

# BROOKINGS

## U.S. Policy Toward a Cuba in Transition

*Following is an extract from a forthcoming report by the Brookings "U.S. Policy Toward a Cuba in Transition" project. The roadmap was released on February 26 at a Brookings event in Miami, FL.*

### ROADMAP FOR CRITICAL AND CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Under the auspices of the Brookings Institution's project "U.S. Policy toward a Cuba in Transition," nineteen distinguished academics, opinion leaders, and diplomats committed themselves to seeking ways to improve our policy so that it would better serve the interests of our country, the Cuban people, and the Hemisphere. Together, over the past eighteen months, we have carried out simulations and discussions on the complex realities of the United States and Cuba. Although we all come from different backgrounds and political orientations, we arrived at the same conclusion.

The goal of U.S. policy toward Cuba should be to support the emergence of a Cuban state where the Cuban people determine the political and economic future of their country through democratic means. A great lesson of democracy is that it cannot be imposed; it must come from within. Our policy should encompass the political, economic and diplomatic tools that are needed to help the Cuban people find the political space that is essential to engage in and direct the politics of their country.

A policy of constructive and critical engagement -- while having as a goal evolution to a peaceful and democratic Cuba -- does not promise an overnight metamorphosis. It is a process, a pathway with various detours and obstacles that over time arrives at its destination. It will take Cuban cooperation to achieve a real improvement in relations, but we should not publicly link the initiatives to specific actions of the Cuban government. Doing so would give the Cuban hierarchy a veto over our policy. Rather, the United States should act on its assessment of internal developments on the island and how best to advance a democratic Cuba.

The roadmap we present here is made up of a basket of short, medium and long-term initiatives. The President can pick and choose the initiatives within each basket. The conduct and timing of foreign policy is up to the President. Although we prefer that all the initiatives in the short term basket be carried out in order to create a new dynamic in the relationship, we assume that prior to moving on to the medium and long-term baskets, the President and his advisers will assess the impact within the United States, Cuba, and the international community.

We recommend the following roadmap of initiatives to frame a new U.S. policy of constructive and critical engagement:

### **Short-Term Initiatives**

- Remove all restrictions on family and humanitarian travel to Cuba.
- Permit and expand specific licenses for people-to-people travel for educational, cultural and humanitarian purposes -- all travel permitted under law.
- Reinstate remittances for individuals and independent civil society in Cuba.
- Allow all Cubans who meet requirements of U.S. immigration law to travel to the United States.
- Promote normal diplomatic activities on a reciprocal basis, including in-country travel, official meetings, exchange of attaches, and sponsorship of cultural and educational exchanges.
- Open a dialogue between the United States and Cuba, particularly on issues of mutual concern, including migration, counter-narcotics, environment, health, and security.
- Develop agreements and assistance with the GOC for disaster relief and environmental stewardship.
- Conduct a review of the purpose, content and implementation capacity of the new contracts awarded to private companies and non-governmental organizations during the last months of the Bush Administration.
- Establish an assistance program for civil society and license the transfer of funds for activities that focus on human rights, rule of law, micro-enterprise, and professional training.
- Provide licensing for providers of U.S. government and private assistance in order to advance the goals of U.S. policy identified in this report.
- Modify current licensing regulations so that tradable medicines developed in Cuba are only subject to FDA approval without separate OFAC authorization.
- Permit the free exchange of ideas, including the creation of art, cinema, and music by amending OFAC regulations to allow the “Free Trade in Ideas Act” (“the Berman Amendment”) to reflect its original intention of permitting the creation and free flow of informational materials and ideas.
- Modify regulations to permit the donation and sale of communications equipment under a general license, and license the provision of telecommunications services as provided in the Cuban Democracy Act.
- License Cuban state and non-state entities to access satellite and broadband communications networks.
- Do not object to an OAS dialogue with Cuba on the status of its membership. Permit Cuba to participate in OAS specialized and technical agencies and in knowledge-building seminars at multilateral institutions.
- Review the evidence to determine if Cuba should continue to be listed as a state sponsor of terrorism.

### **Medium-Term Initiatives**

- Encourage and fund a wide variety of educational exchanges and scholarships that promote understanding and provide training in diverse fields such as arts, economics, and journalism.
- Permit commercial credit terms without government guarantees for the sale of communications equipment.
- Allow licenses for U.S. companies to participate in the development of Cuban offshore oil, gas and renewable energy resources.
- Encourage and participate in multilateral organizations that further human rights and the growth of civil society in Cuba.
- Do not object to Cuba's reinstatement in the Organization of American States if the General Assembly consents.
- Seek to recover Executive Authority to permit Cuba's participation in international financial institutions.
- Work with Congress to restore Executive Branch authority over travel to Cuba.
- Upgrade United States diplomatic relations.
- Open bilateral discussions for the resolution of the claims of United States citizens relating to expropriated property.
- Open bilateral discussions for a framework to satisfy mutual concerns over Guantanamo Bay Naval Base.

### **Long-Term Initiatives**

- Open reciprocal diplomatic and consular offices in major cities in the United States and Cuba.
- Provide general licenses for the exportation of additional categories of goods and services such as products that enhance the environment, conserve energy, and provide improved quality of life.
- Permit importation of additional categories of Cuban goods.
- Support Cuban efforts to promote the reconciliation of the Cuban nation.
- Reach mutually acceptable settlement on claims for expropriated property.
- Reach mutually acceptable solution for restoring Cuban sovereignty over the territory of Guantanamo Bay.
- Achieve full diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba.

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