



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on April 18, 2019

## Trump to Allow Lawsuits Against Foreign Companies Using Seized American Properties in Cuba

After seizing power in Cuba in 1959, Communist revolutionary Fidel Castro stole property from Cubans and redistributed it, on the pretext that “the revolution is the dictatorship of the exploited against the exploiters.”

Next, Castro stole foreign-owned casinos, and began nationalizing plantation lands owned by American investors. He confiscated the property of foreign landowners, and nationalized (a nice-sounding word for stealing) foreign-owned oil refineries, without compensation.



Now, President Donald Trump has decided to pressure Cuba to rectify those thefts, by allowing lawsuits against foreign companies that use those confiscated American-owned properties. Trump is apparently desirous of taking steps to bring down the socialist government of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, who is clinging to power with the help of Cuba and some other countries such as Communist China and Russia.

Johana Tablada, Cuba’s deputy director of U.S. affairs, was incensed, responding on Twitter: “Before they try to euphorically ride a wave of wickedness and lies, they should take a dose of reality. The world has told John Bolton and the U.S. government to eliminate the criminal blockade against Cuba and the Helms-Burton Act.”

That law was sponsored by Senator Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) and Representative Dan Burton (R-Ind.) in 1996. It allowed Americans the right to sue foreign companies — mostly European — who took advantage of the expropriations of the Castro communist dictatorship to operate a variety of businesses that had been taken from Americans who owned them. This includes hotels, tobacco factories, distilleries, and other properties that Cuba nationalized when Castro took over power. In addition, the law allows former Cuban nationals who escaped from Cuba after the Castro government stole their property, and are now U.S. citizens, to file suit in U.S. courts against people or entities trafficking in those properties.

Not surprisingly, many nations who have benefitted from the thefts — including Canada, France, Spain, and others — have even threatened to sue in the courts of the World Trade Organization (WTO) if the Trump administration persists with its plans. The European Union Ambassador to Cuba, Alberto Navarro, evidently thinks there is nothing wrong with what Castro did, but finds the Trump decision immoral and illegal.

In addition to enforcing the Helms-Burton Act, largely ignored by previous U.S. presidents dating back to President Bill Clinton, the Trump administration also intends to begin the enforcement of another section of the Helms-Burton Act that would deny a visa to Cubans and citizens of other countries that



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are trafficking in the confiscated property.

A good example of the thievery of the Castro dictatorship was what an American couple experienced — Roy and Lois Schechter — who owned a tobacco farm in October of 1960 about 100 miles west of Havana, where they were living. They drove to check on their property and encountered armed soldiers outside their property who were confiscating it by force. It was one of about 6,000 properties owned by U.S. citizens and companies taken by the Castro regime.

Many Americans do not know that this is what led to the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba. Many just presume the embargo was enacted because the U.S. government did not like the communist dictatorship in the island nation only 90 miles off the coast of America. That, of course, has led many Americans to wonder why the United States would trade with Communist China, but not Communist Cuba.

In the *Dallas* TV show, quite popular in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the central character of the series, Dallas oil tycoon J.R. Ewing, was castigated by other characters on the show when they discovered that he had given money to overthrow a foreign government. Oddly, these other characters questioned the morality of Ewing overthrowing a foreign government, but apparently had no problem with the fact that the foreign government in question had just stolen his oil business interests in that country without compensation.

The message for the viewers was very clear: It is perfectly acceptable for a government to take private property, especially if it is “foreign,” without compensation.

Of course, the people who had it worst under the Castro dictatorship were the Cubans themselves. Inside Cuba, the people there felt the full weight of life under a brutal communist dictatorship. Soon after coming to power, Castro announced the need for gun registration, ostensibly to fight gangsterism on the island. Nine months later, he simply rounded up the guns, asserting that there was no longer any need for individual Cuban citizens to have firearms.

Armando Lago, a Harvard-trained economist, has estimated that almost 78,000 people may have died trying to flee Cuba since Castro imposed his communist tyranny on the island. Lago, writing in *The Black Book of Communism*, was able to document nearly 100,000 killed by Castro, either by firing squad, assassination, or death in prisons, or by attempting to flee the island through the treacherous waters between Cuba and Florida.

Before Castro and his henchmen came to power, the Cuban economy was ranked the second-highest in Latin America.

Such information is, of course, of no importance to the European companies and American media and academics who continue their love affair with the late bearded dictator. Using stolen American property to make a profit? They have no moral objections to that.



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