

# EU and US Cuba Policy

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# Difference in goals? United States

**Transition but Regime change  
(i.e. Cambio Sí, Castro No!)**

**Helms–Burton Law 1996:**

“... a transition government in Cuba is a government that:  
...(3) has dissolved the present Department of State Security in the Cuban Ministry of the Interior, including the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and the Rapid Response Brigades;  
and....  
....(7) does not include Fidel Castro or Raul Castro...”

# Difference in Goals? EU

Transition but regime reform  
(i.e. Cambio Sí, Castro Quizás)

Common Position 1996:

“The objective of the European Union in its relations with Cuba is to encourage a process of transition to pluralist democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as a sustainable recovery and improvement in the living standards of the Cuban people. A transition would most likely be peaceful if the present regime were itself to initiate or permit such a process...”

# Different means? US

**Helms Burton =international sanctions/isolation**

“SEC. 101....the President should advocate, and should instruct the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations to propose and seek within the Security Council, a mandatory international embargo against the totalitarian Cuban Government...”

“SEC. 102. ...The Congress hereby reaffirms section 1704(a) of the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, which states that the President should encourage foreign countries to restrict trade and credit relations with Cuba...”

# Different means? EU

## Common Position = engagement

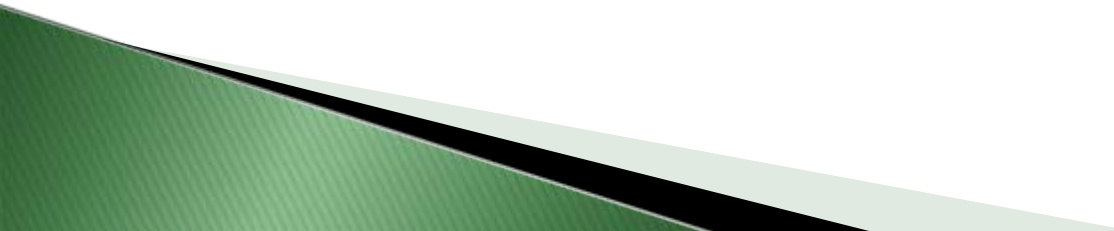
“...It is not European Union policy to try to bring about change by coercive measures with the effect of increasing the economic hardship of the Cuban people...”

“...will remain willing, through the Member States, also to carry out focused economic cooperation.....”

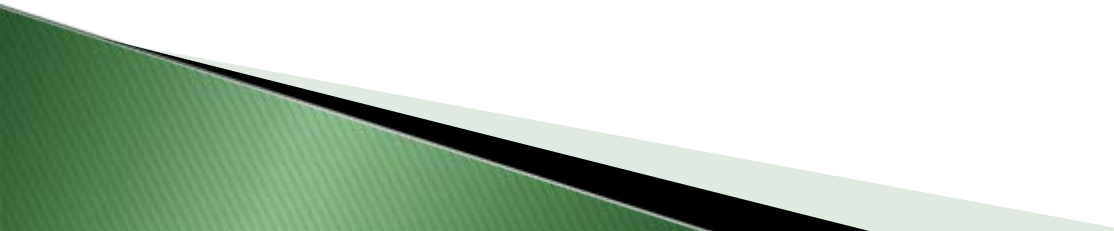
“...As the Cuban authorities make progress towards democracy, the European Union will lend its support to that process and examine the appropriate use of the means at its disposal for that purpose, including:

- the intensification of a constructive, result-oriented political dialogue between the European Union and Cuba,
- the intensification of cooperation and, in particular, economic cooperation...”

# Historic differences

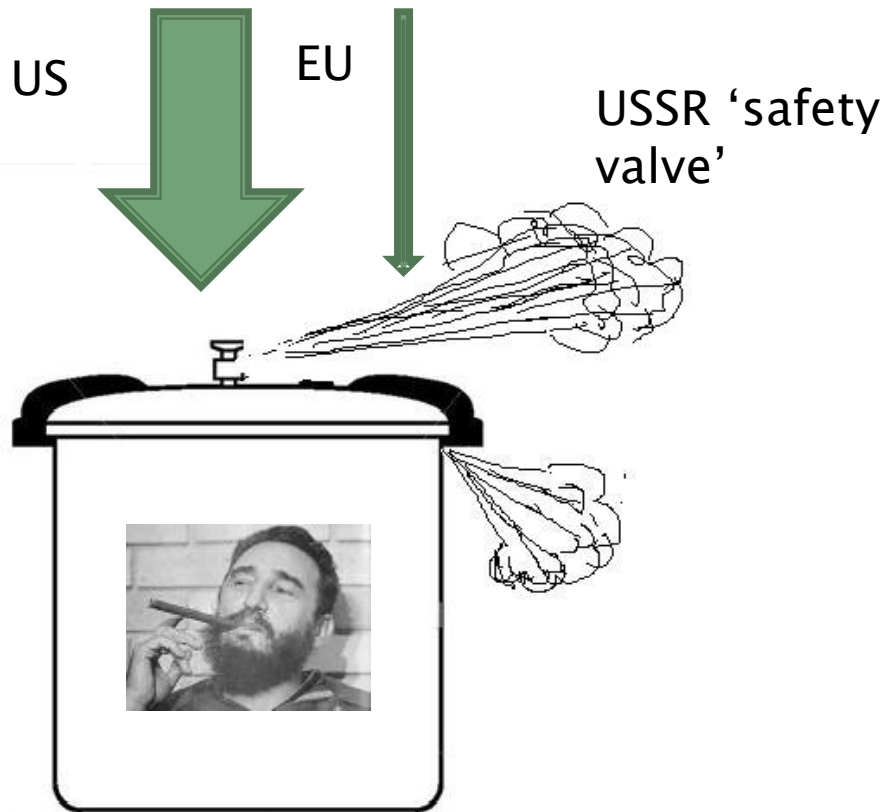
- ▶ Embargoes increase tendencies to self-sufficiency/reliance
  - ▶ Embargo would drive Castro into the arms of the Soviets
  - ▶ Castro 'not Communist' and could be steered away from the Soviets
  - ▶ Same attitude towards Cuba as towards Soviet Union
  - ▶ Cuba 'not a threat' to Western security
  - ▶ Commitment to maintaining free commerce
  - ▶ US practising double standards
  - ▶ Misgivings about embargoes in general
  - ▶ Cuba was an 'American' problem
  - ▶ Powerful Left/social democratic/mixed economies/ welfare states
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# European interests

- ▶ Caribbean dependencies
  - ▶ Drugs issues
  - ▶ Migration issues
  - ▶ Personal investments
  - ▶ Cuban claims settled
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# The leaking pressure cooker

1962-89



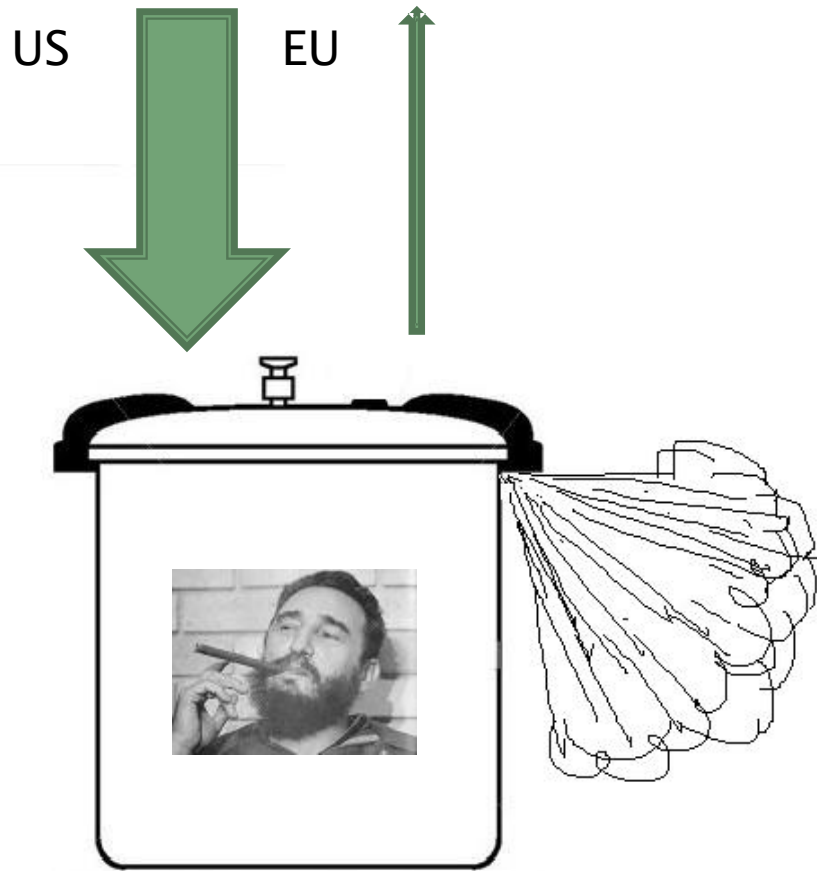
US imposes embargo  
Freezes Cuba out of  
OAS.

..but Europeans (and  
Canadians) continue to  
trade. Pot leaks

Soviets assistance  
provides safety valve  
means embargo policy  
only serves to isolate  
not asphyxiate



# 1990-96



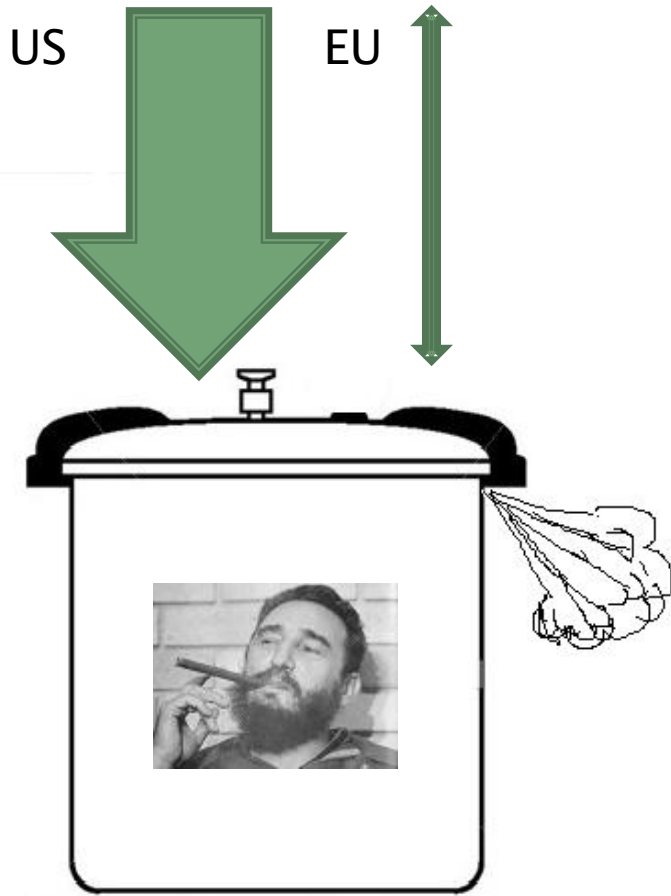
No more Soviet Safety valve.

US passes CDA to increase pressure.

...but Europe does the opposite and takes pressure off.

Provides sufficient breathing space to prevent collapse.

# 1996-99

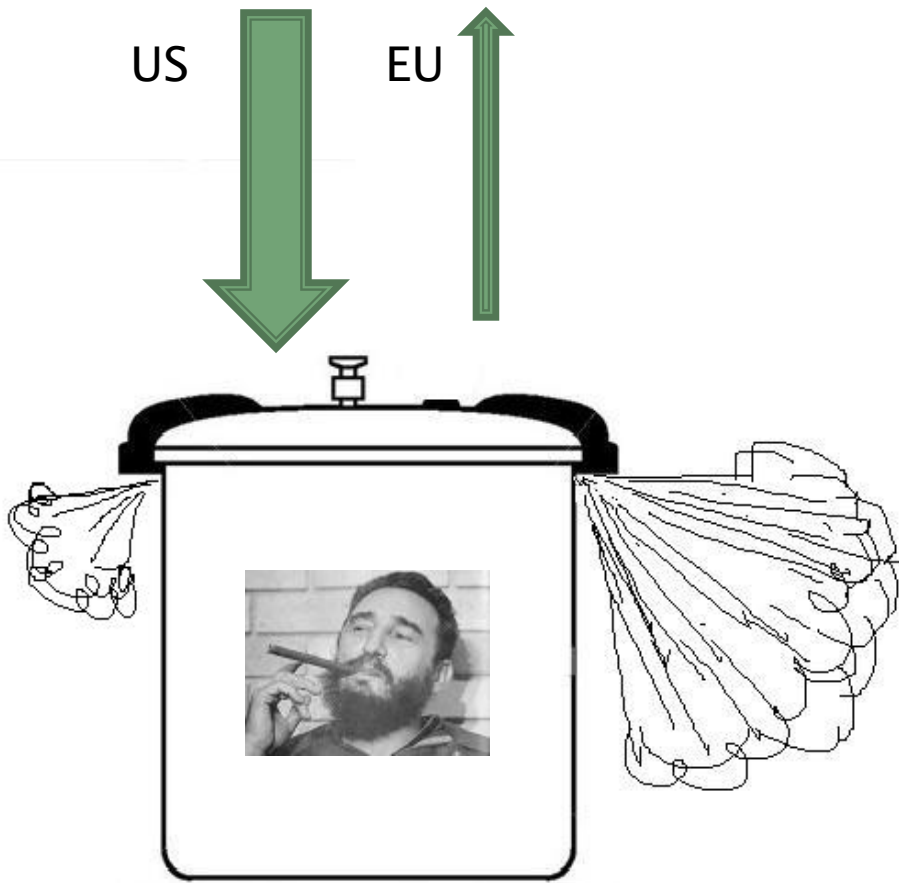


US passes Helms Burton,  
this has effect of  
reducing EU commitment

.....but extra territoriality  
issue makes EU continue  
to invest and refuse to  
acquiesce.

The pot remains leaky.  
The regime survives

# 2000-2003

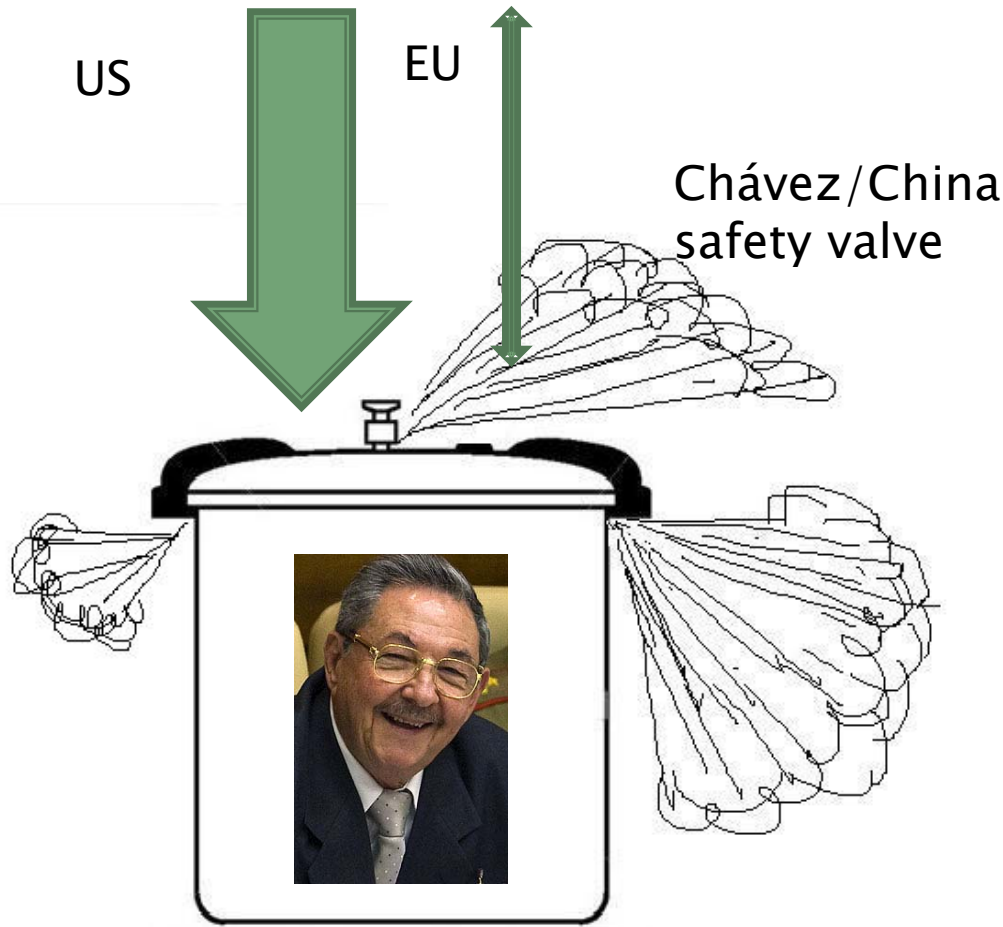


Clinton makes changes to regulations and eases pressure. Bush signs the food exception bill.

The pot now starts to leak on the US side.

EU continues to trade and invest.

# 2003-2008



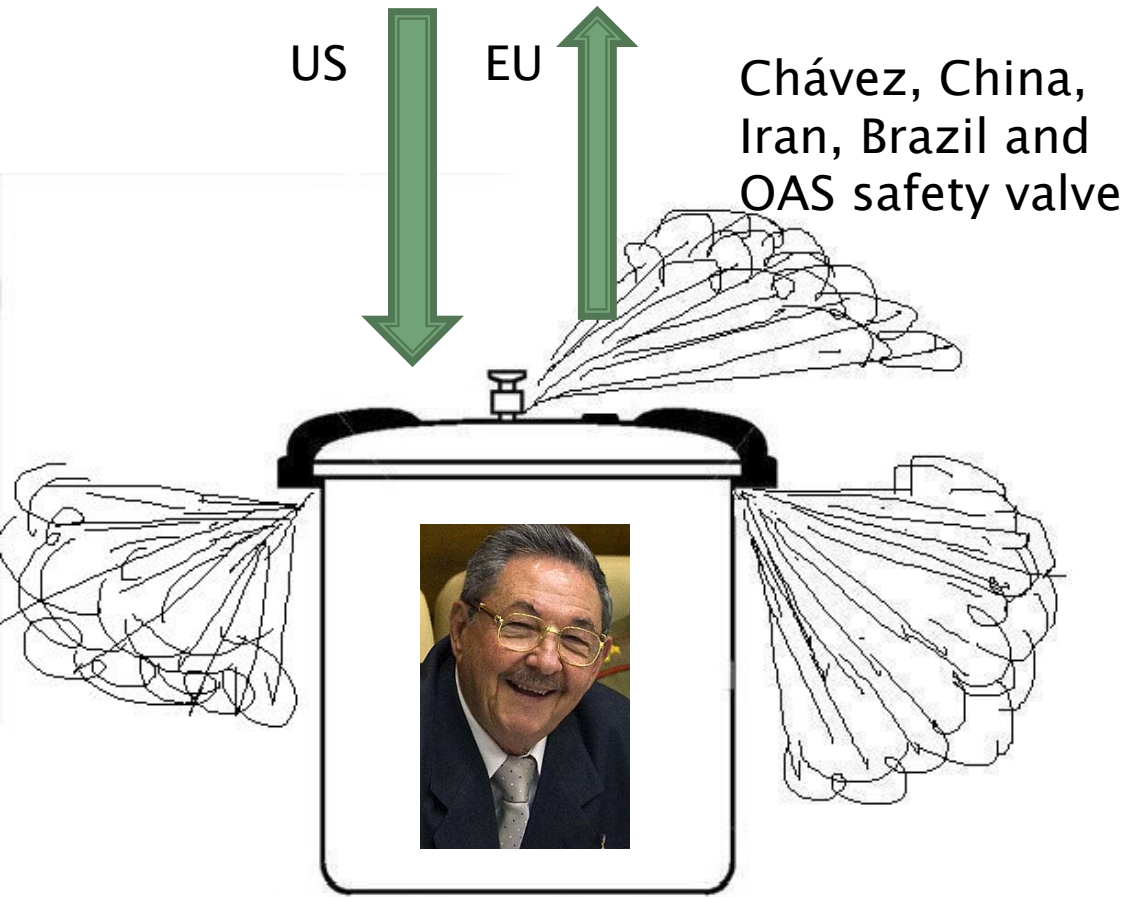
US introduces new sanctions but continues to sell food.

Europe imposes some diplomatic pressure but continues to trade.

Venezuela and China throw Cuba a lifeline.

The pressure is off!

# 2008–present



Obama eases the pressure.

Spain eases the pressure.

Iran and Brazil extend help. Venezuela and China continue to provide support.

OAS, Rio Group ends Cuba's political isolation

# Conclusions

- ▶ The embargo is becoming less and less effective.
- ▶ Helms–Burton policy goal of regime overthrow is less and less achievable.
- ▶ European CP approach is also failing. Support for it is waning.
- ▶ US and EU (plus Canada) should seek to converge their policies.
- ▶ Unless something happens... (e.g. a Venezuela–Colombia war?)... a further easing of pressure on the regime is now the only policy that can influence it to reform.