

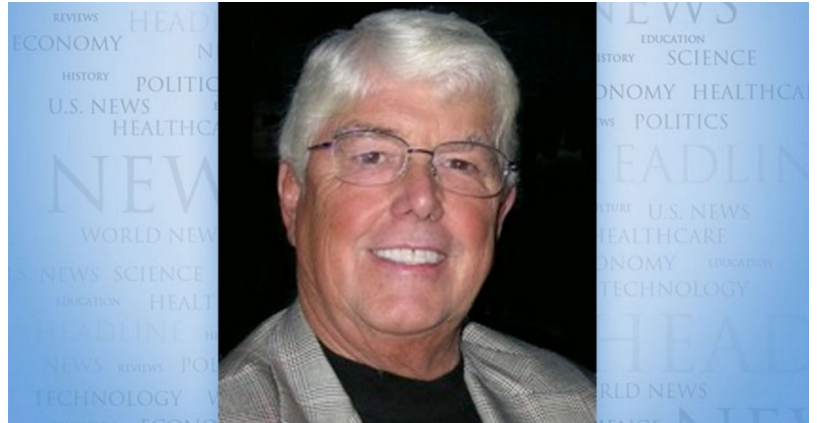


Written by [Wallis W. Wood](#) on December 24, 2014

## Obama's Cuban Deal Boosts His Legacy; Won't Help Cubans

Boy, is Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) ticked off. The son of immigrants from Cuba, he says that Barack Obama's plan to re-establish diplomatic relations with Cuba is an abject betrayal of American principles and the Cuban people.

Rubio has been all over the media recently, explaining why he is so opposed to Obama's plans. In an op-ed last Thursday in *The Wall Street Journal*, Rubio pointed out:



[I]t has been the policy and law of the U.S. to make clear that re-establishing diplomatic and economic relations with Cuba is possible — but only once the Cuban government stops jailing political opponents, protects free speech, and allows independent political parties to be formed and to participate in free and fair elections.

So what did Raul Castro, the communist dictator who succeeded his brother Fidel, concede in exchange for Obama's concessions? Why, absolutely nothing. In fact, Castro bragged in a speech last Saturday that the regime didn't have to give up a thing in the deal with Obama.

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In fact, restoring diplomatic and economic relations will actually strengthen the communist dictatorship in Cuba. With more American tourists coming to the island and with Cubans in this country allowed to send more money back to beleaguered relatives at home, the Castros will be able to get their hands on even more U.S. dollars.

According to Rubio, "The entire policy shift is based on the illusion — in fact, on the lie — that more commerce and access to money and goods will translate to political freedom for the Cuban people." Just the opposite will occur, he insists: "More economic engagement with the U.S. means that the regime's grip on power will be strengthened for decades to come."

That's a pretty hefty price to pay for the diplomatic gesture. But wait, Rubio says the actual consequences are even worse:

This precedent places a new price on the head of every American, and it gives rogue leaders around the world more clear-cut evidence of this President's naiveté and his willingness to abandon fundamental principles in a desperate attempt to burnish his legacy.

It isn't just Republicans who are upset by this policy switch. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), the senior senator from New Jersey, who is also of Cuban ancestry, had this to say:

For compromising on bedrock U.S. values, we received zero commitments from the regime to change its ways, to hold free elections, permit dissent, halt censorship and free all political prisoners. We abandoned U.S. policy, while the Castro brothers' stranglehold on power just got tighter.



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Menendez, who is the outgoing chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, then added this warning: “This swap sets an extremely dangerous precedent and invites dictatorial and rogue regimes to use Americans serving overseas as bargaining chips.”

Not everyone agrees with Rubio and Menendez, of course. Even some conservatives say it’s time to try a new approach to our relations with Cuba. The always-eloquent Peggy Noonan sounded downright optimistic in her column this past Saturday in the *Wall Street Journal*:

Nothing will make Cuba democratic overnight. But American involvement and presence — American tourists and businessmen, American diplomats, American money, American ways and technology — will likely in time have a freeing effect. With increased contact a certain amount of good feeling will build. And that could make Cuba, within a generation or less, a friend.

In the long term, I think the lady is probably right. The majority of Cubans, like the majority of people everywhere, want to be free. They want the same basic rights we take for granted. And once the Castros are gone, there’s a good chance Cuba will start making moves in that direction.

Hopefully, over time the Cuban people will gain more political and economic freedom. As they do, their economy will improve and their standard of living will go up.

But all of that is many years away. And in the meantime, I have no doubt that the immediate effect of Obama’s unilateral action will be to strengthen Cuba’s desperate and deadly regime.

Rubio has vowed he will do “everything in my power to prevent President Obama’s dangerous policies from becoming reality.” That’s a worthy goal — and not just as it involves a communist dictatorship 90 miles from our shore.

Until next time, keep some powder dry.

*Chip Wood was the first news editor of The Review of the News and also wrote for American Opinion, our two predecessor publications. He is now the geopolitical editor of Personal Liberty Digest. This article first appeared on [PersonalLiberty.com](#) and has been reprinted with permission.*



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