

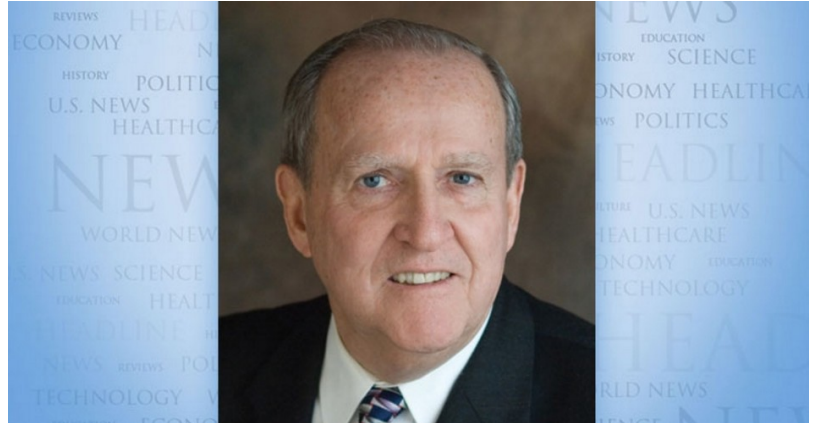


Written by [John F. McManus](#) on March 25, 2016

## Obama's Trip to Cuba Solidified Tyranny

Call it a big plus for Raúl and Fidel Castro and their oppressive rule. President Barack Obama's trip to the island nation 90 miles from Florida could be termed, "He came, he saw, and they triumphed."

The caving in started a year ago when Obama announced his intention to reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba after more than five decades of cold war animosity. The Castro brothers, known to be lifelong communists by many, assumed power on January 1, 1959, but the Eisenhower administration not only refused to admit that the two were unworthy of diplomatic recognition, but [the United States aided their takeover](#). Finally, in 1961, relations were broken. But for more than 50 years, the small nation has been a bastion of tyranny for its people and the spreader of communist subversion throughout the Western Hemisphere.



Whenever they could flee, Cubans numbering in the thousands left their home country and fled in small boats and rickety rafts to Florida. Many perished in the sea. Those left behind continued life in a totalitarian state where human rights were non-existent and fear of government was everywhere. In 1962, U.S. leaders reluctantly announced that Russian missiles, troops, and bombers had been placed in Cuba. The so-called "Cuban Missile Crisis" ended when the Soviet ruler Nikita Khrushchev agreed to take his missiles back to Russia. But the cost to America, other than being humiliated by the Castro brothers and their Soviet allies, included removal of U.S. missiles from Turkey and Italy.

Sustained monetarily by the Kremlin and by the Soviet forces stationed in the island, Cuba paid for the help it received by sending some of its own troops to maintain communist control of the African nation of Angola. The Castro-led regime demonstrated in many ways its subservience to Moscow, receiving financial and military aid along with schooling in how to maintain a brutal and repressive tyranny.

In 2015, with [no indication of relaxation](#) from the Castros, President Obama reopened the U.S. embassy in Havana and laid down a welcome mat for a Cuban emissary to Washington. The State Department then erased Cuba's name from its list of state sponsors of terrorism. President Obama met with Raúl Castro at the Summit of the Americas in Panama, the first instance of dignity bestowed on a Cuban leader in half a century. Most restrictions on travel to Cuba were cancelled. And several U.S. cabinet members traveled to meet with Cuban counterparts in Havana.

One would think that Cuban leaders would respond to all these favors showered on them by relaxing the oppression of their people. But [tyranny has actually worsened](#), with more than a thousand arrests in the single month of November 2015, according to Amnesty International (AI). Even the United Nations



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joined AI in condemning the escalating number of arrests and detentions.

So far, Obama's gestures regarding Cuba have amounted to proceeding down a one-way street. The nation is still a huge prison. But Barack Obama's disastrous legacy is filling up. He swapped five Islamic terrorists for an American military deserter. He arranged to pay millions to Iran for a nuclear arms promise no one expects Tehran to keep. He failed to build the wall at our Mexican border. And now he's the architect of bestowing favors on the murderous regime located 90 miles from Florida. If the Castro brothers could arrange it, they'd surely keep Obama in office. That is something the Cuban people don't want, and neither do many Americans.

*John F. McManus is president emeritus of [The John Birch Society](#). This column appeared originally at the [insideJBS](#) blog and is reprinted here with permission.*



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