

Center for Democracy  
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AMERICAS



## 9 WAYS FOR US TO TALK TO CUBA AND FOR CUBA TO TALK TO US

How can we break the fifty year old diplomatic deadlock between the United States and Cuba?

U.S. policy—imposing economic sanctions to provoke the overthrow of Cuba’s government – has never worked and never will. The two nations simply won’t agree on each other’s most basic demands. Cuba asks for an unconditional end to the U.S. embargo; the U.S. demands that Cuba unilaterally dismantle its political system. With both sides so hopelessly divided, how can we even begin a conversation to end this stalemate?

There are numerous topics of global and mutual interest to talk about. The Center for Democracy in the Americas has identified nine critical areas where Washington and Havana can communicate, work together and build relationships of confidence and trust.

CDA recruited a team of scholars and experts (see brief bios below) to offer their ideas for cooperation in military affairs, migration, energy, trade, academic exchange and other fields which could then produce the progress that has eluded our diplomats for five decades. In their essays, the experts address:

**Military cooperation:** Shared techniques and training exercises on search and rescue and drug interdiction between the Cuban military and the U.S. Defense Department could lead to a dialogue involving Cuba in international humanitarian programs or defense of the Panama Canal.

**Security cooperation:** By working together to stop drug smuggling, criminal financial activities, and other law enforcement matters, and jointly managing environmental and major security crises, the governments could create functional relationships on which to build trust.

**Migration cooperation:** Cooperation on migration has historically followed migration crises rather than preceding them. Here is a new migration agenda that starts with specific policy reforms, such as more family visits and joint anti-smuggling operations, but leads to a new “normal” regime that promotes economic cooperation, educational partnerships, and exchanges.

**Medical cooperation:** U.S. sanctions against Cuba's health care system have had the paradoxical effect of fostering breakthroughs in Cuban research on cancer drugs and immunizations that are unavailable to U.S. citizens. Both countries could benefit from developments in health education and research if medical sanctions were repealed.

**Commercial cooperation:** Opportunities for trade and commerce with Cuba would help U.S. firms compete against foreign firms, which operate in Cuba without restrictions, while improving Cuban living standards and working conditions.

**Energy cooperation:** The expertise of the U.S. energy industry could speed Cuba's development of abundant untapped oil resources, increase Cuba's ability to produce ethanol, boost energy supplies to the U.S., and help Cuba's economy.

**Hurricane cooperation:** Cuba's peerless civil defense program and mass mobilization in natural disasters dramatically reduces the number of casualties from serious tropical storms. With storm activity in the Caribbean rising, shared information to improve hurricane forecasting and response would benefit both countries.

**Academic cooperation:** Broad academic cooperation between the U.S. and Cuba in public health, biotechnology, arts education and environmental issues is impermissible under current sanctions. A democratic society cherishes the free flow and exchange of ideas; the U.S. should act in accordance with its values and resume academic exchange.

**The role of Cuban-Americans:** The passage of time and a changing political climate in Florida has released the grip of hardliners in the Cuban-American community on U.S.-Cuba policy. This means that travel restrictions on Cuban Americans can be removed, programs like Radio and TV Marti can be reexamined or defunded, and the belligerent tone of our diplomacy can be replaced. The moderate Cuban-American community can now become a vital element of an improved, more creative policy that actually helps to facilitate a peaceful economic and political opening on the island.

### Contributors

**Preface:** Sarah Stephens, executive director of the Center for Democracy in the Americas, has visited Cuba over thirty times, and led official delegations to the island for 33 Members of the U.S. House and Senate, and 30 Congressional staff.

**Introduction:** Alan Webber is the former managing editor and editorial director of the Harvard Business Review, co-founding editor of Fast Company magazine, and writer and contributor to a number of newspapers and magazines in the United States.

**Military cooperation:** General James T. Hill, a U.S. Army Retired Four Star, was the Combatant Commander of U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), commanding all U.S. military operations and relationships in the Caribbean, Central and South America.

**Security cooperation:** Randy Beardsworth, a former Assistant Secretary for Strategic Plans at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, also served in the U.S. Coast Guard, holding command of four ships and serving as Chief of Law Enforcement in Miami. He is now a Principal with Catalyst Partners.

**Migration cooperation:** Dr. Robert L. Bach is an internationally recognized expert on immigration and border and transportation security issues, who has served with the U.S. Department of Justice as Executive Associate Commissioner for Policy, Strategic Planning and Programs for the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

**Medical cooperation:** Dr. Peter G. Bourne, a Special Assistant for Health Issues in the Carter White House, is chairman of the board of Medical Education Cooperation with Cuba (MEDICC), and a biographer of Fidel Castro.

**Commercial cooperation:** Jake Colvin is Vice President for Global Trade Issues at the National Foreign Trade Council and directs the Cuba Initiative of USA\*Engage, a business coalition that promotes U.S. diplomacy, trade and humanitarian aid abroad.

**Energy cooperation:** Amy Myers Jaffe is a research scholar at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, whose focus is on oil geopolitics and strategic energy policy, and Dr. Ronald Soligo is a professor of economics at Rice University and a Rice Scholar at the Baker Institute, whose research focuses on economic growth and development and energy economics.

**Hurricane cooperation:** Dr. Ivor van Heerden, author of *The Storm - What Went Wrong and Why during Hurricane Katrina: the Inside Story from One Louisiana Scientist* (2006), is deputy director of the Louisiana State University Hurricane Center.

**Academic cooperation:** Dr. Franklin W. Knight is the Leonard and Helen R. Stulman Professor of History at the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. He served as President of the Latin American Studies Association from October 1998 to May 2000.

**The role of Cuban-Americans:** Dr. Alberto R. Coll, Professor of International Law at DePaul University College of Law in Chicago, served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense in the administration of President George H. W. Bush.

**Afterword:** Dr. Louis A. Pérez, Jr. is the J. Carlyle Sitterson Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A renowned historian, his many books include *Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos* (2008).

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9 WAYS FOR US TO TALK TO CUBA AND FOR CUBA TO TALK TO US is a report by The Center for Democracy in the Americas (CDA), an independent, non-governmental organization. Learn more about CDA: [www.democracyinamericas.org](http://www.democracyinamericas.org).

## **PRAISE FOR THE “9 WAYS”**

“Cuba ceased being a security threat to the United States over a decade ago. The rest of the world has changed during that decade. Yet, U.S. policymakers remain wedded to a series of dated policies that cry out for a fresh approach. This report offers concrete ideas which could yield benefits to both sides of the Florida Straits and help bring a close to sixty years of distrust and animosity.”

***John J. “Jack” Sheehan is a retired United States Marine Corps general. He was Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic for NATO and Commander-in-Chief for the U.S. Atlantic Command (1994-1997)***

“As a rafter who left Cuba many years ago, as a citizen soldier who fought in Iraq, as a Cuban-American who loves our country, I urge President Obama to read this report and follow its advice. If he would close Guantanamo and open up Cuba to all Americans, he can change history and help our country live up to its highest ideals.”

***Sgt. Carlos Lazo***  
***Bronze Star winner, Operation Iraqi Freedom***

“This 9 Ways report is a road map for not just ending the embargo but also for engaging the Cuban people, sending a hopeful signal to Latin America, and showing the world that this White House is under new management. This is exactly the kind of change we elected Barack Obama to make.”

***Donna Brazile***  
***Political strategist, adjunct professor, author, and syndicated columnist***

“Our current policy toward Cuba is simply wrong and has led to little else except restrictions on the freedoms of U.S. citizens. Instead, a more effective approach would be to allow contact with American society and our values, as this report effectively argues.”

***Congressman Jeff Flake (R-AZ)***  
***Principal sponsor of legislation to remove restrictions on travel to Cuba***

“If one purpose of American foreign policy is to urge all countries to respect the rule of law, why does the U.S. embargo against Cuba stop my law school from talking to the law faculty at the University of Havana about our legal systems? It makes no sense. That’s why recommendations like restarting academic exchanges, as this report suggests, offer the right way forward to reform and rationalize U.S. policy toward Cuba.”

***Hon. Kurt L. Schmoke***  
***Dean, Howard University School of Law; former Mayor of Baltimore***

“When I visited Cuba as a Member of Congress, it was obvious to me that U.S. policy was a failure that was contributing to human suffering, dividing families and denying opportunities for U.S. and Cuban citizens. The core point of ‘Nine Ways’ is exactly right: if we sell Cuba more food, exchange more ideas, and encourage travel in both directions, we’ll break this deadlock that has outlived the Cold War and ten American presidents, and put U.S.-Cuba relations on a more positive and productive course.”

***Hon. Cal Dooley***  
***President & CEO, American Chemistry Council***