficient medical care. Revenues for services earned from international missions (as well as the licensing and export of Cuban biotechnology and medical treatment to foreigners in Cuba) have become a major source of hard currency earnings, surpassing tourism earnings every year since 2005. (Blue 2010). (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 777)
110. Chávez's ideological and political campaign. (Id.). [Thus, MBA functions at a variety of levels.](#) It serves the ideological goals of the Cuban regime. It is an important means of advancing Cuban international relations. It serves as a template for Marxist-Leninist development models. It provides a different basis for state-to-state relations and commerce, based on government directed, non- reciprocal trade in furtherance of divergent objectives. Yet it is also a business. (Pérez & Haddad 2008). For Venezuela, Cuban doctors serve as a valuable input in the business of creating a viable public health sector. For Cuba, it serves as (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 778)
111. Embargo mentality" as the ordering device for analysis. [Conventionally understood, Cuban engagement has been episodic and opportunistic.](#) It has been (and

continues to be) confrontational at times and always ideologically driven in large part, perhaps, because those strategies have worked well for Cuba on the international stage. Since the 1959 Revolution, Cuba has fought a number of wars on multiple fronts in the service of its national interests and internationally significant ideological campaigns. Virtually every lever of state power has been used in these efforts— including military, diplomatic, organizational, economic, media, cultural, religious and ideological efforts. Most of (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 739)

112. 112 Larry Catá Backer, *The Cuban Economic Condition—The Abyss is not an Empty Space*, LAW AT THE END OF THE DAY (Aug. 3, 2023), 2025 Penn State Journal of Law & International Affairs 13:2 42 obtains its purported independence and a stabilizing measure of discursive space in which it can blame all of its problems on capitalism, foreign interference and the U.S. as the once and only evil hegemon of choice.114 Foreign capitalist, Marxist-Leninist, and other monied or interested states (whatever their ideological camp) get what they think is a measure of leverage (though it is hard to (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 40)
113. constitution of post-global empire. Everyone loves to play. And there is a measure of stability in this playground of self- loving states with incompatible agendas except this: to use Cuba to its own discursive advantage. And Cuba has gotten good (not quite as good as the Argentines, but good enough) to play these monied states with agendas and the ability to pay for the privilege of appearing to advance them with and against themselves. Everybody wins. The lending states can continue to develop the narrative of Cuba as a state of crisis and its political economic model as (Backer_Formatted.pdf, Page 41)
114. America First 14:2 177 governments in the region. The United States would hold "holding the Cuban regime accountable for its malign actions and relationships, while also remaining committed to supporting the Cuban people's aspirations for a free and democratic society..... (Backer Final Formatted .pdf, Page 121)
115. the priority objectives" for Cuban intelligence. ICAP ultimately serves as the organizational node for the wide range of civil society groups, left- wing activist organizations, and NGOs that collectively comprise a major arm of the Cuban network in the United States. The size and scale of these organizations serve as a force multiplier for Cuba, providing it with far more power, influence and reach than it could ever leverage on its own – and serving as a mechanism by which a sprawling, seemingly decentralized network can be mobilized in service of the Cuban revolutionary state. After decades of (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 67)
116. embedding into the global order created around it. While its ideological position and the implementation choices it has made use many of the same words and concepts that are used elsewhere, they acquire a sometimes substantial difference of meaning when used in Cuba or in the West. Concepts like markets, private sector activity, democratic engagement, the role of labor, the role of the PCC, for example, are operationalized within the Cuban "experiment" in ways that are not necessarily compatible with their understanding elsewhere. It may be useful, then, to consider more deeply the principles that shape these internal (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 16)
117. Americans into instruments of their own nation's undoing. To mistake Cuba's poverty for harmlessness is to misunderstand the threat entirely. Its material weakness was never the measure of its danger. Its power was always ideological, subversive, and

parasitic – and it has proven remarkably durable, outlasting the Soviet empire that helped build it and grafting itself onto every new enemy of the United States that has arisen since. Today it serves as the connective tissue of a broader anti-American coalition, a staging ground where the ambitions of Moscow, Beijing, and Tehran converge with the radical movements operating inside (Cuba-Report.pdf, Page 98)

118. half century, these efforts have had mixed results. **But they have had one singular success—they have propelled Cuba to a level of influence on the world stage far beyond what its size, military and economic power might have suggested.....**

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119. Cuban engagement has been episodic and opportunistic. **It has been (and continues to be) confrontational at times and always ideologically driven in large part, perhaps, because those strategies have worked well for Cuba on the international stage.** Since the 1959 Revolution, Cuba has fought a number of wars on multiple fronts in the service of its national interests and internationally significant ideological campaigns. Virtually every lever of state power has been used in these efforts— including military, diplomatic, organizational, economic, media, cultural, religious and ideological efforts. Most of these have used the United States, and its socio-political, economic,

(Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 739)

120. aligned with the experiences and operations of FAR. **The key is to get the language right--initially that may require working with the FAR's economic enterprises and negotiating a slow and well managed opening of transactional spaces within Cuba.** That builds the meta-spaces for economic activity; consumer level activity and the legal structures for its development might have to start with a 344 This has been the well-known cornerstone of the Chinese win-win strategy. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, Toward a New Type of International Relations of Win-Win Cooperation (Mar. 25, 2015); available

[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/zyjh/202405/t20240530_11340848.html]. (Backer Final Formatted .pdf, Page 119)

121. a Marxist-Leninist system that is forward looking. **Cuba must find its own if it is overcome the constraints and contradictions of the ideological dead ends it continues to embrace and retain, after the founding generation passes, its Socialist character and develop a Caribbean variant of Chinese Socialist Democracy.** That path must draw on Cuba's own indigenous roots and be consonant with the political cultures of Latin America, within which its governance style remains situated. That requires a very different approach to the theoretical foundations of the Cuban Party and State, an approach to seek to do more than (Backer_Cuba_2018.docx, Page 102)