

# OMNI

## CUBA NEWSLETTER #3,

April 25, 2017.

<http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/2017/04/cuba-newsletter-3-april-25-2017.html>

Compiled by Dick Bennett for a CULTURE OF PEACE and Justice.

(#1 Feb. 4, 2011; #2 Oct. 21, 2012).

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Hayden, *Listen, Yankee!* 2015

Blum. 2014

A.N.S.W.E.R. Coalition, *US Terrorist Saboteurs Arrested in Cuba*. 2014

LeoGrande and Kornbluh, [\*Back Channel to Cuba\*](#). 2014

Leogrande, *USAID to Cuba*. 2014

Lamrani, *US Economic War Against Cuba*. 2013

Free the Cuban 5. 2013

Chomsky's Recommended Books on Cuba

## SUPPORT FOR CUBA 2015-, US BULLYING ENDING THANKS TO PRESIDENT OBAMA AND MANY GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

ANNOUNCEMENT APRIL 25, 2017

CHEERS TO PASTOR FOR PEACE, STEADFAST FRIEND TO CUBA, AND ACPJ

### **Pastors for Peace “Friendshipment Caravan” April 29, 2017**

ACPJ Email [via mail141.atl121.mcsv.net](mailto:mail141.atl121.mcsv.net)

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### **Pastors for Peace “Friendshipment Caravan”**

April 29, 7:00pm

Unitarian Universalist Church  
1818 Reservoir Road, Little Rock, AR

Pastors for Peace speaking tour arrives in Little Rock on Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, and will speak at a meeting hosted by the Arkansas Coalition for Peace & Justice (ACPJ.)

The meeting, starting at 7 pm and lasting about 75 minutes, takes place at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Little Rock, located at 1818 Reservoir Road.

Pastors for Peace, also called “Friendshipment Caravan,” has representatives traveling to 54 cities across America this month, talking about what is taking place in Cuba today, and emphasizing the changes still needed in US policy to achieve normal, civilized relations between Cuba and the US. Pastors for Peace seeks to build upon the openings created by President Obama which would eventually end the US economic blockade of Cuba and the restrictions on travel to Cuba that still apply to US citizens and residents. ACPJ, and others, believe that a change in US-Cuba relations will be equally beneficial to citizens of both countries, and would

oppose any rollback of these important gains.

Besides providing information and answering questions, the evening will highlight film-maker Jennifer Wager, who has made several short films focusing on Cuba and Cuba-US relations. One of her films, "Dare to Dream-Cuba's Latin American medical School," will be shown on the 29th. Jennifer is from Newark, and directed "Venezuela Rising," and "Against the Silence - Families of the Five Speak Out." She was on the IFCO (Interfaith Cuba group) staff for five years and organized many caravans and delegations. She is currently on faculty at Essex County College in New Jersey as assistant professor of communications and new media technology.

**Pastors for Peace** have been regular visitors to Little Rock – and ACPJ - over the past 20 years, having organized caravans to Cuba since 1992 which allowed US citizens an opportunity to express their support for changing relations with Cuba.

For information, contact John Coffin, at [joticof@aol.com](mailto:joticof@aol.com), or at 501 952 8181.

Arkansas Coalition for Peace & Justice

PO Box 250398

Little Rock, AR 72225

## **EXCHANGE PROGRAMS WITH "ENEMY" NATIONS**

### ***THE NATION'S EXCHANGE TO CUBA JUNE 2014***

During the "Cold War," former Senator J. William Fulbright attempted to establish an exchange program with the Soviet Union, but was thwarted by Sovietphobes like Senator "Scoop" Jackson. Above all else, exchanges with "enemies" should be the central purpose of faculty, student, citizen exchanges. We need to improve understanding and relations with Denmark?

The crippling bigotry against the Soviet Union by influential US officials and the majority public sheep has been iterated for fifty years against Cuba. Again no attempt to be better acquainted through exchanges. But private groups may, and *The Nation* is leading the way. Working in conjunction with *The Nation*, Cuba Educational Travel organized an educational program June 1-8 bringing together US citizens and Cubans from many walks of life. Hosts were Peter Kornbluh, director of the Cuba Documentation Project at the National Security

Archive and author of several books on Cuba; and Katrina vanden Heuvel, editor and publishers of *The Nation*. Since then, *The Nation* has led other trips to Cuba. --Dick

## 2015

January: Cuba freed 53 political prisoners as part of its deal to reopen diplomatic relations with the United States.

July: The two countries officially restored full diplomatic relations in July 2015 more than 50 years after severing them. Although the US embargo remains officially in place, Obama loosened regulations to allow more commercial relations.

Disarm/Global Health Partners (Ed Asner), like PforP, continues its support of Cuba.  
[www.disarm.org](http://www.disarm.org)

“Again, U.N. Vote Raps Cuba Embargo.” *NADG* (Oct. 28, 2015). US of B, United States of Bullies. “The General Assembly voted **191-2** to condemn the commercial, economic and financial embargo against Cuba.” Who joined USofB? Israel. This is the 24<sup>th</sup> year of UN General Assembly condemnation and USofB’s vote against. However, Pres. Obama said the vote “didn’t reflect ‘the spirit of engagement’ between Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro.

But “Trump Shifts on Cuba, Says He Would Reverse Obama’s Deal.” *CNN Headline News* (Nov. 14, 2016). Because Obama ended the embargo by executive order that did not require congressional action, Trump has the power to overturn it.

## 2016

November 26: Castro died. *NWADG* page-one screamer headline Nov. 27: “Castro’s Death Met with Rejoicing.” Where? In Miami. I look forward to a book on the prejudiced, hugely one-side reporting of Castro by US mainstream media during the embargo, even though trade with Cuba would benefit the US.

December: Disarm/Global Health Partners' Year End Report from Asner. It accelerated its medical aid shipments and collaborations between doctors and medical facilities in the two countries, in 2016 delivering "five medical shipments worth \$1,676,189" (letter from Asner). During its 22 years of sending medicines and medical supplies to Cuba, according to him Disarm raised \$131 million.

## US TERRORISTIC LAWLESSNESS AGAINST CUBA

Contents in reverse chronology by publication date

William Blum, The Anti-Empire Report

WHAT HAS THE US *NOT* TRIED TO OVERTHROW THE CUBAN SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT?

TWO ESSAYS BY WILLIAM BLUM

**William Blum. "The Anti-Empire Report #144."** March 11th, 2016.

CIA motto: "Proudly overthrowing the Cuban government since 1959."

Now what? Did you think that the United States had finally grown up and come to the realization that they could in fact share the same hemisphere as the people of Cuba, accepting Cuban society as unquestioningly as they do that of Canada? The Washington Post (February 18) reported: "In recent weeks, administration officials have made it clear Obama would travel to Cuba only if its government made additional concessions in the areas of human rights, Internet access and market liberalization."

**Imagine if Cuba insisted that the United States make "concessions in the area of human rights"; this could mean the United States pledging to not repeat anything like the following:**

Invading Cuba in 1961 at the Bay of Pigs.

Invading Grenada in 1983 and killing 84 Cubans, mainly construction workers.

Blowing up a passenger plane full of Cubans in 1976. (In 1983, the city of Miami held a day in honor of Orlando Bosch, one of the two masterminds behind this awful act; the other perpetrator, Luis Posada, was given lifetime protection in the same city.)

Giving Cuban exiles, for their use, the virus which causes African swine fever, forcing the Cuban government to slaughter 500,000 pigs.

Infecting Cuban turkeys with a virus which produces the fatal Newcastle disease, resulting in the deaths of 8,000 turkeys.

In 1981 an epidemic of dengue hemorrhagic fever swept the island, the first major epidemic of DHF ever in the Americas. The United States had long been experimenting with using dengue fever as a weapon. Cuba asked the United States for a pesticide to eradicate the mosquito involved but were not given it. Over 300,000 cases were reported in Cuba with 158 fatalities.

These are but three examples of decades-long CIA chemical and biological warfare (CBW) against Cuba. We must keep in mind that food is a human right (although the United States has repeatedly denied this).

Washington maintained a blockade of goods and money entering Cuba that is still going strong, a blockade that President Clinton's National Security Advisor, Sandy Berger, in 1997 called "the most pervasive sanctions ever imposed on a nation in the history of mankind".

Attempted to assassinate Cuban president Fidel Castro on numerous occasions, not only in Cuba, but in Panama, Dominican Republic and Venezuela.

In one scheme after another in recent years, Washington's Agency for International Development (AID) endeavored to cause dissension in Cuba and/or stir up rebellion, the ultimate goal being regime change.

In 1999 a Cuban lawsuit demanded \$181.1 billion in US compensation for death and injury suffered by Cuban citizens in four decades “war” by Washington against Cuba. Cuba asked for \$30 million in direct compensation for each of the 3,478 people it said were killed by US actions and \$15 million each for the 2,099 injured. It also asked for \$10 million each for the people killed, and \$5 million each for the injured, to repay Cuban society for the costs it has had to assume on their behalf.

Needless to say, the United States has not paid a penny of this.

One of the most common Yankee criticisms of the state of human rights in Cuba has been the arrest of dissidents (although the great majority are quickly released). But many thousands of anti-war and other protesters have been arrested in the United States in recent years, as in every period in American history. During the Occupy Movement, which began in 2011, more than 7,000 people were arrested in about the first year, many were beaten by police and mistreated while in custody, their street displays and libraries smashed to pieces. ; the Occupy movement continued until 2014; thus, the figure of 7,000 is an understatement.)

Moreover, it must be kept in mind that whatever restrictions on civil liberties there may be in Cuba exist within a particular context: The most powerful nation in the history of the world is just 90 miles away and is sworn – vehemently and repeatedly sworn – to overthrowing the Cuban government. If the United States was simply and sincerely concerned with making Cuba a less restrictive society, Washington’s policy would be clear cut:

Call off the wolves – the CIA wolves, the AID wolves, the doctor-stealer wolves, the baseball-player-stealer wolves.

Publicly and sincerely (if American leaders still remember what this word means) renounce their use of CBW and assassinations. And apologize.

Cease the unceasing hypocritical propaganda – about elections, for example. (Yes, it’s true that Cuban elections never feature a Donald Trump or a Hillary Clinton, nor ten billion dollars, nor 24 hours of campaign ads, but is that any reason to write them off?)

Pay compensation – a lot of it.

Sine qua non – end the God-awful blockade.

Throughout the period of the Cuban revolution, 1959 to the present, Latin America has witnessed a terrible parade of human rights violations – systematic, routine torture; legions of “disappeared” people; government-supported death squads picking off selected individuals;

massacres en masse of peasants, students and other groups. The worst perpetrators of these acts during this period have been the military and associated paramilitary squads of El Salvador, Guatemala, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Uruguay, Haiti and Honduras. However, not even Cuba's worst enemies have made serious charges against the Havana government for any of such violations; and if one further considers education and health care, "both of which," said President Bill Clinton, "work better [in Cuba] than most other countries" , and both of which are guaranteed by the United Nations "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and the "European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms", then it would appear that during the more-than-half century of its revolution, Cuba has enjoyed one of the very best human-rights records in all of Latin America.

But never good enough for American leaders to ever touch upon in any way; the Bill Clinton quote being a rare exception indeed. It's a tough decision to normalize relations with a country whose police force murders its own innocent civilians on almost a daily basis. But Cuba needs to do it. Maybe they can civilize the Americans a bit, or at least remind them that for more than a century they have been the leading torturers of the world.

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Notes

"Libya: Transition and U.S. Policy", updated March 4, 2016.

*New York Times*, February 28, 2016

Mark Weisbrot, "Top Ten Ways You Can Tell Which Side The United States Government is On With Regard to the Military Coup in Honduras", Common Dreams, December 16, 2009

Roger Morris, former member of the National Security Council, *Partners in Power* (1996), p.415. For a comprehensive look at Hillary Clinton, see the new book by Diane Johnstone, *Queen of Chaos*.

*National Review* online, May 1, 2007

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Patrick J. Buchanan, "Will the Oligarchs Kill Trump?", Creators.com, March 08, 2016

William Blum, *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower* (2005), chapter 14

Ibid., p.264

White House press briefing, November 14, 1997, US Newswire transcript

Fabian Escalante, *Executive Action: 634 Ways to Kill Fidel Castro* (2006), Ocean Press (Australia)

Huffington Post, May 3, 2012

Miami Herald, October 17, 1997, p.22A

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William Blum is an author, historian, and U.S. foreign policy critic. He is the author of *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*; *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*; *America's Deadliest Export: Democracy*; *Freeing the World to Death*

*Essays on the American Empire*

## ***Listen, Yankee! Why Cuba Matters* by Tom Hayden. Seven Stories, 2015.**

Based on unprecedented access to both Cuban and American officials, a book that offers fresh insight into one of history's most enigmatic relationships between nation-states—from one of America's best-known voices of political and social activism.

*Listen, Yankee!* offers an account of Cuban politics from Tom Hayden's unique position as an observer of Cuba and as a US revolutionary student leader whose efforts to mobilize political change in the US mirrored the radical transformation simultaneously going on in Cuba.

Chapters are devoted to the writings of Che Guevara, Régis Debray, and C. Wright Mills; the Cuban missile crisis; the Weather Underground; the assassination of JFK; the strong historical links between Cuba and Africa; the Carter era; the Clinton era; the Cuban Five; Elián González; and the December 17, 2014 declaration of normalization by presidents Obama and Castro.

Hayden puts the present moment into historical context, and shows how we're finally finding common ground to the advantage of Cubans and Americans alike.

“Over half a century after C. Wright Mills published his remarkable account of the Cuban Revolution, *Listen, Yankee!*, Tom Hayden continues the conversation. Hayden was there at the beginning. Inspired by the struggle for freedom in Cuba, Hayden pushed the New Left in the US to think about the larger world. And he is here at the end—or at least the beginning of the end—of the decades-long embargo Washington used to contain Cuba's promise. This book is much more than an account of the politics of the current thaw: it is a memoir and a

meditation, a thoughtful reflection on the inter-American struggles of activists, intellectuals and politicians for a more just world.” – Greg Grandin, *The Empire of Necessity: Slavery, Freedom, and Deception in the New World*

## William Blum. The Anti-Empire Report #127

*By William Blum. April 7th, 2014*

### Cuba ... Again ... Still ... Forever

Is there actually a limit? Will the United States ever stop trying to overthrow the Cuban government? Entire books have been written documenting the unrelenting ways Washington has tried to get rid of tiny Cuba's horrid socialism – from military invasion to repeated assassination attempts to an embargo that President Clinton's National Security Advisor called “the most pervasive sanctions ever imposed on a nation in the history of mankind”. But nothing has ever come even close to succeeding. The horrid socialism keeps on inspiring people all over the world. It's the darnedest thing. Can providing people free or remarkably affordable health care, education, housing, food and culture be all that important?

And now it's “Cuban Twitter” – an elaborately complex system set up by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to disguise its American origins and financing, aiming to bring about a “Cuban Spring” uprising. USAID sought to first “build a Cuban audience, mostly young people; then the plan was to push them toward dissent”, hoping the messaging network “would reach critical mass so that dissidents could organize ‘smart mobs’ – mass gatherings called at a moment's notice – that might trigger political demonstrations or ‘renegotiate the balance of power between the state and society’.” It's too bad it's now been exposed, because we all know how wonderful the Egyptian, Syrian, Libyan, and other “Arab Springs” have turned out.

Here's USAID speaking after their scheme was revealed on April 3: “Cubans were able to talk among themselves, and we are proud of that.” We are thus asked to believe that normally the poor downtrodden Cubans have no good or safe way to communicate with each other. Is the US National Security Agency working for the Cuban government now?

The *Associated Press*, which broke the story, asks us further to believe that the “truth” about most things important in the world is being kept from the Cuban people by the Castro regime, and that the “Cuban Twitter” would have opened people's eyes. But what information might a Cuban citizen discover online that the government would not want him to know about? I can't

imagine. Cubans are in constant touch with relatives in the US, by mail and in person. They get US television programs from Miami and other southern cities; both CNN and Telesur (Venezuela, covering Latin America) are seen regularly on Cuban television"; international conferences on all manner of political, economic and social issues are held regularly in Cuba. I've spoken at more than one myself. What – it must be asked – does USAID, as well as the American media, think are the great dark secrets being kept from the Cuban people by the nasty commie government?

Those who push this line sometimes point to the serious difficulty of using the Internet in Cuba. The problem is that it's extremely slow, making certain desired usages often impractical. From an American friend living in Havana: "It's not a question of getting or not getting internet. I get internet here. The problem is downloading something or connecting to a link takes too long on the very slow connection that exists here, so usually I/we get 'timed out'." But the USAID's "Cuban Twitter", after all, could not have functioned at all without the Internet.

Places like universities, upscale hotels, and Internet cafés get better connections, at least some of the time; however, it's rather expensive to use at the hotels and cafés.

In any event, this isn't a government plot to hide dangerous information. It's a matter of technical availability and prohibitive cost, both things at least partly in the hands of the United States and American corporations. Microsoft, for example, at one point, if not at present, barred Cuba from using its Messenger instant messaging service. Cuba and Venezuela have jointly built a fiber optic underwater cable connection that they hope will make them less reliant on the gringos; the outcome of this has not yet been reported in much detail.

The grandly named Agency for International Development does not have an honorable history; this can perhaps be captured by a couple of examples: In 1981, the agency's director, John Gilligan, stated: "At one time, many AID field offices were infiltrated from top to bottom with CIA people. The idea was to plant operatives in every kind of activity we had overseas, government, volunteer, religious, every kind."

On June 21, 2012, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) issued a resolution calling for the immediate expulsion of USAID from their nine member countries, "due to the fact that we consider their presence and actions to constitute an interference which threatens the sovereignty and stability of our nations."

USAID, the CIA, the National Endowment for Democracy (and the latter's subsidiaries), together or singly, continue to be present at regime changes, or attempts at same, favorable

to Washington, from “color revolutions” to “spring” uprisings, producing a large measure of chaos and suffering for our tired old world.

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## Notes

1. William Blum, *America’s Deadliest Export – Democracy: The Truth About US Foreign Policy and Everything Else*, p.22-5
2. Walter Isaacson & Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men* (1986), p.158
3. *Washington Post*, March 31, 2014
4. [“NATO takes measures to reinforce collective defence, agrees on support for Ukraine”](#), NATO website, April 1, 2014
5. Sandy Berger, White House press briefing, November 14, 1997, US Newswire transcript
6. *Associated Press*, April 3 & 4, 2014
7. *Washington Post*, April 4, 2014
8. *Associated Press*, June 2, 2009
9. George Cotter, “Spies, strings and missionaries”, *The Christian Century* (Chicago), March 25, 1981, p.321

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*The following announcement was first circulated by the  
[National Committee to Free the Cuban Five](#)*

## **ALERT 2014**

### **Cuba announces arrest of four Miami terrorists who were planning to carry out terrorist attacks**

**Be sure and sign the petition below this message!**

On May 7, Cuban authorities announced that on April 26, four Cuban right-wing exiles from Miami were arrested in Havana for plotting terrorist attacks in Cuban territory. Their names are José Ortega Amador, Obdulio Rodríguez González, Raibel Pacheco Santos and Félix Monzón Álvarez.

According to the report, the men have admitted that they planned to attack military installations and they had entered Cuba several times since 2013 to plot their actions.

The four men who are now detained in Cuba have also admitted that Santiago Álvarez, Osvaldo Mitat and Manuel Alzugaray were directing their terror campaign. They are long-time collaborators with CIA operative and terrorist Luis Posada Carriles.

The four men who are now detained in Cuba have admitted to Cuban authorities that Santiago Álvarez, Osvaldo Mitat and Manuel Alzugaray were directing their actions.

#### **Who is Santiago Álvarez Fernández Magriña?**

Although he has long been identified in the Miami media as a Miami businessman, Álvarez is a terrorist with a long violent history. He has worked closely for years with CIA agents like Luis Posada Carriles.

He is most noted for financing Posada's bombing and assassination campaigns and helping him escape justice. Posada Carriles is responsible for engineering the bombing of a Cuban airliner, killing 73 people, in 1976. He lives as a fugitive from justice in Miami.

#### **Here are just a few facts about the terrorist Álvarez:**

- Oct. 12, 1971, Alvarez and CIA agent Antonio Iglesias Pons machine-gunned the village of Boca de Sama, eastern Cuba from a speedboat, killing two men and injuring several people, including a young girl.
- In 2000, he was involved in the plot to try to assassinate Fidel Castro in Panama, led by Posada Carriles. After Posada and three others were convicted, then illegally pardoned by pro-U.S. Panama president Mireya Moscoso, Álvarez flew three of the men into Miami on a Lear jet.
- In 2001, he bought 8 assault rifles in Miami and thousands of rounds of ammunition. The weapons were later found on three men arrested in Cuba. Álvarez ordered them to explode the Tropicana nightclub in Havana with C-4

explosives, potentially threatening hundreds of people's lives.

- Together with Osvaldo Mitat, he illegally sneaked Posada Carriles into Miami on a boat in March 2005. To this day Posada runs free in Miami, continuing to plot with his terrorist accomplices.
- Álvarez and Mitat were caught with weapons caches in Miami (machine guns, C-4 explosives, grenade launchers) in 2005, yet they served less than two years.

[Read more about the terrorist history of Santiago Álvarez](#)

**We the people of the United States believe the U.S. government should not harborknown terrorists in Miami or anywhere.**

**[Sign the petition to urge President Obama:](#)**

- The U.S. government must stop harboring anti-Cuba terrorists, and instead prosecute them, to protect all potential victims of terrorism.
- Free the Cuban Five now. They were on a life-saving mission in Miami, monitoring and preventing the plots of the Miami terrorists.
- Extradite Luis Posada Carriles to Venezuela to face trial for masterminding the Cubana airliner bombing that killed 73 people on Oct. 6, 1976.

**[Sign the petition here](#)**

**A.N.S.W.E.R. Coalition**

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William M. LeoGrande and Peter Kornbluh. *[Back Channel to Cuba: The Hidden History of Negotiations between Washington and Havana.](#)* U of N. Carolina P, 2014.

Challenging the conventional wisdom of perpetual hostility between the United States and Cuba--beyond invasions, covert operations, assassination plots using poison pens and exploding seashells, and a grinding economic embargo--this fascinating book chronicles a surprising, untold history of bilateral efforts toward rapprochement and reconciliation. Since 1959, conflict and aggression have dominated the story of U.S.-Cuban relations. Now, William M. LeoGrande and Peter Kornbluh present a new and increasingly more relevant account. From John F. Kennedy's offering of an olive branch to Fidel Castro after the missile crisis, to Henry Kissinger's top secret quest for normalization, to Barack Obama's promise of a "new approach," **LeoGrande and Kornbluh reveal a fifty-year record of dialogue and negotiations, both open and furtive, indicating a path toward better relations in the future.**

LeoGrande and Kornbluh have uncovered hundreds of formerly secret U.S. documents and conducted interviews with dozens of negotiators, intermediaries, and policy makers, including Fidel Castro and Jimmy Carter. The authors describe how, despite the political clamor surrounding any hint of better relations with Havana, serious negotiations have been conducted by every presidential administration since Eisenhower's through secret, back-channel diplomacy. Concluding with ten lessons for U.S. negotiators, the book offers an important perspective on current political debates, at a time when leaders of both nations have publicly declared the urgency of moving beyond the legacy of hostility.

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#### **About the Author**

William M. LeoGrande, professor of government at American University, is the author of *Our Own Backyard: The United States in Central America, 1977-1992*, among other books.

Peter Kornbluh, director of the Cuba Documentation Project at the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C., is the author of *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*, among other books.

**USAID PROGRAM TO CUBA FOR REGIME CHANGE; AUTHENTIC EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES NEEDED.**

## “Washington’s Secret ‘Cuba Twitter’ Program Is the Same Old Policy of Regime Change”

Such covert operations are not sanitized by running them through USAID and wrapping them in the rhetoric of “democracy promotion.”

[William M. LeoGrande](#)

April 23, 2014 | [This article appeared in the May 12, 2014 edition of The Nation.](#) [The title in my no. of May 12 is “Cuba Twitter’ Scandal.” --Dick]

In defiant defense of ZunZuneo, the Agency for International Development’s secret text messaging program in Cuba, USAID spokesman Matt Herrick declared the agency “proud” of its Twitter clone, which, at its height, reached more than 60,000 Cuban cellphone users. The aim of the program, according to Herrick, “was to create a platform for Cubans to speak freely among themselves, period.” US officials at first denied that it had any political intent or sent out any political messages. But AP, which broke the story, decisively refuted those claims by publishing the political tweets and interviewing a subcontractor who wrote them.

Administration officials nevertheless remained unapologetic. In a Senate hearing, USAID administrator Rajiv Shah insisted the program was not covert, merely “discreet,” and that it was just trying to “enable open communications” among Cubans. Shah’s defense was echoed by the usual suspects on Capitol Hill, with Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen arguing that USAID was simply promoting “God-given values like freedom, justice or liberty.” The *Washington Post* editorial page jumped on the bandwagon, declaring that there was nothing wrong with “undermining a tyranny.”

But **fomenting unrest in a country by trying to secretly manipulate its domestic politics violates US treaty obligations under international law.** The charter of the Organization of American States declares, “No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State,” a prohibition that is not limited to the use of force. The UN Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention and Interference in the Internal Affairs of States repeats the OAS language and recognizes “the sovereign and inalienable right of a State freely to determine its own political, economic, cultural and social systems.” And it imposes on all states the duty “to refrain from any action or attempt in whatever form or under whatever pretext to destabilize or to undermine the stability of another State.”

International law has never prevented Washington from covert intervention, especially in Latin America. But because destabilizing other governments violates US treaty obligations, these operations were conducted secretly by the CIA during most of the Cold War. ZunZuneo and USAID's other "democracy promotion" schemes in Cuba remind Latin Americans that Washington still does not fully respect their sovereignty.

When Barack Obama took office, hopes ran high in the region that he would break the deadlock in US-Cuban relations. At the Fifth Summit of the Americas in April 2009, he pledged a "new beginning" with Cuba. But when the Sixth Summit convened in April 2012, US policy was essentially unchanged, and Obama faced a solid phalanx of Latin American leaders tired of Washington's intransigence. Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos—a close US ally—and Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff declared that they would skip the next summit if Cuba was not invited.

To his credit, Obama has restored people-to-people connections between the United States and Cuba. Educational, cultural and family travel is flourishing. But he has made little headway on state-to-state relations, nor has he reined in the foreign policy bureaucracy, which tries to exploit any relaxation of state control in Cuba to undermine its government. ZunZuneo is a perfect, albeit inept, example. When Raúl Castro legalized the sale of cellphones, USAID used that opening to build a social media platform it hoped would mobilize "smart mobs" reminiscent of Egypt's Tahrir Square uprising and Iran's "Green Revolution."

Covert operations designed to bring about regime change in Cuba are the direct descendants of the CIA's political operations of yesteryear. They are not sanitized by running them through USAID, calling them "discreet" and wrapping them in the rhetoric of democracy. Three sitting presidents in Latin America—Rousseff in Brazil, Michelle Bachelet in Chile and José Mujica in Uruguay—suffered personally at the hands of military dictatorships that US covert operations helped install a generation ago. Policy-makers in Washington would rather not dwell on the deadly consequences those operations had for thousands of Latin Americans, but Latin America has not forgotten.

Washington's relationship with the region is deteriorating, corroded by a policy toward Cuba that symbolizes a bygone era of US hegemony—a policy that no other country in the hemisphere supports. If Obama wants to build the "equal partnership" he originally promised, he cannot continue to ignore Cuba.

**[What Pres. Obama should do. -D]**

Last November, talking to supporters in Miami about Cuba, **Obama** said, “We have to be creative. And we have to be thoughtful. And we have to continue to update our policies.” He could start by replacing USAID programs targeting Cuba with aboveboard initiatives to **support authentic educational and cultural exchanges**—exchanges without the hidden hand of government manipulation or a hidden agenda of regime change.

Read Next: *Tom Hayden* [\*on normalizing US relations with Cuba\*](#)

***William M. LeoGrande***

April 23, 2014 | [\*This article appeared in the May 12, 2014 edition of The Nation.\*](#)

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## ***The Economic War Against Cuba:***

*A Historical and Legal Perspective on the U.S. Blockade* by [\*\*Salim Lamrani\*\*](#); prologue by Wayne S. Smith; foreword by Paul Estrade; translated by Larry Oberg. 2013.

142 pages

March 2013

It is impossible to fully understand Cuba today without also understanding the economic sanctions levied against it by the United States. For over fifty years, these sanctions have been upheld by every presidential administration, and at times intensified by individual presidents and acts of Congress. They are a key **part of the U.S. government’s ongoing campaign to undermine the Cuban Revolution, and stand in egregious violation of international law. Most importantly, the sanctions are cruelly designed for their harmful impact on the Cuban people.**

In this concise and sober account, Salim Lamrani explains everything you need to know about U.S. economic sanctions against Cuba: their origins, their provisions, how they contravene international law, and how they affect the lives of Cubans. He examines the U.S. government’s own official documents to expose what is hiding in plain sight: an indefensible,

vicious, and wasteful blockade that has been roundly condemned by citizens around the world.

*Salim Lamrani is a treasury of powerful factual information.*

—Howard Zinn, author, *A People's History of the United States*

*Lamrani brings forth valuable insight, much needed information, and honest judgment while exposing the economic aggression perpetrated by U.S. leaders against the people of Cuba.*

—Michael Parenti, author, *The Face of Imperialism*

*Professor Lamrani's brilliant study provides the most comprehensive and systematic exposition and critique of Washington's extraterritorial application of sanctions against Cuba—it documents the human cost and the criminal intent.*

—James Petras, Bartle Professor Emeritus of Sociology, Binghamton University

*An excellent summary of the American economic sanctions against Cuba, the manner in which they have been imposed for more than a half century and the harm they cause the Cuban people.*

—Wayne S. Smith, senior fellow and director of the Cuba Project, Center for International Policy; former head, U.S. Interests

## [9/12: Protest 15 years of unjust incarceration/FREE THE CUBAN 5!](#)

Tue Aug 6, 2013 6:30 pm (PDT) . Posted by:

["FreetheCuban5 LibertadparalosCinco" freethec\\_5](#)

The Popular Education Project to Free the Cuban 5

Email: [freethecuban5@gmail.com](mailto:freethecuban5@gmail.com)

Website: [www.freethecuban5.org](http://www.freethecuban5.org)

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/NYC-Free-the-Cuban-5>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/freethecuban5>

Telephone: 718-601-4751

For more information on the Cuban 5 go to:

<http://www.freethecuban5.org>

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## **CHOMSKY'S RECOMMENDED BOOKS ON CUBA**

[Chomsky's Recommended Cuba Books List | ChomskyList.com](#)

[www.chomskylist.com/category\\_page.php?category\\_id=130](http://www.chomskylist.com/category_page.php?category_id=130)

The following is a book list on **Cuba** made from the references in Noam **Chomsky's** books.

**OMNI Newsletters:** <http://omnicenter.org/dick-bennetts-peace-justice-and-ecology-newsletters/>

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[j.dick.bennett@gmail.com](mailto:j.dick.bennett@gmail.com)

Contents Cuba Newsletter #1

Introduction by Dick

Spadoni's *Failed Sanctions*

William Blum's *Empire Report* on Cuba

Two Books on Pentagon Plans to Attack Again

Jon Elliston and James Bamford

## **Contents Cuba Newsletter #2 END THE BULLYING**

US Against Cuba and the World: UN General Assembly 1959-

Chomsky, US/SU Nuclear Confrontation 1962

Bolender, Cuban Victims of US Terror 1960s to Present

Cuban Five 1998 to Present

Cuban Five Month, Stone's *South of the Border*

Cindy Sheehan for Cuban 5

Franklin, Cuba/US 21<sup>st</sup> Century

## **END CUBA NEWSLETTER #3, APRIL 25, 2017**

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**Dick Bennett**

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