



Study Guide

Topic Area A

Rapprochement of the relationship between the Organization and the Republic of Cuba

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Study Guide Topic Area A: *Rapprochement of the relationship between the Organization and the Republic of Cuba* to be discussed at the Summit of OAS for its simulation during the 7th Rhodes Model Regional Co-operation to be held in Rhodes, October 12-16, 2016.

Version 1.0 – Pages 31 – Last update: 21/08/2016

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Welcoming Letter

Dear delegates,

We would like to welcome you to the Organization of the American States and to congratulate you for participating in RhodesMRC 2016. We are convinced that you will have the opportunity to

participate in fruitful debates, to exchange innovative ideas and to live an unforgettable experience!

Our Committee will try to explore two interesting topics: firstly, the rapprochement of the relationship between OAS and the Republic of Cuba and the second one is about possible ways of combating corruption and alleviating its impact on human rights. For this reason, we are waiting for your opinions, your dynamic presence, your negotiation skills, and your personality. And of course, we are more than eager to help you, to discuss with you, to learn from you.

We hope that this study guide will contribute a lot in your study and that it will be a strong motivation for further research. However, it is crucial to examine your country's policy in order to develop more solid arguments and to achieve a higher level of diplomatic dialogue and attitude. Mobilize your academic knowledge and your temperament and be ready for an exceptional journey!

We would like to thank you for your interest and we are looking forward to meeting you in October! RhodesMRC 2016 is going to be a unique experience! Take a stand!

Kind Regards,

Board of the Organization of the American States

Paschalis Paschalidis, Chairperson

Theodora-Iliana Papacharalampous, Secretary General

Introduction to the Organization ¹

The Organization of American States is an organization of regional cooperation between the states of the American region. Its roots were held back to 1890 after the negotiations that took place during the First International Conference of American States, held in Washington, D.C. of the United States. This Conference decided the establishment of the “International Union of

¹ About the History of OAS, you can search the following links: http://www.oas.org/en/about/who_we_are.asp and <http://www.usoas.usmission.gov/history.html>

American Republics”, the first regional cooperation institution of the world. The aim was to create a legal framework and the proper institutions in order to unite the American region and ensure the proper communication between the states.

The Union was transformed to the Organization of American States in 1948, when the member states met in Bogota of Colombia and signed the Charter of OAS, which was entered into force in 1951. Four important amendments followed by the Protocol of Buenos Aires (1967), the protocol of Cartagena de Indias (1985), the Protocol of Managua (1993) and the protocol of Washington (1992).

According to the article 2 of the Charter of OAS²:

"The Organization of American States, in order to put into practice the principles on which it is founded and to fulfill its regional obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, proclaims the following essential purposes:

- a) To strengthen the peace and security of the continent;
- b) To promote and consolidate representative democracy, with due respect for the principle of nonintervention;
- c) To prevent possible causes of difficulties and to ensure the pacific settlement of disputes that may arise among the Member States;
- d) To provide for common action on the part of those States in the event of aggression;
- e) To seek the solution of political, juridical, and economic problems that may arise among them;
- f) To promote, by cooperative action, their economic, social, and cultural development;
- g) To eradicate extreme poverty, which constitutes an obstacle to the full democratic development of the peoples of the hemisphere; and
- h) To achieve an effective limitation of conventional weapons that will make it possible to devote the largest amount of resources to the economic and social development of the Member States."

² You can find the Charter of OAS in the following link: http://www.oas.org/dil/treaties_A-41_Charter_of_the_Organization_of_American_States.htm

Today, the organization consists by 35 members and has also approved the status of observers to 70 states. Its actions are based on four main pylons: democracy, human rights, security, and development.

Introduction to the topic

The relationship of the Organization of American States with the Republic of Cuba had always been one of the most crucial and tough topics that OAS had to deal with. Cuba has been one of the founding members of the Organization, but their membership was suspended in 1962, as an outcome of the Revolution to the country. The purposes of the Revolution were claimed to be against the spirit and the principles of the member States of OAS and this is why the reaction of the Organization was immediate and strict. Until then, the relationships between the two sides are frozen and in some periods even hostile.

The Cuban government has changed. A rapprochement with Cuba is observed in multiple levels. The Organization decided in 2009 to accept Cuba back as a member State and voted the resolution AG/RES 2438. However, until now Cuba rejects the return to the Organization. This is why the conference of 2016 should not focus only on the return of Cuba as a member State, but also to the measures of more active cooperation between its member states and the island.

As the Organization of American States, it is our responsibility to plan the future of American region and focus on the needs and the problems of its citizens. Cooperation has to be increased in all levels and the representatives of the member States have to take realistic and specific measures, which are going to resolve one of the most chronic problems of our Organization. Solidarity, mutual understanding, respect to the principles of the Organization and the international law have to be our main goals during this conference.

Historical Background

Relationships with Cuba before the revolution

Between 1826 and 1889 several conferences took place in the American region under the common idea of uniting all the states of the region and create a common regional organization. These conferences were called Pan- American ones, as representatives from almost the whole American region were present and discussed about the future of the region. The most important conference was without a doubt the First International Conference of American States, which started on October 1889 and completed on April 1903³. The creation of a Pan-American Organization, which would be able to unite all the American States was the vision of the United States' Secretary of State, James G. Blaine and after long negotiations this vision was accomplished. The International Union of American Republics was finally established with the participation of a large number of the total of American republics.

This organization was evolved to the Organization of American States as it is known today. Twenty-one representatives of American states were met in Bogota on May 1948 and signed the Charter of the Organization of American States. The States that were present in the conference were Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela⁴.

During that period, the colonization in American region was historically almost over. Cuba had won its independence from Spain after almost four centuries, but yet the political stability was not a reality in the country. Civil wars, political movements, a provisional government supported by the Pentarchy of 1933 and Fulgencio Batista can briefly describe the situation of Cuba until the early 1940s⁵. The constitution of the country was violated many times and the legitimacy of the governments of Batista and Ramon Grau San Martin was very dubious. On 1948⁶, Carlos Prío

³ <http://www.usoas.usmission.gov/history.html>

⁴ http://www.oas.org/en/about/who_we_are.asp

⁵ Frank R. Villafana, *Expansionism: Its Effects on Cuba's Independence*. Transaction Publishers

⁶ Bethell, Leslie, *Cuba*. Cambridge University Press

Socarrás a political ally of Grau won the elections and made efforts to bring investments in the country, in order to achieve a modernization of the country and improve the quality of life. In the same level⁷, the more active international presence of the state was decided and this explains why Cuba was one of the main negotiators and contributors in the conference of Bogota and in the creation of the Organization of American States.

However, the stable relationships with organization were not going to last for longtime.

The Revolution of Cuba

Although the efforts of Socarras continued, the political instability in Cuba was going on. Batista's political party regained strength and the country was led to divisive situation between the political parties. In 1956, Fidel Castro and his supporters, mainly political rivals of Batista made the first revolutionary movement against the government. By 1958 the group of Fidel Castro was the most important revolutionary group in Cuba and managed to capture Sierra Maestra and Santa Clara. Under the pressure of the revolution, which was being stronger day by day, Batista and his family were forced to abandon the country and find shelter first to Dominican Republic and then to Portugal. In the early 1959 Fidel Castro joined in Havana. The revolution was almost over as almost the whole territory was under the control of the revolutionists. Manuel Urrutia Lleó, a liberal politician was appointed as the provisional president.

Many reactions took place during the years after the Revolution. Groups of insurgents fought against Castro for almost six years but did not manage to tumble the new regime. The reaction of the government was violent and immediate. According to facts of the Amnesty International 237 people were proved to be executed by the official authorities⁸. The State Department estimates the exact number to about 3,200, only between 1959 and 1962⁹. According to recent studies of academics, the number of the executed people, of the internally displaced ones and the exiles may reach even 33,000.

⁷ Jaime Suchlicki, Cuba: From Columbus to Castro and Beyond, Potomac Books,

⁸ When the State Kills: The Death Penalty v. Human Rights, Amnesty International Publications, 1989

⁹ <http://www.longitudebooks.com/find/p/7230/mcms.html>

The international reaction to the revolution was at first positive. Especially the Western World estimated that the new regime may be a very important first step towards the democratization and modernization of Cuba. However, the violent reaction of Castro against the insurgents and his political rivals, the violation of the law and the human rights were crucial factors to change the whole situation. The persistence to the communistic system which was very similar to the one of the Soviet Union was one more factor to make the Western World opposed to Castro's government.

In 1960 the first attempt to tumble Castro took place. After the permission of Dwight D. Eisenhower, American CIA agents trained Cuban exiles in order to overthrow Castro and his government¹⁰. In 1961 about 1,400 Cuban exiles trained by the CIA returned to Cuba in order to begin an armed fight to overthrow Castro. However, they did not achieve the goal and their try had a violent end¹¹. The relationships of Cuba and Soviet Union were to become even stronger. In 1962, Castro and Anastas Mikoyan signed a very important bilateral commercial agreement. This step was strongly disapproved by the United States and its allies.

The reaction of the Organization of American States

While the situation in the whole American region was very unstable and the danger of subversion of the democratic institutions was more than obvious in a variety of American states, the American republics decided to take action in order to ensure the maintenance of democracy and deter the threat of communism. At first, the Organization decided to suspend any aid to Haiti and also impose sanctions to the country because of the rise of the dictatorial government of François Duvalier. The case of Cuba was the next one to be discussed.

According to the chapter of OAS, a 2/3 majority should be taken in order to impose sanctions to any member state of the organization. The United States made diplomatic efforts to convince the majority of the members to vote upon the proposed sanctions on the 8th conference of OAS, which was going to take place in Punta del Este of Uruguay. Many representatives were convinced to walk away the negotiations if the chairman did not put the issue of sanctions into consideration.

¹⁰ Stephen G. Rabe, *Eisenhower and Latin America: The Foreign Policy of Anticommunism*. UNC Press Books.

¹¹ <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/khrushchev-and-eisenhower-trade-threats-over-cuba>

The conference finally took place on 21 January of 1962. The United States strongly proposed the Organization to impose strong sanctions against Cuba. However, the complexity of the case and the several political interests between the States made the situation rough. Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Bolivia and Ecuador supported the government of Castro and considered that the sanctions would be an authoritarian step, which could endanger the stable relationships between the member States of the Organization. In the same level, Haiti and Uruguay were very neutral, trying to contribute in the de-escalation of the crisis. The United States finally managed to convince the representative of Haiti to support the sanctions, in return of the elevation of the sanctions against Haiti and the provision of humanitarian aid, where necessary. As the supporters of Cuba noticed that the United States was close to achieve the required majority, Argentina decided to make a conciliatory suggestion. The government of Buenos Aires presented a three pylon plan¹², which suggested:

- a) The suspension of Cuba from the Organization;
- b) The imposing of optional financial sanctions of minor level where necessary;
- c) The establishment of a security committee under the auspices of OAS, in order to ensure the de-escalation of the crisis in the relationships between Cuba and OAS.

Although the United States preferred the imposing of sanctions in a bigger level¹³, they were finally convinced to accept the suggestion and supported the suspension of Cuba, considering that the communist belief and the support of Castro to the Soviet Union were totally opposed to the principles of OAS and the beliefs of American states. In the same level a suggestion to combat the “Cuba's subversive activities” was made.

Finally, 19 states voted in favor of the proposal of the United States to combat “Cuba's subversive activities”, 16 voted for the imposing of a trade embargo as it was proposed by Argentina and 14 voted for the suspension of Cuba from the Organization. Because of the fact that the suggestion of Argentina was not voted as it was expressed, but with amendments, Argentina finally abstained. Cuba voted against all of the suggestions, but did not manage to convince any other states to support the country, as the government of Castro did not manage to retain stable diplomatic

¹² See Thomas C. Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution* p. 60 and next

¹³ <https://www.petersoninstitute.org/research/topics/sanctions/cuba2.cfm>

relationships with the other governments. Even the main supporters of Cuba, (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, and Mexico,) did not vote against, but preferred to abstain from the voting procedure. The final clause, after the amendments was the following:

- 1) That adherence by any member of the Organization of American States to Marxism–Leninism is incompatible with the inter-American system and the alignment of such a government with the communist bloc breaks the unity and solidarity of the hemisphere.
- 2) That the present Government of Cuba, which has officially identified itself as a Marxist–Leninist government, is incompatible with the principles and objectives of the inter-American system.
- 3) That this incompatibility excludes the present Government of Cuba from participation in the inter-American system

Interpreting this clause, professors of International Law explain that Cuba was technically still a member of OAS, but the government of Castro was denied the right to be represented, vote and take part in any action of the Organization, until the country was democratized and renounce the principles of communism¹⁴. This situation equals to a de facto suspension from the Organization. Organs of the Organization of American States, such as the American Commission on Human Rights continued to publish reports on the violation of Human Rights and International Law in Cuba¹⁵. Some States later doubted those reports, but the majority of the Organization's plans was based on them for any future actions against the government of Castro.

After the decision, the relationships of Cuba with the Organization and the majority of American States were almost frozen. Cuba declared that the Organization had no rights to publish reports and be referred to the country, as Cuba was not anymore a member of OAS and therefore any similar action would be considered as a violation to the island's sovereignty.

In the meanwhile, the United States imposed a variety of sanctions against Cuba, which actually froze any relationships between the two states. The sanctions included a total arms and trade embargo and restricted many freedoms of transactions between the citizens of the two countries.

¹⁴ See for example: William Appleman Williams, *The United States, Cuba, and Castro: An Essay on the Dynamics of Revolution and the Dissolution of Empire*

¹⁵ You can find an example of reports in the following links: <http://www.cidh.oas.org/countryrep/Cuba83eng/intro.htm> and <http://www.cidh.oas.org/countryrep/Cuba79eng/intro.htm>

Cuba followed the same policy for the next years. The relationships with the Soviet Union, China and their allies were strengthened, but the ties with the American states and the European countries were now more than ever unstable. The missile crisis of 1962, the communistic reform of 1963 and the military support to actions of the Soviet Union in Ethiopia and Angola in 1970s made the background of the situation even more unstable. The relationships of the country with the Western World were now almost hostile.

The financial status of Cuba was getting worse and reactions took place in the whole country¹⁶. Castro made efforts to improve the situation and for this reason he tried to find possible partners, in the field of commercial cooperation. In that level, he strengthened even more the relationships with the Soviet Union and China and made efforts to reproach some nations of the Latin America, like Bolivia and Venezuela¹⁷.

In a spirit of frozen relationships and sanctions, the Organization of American States in 1971 took one more important measure that harmed the relationships with Cuba. The Organization approved a convention ordering that no nation of the American region should have any relationships with Cuba. This practically equaled to a full embargo against the island and a complete isolation of the government of Castro from the whole American region. The convention was signed and ratified from almost all the member states of the Organization. Only Mexico denied to become a member of that convention and retained some relationships with Cuba. Chile was also very neutral at first and the Christian Democrat Party of Chile strongly pressed the government not to sign and ratify the convention. However, under the international pressure, Chile also became a member of this convention.

The situation changed some years later. As OAS noticed that the Soviet Union could find a strong ally in the American region and this could have catastrophic results during the cold war, the member states decided to make a first rapprochement with Cuba. This is why in the conference of 1975 the issue of sanctions against Cuba was for once more discussed. With 16 votes in favor, the Organization decided to cancel the already voted sanctions, in order to ensure that the strong

¹⁶ Bethell, Leslie. The Cambridge History of Latin America

¹⁷ <https://www.petersoninstitute.org/research/topics/sanctions/cuba2.cfm>

financial transactions between Cuba and the Asian markets would stop. Even the United States voted for this proposal, but retained their own sanctions against Cuba.

The Missile Crisis

The missile crisis is an historical event, which took place in Cuba on October 1962 and refers to a juxtaposition between Cuba, the Soviet Union and the United States¹⁸. It all started Soviet when ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads were installed in the Bay of Pigs as an answer to the installation of United States' missile in the United Kingdom, Italy and mainly Turkey. J.F Kennedy talked in public about the danger of a nuclear threat and announced the American navy forces would impose a blockade to Cuba. Moreover, an American operation was prepared in order to attack the missile basis, collect the weapons and deliver them to the States¹⁹. As an answer, the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev condemned the action of the United States, talked about a clear violation of the international law and finally proposed a conciliatory solution. The proposal included a mutual withdrawal of the Soviets from Cuba and the Americans from Europe and Asia. The Secretary General of the United Nations, U Thant met both Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Khrushchev²⁰ and after long negotiations announced on October 1962 that the Soviet operation would stop and the ballistic missiles were going to be withdrawn by the Cuban territory²¹. In return, Kennedy accepted that the United States would not try any military operation against Cuba and secretly agreed to withdraw the American missiles from the territory of Turkey.

The period after the end of the Cold War

In 1991 the cold war came into an end and the Soviet Union collapsed, creating an unstable situation in the area. Cuba noticed the whole situation with deep discomfort as their strongest ally was now an insecure and unstable country that struggled to do the next steps. The financial conditions were now even worse as the investments of Soviets were decreased. The United

¹⁸ <http://www.state.gov/youthandeducation/>

¹⁹ http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/item/2007/0709/whit/white_rfk.html

²⁰ <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/x2jfk.html>

²¹ https://books.google.gr/books?id=TLZn_VZV2V0C&printsec=frontcover&dq=isbn:9781442216792&hl=el&sa=X&ei=XyPeVK_9BtfZaoiFgpAF&ved=0CCAQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false

States noticed this situation and considered it as a good chance to make a new rapprochement with Cuba. George H. W. Bush followed by Bill Clinton made strong attempts to propose to the government of Cuba to allow strong American investments in the country. However, Castro denied any aid by the United States and their allies. An abundance of manifestations broke up in Cuba and many of them were violently suppressed by the official authorities²². The government of Cuba blamed the CIA to be involved in the organization of those manifestations.

In the meanwhile, Castro made attempts to find new allies after the collapse of the Soviet Union. For this reason, he managed to successfully negotiate with China, Venezuela and Bolivia. Castro created strong personal relationships with Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales, which was the first step for a very active rapprochement of the relationships of Cuba with other American countries.

In 2003, a new round of strong incidents against Castro was started. The called “black spring” was now a reality in the whole country. The government accused for once more the United States to be behind those actions. They considered that after the invasion of the U.S. in Iraq, those manifestations were made in order to ensure the imperialism of the capitalist model in different places of the world. The black spring ended after a new circle of violence. More than 75 people, including foreign journalists were imprisoned after the violent outburst of the Cuban authorities. As a reaction, the European Union imposed a variety of new sanctions against Cuba, which were finally lifted by 2012²³.

Any rapprochement of the relationships of OAS with Cuba was for once more frozen after the actions of the Cuban authorities. As a result, Fidel Castro called the Organization as “part of a disgraceful institution that has only humiliated the honor of Latin American nations²⁴” and declared that Cuba has no intention to return in this kind of Organization.

²² <http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/article/can-cuba-change-ferment-civil-society>

²³ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7463803.stm> and <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+IM-PRESS+20051017FCS01528+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN#title3>

²⁴ <https://books.google.gr/books?id=i5PhTgxc84C&pg=PA75&lpg=PA75&dq=part+of+a+disgraceful+institution+that+has+only+humiliated+the+honor+of+Latin+American+nations&source=bl&ots=5eb5QpdLo4&sig=gupn1iH9yT209M95Gs55E0Wv2-k&hl=el&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewiUyCbJm-HMAhWmF8AKHYBYCHgQ6AEIKzAC#v=onepage&q=part%20of%20a%20disgraceful%20institution%20that%20has%20only%20humiliated%20the%20honor%20of%20Latin%20American%20nations&f=false>

Recent incidents

In 2008, a very important page of the Cuban history was written. The president Fidel Castro decided to resign and he was replaced by his brother Raul Castro²⁵. Raul Castro, as the new president, promised to modernize the country, reform it and remove many restrictions of the people's freedom. Indeed, in 2009 he dismissed a large number of government ministers and strong collaborators of Fidel Castro²⁶. Moreover, he proclaimed a variety of economic reforms, in order to ensure the modernization of Cuba, the economic growth and the research of new markets for transactions²⁷.

Venezuela did not have a positive view on the recent incidents. The Bolivarian Republic considered that the new government could destroy all the positive steps and initiatives of a 50 years' revolution made in the country. According to unverified yet information, Venezuela was planning a movement for the overthrow of Raul Castro and the reinforcement of the socialistic model in the country. According to the same facts, Hugo Chávez seemed to have contacted with the Dominican Republic about this purpose, but their president Leonel Fernández declined to contribute²⁸. This information was denied both by Venezuela and Dominican Republic.

The most important rapprochement between the Organization of American States and the Republic of Cuba took place in 2009. Many nations considered that as Cuba is now historically in a new period, the American region should contribute to the new area of stronger international relationships between the country and the other American states. This is why it was proposed to reconsider the issue of the suspension of Cuba from the Organization. Mexico was the country to strongly propose this step as it continued to have some important relationships with the Cuban authorities. However, the status of Cuba, the statements made by times by the Cuban officials and the general policy of Cuba forced many of the member States to be very cautious about this step. In addition, it is commonly known that Cuba has many times called the Organization as “Ministry of Colonies of the United States of America²⁹”.

²⁵ <https://www.afp.com/english/news/stories/newsmlmmd.fce074e0275fae2a0c16383ec4973c96.191.html>

²⁶ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/mar/02/raul-castro-fidel-cuba-officials>

²⁷ <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/americas/cuba/story/938581.html>

²⁸ <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/americas/03/17/cuba.overthrow.plot/>

²⁹ <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-organization-of-american-states-oas-and-the-re-establishment-of-ties-between-the-u-s-and-cuba/5442045>

A very important conference was held in San Pedro Sula of Honduras on 3 June 2009. The agenda considered the rapprochement of relationships with the Republic of Cuba and the issue of the suspension of the country from being a member of the organization was going to be discussed. After the attempts of many countries, and especially Mexico and Ecuador, the proposal for lifting the suspension was finally approved³⁰. The United States was at first opposed to this step, but after strong pressures by the majority of the American states, they accepted to support it. The president of Ecuador, Fander Falconí declared that “This is a new proposal, it has no conditions – of any kind {...} That suspension was made in the Cold War, in the language of the Cold War. What we have done here is to fix a historic error³¹”

Everyone waited for Cuba’s reaction after the historic vote made by the member States of the Organization of American States. At first, the Cuban leader Raul Castro stated that the Organization’s decision would be “recalled by future generations³²”. However, his final decision was negative. In 8 June 2009, during an official press statement, he announced that finally although welcoming the decision of the Organization “Cuba will not return to the OAS³³”. During the recent period the relationships of Cuba with the members of OAS were ameliorated, as Cuba made essential steps towards modernization, respect to liberties, human rights and international law. In a recent press statement of 2014, the foreign minister of the Cuban government Bruno Rodriguez announced that Cuba’s policy in relation to the relationship with the Organization of American States remains unchanged and the country has no intention to return as a member state.

Since 1961, the Cuban authorities had imposed a travel restriction to all of their citizens. Anyone who wished to travel abroad had to receive a special permission by the authorities and a letter of invitation by the foreign state. Moreover, they were not allowed to take their families with them. In 2014, the government announced the lift of the restrictions. The authorities started to provide IDs

³⁰ See the full text here: <http://photos.state.gov/libraries/113464/pdfs/AG-Cuba.pdf>

³¹ <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/article24540739.html>

³² <http://www.thenewamerican.com/world-news/north-america/item/10673-will-cuba-join-oas>

³³ See the official announcement here:

<http://wayback.archive.org/web/20120219170708/http://www.granma.cu/ingles/2009/junio/lun8/Declaration.html>

and visas to all those wishing to travel, but still the fee for acquiring a visa is high. According to International Business Times, more than 180,000 Cubans traveled abroad as tourists.

Even the relationships with the United States of America were ameliorated in a high level. First of all, after negotiations of representatives of both states, including Barack Obama and Raul Castro, the Cuban authorities released 54 American prisoners, including former agents and the government contractor Alan Phillip Gross³⁴. In return, the United States released 3 Cuban agents. Although the sanctions are not yet totally lifted, an important progress has been achieved. Some restricted and supervised transactions between the two parties have been allowed, mainly concerning imports, exports and trade transaction.

Impact of the embargo

According to official researches, the embargo did not finally have such a big impact against the Cuban government. Only \$685 million annually are lost by the restricting of the transactions of Cuba. At the same level, the country that actually was mainly hurt by this embargo was the United States of America³⁵. As the Chamber of Commerce mentioned the amount of total loss was about \$1.2 billion per year. Similar impacts touched other American States, as their commercial relationships with Cuba were totally frozen.

The situation could be explained by two reasons:

First of all, Cuba's foreign policy during all these years was finally successful. The regime managed to find strong allies and commercial partners in the markets of Asia and South America. At first the Soviet Union and after it collapsed China, Venezuela and Bolivia were some of the main contributors to the commercial relationships of Cuba. Moreover, researches about illegal transactions during the times of embargo are yet unverified, but are claimed to be another contributor to Cuba's revenues.

Second of all, Cuba managed to find alternative sources for boosting the country's economy. One of the main economic sectors of Cuba is tourism. The level of tourism in the country has very much increased during the period of cold war, although the embargo and the travel restrictions

³⁴ <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/u-s-cuba-relations/cuba-frees-american-alan-gross-held-five-years-n269926>

³⁵ <http://www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2009/0309pepper.html>

were in order. Considering the low value of the Cuban currency, the money received by tourists and individual investors, Cuban economy was at least maintained, if not improved through the years.

Criticism against the embargo

A variety of politicians, organizations, academics and analysts strongly criticized the imposing of embargo against Cuba as a violation of fundamental human rights of the people of Cuba. The criticism mainly focuses on the impacts it has on the infrastructures, food, clean water, medicine and medical supplies. It also emphasized on the medical crises that took place in the country as a result of the lack of basic necessities³⁶. Moreover, the lack of intelligence, because of the travel ban is responsible of the spread of infectious diseases in the country, as the doctors and the medical system are not properly trained.

Hugo Chavez in a public speech in 2009 blamed president Obama for being the responsible one about the maintaining of the sanctions by all the American states. He called the American president to assist the Cuban people and condemned the embargo as a violation of human rights and a well-known plan of the United States to weaken their political rivals, while at the same moment reinforcing dictators in other places of the world. Moreover, he considered the lift of embargo as an agenda of the OAS for the next years and also as a part of the bilateral negotiations between the United States and Venezuela³⁷.

In the same level, the government of Canada criticized the embargo and was willing to contribute to the dialogue for its lift. However, no official actions were made yet. The Canadian investors are in talks with government as they seem more than willing to move on strong investments in Cuba during the next years, if the embargo is finally lifted. Many European countries supported the

³⁶

<http://www.medicc.org/resources/documents/embargo/The%20impact%20of%20the%20U.S.%20Embargo%20on%20Health%20&%20Nutrition%20in%20Cuba.pdf>

³⁷ <http://europe.newsweek.com/moises-naim-obsession-cuba-80307?rm=eu>

reaction of Canada. The Cuban market is now an attractive destination for a variety of European companies³⁸.

Even some American companies from different countries of the American region supported that the embargo violates the international law of competition as these companies do not have any access to transactions with the Cuban markets, while the Cuban authorities – according to them – violate the embargo and many of their companies still have commercial relationships, even illegal ones³⁹.

Pope John Paul II, Patriarch Bartholomew, the United Church of Christ to the U.S, the Disciples of Christ, the National Council of Churches are only some of the religious leaders and organizations publicly opposed to the embargo and the freezing of relationships between Cuba and other American states. They all call for a new round of negotiations under the spirit of humanism, human rights and offer to the human being⁴⁰.

Cuba has many times called the international community to lift the sanctions in the past, using strong expressions like “an act of genocide” and “theft”.

The United Nations General Assembly condemned many times the imposing of sanctions. Even an abundance of American states, although maintaining sanctions voted in favor of the relevant resolutions, in order to show their commitment in the progress of dialogue. Many analysts consider those votes as a message to the United States that the rigid policy of the White House has to change in the next years. Only the United States, Israel and Palau vote against all the resolutions proposed to the General Assembly since 1992. The last resolution about the embargo was voted on 2010 with 187 voted in favor, 2 against (U.S.A, Israel) and 3 abstentions (Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Palau) and condemned the embargo.

In 2014, after the most important rapprochement of the relationships of the United States with Cuba, Barack Obama proposed the Congress to consider the possibility of ending the embargo immediately. "Neither the American nor Cuban people are well-served by a rigid policy that's

³⁸ See this important report and the suggestions made by the European Council:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&mode=XML&reference=A4-1996-0329&language=EN>

³⁹ http://web.archive.org/web/20071012195201/http://caller.com/ccct/local_news/article/0,1641,CCCT_811_4582172,00.html

⁴⁰ <http://www.news.va/en/news/us-bishops-call-for-end-to-cuba-embargo>

rooted in events that took place before most of us were born", mentioned the American president⁴¹.

Possible Fields of Cooperation with Cuba

Economy

The economic model of Cuba is based on the main principles of the socialistic and communistic model. The total majority of the sources are controlled by the state and almost all the citizens work for the state. During the last years, the government decided to accept some investments from individuals, but under a strict legal framework and State supervision. This is why the percentage of the state employees is reduced from 92% to 78%. However, it is obvious that the government controls the majority of the country's economy. Therefore, a lot of conversation has begun in national and international level about the possibilities of foreign investments in order to boost the local economy, create more jobs and improve the quality of life.

Every interested investor has to take into account that Cuba still uses a dual currency system, which means that it actually accepts two forms of coin. For example, the majority of the wages are paid in Cuban pesos (CUP), while the tourists pay in Convertible pesos (CUC), whose value is equal to the American dollar. This is a way that reinforces the State Funds and makes Cuba an attractive destination for tourists, but at the same moment weakens the purchasing power of the Cuban citizens. Some other alternative forms of tourism, like cultural tourism and agricultural tourism are some forms that can be highly reclaimed. However, a great progress has not been achieved towards this direction.

As it was earlier mentioned during the cold war Cuba was very much related to the Soviet Union, China and other markets mainly in Asia. In the modern period, according to the CIA Fact book, the exports of Cuban products are valued to about \$2.4 billion, including mainly medical products,

⁴¹ Read carefully the analysis: <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/12/17/politics/obama-cuba-castro-relations/>

coffee, sugar, nickel, fish, tobacco, citrus fruits, while the imports to about \$6.9 billion, including mainly machinery, machinery, food and clothing,⁴².

A field that is estimated to be as one of the most crucial for the economic growth is the **constructions**. Until 2010, Cuban citizens were not allowed to build and own their houses, as the State was responsible for building all the required buildings and of course own the total of the property in the Cuban territory. However, with a recent law of 2010, constructions are now allowed to be made by individuals without the endorsement of the State⁴³. In any case, it is observed that the infrastructure in Cuba is in some cases defective, especially in isolated areas, small villages and district locations. The regime made some great tries during the previous years to improve this kind of infrastructure, mainly in health system, education and public administration. However, for the amelioration of the life condition it is more than necessary, Cuba to make steps forward, even if it necessary to accept private sponsorship.

Moreover, a very important aspect of the economic growth concerns the **natural sources**. Cuba has already achieved a strong cooperation with Brazil and Venezuela in the fields of oil and gas infrastructure, under the aim of increasing the profits coming from this aspect. The island has many inventories in very important elements, like iron, ore, copper, gold, silver, chromium, and cobalt, while this is the largest world's producer of nickel. It is crucial to be discussed if all of these inventories should be reclaimed in cooperation with foreign states and/ or individuals or it is preferred to stay as the "natural treasure" of the country⁴⁴.

The main factor that boosted the Cuban economy during the cold water and the modern period is **tourism**. The low value of the Cuban currency, the low cost of life and the natural landscapes have made Cuba an attractive destination for a large number of tourists from all over the world. Specifically in the American region, Cuba constitutes the no.1 destination for the Canadian tourists and the two states have already achieved a stable cooperation concerning tourism and all its related aspects. Cuba has now joined the tourism market and is actually the 3rd most important player in this kind of market in Caribbean region, behind Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico and

⁴² <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2078rank.html>

⁴³ <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/03/world/americas/03cuba.html?ref=todayspaper&r=0>

⁴⁴ http://www.indexmundi.com/cuba/natural_resources.html

the most important player in the field of medical tourism⁴⁵. This is why many American countries, especially the islands of the Caribbean are concerned about this sudden growth and press the international community for the implementation of equal standards of competitiveness. Another worrying aspect is the sex tourism that is observed in Cuba. According to recent reports, the child sex tourism constitutes a reality in the country and many boys and girls are forced to work in this field for living. Many international organizations and human rights observers caution about the dangers of this serious phenomenon.

For once more, it has to be said that since some countries still retain the embargo and sanctions against Cuba, a stronger commercial cooperation cannot be achieved. This is why many countries and mainly Canada criticized those practices and supported their lift, in order to achieve a common progress in the relationships of the states and make Cuba a place where investors can bring their money.

Immigration

Since the area of colonization, a large number of people mainly of Spain, France, Portugal, Italy, Russia, Denmark, Greece, Ireland and the British Empire arrived in Cuba creating the first emigration wave. Some of them returned in Europe but the majority remained in the region, it created societies and comprise the people of Cuba. The Revolution of Cuba created the second emigration wave as almost one million people, mainly political rivals of Castro were forced to leave Cuba and travel to the United States, the islands of Caribbean, Mexico, Canada and Europe either as refugees or immigrants. This contributed to the creation of a tragedy in the seas of Cuba. As the immigration was illegal almost in total, is it estimated that about 80,000 of citizens lost their lives in their try to abandon the country.

In the late 20th century, immigration was still a very serious problem. The United States brought the topic many times in the Organization of American States, the United Nations and other international organs. In 1994, Cuba and the United States signed a bilateral agreement which ordered that

⁴⁵ <https://web.archive.org/web/20060822042043/http://www.uiowa.edu/ifdebook/conferences/cuba/TLCP/Volume%201/Facio.pdf>

- a) The United States would provide a visa and would allow to 20,000 of their citizens annually to travel in Cuba as tourists in order to contribute to the economic growth of the island;
- b) Cuba would take stricter measures for border controls, in order to reduce the waves of the refugees and immigrants travelling to the United States⁴⁶.

On the same field, a very important memorandum of cooperation was signed between both States in 2016, which provides the citizens of both countries with more rights in transport, more safety guarantees, more right and the most important more commercial opportunities in the foreign state. After the recent incidents in Cuba and the rapprochement of the relationships with the United States, is it believed that many similar agreements may occur in the near future⁴⁷.

In the recent period many Cuban citizens still live in foreign countries. After the latest changes in the government of Cuba and in general to its conditions, an international discussion has begun about the status of those people, the possibility of their return in the country and the agreements about the illegal immigration.

Education and Culture

Education was always one of the factors that Cuban governments emphasized on. Before the Revolution, according to the United Nations, the literacy rate was about 80% of the citizens, one of the highest worldwide. The Revolution made a big educational reform starting from the early 1960s. Private institutions were forbidden, but the school attendance was made compulsory until the age of 15 years old. The literacy level was increased to almost 99% and is one of the highest worldwide, while school graduation level is 94%, an also very impressive percentage⁴⁸.

The university education constitutes of almost all the scientific sectors and emphasizes on the agriculture, pedagogy and polytechnic studies. In 1999, the government established the ELAM (Latin American School of Medicine) for foreign students, which is considered as one of the most important movements of Cuba towards a stable international approach of its policy⁴⁹.

⁴⁶ <http://www.gao.gov/archive/1995/ns95211.pdf>

⁴⁷ Study this very important memorandum here: <http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ata/c/cu/252525.htm>

⁴⁸ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cu.html>

⁴⁹ <http://www.nbcnews.com/id/19942866/>

However, the worries around the educational system of Cuba concern two specific issues. First of all, the whole system is totally focused on the principles of communism and socialism and many foreign academics consider this as a way of propaganda made by the state. Second of all, the international appraisal for the Cuban universities is very bad. None of them has managed to be even in the first 1500 universities of the world according to the relevant researches⁵⁰. The level of education is considered low, while research and development principle is almost totally absent. Recently, Cuba accepted investments from the government of Venezuela in the fields of technological and educational progress. Since then, a very important issue concerns the investments in those fields and also in the field of culture. Cuba has maintained strong cultural facts, internationally popular, concerning mainly music, food, literature, poetry and theatre. Many people believe that investments in those sectors could reinforce them, create stronger infrastructures and become a very important step for the cooperation between people, under the auspices of educational and cultural progress.

Healthcare

Before the Revolution, the healthcare system of Cuba was very high-level and the percentages of child mortality were very low, while the life expectancy was high. Moreover, many Cuban scientists contributed actively in the progress of the science and were responsible for very important medical researches. During the first years of the Revolution, the healthcare system met a sudden downgrading. Infectious diseases were spread, child mortality was increased and more than 6,000 doctors were forced to abandon the country because of political beliefs or in order to find better conditions of working and living. The system recovered during the 1980s. The government considered the healthcare as a priority and invested strong amounts of money in modernizing the infrastructures, train the doctors and the employees and evaluate the healthcare system in the province and the rural citizens⁵¹.

However, the biggest problem of the healthcare system was and is the severe material shortages, because of the embargo and the lack of strong cooperation with other states in the field of

⁵⁰ http://www.webometrics.info/en/Latin_America/Cuba

⁵¹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cu.html>

healthcare. Although a strong progress has been made, the Cuban system has the following severe problems: the infrastructures are poor and low leveled, especially compared to the international standards, essential medical substances are frequently in shortage, the provision of equipment remains poor, doctors' salaries are low; these are some of the main reasons that some migrate with the aim of improving their lives. The great paradox observed is that although Cuba disposes well trained doctors and nurses, it does not have a well-functioning system to support their work.

As such, many specialists estimate that a more active cooperation can be achieved. Cuba could send doctors, nurses and other employees to countries that need it, while those countries can invest to the Cuban healthcare system or with other measures support it and contribute to its growth. Thus, a regional exchange of know-how, personnel, equipment and funding seems to be essential. This could contribute in the common good and the progress of many healthcare systems around the American region⁵².

For example, Cuba assisted Colombia when its system was in an emergency situation by providing doctors and medicines. At the same time, it achieved a higher cooperation with Venezuela in issues relating to healthcare and mainly doctors' and nurses training, exchange of medical products and improvement of infrastructures.

During the recent years, progress was indicated, mainly in the field of medicals' production. The Ministry of Basic Industry created a company responsible for the research, production and export of the basic medical products needed. The goals were focused on the elimination of cancer, HIV⁵³ and other infectious diseases and, according to the World Health Organization⁵⁴, it generated growth and improved the general situation. However, WHO estimates that the embargo shall be lifted and aim to stronger cooperation⁵⁵ with the international community.

Human rights protection

⁵² For this issue: Linda M. Whiteford, Lenore Manderson, Global Health Policy, Local Realities: The Fallacy of the Level Playing Field

⁵³ <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/jun/30/cuba-first-eliminate-mother-baby-hiv-transmission>

⁵⁴ <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2015/mtct-hiv-cuba/en/>

⁵⁵ <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21651216-transformation-economy-needs-happen-much-faster-be-more-libre>

The Western countries have many times accused the Cuban government for a constant violation of human rights in many and different fields. In the same time, international organizations, observers of human rights and other international organs accuse Cuba for an abundance of violation of fundamental human rights. Unfair trials tortures, arbitrary imprisonments and even extrajudicial executions are the most common and most severe accusations expressed in the international community. Moreover, according to a research report of the Human Rights Watch, a constant violation of fundamental human rights is observed, mainly concerning the rights to assembly, association, due process of law, free expression, movement and privacy⁵⁶.

The European Union has decided to put the issue into consideration and has repeatedly accused the Cuban government for those actions, requesting a higher transparency to the judicial procedures and a higher access of observers and international organs to the country for monitoring the situation. The United States used many times the example of the violation of human rights, as a reason for maintaining the embargo, until Cuba follows the principles of democracy and respect of human rights.

A significant aspect of this situation is the freedom of expression and the press freedom. Cuba disposes five television stations and all of them are controlled by the State. In general, all the media are controlled or supervised by the State, which is totally opposed to the freedom of expression and reinforces the governmental propaganda. The levels of internet freedom are almost none existing. The access to Internet is limited and controlled, the e-mails and the social media are monitored. The sale of computers and systems of data processing are regulated by the government. The State provides the citizens a free access to an online encyclopedia, similar to Wikipedia, but sponsored and supervised by the State. The Human Rights Watch and the Committee to Protect Journalists report that Cuba is the country with the second most arrests of journalists worldwide, behind China⁵⁷.

The security system of Cuba is one of the most developed in the American region. The State has invested a great amount of expenses for creating it and is accused by political rivals that this

⁵⁶ <https://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/cuba/Cuba996-05.htm>

⁵⁷ <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/517241/cubas-new-internet-service-is-also-no-bed-of-roses/> and <http://www.ibtimes.com/cuba-human-rights-violations-persist-political-dissidents-face-beatings-arbitrary-1792700> and <https://www.hrw.org/americas/cuba>

money could be invested to education, healthcare, technology and similar fields. Furthermore, according to human rights observers, the political rivals of the government are prosecuted for their beliefs and the majority of all those opposed to the country's policy is prisoned⁵⁸.

The treatment of the prisoners is one more factor for accusations. According to international organs, the majority of the prisoners have been victims of physical and/ or verbal abuse by the official organs and the legal framework does not equip them with any rights of defense. The European Union took measures and called the Cuban government to reconsider the status of political prisoners and take all the necessary measures for the amelioration of conditions of custody, imprisonment. In the same field, the EU proposes an amelioration of the legal framework and the judicial system in order to ensure the right to a fair trial. However, the Cuban government constantly denies the existence of political prisoners and supports that the right to fair trial is implemented⁵⁹.

One more crucial aspect that has been put into consideration by the international organs concerns the travel restriction and the separation of families. As it was earlier mentioned, after a law of 2013, the need for an extra visa is not anymore an issue and there had been an elimination of all those restrictions. The main problem right now is the absolute authorization of the national authorities to characterize a travel as “dangerous for national security” or invoking other reasons “of public interest” and rejecting relevant requests of citizens, which restricts the current legal framework and the international conventions. In many cases, the government has rejected to many Cubans who live abroad, the right to visit the island, invoking for once more reasons for national security and public safety. Even concerning the transportation in Cuban territory, the citizens of the island need an official approval of the State, if they want to visit Havana, the capital of the island⁶⁰.

Conclusion

⁵⁸ <http://www.bbc.com/news/10517497>

⁵⁹ <https://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/cuba/Cuba996-05.htm>

⁶⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/cuba>

As it is crystal clear, the relationship of the Organization of American States with Cuba always constituted one of the most difficult problems that OAS had to deal with. The chronic period of the frozen relationship between both sides increases the importance of the problem and the rapprochement seems complicated. However, it is believed that the differences should be resolved under the principles of democracy, rule of law, respect to the diversity and solidarity.

While the Cuban system of organization is totally different to the most systems of governance of the states of the organization, it is crucial to find the common points and also how this political diversity can contribute to the creation of a more stable and more democratic regional organization. The cold war is over and it is a common belief that the incidents that took place in that period have also to come to an end. If OAS is to achieve a realistic result, it is going to be a real revolution in the international standards. As such, one crucial point of discussion is the status of Cuba in the Organization.

The issue is based in some very important pillars that need to be put into consideration by all the member States of the Organization, as well as the Observers who can highly contribute in the resolution of the problem. The first pillar concerns the status the status of Cuba in the Organization and all the relevant diplomatic efforts to be done, the guarantees that Cuba and the other member – States of OAS are going to seek and the final agreement, after long multilateral negotiations. The second pillar concerns the cooperation between both parties, even if it decided that Cuba will not be a member state of the organization. Some very important cases, like the violation of human rights in all the different sub-topics have to be discussed and a resolution of them has to be achieved. The third pillar includes the cooperation in the field of investments and economic growth of the island in the several cases that are mentioned above. The fourth pillar, finally, constitutes need for negotiations in the field of the embargo and travel restrictions from and to Cuba.

As it is clear, there are many and different aspects of the problem, which is considered to be an issue of strict democracy between the different parties. We are talking about a conflict of two totally different political systems, capitalism and communism. After the end of the cold war, it is urgent to seek for common ground and resolve all the possible oppositions, in order to achieve an agreement that will be profitable for all the parties and will guarantee the safety and security in the

region, as well as the human rights protection. Let's hope that finally the Organization of American States will be able to deal with all these important issues.

Food for thought / Points to be addressed

- Bearing in mind the history of the relationships between both sides and the recent incidents, what should the status of Cuba in the Organization of American States?
- Acknowledging the different political systems and beliefs in the American region, what should be the approach of the Organization to communistic and socialistic systems after the cold war
- Are sanctions required for making sure that the principle “pacta sunt servanda” will be implemented?
- Would the lift or maintenance of the embargo contribute to creation of conditions of stability in the area?
- Keeping in mind the differences between the states, as well as the principles of the international law, what would be possible ways of cooperation with Cuba in the fields of:
 - ✓ Economy;
 - ✓ Tourism;
 - ✓ Technology;
 - ✓ Immigration;
 - ✓ Education;
 - ✓ Culture;
 - ✓ Healthcare?
- What was the impact of the missile crisis in the relationships of the Organization with Cuba?
- What impact will have the recent incidents in the government of Cuba in the governance of the country and its relationships with the Organization?
- What more should be done in order to ensure the protection of Human Rights in Cuba, keeping into account the recent reports of the international observers?

- Are investments necessary for the economic growth of Cuba? Should there be any restrictions?

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Useful links

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