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### plan

#### The United States federal government should substantially ease its impediments to oil technology sharing toward Cuba.

### Spills

#### Advantage 1 is spills.

#### Drilling is inevitable in Cuba --- multiple reasons:

#### Russia is going to drill

**Vostok 4/9**

(“US concerned about intensification of Russian oil activities near Cuban coast” Dmitry Vostok, The Voice of Russia, 9 April 2014, http://voiceofrussia.com/2014\_04\_09/US-concerned-about-intensification-of-Russian-oil-activities-near-Cuban-coast-9748/)

The US is fearing Russian oil companies near the Cuban coast. According to the Houston Chronicle, the West sanctions against Russia may prompt Russia to accelerate ongoing oil and gas exploration in Cuban waters not far from Florida. The current tension in Russia-US and US-Cuban relations will also complicate a timely response to a possible environmental disaster. The Voice of Russia talked to Malcolm Graham-Wood, Founding Partner at Hydrocarbon Capital Limited. According to the Houston Chronicle, drilling in Cuban waters may pose risk for the environmental safety of the American coastline from Texas to the Florida Keys. In 2010, the Deepwater Horizon disaster killed 11 workers and caused catastrophic environmental damage in the Gulf of Mexico. BP that owned Deepwater Horizon oil rig paid $40 billion in fines and compensations. When earlier this month, the US Environmental Protection Agency approved the resumption of BP’s activities in the area, this already raised public concerns. But while BP remains under strict supervision of the US, Russian oil companies are drilling offshore in Cuban waters with no US oversight. In case of an oil spill, Cuba has only 5% of technical resources needed to respond to the disaster. Considering the US-Cuba trade embargo it will be impossible for the US to supply the needed resources in time to avert disaster. In fast-moving Cuban waters it will take the spilled oil only 10 days to reach the American coast. Russia and the giant oil companies it controls are key players in offshore exploratory drilling in Cuban waters. In particular, Russia is carrying out enhanced oil recovery operations at the at the Cuban oil field of Boca de Jaruco as part of the 25 year agreement with Cuba. Also last year, Russia’s Rosneft company signed a memo on cooperation with Cuba’s Cupet company.

#### Even if Russia doesn’t come back – several other companies will drill.

**Reuters ’13** (Jeff Franks, “Cuban oil hopes sputter as Russians give up for now on well,” 5/29/13, http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/29/cuba-oil-idUSL2N0EA00W20130529)//CT

Repsol, which also drilled an unsuccessful well in deep water near Havana in 2004, pulled out of Cuba, but some of the other oil partners are still around.

Petronas is continuing to conduct seismic studies in the four blocks it leases with Russian partner Gazprom and is considering another well, as is Venezuela's PDVSA, which has four blocks at Cuba's western tip, industry and diplomatic sources said.

A unit of India's Oil and Natural Gas Corp, which had a share of the Repsol wells, has two offshore blocks of its own and has been looking for a partner to drill a well.

#### Additionally, there is accessible Cuban offshore oil --- multiple surveys prove

**Piñón and Benjamin-Alvarado, 10** – Associate Director of UT at Austin Jackson School of Geoscience’s Center for International Energy and Environmental Policy (CIEEP) AND Ph. D of Political Science, University of Nebraska (Jorge R. & Jonathan, Cuba's Energy Future Strategic Approaches to Cooperation, p. 31)

Cuba will probably have little choice but to develop an energy policy that relies heavily on clean-burning natural gas as its fuel of choice for electrical power generation. Drivers of this necessity are the inevitable rationalization of the oil-refining industry in Cuba (because of its outdated technology, which is unable to process heavy crude oil), and the country’s environmentally sensitive tourist industry. Cuba’s future natural gas needs could be filled by importing liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Trinidad and Tobago, which Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic are currently doing, or by future Venezuelan production. A regasification facility to receive Venezuelan sourced liquid natural gas is currently being planned for the southern-coast port city of Cienfuegos by Venezuela’s PDVSA and Cupet. Two one-millionton regasification trains are planned for 2012, at a cost of over $400 million. The natural gas is destined as fuel for that city’s thermoelectric power plant, local industry, and future petrochemical plants. 20 Cuba’s Deep Water: The Exclusive Economic Zone The future of Cuba’s oil and gas exploration and production sector could very well be in the deep offshore Gulf of Mexico waters along the western approaches to the Florida Strait and the eastern extension of Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula. Cuba’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the Gulf of Mexico is a 46,000-square-mile area that Cupet has divided into fifty-nine exploration blocks of approximately 772 square miles each. The average ocean depth is 6,500 feet, but some blocks are as deep as 13,000 feet. 21 Geography of Oil in the Gulf of Mexico The EEZ lies between Mexico, Cuba, and the United States, within demarcation boundaries agreed to in 1977. The northernmost of the blocks lies south of the Dry Tortugas, off Florida’s southwest coast. The northwesternmost blocks are situated next to the Gulf of Mexico’s eastern gap, a sizable portion of the eastern Gulf, west of the Florida EEZ and north of the Cuban EEZ, for which economic exclusivity rights have not been negotiated, and 100 kilometers from the southernmost limit of acreage, offered as lease 181 by the U.S. Mineral Management Services, on the outer continental shelf off Florida’s west coast. Although the maritime boundary agreement between Cuba and the United States has been submitted to the U.S. Senate, for political reasons— not because of any objection in the boundary itself— it has not been ratified by that body. Cuba and the United States have since agreed to provisional application of the agreement, pending ratification, by exchanging agreement notes every two years that extend the provisional application of the agreement. The demarcation of the Gulf of Mexico’s eastern gap itself, which will include Cuba, Mexico, and the United States, is still open for negotiation, and awaits improvements in the diplomatic relations between Washington and Havana. A February 2005 U.S. Geological Survey report, “Assessment of Undiscovered Oil and Gas Resources of the North Cuba Basin 2004,” estimates a mean of 4.6 billion barrels of undiscovered oil and a mean of 9.8 trillion cubic feet of undiscovered natural gas along Cuba’s North Belt Thrust. The high-end potential of the North Cuba Basin could be 9.3 billion barrels of undiscovered oil and of 21.8 trillion cubic feet of undiscovered natural gas, according to the report. 23 If these undiscovered reserves are certified as recoverable, they will rank Cuba among major Latin American oil producers and exporters such as Colombia and Ecuador. Industry experts have categorized Cuba’s EEZ as high risk from the technical geosciences standpoint— there might not be any oil or gas there— but some reports indicate that some hydrocarbon potential might exist. Meanwhile, Cuban government sources estimate the potential of the whole EEZ at an optimistic 20 billion barrels of undiscovered reserves. 24 This figure includes the 5 billion barrels that the U.S. Geological Survey estimates in the Cuba North Belt Thrust, and an additional 15 billion barrels of undiscovered reserves in the North Cuba Foreland Basin, the Florida and Campeche escarpments, on the shelf margin of the Florida Platform, and in the Gulf of Mexico Sigsbee Basin. Very little seismic work and exploratory drilling have been done outside of North Cuba’s Fold and Thrust Belt, the North Cuba Foreland Basin, and the U.S. Geological Survey’s Florida Platform Margin Carbonate assessments units (AUs). 25 This can be interpreted as meaning that there is a high likelihood of oil and gas in Cuba’s offshore reserves. Moreover, a basic analysis of the geological formations by Cuban analysts suggest that the potential for additional reserves is likely. In most experts’ opinion, a lot of exploratory work has yet to be done to substantiate the high-end estimates put forth by Cuban geologists, regardless of the technical soundness of the data presented in support of their estimate.

#### Likelihood of a devastating oil spill is high in the status quo -

#### First, prevention severely weakened because companies operating in Cuba cannot use the US capping equipment, which is key to prevent a spill -- US tech is the ONLY way to safely drill --- all countries rely on the tech and will default to second-tier parts absent the plan.

**Davenport 11** (Coral, National Journal, “Drill, Bebe, Drill,” 7/28, <http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/will-sloppy-drilling-off-the-coast-of-cuba-threaten-florida-gulf-beaches--20110728)//HA>

Cuba is about to drill for offshore oil with “second-tier parts” because of the trade embargo. That’s not good news for U.S. beaches. Sometime over the next three months, if all goes according to plan, Cuban workers on a Chinese-built, Spanish-owned rig will start drilling for oil in the mile-deep waters just off the north coast of Cuba, 70 miles from the Florida Keys. If the drill hits a major oil deposit—and all geologic signs indicate it will—the discovery will unleash a cascade of developments with profound political, environmental, and economic consequences. From National Journal: Activists Call for a Fair Debt Deal DeMint Wants to Change Business as Usual Debt Showdown is Damaging the Economy GRAPHIC: GOPers on Hot-Button Issues The Cuban government has long wanted to extract the rich reserves of oil and natural gas believed to lie off its shores. Estimates for oil range from 5 billion to 20 billion barrels, while the estimate for natural gas is 8.6 billion cubic feet. Unlocking that oil could jump-start a nascent Cuban offshore-oil industry—and free the island nation from its energy and political dependence on Venezuela, from which it imports 60 percent of its oil today. A newfound independence from its socialist neighbor and its mercurial president, Hugo Chavez—coming at a time when the Cuban leadership is facing change with the eventual demise of Fidel Castro—is an appealing prospect to the United States. But the potential of a closer relationship with Cuba comes with a terrifying specter: An oil blowout in Cuban waters could reprise the nightmare that was last year’s Gulf of Mexico oil spill, and send crude spewing to the beaches of Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. And the likelihood for such a disaster is very real, say oil industry experts, thanks in part to Washington’s 49-year-old embargo on Cuba. Because of the embargo, U.S. companies cannot drill in Cuba, supply equipment to Cuba, have any say over safety regulations in Cuba, or even take part in helping control a blowout and spill in Cuba. As the island prepares to begin offshore drilling, it has signed contracts with oil companies from Brazil, India, Italy, Russia, and Spain—and is in talks to lease major portions of its coastal water to Chinese companies (continuing China’s pattern of pursuing oil exploration in countries where U.S. drillers aren’t welcome). Under the embargo’s terms, the oil drilling and safety equipment used by those companies must be less than 10 percent U.S.-made. But all of the most technologically advanced equipment for drilling and preventing or stopping oil spills is made in the United States or by U.S. companies. “There are not international suppliers of this level of equipment. They will have to buy copycat or second-tier parts,” Lee Hunter, president of the Houston-based International Association of Drilling Contractors, told National Journal. Hunter and other experts say that, to date, it appears that the Cuban government, fearful of the devastation an oil spill could wreak on its economy, wants to use the lessons learned from the BP oil disaster to develop a rigorous safety and oversight program. But it will be nearly impossible for drillers in Cuba’s waters to legally use the safest equipment. “The Cubans want to use good technology; they want to drill safely,” Hunter said. “But … their ability to drill safely is extremely compromised.” Also deeply compromised is their ability to respond to a disaster should it occur. Even if oil from a Cuban spill laps at Florida’s shores, the U.S. agencies and oil companies that have all-too-hard-won expertise in wrestling a spill—the Coast Guard, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Interior Department—would be banned from crossing into Cuban waters to help. And experts say that the Cuban oil industry and government don’t yet have a fraction of the resources and expertise they would need to deal with such an event on their own.

#### Second, current impediments to US-Cuban oil cooperation destroy spill response – two reasons:

#### a) Technology - Absent changes in US policy the Coast Guard and US Companies can’t use expertise and specially designed equipment --- existing licenses don’t solve

(booms, skimming equipment and vessels, and dispersants), well-capping stacks and submersibles

**Bert and Clayton** ’12 – Captain of the US Coast Guard/military fellow (U.S. Coast Guard) at the Council on Foreign Relations and a fellow for energy and national security at the Council on Foreign Relations (Captain Melissa and Blake, “Addressing the Risk of a Cuban Oil Spill,” Policy Innovation Memo 15, *Council on Foreign Relations*, http://www.cfr.org/cuba/addressing-risk-cuban-oil-spill/p27515)//CT

An oil well blowout in Cuban waters would almost certainly require a U.S. response. Without changes in current U.S. law, however, that response would undoubtedly come far more slowly than is desirable. The Coast Guard would be barred from deploying highly experienced manpower, specially designed booms, skimming equipment and vessels, and dispersants. U.S. offshore gas and oil companies would also be barred from using well-capping stacks, remotely operated submersibles, and other vital technologies. Although a handful of U.S. spill responders hold licenses to work with Repsol, their licenses do not extend to well capping or relief drilling. The result of a slow response to a Cuban oil spill would be greater, perhaps catastrophic, economic and environmental damage to Florida and the Southeast.

#### b) Transparency - Even if limited licenses already granted, lack of transparency thwarts fast response.

**Peterson, Whittle, and Rader, ’12** – Assoc. at California Environmental Associates, Environmental Defense Fund's Cuba program director, and (Emily A., Daniel J., and Douglas N., “Bridging the Gulf Finding Common Ground on Environmental and Safety Preparedness for Offshore Oil and Gas in Cuba,” Environmental Defense Fund, http://www.macfound.org/media/article\_pdfs/Bridging\_the\_Gulf.pdf)//HA/CT

Under current U.S. law, American companies must obtain licenses and approvals from the U.S. Treasury Department and the U.S. Commerce Department in order to provide assistance in Cuba with equipment or personnel during a spill in Cuban waters. How many companies are licensed is not a public record, but many observers believe that licensed capacity is not yet sufficient to independently respond to a major spill in Cuban waters. In the case of the Deepwater Horizon spill, for instance, 52 contractors were involved in incident response and 7,278 contract personnel provided services at the peak of the response effort. 56 In a Senate testimony in October 2011, Paul Schuler, president of Clean Caribbean and Americas—which is one of the contractors authorized by the Department of Treasury to supply pre-approved equipment for a spill in Cuba—stated that “loosening up” the licensing process could make more U.S. companies and resources available if needed for a significant spill in Cuba. 57 Without immediate access to a full range of U.S. resources and technology, international oil companies operating in Cuba might have to rely on supplies and expertise from Europe or Asia, which could cost precious time during an event in which time is of paramount urgency. 58 Thus, there is a real need to guarantee that sufficient resources are at the ready in order to ensure response is carried out in a timely and effective manner. Estimates indicate that the fastest timeframe in which response equipment could be mobilized from U.S. sources in the Gulf of Mexico is approximately 14 days. 59 A more efficient and proactive federal licensing process might help condense this timeframe and expedite response efforts. The Coast Guard notes that it holds general licenses from the Department of the Treasury and the Department of Commerce that would permit the agency to marshal private U.S. resources and personnel needed for mounting a full-scale response to an oil disaster that threatens the U.S. EEZ. 60 These licenses—which have not been made available for public review—apparently would allow the Coast Guard to take action in the Cuban EEZ if necessary and to bring non-licensed U.S. companies to operate under the agency’s direction in Cuban waters. While these licenses represent a positive step forward, the precise nature and scope of authority granted to the Coast Guard and to the private companies it chooses to deploy in the event of an emergency remain unclear.

It also bears emphasizing here that this general license notwithstanding, the U.S. Coast Guard and any private companies it recruits would not be authorized to enter into or operate in Cuban waters without permission from the Cuban government. Thus, as discussed below, an explicit agreement between the United States and Cuba is needed to provide this authority and to set forth the terms of any joint U.S.-Cuban oil spill response in Cuban waters. 61 Given their broad nature, the Coast Guard’s licenses would be applicable during a catastrophic spill—i.e. on the magnitude of the Deepwater Horizon incident—for which the limited list of pre-approved U.S. private contractors is insufficient to combat the spill and protect U.S. resources. The Coast Guard has used inter-agency tabletop exercises to coordinate broadly with contractors on general spill preparedness throughout the Western Caribbean. 62 Although the Coast Guard holds access to a database of resources that U.S. contractors could provide in the event of an international spill, it has not specifically collaborated with licensed and nonlicensed contractors to codify a communications and resource mobilization protocol for a potential spill in Cuban waters.

#### It will destroy key Cuban AND US ecosystems.

**Peterson, Whittle, and Rader, ’12** – Assoc. at California Environmental Associates, Environmental Defense Fund's Cuba program director, and (Emily A., Daniel J., and Douglas N., “Bridging the Gulf Finding Common Ground on Environmental and Safety Preparedness for Offshore Oil and Gas in Cuba,” Environmental Defense Fund, http://www.macfound.org/media/article\_pdfs/Bridging\_the\_Gulf.pdf

Shared environmental resources at risk If a spill were to occur in Cuban waters, marine and coastal resources of the United States, Cuba, and the Bahamas could be placed at significant risk. Fisheries, coastal tourism, recreation, and other natural resources-based enterprises and activities in the region could experience adverse impacts on the scale of weeks to years, or even decades. Multiple factors—including the type and amount of oil spilled, the environment in which the oil spilled, and prevailing weather and ocean current conditions—would play key factors in determining the extent and gravity of a spill’s impact.45 In Cuba, marine and coastal habitats could suffer substantial long-term harm which could degrade, in turn, entire populations and habitats downstream in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico. According to Dr. John W. Tunnell, Jr., associate director of the Harte Research Institute and an expert on the Gulf of Mexico marine environment, the primary three habitats at risk on Cuba’s North Coast near the area where exploration is occurring are coral reefs, seagrass beds, and lush mangrove forests.46 These habitats are found throughout the region, but in greatest abundance in the Archipelago Sabana-Camaguey and the Archipelago Los Colorados, where they provide breeding, nursery, and feeding habitats for commercial fish species, including grouper, snapper, and grunts. If chemical dispersants were used as part of the clean-up effort, they could reduce impacts on fauna for which oiling per se is the greatest threat (e.g. birds) but also add additional toxicity, as well as alter the transport and ecological fate of oil constituents moving through the water column and then into the air or back towards the bottom. Dispersed oil could have greater deleterious effect on Cuba’s coral reefs, which are fragile, slow-growing, and have low resilience to physical and chemical stresses.47 Like salt marshes, coastal mangrove swamps are also difficult to clean up in the aftermath of an oil spill, and mangroves can die within a week to several months as a result of oil exposure.48 Reduced from their formerly healthy, vibrant state, such important habitats could lose their ability to support the fisheries and marine life that depend on them. Oil toxicity and physical contamination can also have profound effects on individual organisms. The news media often draw attention to charismatic marine life, such as dolphins and sea turtles, which are closer to shore and can experience heavy oil coating during a spill. However, less visible organisms such as surface-floating larvae, mid-depth “scattering layer” organisms, and benthic organisms- including coral reefs, but also soft-sediment communities- are equally, if not more, vulnerable. A significant spill in Cuba’s waters could impact larval populations of lobster, grouper, snapper, and other reef fishes that traditionally mature in the waters of the U.S. Gulf of Mexico and south Atlantic, as well as those that have key spawning grounds in the Gulf itself (including Atlantic Bluefin tuna). The ecological linkages between Cuba and the United States are brought into clear focus when considering the environmental resources that would be at stake in those two countries in the event of a spill. In the same way that Cuban officials expressed serious concern about potential impacts to Cuban waters from the BP Deepwater Horizon spill, Floridians are deeply worried about potential damages to their communities and natural environment. Migratory species that normally travel freely between Cuban and U.S. territory — including bluefin tuna, whale sharks, and birds along the East Coast flyaway — could suffer from oil exposure during a significant spill incident. One problematic limitation in evaluating natural resources at risk in Cuba’s waters—and the subsequent risk to the U.S. environment—is the lack of sufficient baseline scientific knowledge. Detailed geological and environmental conditions are not fully understood in many parts of the Caribbean. 49 For example, petroleum-eating microbes exist in high concentrations in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico and may help mitigate environmental damages during spills and natural seepages, although the ecological cascades unleashed by altered biomass, dissolved oxygen, and acidification patterns remain unknown. It is not known if such oil-eating bacteria also exist in substantial numbers in Cuban waters and would possibly modulate damages to natural resources there.

#### AND, dispersants must be used within 4 days to be effective – key to technical response.

**Bert and Clayton ’12** – Captain of the US Coast Guard/military fellow (U.S. Coast Guard) at the Council on Foreign Relations and a fellow for energy and national security at the Council on Foreign Relations (Captain Melissa and Blake, “Addressing the Risk of a Cuban Oil Spill,” Policy Innovation Memo 15, *Council on Foreign Relations*, http://www.cfr.org/cuba/addressing-risk-cuban-oil-spill/p27515)//CT

Deepwater drilling off the Cuban coast also poses a threat to the United States. The exploratory well is seventy miles off the Florida coast and lies at a depth of 5,800 feet. The failed Macondo well that triggered the calamitous Deepwater Horizon oil spill in April 2010 had broadly similar features, situated forty-eight miles from shore and approximately five thousand feet below sea level. A spill off Florida's coast could ravage the state's $57 billion per year tourism industry. Washington cannot count on the technical know-how of Cuba's unseasoned oil industry to address a spill on its own. Oil industry experts doubt that it has a strong understanding of how to prevent an offshore oil spill or stem a deep-water well blowout. Moreover, the site where the first wells will be drilled is a tough one for even seasoned response teams to operate in. Unlike the calm Gulf of Mexico, the surface currents in the area where Repsol will be drilling move at a brisk three to four knots, which would bring oil from Cuba's offshore wells to the Florida coast within six to ten days. Skimming or burning the oil may not be feasible in such fast-moving water. The most, and possibly only, effective method to respond to a spill would be surface and subsurface dispersants. If dispersants are not applied close to the source within four days after a spill, uncontained oil cannot be dispersed, burnt, or skimmed, which would render standard response technologies like containment booms ineffective.

#### Cuba is key to regional marine biodiversity – a collapse spills over

**Almeida ‘12**

Rob Almeida is Partner/CMO at gCaptain. He graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1999 with a B.S in Naval Architecture and spent 6.5 years on active duty as a Surface Warfare Officer. He worked for a year as a Roughneck/Rig Manager trainee on board the drillship Discoverer Americas. May 18th – http://gcaptain.com/drilling-cuba-embargo-badly/

In short however, Cuba’s access to containment systems, offshore technology, and spill response equipment is severely restricted by the US embargo, yet if a disaster occurs offshore, not only will Cuban ecosystems be severely impacted, but those of the Florida Keys, and US East Coast.¶ If disaster strikes offshore Cuba, US citizens will have nobody else to blame except the US Government because outdated policies are impacting the ability to prepare sufficiently for real-life environmental threats. Considering Cuba waters are home to the highest concentration of biodiversity in the region and is a spawning ground for fish populations that migrate north into US waters, a Cuban oil spill could inflict unprecedented environmental devastation if not planned for in advance.

#### Marine biodiversity hotspots key

**Mittermeier ‘11**

(et al, Dr. Russell Alan Mittermeier is a primatologist, herpetologist and biological anthropologist. He holds Ph.D. from Harvard in Biological Anthropology and serves as an Adjunct Professor at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He has conducted fieldwork for over 30 years on three continents and in more than 20 countries in mainly tropical locations. He is the President of Conservation International and he is considered an expert on biological diversity. Mittermeier has formally discovered several monkey species. From Chapter One of the book Biodiversity Hotspots – F.E. Zachos and J.C. Habel (eds.), DOI 10.1007/978-3-642-20992-5\_1, # Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg 2011. This evidence also internally references Norman Myers, a very famous British environmentalist specialising in biodiversity. available at: http://www.academia.edu/1536096/Global\_biodiversity\_conservation\_the\_critical\_role\_of\_hotspots)

Extinction is the gravest consequence of the biodiversity crisis, since it is¶ irreversible. Human activities have elevated the rate of species extinctions to a¶ thousand or more times the natural background rate (Pimm et al. 1995). What are the¶ consequences of this loss? Most obvious among them may be the lost opportunity¶ for future resource use. Scientists have discovered a mere fraction of Earth’s species¶ (perhaps fewer than 10%, or even 1%) and understood the biology of even fewer¶ (Novotny et al. 2002). As species vanish, so too does the health security of every¶ human. Earth’s species are a vast genetic storehouse that may harbor a cure for¶ cancer, malaria, or the next new pathogen – cures waiting to be discovered.¶ Compounds initially derived from wild species account for more than half of all¶ commercial medicines – even more in developing nations (Chivian and Bernstein¶ 2008). Natural forms, processes, and ecosystems provide blueprints and inspiration¶ for a growing array of new materials, energy sources, hi-tech devices, and¶ other innovations (Benyus 2009). The current loss of species has been compared¶ to burning down the world’s libraries without knowing the content of 90% or¶ more of the books. With loss of species, we lose the ultimate source of our crops¶ and the genes we use to improve agricultural resilience, the inspiration for¶ manufactured products, and the basis of the structure and function of the ecosystems¶ that support humans and all life on Earth (McNeely et al. 2009). Above and beyond¶ material welfare and livelihoods, biodiversity contributes to security, resiliency,¶ and freedom of choices and actions (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005).¶ Less tangible, but no less important, are the cultural, spiritual, and moral costs¶ inflicted by species extinctions. All societies value species for their own sake,¶ and wild plants and animals are integral to the fabric of all the world’s cultures¶ (Wilson 1984). The road to extinction is made even more perilous to people by the loss of the broader ecosystems that underpin our livelihoods, communities, and economies(McNeely et al.2009). The loss of coastal wetlands and mangrove forests, for example, greatly exacerbates both human mortality and economic damage from tropical cyclones (Costanza et al.2008; Das and Vincent2009), while disease outbreaks such as the 2003 emergence of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in East Asia have been directly connected to trade in wildlife for human consumption(Guan et al.2003). Other consequences of biodiversity loss, more subtle but equally damaging, include the deterioration of Earth’s natural capital. Loss of biodiversity on land in the past decade alone is estimated to be costing the global economy $500 billion annually (TEEB2009). Reduced diversity may also reduce resilience of ecosystems and the human communities that depend on them. For example, more diverse coral reef communities have been found to suffer less from the diseases that plague degraded reefs elsewhere (Raymundo et al.2009). As Earth’s climate changes, the roles of species and ecosystems will only increase in their importance to humanity (Turner et al.2009).¶ In many respects, conservation is local. People generally care more about the biodiversity in the place in which they live. They also depend upon these ecosystems the most – and, broadly speaking, it is these areas over which they have the most control. Furthermore, we believe that all biodiversity is important and that every nation, every region, and every community should do everything possible to conserve their living resources. So, what is the importance of setting global priorities? Extinction is a global phenomenon, with impacts far beyond nearby administrative borders. More practically, biodiversity, the threats to it, and the ability of countries to pay for its conservation vary around the world. The vast majority of the global conservation budget – perhaps 90% – originates in and is spent in economically wealthy countries (James et al.1999). It is thus critical that those globally ﬂexible funds available – in the hundreds of millions annually – be guided by systematic priorities if we are to move deliberately toward a global goal of reducing biodiversity loss.¶ The establishment of priorities for biodiversity conservation is complex, but can be framed as a single question. Given the choice, where should action toward reducing the loss of biodiversity be implemented ﬁrst? The ﬁeld of conservation planning addresses this question and revolves around a framework of vulnerability and irreplaceability (Margules and Pressey2000). Vulnerability measures the risk to the species present in a region – if the species and ecosystems that are highly threatened are not protected now, we will not get another chance in the future. Irreplaceability measures the extent to which spatial substitutes exist for securing biodiversity. The number of species alone is an inadequate indication of conserva-tion priority because several areas can share the same species. In contrast, areas with high levels of endemism are irreplaceable. We must conserve these places because the unique species they contain cannot be saved elsewhere. Put another way, biodiversity is not evenly distributed on our planet. It is heavily concentrated in certain areas, these areas have exceptionally high concentrations of endemic species found nowhere else, and many (but not all) of these areas are the areas at greatest risk of disappearing because of heavy human impact.¶ Myers’ seminal paper (Myers1988) was the ﬁrst application of the principles of irreplaceability and vulnerability to guide conservation planning on a global scale. Myers described ten tropical forest “hotspots” on the basis of extraordinary plant endemism and high levels of habitat loss, albeit without quantitative criteria for the designation of “hotspot” status. A subsequent analysis added eight additional hotspots, including four from Mediterranean-type ecosystems (Myers 1990).After adopting hotspots as an institutional blueprint in 1989, Conservation Interna-tional worked with Myers in a ﬁrst systematic update of the hotspots. It introduced two strict quantitative criteria: to qualify as a hotspot, a region had to contain at least 1,500 vascular plants as endemics (¶ >¶ 0.5% of the world’s total), and it had to have 30% or less of its original vegetation (extent of historical habitat cover)remaining. These efforts culminated in an extensive global review (Mittermeier et al.1999) and scientiﬁc publication (Myers et al.2000) that introduced seven new hotspots on the basis of both the better-deﬁned criteria and new data. A second systematic update (Mittermeier et al.2004) did not change the criteria, but revisited the set of hotspots based on new data on the distribution of species and threats, as well as genuine changes in the threat status of these regions. That update redeﬁned several hotspots, such as the Eastern Afromontane region, and added several others that were suspected hotspots but for which sufﬁcient data either did not exist or were not accessible to conservation scientists outside of those regions. Sadly, it uncovered another region – the East Melanesian Islands – which rapid habitat destruction had in a short period of time transformed from a biodiverse region that failed to meet the “less than 30% of original vegetation remaining” criterion to a genuine hotspot.

#### Biodiversity loss causes extinction

**Coyne and Hoekstra, 07 -** \*professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolution at the University of Chicago AND \*\* Associate Professor in the Department of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology at Harvard University (Jerry and Hopi, The New Republic, “The Greatest Dying,” 9/24, http://www.truthout.org/article/jerry-coyne-and-hopi-e-hoekstra-the-greatest-dying)

Aside from the Great Dying, there have been four other mass extinctions, all of which severely pruned life's diversity. Scientists agree that we're now in the midst of a sixth such episode. This new one, however, is different - and, in many ways, much worse. For, unlike earlier extinctions, this one results from the work of a single species, Homo sapiens.We are relentlessly taking over the planet, laying it to waste and eliminating most of our fellow species. Moreover, we're doing it much faster than the mass extinctions that came before. Every year, up to 30,000 species disappear due to human activity alone. At this rate, we could lose half of Earth's species in this century. And, unlike with previous extinctions, there's no hope that biodiversity will ever recover, since the cause of the decimation - us - is here to stay.     To scientists, this is an unparalleled calamity, far more severe than global warming, which is, after all, only one of many threats to biodiversity. Yet global warming gets far more press. Why? One reason is that, while the increase in temperature is easy to document, the decrease of species is not. Biologists don't know, for example, exactly how many species exist on Earth. Estimates range widely, from three million to more than 50 million, and that doesn't count microbes, critical (albeit invisible) components of ecosystems. We're not certain about the rate of extinction, either; how could we be, since the vast majority of species have yet to be described? We're even less sure how the loss of some species will affect the ecosystems in which they're embedded, since the intricate connection between organisms means that the loss of a single species can ramify unpredictably.     But we do know some things. Tropical rainforests are disappearing at a rate of 2 percent per year. Populations of most large fish are down to only 10 percent of what they were in 1950. Many primates and all the great apes - our closest relatives - are nearly gone from the wild.     And we know that extinction and global warming act synergistically. Extinction exacerbates global warming: By burning rainforests, we're not only polluting the atmosphere with carbon dioxide (a major greenhouse gas) but destroying the very plants that can remove this gas from the air. Conversely, global warming increases extinction, both directly (killing corals) and indirectly (destroying the habitats of Arctic and Antarctic animals). As extinction increases, then, so does global warming, which in turn causes more extinction - and so on, into a downward spiral of destruction.     Why, exactly, should we care? Let's start with the most celebrated case: the rainforests. Their loss will worsen global warming - raising temperatures, melting icecaps, and flooding coastal cities. And, as the forest habitat shrinks, so begins the inevitable contact between organisms that have not evolved together, a scenario played out many times, and one that is never good. Dreadful diseases have successfully jumped species boundaries, with humans as prime recipients. We have gotten aids from apes, sars from civets, and Ebola from fruit bats. Additional worldwide plagues from unknown microbes are a very real possibility.     But it isn't just the destruction of the rainforests that should trouble us. Healthy ecosystems the world over provide hidden services like waste disposal, nutrient cycling, soil formation, water purification, and oxygen production. Such services are best rendered by ecosystems that are diverse. Yet, through both intention and accident, humans have introduced exotic species that turn biodiversity into monoculture. Fast-growing zebra mussels, for example, have outcompeted more than 15 species of native mussels in North America's Great Lakes and have damaged harbors and water-treatment plants. Native prairies are becoming dominated by single species (often genetically homogenous) of corn or wheat. Thanks to these developments, soils will erode and become unproductive - which, along with temperature change, will diminish agricultural yields. Meanwhile,with increased pollution and runoff, as well as reduced forest cover, ecosystems will no longer be able to purify water; and a shortage of clean water spells disaster.     In many ways, oceans are the most vulnerable areas of all. As overfishing eliminates major predators, while polluted and warming waters kill off phytoplankton, the intricate aquatic food web could collapse from both sides. Fish, on which so many humans depend, will be a fond memory. As phytoplankton vanish, so does the ability of the oceans to absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen. (Half of the oxygen we breathe is made by phytoplankton, with the rest coming from land plants.) Species extinction is also imperiling coral reefs - a major problem since these reefs have far more than recreational value: They provide tremendous amounts of food for human populations and buffer coastlines against erosion.     In fact, the global value of "hidden" services provided by ecosystems - those services, like waste disposal, that aren't bought and sold in the marketplace - has been estimated to be as much as $50 trillion per year, roughly equal to the gross domestic product of all countries combined. And that doesn't include tangible goods like fish and timber. Life as we know it would be impossible if ecosystems collapsed. Yet that is where we're heading if species extinction continues at its current pace.     Extinction also has a huge impact on medicine. Who really cares if, say, a worm in the remote swamps of French Guiana goes extinct? Well, those who suffer from cardiovascular disease. The recent discovery of a rare South American leech has led to the isolation of a powerful enzyme that, unlike other anticoagulants, not only prevents blood from clotting but also dissolves existing clots. And it's not just this one species of worm: Its wriggly relatives have evolved other biomedically valuable proteins, including antistatin (a potential anticancer agent), decorsin and ornatin (platelet aggregation inhibitors), and hirudin (another anticoagulant).     Plants, too, are pharmaceutical gold mines. The bark of trees, for example, has given us quinine (the first cure for malaria), taxol (a drug highly effective against ovarian and breast cancer), and aspirin. More than a quarter of the medicines on our pharmacy shelves were originally derived from plants. The sap of the Madagascar periwinkle contains more than 70 useful alkaloids, including vincristine, a powerful anticancer drug that saved the life of one of our friends.     Of the roughly 250,000 plant species on Earth, fewer than 5 percent have been screened for pharmaceutical properties. Who knows what life-saving drugs remain to be discovered? Given current extinction rates, it's estimated that we're losing one valuable drug every two years.     Our arguments so far have tacitly assumed that species are worth saving only in proportion to their economic value and their effects on our quality of life, an attitude that is strongly ingrained, especially in Americans. That is why conservationists always base their case on an economic calculus. But we biologists know in our hearts that there are deeper and equally compelling reasons to worry about the loss of biodiversity: namely, simple morality and intellectual values that transcend pecuniary interests. What, for example, gives us the right to destroy other creatures? And what could be more thrilling than looking around us, seeing that we are surrounded by our evolutionary cousins, and realizing that we all got here by the same simple process of natural selection? To biologists, and potentially everyone else, apprehending the genetic kinship and common origin of all species is a spiritual experience - not necessarily religious, but spiritual nonetheless, for it stirs the soul.     But, whether or not one is moved by such concerns, it is certain that our future is bleak if we do nothing to stem this sixth extinction. We are creating a world in which exotic diseases flourish but natural medicinal cures are lost; a world in which carbon waste accumulates while food sources dwindle; a world of sweltering heat, failing crops, and impure water. In the end, we must accept the possibility that we ourselves are not immune to extinction. Or, if we survive, perhaps only a few of us will remain, scratching out a grubby existence on a devastated planet. Global warming will seem like a secondary problem when humanity finally faces the consequences of what we have done to nature: not just another Great Dying, but perhaps the greatest dying of them all.

#### Independently, biodiversity collapse causes disease spread.

**Matt and Gebser 11** – Florian and Ronny, citing Keesing et al. 2010, “Biodiversity decline can increase the spread of infectious diseases like Hantavirus,” <http://www.eea.europa.eu/atlas/teeb/biodiversity-decline-can-increase-the/view>)//a-berg

What is the problem? Intuitively one might expect that higher overall biodiversity leads to greater diversity and abundance of pathogens and thus more incidences of the transmission of diseases. Therefore, species-rich environments might be seen to exhibit a higher infection risk than anthropogenic disturbed environments with a low biodiversity. However, research results show the opposite. Several studies suggest that with the loss of biodiversity the transmission of diseases increases (Keesing et al. 2010). Thus biodiversity loss causes the loss of an important ecosystem service: buffering the spreading of infectious diseases to humans, animals and plants (Pongsiri et al. 2009). The decline of biodiversity might lead to a faster rate of emergence and re-emergence of infectious diseases, such as the Hantavirus, and therefore the infection of a greater proportion of the human population (Keesing et al. 2010, Pongsiri et al. 2009, Suzan et al. 2008, Peixoto and Abramson 2006). Regionally different genotypes of Hantaviruses cause hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome (HFRS) in Asia and Europe and the Hantavirus pulmonary syndrom (HPS) in the Americas (Pongsiri et al. 2009). Which ecosystem services were examined? And how? The examination of circumstances of recent Hantavirus outbreaks, transmitted from host animals to humans, so called zoonoses, showed that all outbreaks occurred in anthropogenic highly disturbed habitats with reduced biodiversity (Pongsiri et al. 2009, Suzan et al. 2008). Host species of Hantaviruses are rodents and the viruses are transmitted to humans by aerosolized rodent excreta or by direct contact with the animals. Among rodents, the virus spreads through physical contacts (aggressive encounters). In general, each Hantavirus genotype is associated with a certain rodent (host) species. Therefore, the probability that a certain Hantavirus genotype infects other rodent species successfully is very low. A study in Utah, USA, found a negative correlation between small-mammal diversity and Sin Nombre Hantavirus (SNV) infection prevalence in deer mice (Clay et al. 2009). High mammalian species diversity reduced the infection prevalence mainly by reducing the intraspecific encounters rather than by reducing host density. A result also supported by experiments. Deer mouse population density was not statistically associated with SNV infection prevalence. This suggests that high diversity reduced intraspecific encounters rather than host abundance (Clay et al. 2009). There seems to be evidence that in recent outbreaks the rodent species transmitting the virus was a generalist species (Suzan et al. 2008). Generalist species have a high adaptability to a wide range of habitats and can subsist on a variety of food sources. Keesing et al. (2010) speculate that species usually amplifying pathogens tend to invest less energy into immune defence and are more vulnerable to pathogens. In contrast, specialist species are highly adapted to a narrowly defined habitat and require one or a few specific food resources and may invest more into immune defence and hence buffering pathogens (Keesing et al. 2010). Anthropogenic disturbance to natural ecosystems frequently results in extensive simplification of the environment. Often, many specialist species become locally extinct whereas the population density of certain opportunistic species rises dramatically due to their better adaptability to a changing environment and the decrease of competitive pressure. Reduced diversity of rodent species subsequently means that the virus spreads most efficiently as there are fewer encounters with other species. Thus, it can be expected that Hantaviruses are transmitted and spread most efficiently within host communities of low diversity. Furthermore, the population of a generalist species tends to increase when species biodiversity decreases in highly disturbed regions, resulting in a higher risk of disease transmission to humans (Suzan et al. 2008). Hence, if biodiversity decreases, transmission events rise due to an increase in encounter rates among infected and between infected and susceptible hosts. Assuming that a rodent has a certain amount of aggressive encounters during its life, it transmits the virus in more cases if the small-mammal diversity is low, since aggressive encounters happen more often within the same species. A recent experimental field study conducted on wild rodent populations of different species in southwestern Panama backs this view. It showed that the relative abundance of Hantavirus hosts increases with a decrease in small-mammal species diversity (See figure below from Keesing et al. 2010). This in turn increases human infection risk (Pongsiri et al. 2009, Suzan et al. 2008). As a consequence of these findings Montira et al. (2009) suggest supporting policies that maintain or enhance biodiversity rather than trying to support or eliminate a certain species. Focusing on one species can have unexpected implications such as enhancing further biodiversity loss when eliminating a rodent species that might serve as food for others or as a buffer for diseases. Keesing et al. (2010) discuss that for certain diseases it can be considered to add a species (i.e. natural enemy or competitor) in order to control the host of the disease. It is also essential to reduce antibiotic overuse in order to avoid adaptation and resistance of pathogens. Further, it is important to identify potential emergence hotspots. The conservation of natural habitats can provide protection against emerging pathogens as it does not only foster biodiversity but also helps to reduce human-wildlife contact. It is also suggested to reduce contact between domestic animals and wildlife. However, the elimination of disease hotspots has the risk to “backfire” by resulting in pathogen transmission (Keesing et al. 2010).

#### Extinction

**Yu ‘9** [Victoria, “Human Extinction: The Uncertainty of Our Fate,” Dartmouth Journal of Undergraduate Science, May 22, http://dujs.dartmouth.edu/spring-2009/human-extinction-the-uncertainty-of-our-fate]

In the past, humans have indeed fallen victim to viruses. Perhaps the best-known case was the bubonic plague that killed up to one third of the European population in the mid-14th century (7). While vaccines have been developed for the plague and some other infectious diseases, new viral strains are constantly emerging — a process that maintains the possibility of a pandemic-facilitated human extinction**.** Some surveyed students mentioned AIDS as a potential pandemic-causing virus.  It is true that scientists have been unable thus far to find a sustainable cure for AIDS, mainly due to HIV’s rapid and constant evolution. Specifically, two factors account for the virus’s abnormally high mutation rate: 1. HIV’s use of reverse transcriptase, which does not have a proof-reading mechanism, and 2. the lack of an error-correction mechanism in HIV DNA polymerase (8). Luckily, though, there are certain characteristics of HIV that make it a poor candidate for a large-scale global infection: HIV can lie dormant in the human body for years without manifesting itself, and AIDS itself does not kill directly, but rather through the weakening of the immune system.  However, for more easily transmitted viruses such as influenza, the evolution of new strains could prove far more consequential. The simultaneous occurrence of antigenic drift (point mutations that lead to new strains) and antigenic shift (the inter-species transfer of disease) in the influenza virus could produce a new version of influenza for which scientists may not immediately find a cure. Since influenza can spread quickly, this lag time could potentially lead to a “global influenza pandemic,” according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (9). The most recent scare of this variety came in 1918 when bird flu managed to kill over 50 million people around the world in what is sometimes referred to as the Spanish flu pandemic. Perhaps even more frightening is the fact that only 25 mutations were required to convert the original viral strain — which could only infect birds — into a human-viable strain (10).

### Relations

#### The plan is key to US-Cuban energy cooperation --- solves overall relations and stabilizes Cuba

Benjamin-Alvadaro 10 – Jonathan Benjamin-Alvadaro, Report for the Cuban Research Institute, Florida International University, PhD, Professor of Political Science at University of Nebraska at Omaha, Director of the Intelligence Community Centers of Academic Excellence Program at UNO, Treasurer of the American Political Science Association, 2010, Brookings Institution book, “Cuba’s Energy Future: Strategic Approaches to Cooperation”

Conclusion and Recommendations

Oil exploration is an inherently risky enterprise; there are always trade-offs between negatives and positives relating to energy security, environmental integrity, and geostrategic considerations. The consensus arising from the studies and the analyses in this book is that the creation of mutually beneficial trade and investment opportunities between the United States and Cuba is long overdue. Throughout most of the twentieth century, Cuban infrastructure and economic development were direct beneficiaries of commercial relations with the United States. This relationship was instrumental in providing Cuba with access to advanced technologies and the signs of modernity that were unparalleled in Latin America and far beyond.¶ Once again, the United States is presented with an opportunity that might serve as the basis of a new relationship between the United States and Cuba. It holds out the possibility of enhancing the stability and development of a region that is wrestling with questions of how and when it too might benefit from engagement with a global economic development model. The question is whether the United States chooses to be at the center, or to leave Cuba to seek some alternate path toward its goals.¶ Ironically, Cuban officials have invited American oil companies to participate in developing their offshore oil and natural gas reserves. American oil, oil equipment, and service companies possess the capital, technology, and operational know-how to explore, produce, and refine these resources in a safe and responsible manner. Yet they remain on the sidelines because of our almost five-decades-old unilateral political and economic embargo. The United States can end this impasse by licensing American oil companies to participate in the development of Cuba’s energy resources. By seizing the initiative on Cuba policy, the United States will be strategically positioned to play an important role in the future of the island, thereby giving Cubans a better chance for a stable, prosperous, and democratic future. The creation of stable and transparent commercial relations in the energy sector will bolster state capacity in Cuba while enhancing U.S. geostrategic interests, and can help Cuba’s future leaders avoid illicit business practices, minimize the influence of narcotrafficking enterprises, and stanch the outflow of illegal immigrants to the United States.¶ If U.S. companies are allowed to contribute to the development of Cuba’s hydrocarbon reserves, as well as the development of alternative and renewable energy (solar, wind, and biofuels), it will give the United States the opportunity to engage Cuba’s future leaders to carry out long-overdueeconomic reforms and development that will perhaps pave the way to a more open and representative society while helping to promote Cuba as a stable partner and leader in the region and beyond.¶ Under no circumstances is this meant to suggest that the United States should come to dominate energy development policy in Cuba. The United States certainly has a role to play, but unlike its past relationship with Cuba, its interaction and cooperation will be predicated on its ability to accept, at a minimum, that Cuba will be the dominant partner in potential commercial ventures, and an equal partner in future diplomatic and interstate relations. Without a doubt Cuban government actors are wary of the possibility of being dominated by the “colossus of the North,” but as Cuba’s energy policymakers face the daunting reality of their nation’s energy future, it is abundantly clear that they possess the willingness and the capacity to assiduously pursue sound policy objectives and initiatives that begin to address the island’s immediate and long-term challenges. In the end, this course of action will have direct and tangible benefits for the people of Cuba, it neighbors, and beyond.

**Russia is seeking to increase military ties with Cuba --- they will place cruise missiles and boost electronic spying capability**

**Gertz 13**

(Bill Gertz - national security columnist for The Washington Times and senior editor at The Washington Free Beacon, The Washington Times, “Inside the Ring: Russia boosts Cuba ties” Wednesday, July 31, 2013, http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jul/31/inside-the-ring-russia-boosts-cuba-ties/?page=all)//HA

The Russian military recently dispatched a guided-missile warship to Cuba as part of what U.S. officials say are growing military, intelligence and economic ties between Moscow and Havana. The missile cruiser is the Moskva, the flagship of the Russian Black Sea fleet, according to state-run Russian news reports. “The cruiser Moskva and the large seagoing tanker Ivan Bubnov set off for Havana on the fourth week of their long-distance deployment,” a fleet spokesman told Interfax-AVN on Friday. On the way, the ship conducted a test launch of a cruise missile, he said. After Havana, the warship will visit Caracas, Venezuela; Managua, Nicaragua; and Praia Port in the Cape Verde Islands off eastern Africa. The visit to Cuba is part of what the U.S. officials said is a push by Moscow to boost relations with Cuba in the military, energy and transportation sectors. The effort was kicked off in February when Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev announced that Moscow is canceling most of Cuba’s Soviet-era debt, estimated at close to $30 billion, while he denounced the U.S. embargo against the communist island nation. The closer ties also appear related to Russian efforts to maintain influence in the region after the death of leftist Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez and the expected retirement of Cuban President Raul Castro in the coming months. Russian military ties with Cuba were bolstered during a visit to Havana in April by Russian Chief of Staff Gen. Valeri Gerasimov. U.S. officials said Gen. Gerasimov’s visit included stops at Cuban military and intelligence sites and was viewed as an indication that Moscow wants to step up both its military and intelligence presence in Cuba. During the Soviet period, the Russians operated a large electronic spying facility at Lourdes, near Havana, that was capable of intercepting most U.S. communications in the southeastern United States. It was less than 100 miles off the coast of Key West. Now there are signs that the Russians want to return to Lourdes for more electronic spying. The Russians also are assisting the Cubans economically with offshore oil prospecting, plans for a new international airport near Havana and deliveries of Russian passenger jets. The warship visit follows Panama’s recent seizure of a North Korean freighter covertly ferrying Soviet-made missiles and aircraft from Cuba to North Korea, in apparent violation of U.N. sanctions on Pyongyang over its missile and nuclear tests.

#### That causes war --- a lack of communication between the two power houses allows escalation --- relations determine influence

Inter-American Dialogue 12 (U.S. based think tank for policy analysis, exchange, and communication on issues in Western Hemisphere affairs, “Are External Tensions Entangling Latin American Countries?” http://www.cepr.net/documents/CEPR\_News/LAA120810.pdf)

A Stephen Johnson, senior fellow and director of the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies: "It may or may not be true that Russia's government is seeking to build resupply bases for its navy in Cuba, Vietnam and the Seychelles islands. While Russian navy officials say 'da,' the foreign ministry says 'nyet.' Similar talk of establishing bases elsewhere, such as Venezuela, has not materialized. In any case, it would not present a direct threat unless such a facility became an entry point for hostile arms similar to the nuclear-tipped missiles that provoked the 1962 crisis. Like any other state, Russia can strike diplomatic agreements to base military units in other countries. On the other hand, it would be a challenge. First, it would rekindle a military relationship that ended when Russia transferred its signals intelligence facility at Lourdes to the Cuban government in 2002. A new base might be a shot in the arm to the Cuban economy, helping the Castro brothers hang on to aspects of their old command economy without going cold turkey for market reforms. A base could also serve as a hub for military weapons sales to other Latin American nations when the region needs help in fighting transnational crime. The Soviet Union fell more than 20 years ago, but Russia still has large military industries and needs to sell arms more than washing machines. Its prime customers would, like Cuba, be in the Bolivarian alliance. Second, a Russian navy station in Cuba might complicate U.S. politics, specifically any plans a U.S. administration might have to hand back Guantanamo Naval Base in the near future, for which Cuba's current government refuses to cash our rent checks. At a time when U.S. Northern and Southern Commands are gearing more toward military support for civilian law enforcement missions, it would reintroduce a strategic deterrence component into joint exercises and training. That might not be a bad thing, but it would argue for more U.S. defense spending on the Western Hemisphere. All of which seems to argue that recent threat trends in the Americas are not very predictive and that certain old alliances won't go easily into the sunset."¶ A Stephen Wilkinson, chairman of the International Institute for the Study of Cuba: "Russia is in military talks with Cuba for three reasons. One is economic, related to Russian investment in Cuban nickel and oil and the need to guarantee protection of these investments. Another factor is geostrategic. Recent events in Syria have confirmed Russian fears of the long-term strategic aims of the United States. The Russians are very aware that the United States and Western Europe have been supporting the rebels in Syria and they see this as an indirect attack upon their interests as Assad provides them with a naval base at Tartus, on the Mediterranean. The third reason is possibly rather more personal, Vladimir Putin has turned his face against Washington since his recent re-election because he perceived a U.S. hand in organizing the protests against him. From Cuba's point of view, having a Russian military base would be a guarantee of security since it would mean that U.S. military action against it would be less likely. If Washington would not wish for Havana to have such an ally, it ought to reconsider its own policy toward the island. At present, the embargo, and especially the Helms Burton Law, makes it sensible for the Cuban government to seek alliances with as many powers as possible in order to protect itself. U.S. military presence in Latin America has grown in recent years. There are now 24 bases including two new ones in Chile and Argentina. Seven bases in Colombia are being expanded. The justification for this expansion is the war on drugs and for humanitarian intervention purposes. However, it should come as no surprise that this is not the way that Cuba or its closest allies such as Hugo Chávez or Evo Morales view them. They see the bases as potential threats to their independence and sovereignty and a sign that Washington's hegemonic designs on the region are very much alive."¶ A Wayne S. Smith, senior fellow and director of the Cuba Project at the Center for International Policy: "Given the history of the 1962 U.S.-Soviet missile crisis, for the Russians now to propose exploring with the Cubans the setting up of naval bases on the island would seem a rather maladroit idea. The United States made it clear in 1962 that the positioning of offensive nuclear missiles on the island was unacceptable and demanded that they be withdrawn. The world has never been so close to an allout nuclear war. Fortunately, both Kennedy and Khrushchev showed themselves to be sensible men. They reached an understanding under which Khrushchev agreed to withdraw the missiles and Kennedy gave assurances that the United States would not invade Cuba. Subsequently, without informing the United States, the Soviets began building a submarine base on the island, but when it was made clear to them that the United States would consider this a violation of the Kennedy-Khrushchev understanding of 1962, work on the base was quietly halted and never resumed. The United States should of course oppose the positioning of Russian bases in Cuba today, as should the other countries of the hemisphere. They would serve no reasonable purpose and could only unnecessarily add to tensions. The United States has not increased its military presence in Latin America. There is no reason for the Russians to do so."

#### AND, the plan is critical to reverse Russian influence indefinitely.

**Bloomberg, 12/11/13**(Leonid Bershidsky, an editor and novelist, is a Bloomberg View contributor, “Obama’s Handshake Trumps Putin’s Money in Cuba,” 12/11/13, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-12-11/obama-s-handshake-trumps-putin-s-money-in-cuba.html)//CT

Are the 1950s coming back? The U.S. and Russia appear to be vying for influence on Cuba again, one with a handshake and the other with money. The White House says Barack Obama's handshake with Cuban counterpart Raul Castro at Nelson Mandela's funeral was not planned and carried no political meaning. Be that as it may, analysts speculated about its implications, and Senator John McCain went so far as to compare it to World War II-era British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain shaking hands with Hitler. Bearing out the theory that the leader of the free world greeting a dictator is great publicity for the latter, Granma, the Cuban Communist Party's newspaper, ran a photo of the handshake and pointed out that it was a historic first. Accidents like this don't just happen. Many remembered Obama's remarks at a Florida fundraiser in November, where he suggested revising the 53-year-old U.S. embargo against Cuba. For many Cubans, Obama's attitude, and the handshake, spells hope that the two countries will cease hostilities, ease travel restrictions and start trading. By contrast, Granma had nothing to say about another momentous event: the debt deal Cuba clinched with Russia less than a week before the famous handshake. It was, on paper, the biggest debt write-off in Russian history. President Vladimir Putin's government agreed to reduce Cuba's debt to $3.2 billion from $32 billion, payable in equal installments over the next 10 years. Only $1 billion of Cuba's debt to Russia was actually denominated in dollars. The rest was in two dead currencies: 10.3 billion Soviet rubles and 10.3 billion so-called transfer rubles, a payment vehicle used by the Communist bloc before it fell apart in the late 1980s. Putting a value on these amounts is difficult: By the arbitrary benchmarks used in Soviet times, Cuba's debt would amount to almost half a trillion dollars. Such absurd numbers give an idea of how deeply the Soviet Union was involved in maintaining Communist Cuba's livelihood in the face of a hostile U.S. Until 1988, 85 percent of Cuba's two-way trade was with the Soviet Union. Soviet dissidents used to decry the exchange of Russian oil for Cuban cane sugar and the green, flavorless oranges that filled Soviet groceries. With the Soviet Union's collapse, Cuba's economy took a huge hit. Trade with Russia went from $9 billion in 1990 to $506 million in 1994. Cuba has been struggling to restructure its foreign debt, to Russia and other countries, ever since. The $32 billion valuation of what Castro's regime owed Russia is just as meaningless as $500 billion would be. Cuba borrowed in a different world, and the Soviet Union never really expected to get the money back. Still, the debt relief is a major breakthrough. The mountain of Soviet-era debt is gone, and Russia is promising help with restructuring Cuba's $6 billion in obligations to the Paris club of creditor nations. For a country that earns hard-currency revenue of only about $18 billion a year, much of it from tourism, this is a big deal. Putin's interest in maintaining relations with Cuba illustrates the island nation's outsized place in the Russian psyche. "It is a matter of geopolitical reputation," explained Mikhail Belyat, a Latin America expert at Moscow State University of the Humanities, in an interview with TV Rain. "We used to be there when the Soviet Union still existed, we were the second pole, a counterbalance."Putin believes in geopolitics, and pictures of Obama's handshake with Castro will convince him that the debt write-off was a timely move. Russia has to "come back" to Cuba before the U.S. does or risk forever losing its tenuous foothold in the tropics. The write-off will not mean much, however, if the U.S. lifts the embargo. Its proximity and huge trade potential will outweigh any benefits of rebuilding the old friendship with Russia. Putin's Soviet dreams of Cuba can be shattered with just a handshake. That may explain the Granma editors' news judgment.

#### Our argument is not that Russia wants to attack, rather that US policymakers will perceive a threat, and miscalculate accordingly

Richter 08 (Paul, Staff Writer for New York Times, “Moscow-Havana ties worry U.S.” http://articles.latimes.com/2008/sep/01/world/fg-usrussia1)

But at a time when Russia has intervened forcefully in Georgia and is extending the global reach of its rebuilt military, some senior officials fear it may not be only bluster.¶ Russia "has strategic ties to Cuba again, or at least, that's where they're going," a senior U.S. official said recently, speaking, like others, on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive implications of the assessments.¶ The officials said they doubted the Russians would risk stationing nuclear bombers on Cuba. But some believe that Moscow might seek to restore its once-energetic intelligence cooperation with Havana, and to resume limited military cooperation, possibly including refueling stops for aircraft and warships.¶ In the current environment, such contacts would make U.S. officials uneasy, serving as a reminder of a military relationship between Havana and Moscow that stretched from the Cuban Revolution in 1959 until a weakened, post-Soviet Russia finally closed a massive electronic intelligence complex in Lourdes near Havana in 2001.¶ One senior military officer said a return of Russian ships or planes could force additional U.S. deployments in the region. But the Bush administration and Pentagon declined to comment publicly on the implications.¶ "It is very Cold War retro," said a government official. "The topic could be reminiscent of the Cuban missile crisis, and that is a chapter that people don't want to revisit."¶ The Russian Defense Ministry dismissed a report in the newspaper Izvestia in July that quoted an unidentified Russian official as saying the government intended to begin basing Tupolev Tu-160 Blackjack and Tupolev Tu-95 Bear nuclear bombers in Cuba.¶ However, the report was taken seriously enough in Washington that Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, the new Air Force chief of staff, said during his Senate confirmation hearing at the time that sending the bombers would cross a "red line in the sand."

#### US-Russia nuclear miscalc over external crises is likely—risks extinction

**Barrett et al. 13** (Anthony M. Barrett- Global Catastrophic Risk Institute, Seth D. Baum- Center for Research on Environmental Decisions, Columbia University, Kelly R. Hostetler- Department of Geography, Pennsylvania State University, 2013, “Analyzing and Reducing the Risks of Inadvertent Nuclear War Between the United States and Russia”, http://sethbaum.com/ac/fc\_NuclearWar.pdf)

War involving significant fractions of the U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals, which are by far the largest of any nations, could have globally catastrophic effects such as severely reducing food production for years, 1,2,3,4,5,6 potentially leading to collapse of modern civilization worldwide and even the extinction of humanity. 7,8,9,10 Nuclear war between the US and Russia could occur by various routes, including accidental or unauthorized launch; deliberate first attack by one nation; and inadvertent attack. In an accidental or unauthorized launch or detonation, system safeguards or procedures to maintain control over nuclear weapons fail in such a way that a nuclear weapon or missile launches or explodes without direction from leaders. In a deliberate first attack, the attacking nation decides to attack based on accurate information about the state of affairs. In an inadvertent attack, the attacking nation mistakenly concludes that it is under attack and launches nuclear weapons in what it believes is a counterattack. 11,12 (Brinkmanship strategies incorporate elements of all of the above, in that they involve deliberate manipulation of the risk of otherwise unauthorized or inadvertent attack as part of coercive threats that “leave something to chance,” i.e., “taking steps that raise the risk that the crisis will go out of control and end in a general nuclear exchange.” 13,14 ) Over the years, nuclear strategy was aimed primarily at minimizing risks of intentional attack through development of deterrence capabilities, though numerous measures were also taken to reduce probabilities of accidents, unauthorized attack, and inadvertent war. 15,16,17 For purposes of deterrence, both U.S. and Soviet/Russian forces have maintained significant capabilities to have some forces survive a first attack by the other side and to launch a subsequent counter-attack. However, concerns about the extreme disruptions that a first attack would cause in the other side’s forces and command-and-control capabilities led to both sides’development of capabilities to detect a first attack and launch a counter-attack before suffering damage from the first attack. 18,19,20 Many people believe that with the end of the Cold War and with improved relations between the United States and Russia, the risk of East-West nuclear war was significantly reduced. 21,22 However, it has also been argued that inadvertent nuclear war between the United States and Russia has continued to present a substantial risk. 23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33 While the United States and Russia are not actively threatening each other with war, they have remained ready to launch nuclear missiles in response to indications of attack. 34,35,36,37,38 False indicators of nuclear attack could be caused in several ways. First, a wide range of events have already been mistakenly interpreted as indicators of attack, including weather phenomena, a faulty computer chip, wild animal activity, and control-room training tapes loaded at the wrong time. 39 Second, terrorist groups or other actors might cause attacks on either the United States or Russia that resemble some kind of nuclear attack by the other nation by actions such as exploding a stolen or improvised nuclear bomb, 40,41,42 especially if such an event occurs during a crisis between the United States and Russia. 43 A variety of nuclear terrorism scenarios are possible. 44 Al Qaeda has sought to obtain or construct nuclear weapons and to use them against the United States. 45,46,47 Other methods could involve attempts to circumvent nuclear weapon launch control safeguards or exploit holes in their security. 48,49 It has long been argued that the probability of inadvertent nuclear war is significantly higher during U.S.-Russian crisis conditions, 50,51,52,53 with the Cuban Missile Crisis being a prime historical example of such a crisis. 54,55,56,57,58 It is possible that U.S.-Russian relations will significantly deteriorate in the future, increasing nuclear tensions. 59 There are a variety of ways for a third party to raise tensions between the United States and Russia, making one or both nations more likely to misinterpret events as attacks. 60,61,62,63

## 2ac

### Spills

#### Even exploratory drilling risks massive spills

**Peterson et al, ’12** – Assoc. at California Environmental Associates, Environmental Defense Fund's Cuba program director, and chief oceans scientist at the EDF (Emily A., Daniel J., and Douglas N., “Bridging the Gulf Finding Common Ground on Environmental and Safety Preparedness for Offshore Oil and Gas in Cuba,” Environmental Defense Fund, 2012, http://www.macfound.org/media/article\_pdfs/Bridging\_the\_Gulf.pdf)//HA/CT

Risks of a spill in Cuban waters

As demonstrated by the Deepwater Horizon Gulf of Mexico oil disaster of 2010, the Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska in 1989, and Mexico’s 1979 Ixtoc I well blowout, deepwater drilling is inherently risky. Even companies using the most sophisticated, cutting-edge technology with highly skilled personnel experience oil spills and accidents that threaten human lives, economies, and the environment. In fact, the Deepwater Horizon accident resulted in extensive oil pollution of roughly 200 miles along the edge of the Cuban EEZ, and very nearly led to U.S.-drilled oil befouling important and valuable Cuban beaches, reefs, seagrass beds, and mangrove swamps. 36 The only factor that prevented an international incident was the chance timing of the central Gulf Loop Current gyre formation, which interrupted the delivery of oil down current as far as the Florida Keys. As Cuba proceeds with plans to explore its deepwater offshore oil fields, the risk of a poten tial oil spill in Cuban waters impacting U.S. marine and coastal resources is similarly worrisome. Significant oil spills from exploratory wells are not without precedent: both the BP Deepwater Horizon and Ixtoc I spills resulted from exploratory well blowouts. Experience from past disasters highlights that oil spills do not adhere to political boundaries and that advanced planning and cross-border cooperation are pivotal for mounting a timely, coordinated response strategy.

### 2ac --- T appeasement

#### CI- EE includes lifting sanctions

**Pernaa 7** – Dept of Political Science at Lund University (Emilia, “Catering Sticks and Carrots for the Global Security,” http://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordOId=1324375&fileOId=1324376

The term engagement has been understood in a rather multiple manner. It can be understood as opposite to isolation, as a general interaction between two states. Here I will use the term of engagement to some extent in line with the definition of Haass and O’Sullivan. Thus, the term engagement is understood as a positive foreign policy strategy, which depends to a significant degree on positive incentives to achieve its objectives. However, the engaging strategy does not preclude the simultaneous use of negative instruments, such as sanctions or military force, but in order to be understood as engaging strategy the use of positive incentives should play leading role (2000:2). Thus, the term engagement is seen in a positive light, referring to constructive efforts in order to engage the country in case to the international community. Even though some negative means might be used to some extent by side of the engaging strategy, engagement means generally a conflict preventing approach which can be understood as tension reduction, conciliation, appeasement and incentives and use of positive methods to cooperate with proliferators (Baldwin 1985:111). Whereas the economic statecraft such as incentives like trade agreements or lifting the sanctions are probably one of the most tangible engagement efforts, diplomatic statecraft can be considered as an engaging strategy as given in the form of diplomatic recognition and efforts of negotiating common interests (O’Sullivan 2000:5f). In the case of structural statecraft engagement is seen to base on legitimate policies, following the norms of the international system.

### 2ac --- k

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#### Apocalyptic rhetoiric key to solve environment

Salvador and Norton 11 ([Michael Salvador](http://www.tandfonline.com/action/doSearch?action=runSearch&type=advanced&result=true&prevSearch=%2Bauthorsfield%3A(Salvador%2C+Michael)) - Michael Salvador is an Associate Professor in the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication at Washington State University and [Todd Norton](http://www.tandfonline.com/action/doSearch?action=runSearch&type=advanced&result=true&prevSearch=%2Bauthorsfield%3A(Norton%2C+Todd)) - Todd Norton is an Assistant Professor in the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication at Washington State University, “The Flood Myth in the Age of Global Climate Change,” 2/18/11, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2010.544749>

For Killingsworth and Palmer (1996), use of apocalyptic rhetoric has shifted in response to the changing relationship between the prevailing paradigm of human domination over nature\*limitless American progressthrough technology and economic development\*and the oppositional environmental paradigm of humans as subject to nature and in need of ecologically sustainable practices. When this prevailing paradigm was at its zenith, stronger apocalyptic visions were advanced, as in Rachel Carson’s (1962) Silent Spring. As environmental activism took hold in the public consciousness, less threatening visions of the Earth’s future were offered, as in Barry Commoner’s (1971) The Closing Circle. Thus, apocalyptic rhetoric served as a malleable framework for discussing environmental problems, allowing those concerned to transform growing awareness of environmental problems ‘‘into acceptance of action toward a solution by prefacing the solution with a future scenario of what could happen if action is not taken, if the problem goes untreated’’ (Killingsworth & Palmer, 1996, p. 22).

#### b) State key

**Carter** **07**. Neil, Senior Lecturer in Politics @ University of York. “The Politics of the Environment,” p. 59-60.

Another difficulty with decentralization is that many environmental problems are best dealt with at the national or international level. Global commons problems do not respect the political boundaries between existing nation states, let alone small bioregions. Problems such as climate change and ozone depletion require coordinated action across communities and nations, which implies international cooperation between centralized nation states (see Chapter 9). The green slogan 'Think global, act local' may therefore provide an inadequate strategy for dealing with problems of the global commons. Relying on local communities alone to protect the environment assumes that the local community has full knowledge about the causes, impact and solutions to a particular problem; even then, it 'makes sense only when the locals possess an appropriate social and ecological consciousness' (Eckersley 1992: 173).

#### Death reps cause an empathic shift---this is especially crucial in the context of policy debates and advocacy simulations

**Recuber 11** Timothy Recuber is a doctoral candidate in sociology at the Graduate Center of the City. University of New York. He has taught at Hunter College in Manhattan "CONSUMING CATASTROPHE: AUTHENTICITY AND EMOTION IN MASS-MEDIATED DISASTER" gradworks.umi.com/3477831.pdf

Perhaps, then, what distant consumers express when they sit glued to the television watching a disaster replayed **over and over,** when they buy t-shirts or snow globes, when they mail teddy bears to a memorial, or when they tour a disaster site, is a deep, maybe subconscious, longing for those age-old forms of community and real human compassion that emerge in a place when disaster has struck. It is a longing in some ways so alien to the world we currently live in that it requires catastrophe to call it forth, even in our imaginations. Nevertheless, the actions of unadulterated goodwill that become commonplace in harrowing conditions represent the truly authentic form of humanity that all of us, to one degree or another, chase after in contemporary consumer culture every day. And while it is certainly a bit foolhardy

to seek authentic humanity through disaster-related media and culture, the sheer strength of that desire has been evident in the public’s response to all the disasters, crises and catastrophes to hit the United States in the past decade. The millions of television viewers who cried on September 11, or during Hurricane Katrina and the Virginia Tech shootings, and the thousands upon thousands who volunteered their time, labor, money, and even their blood, as well as the countless others who created art, contributed to memorials, or adorned their cars or bodies with disaster-related paraphernalia— despite the fact that many knew no one who had been personally affected by any of these disasters—all attest to a desire for real human community and compassion that is woefully unfulfilled by American life under normal conditions today. ¶ In the end, the consumption of disaster doesn’t make us unable or unwilling to engage with disasters on a communal level, or towards progressive political ends—it makes us feel as if we already have, simply by consuming. It is ultimately less a form of political anesthesia than a simulation of politics, a Potemkin village of communal sentiment, that fills our longing for a more just and humane world with disparate acts of cathartic consumption. Still, the positive political potential underlying such consumption—the desire for real forms of connection and community—remains the most redeeming feature of disaster consumerism. Though that desire is frequently warped when various media lenses refract it, diffuse it, or reframe it to fit a political agenda, its overwhelming strength should nonetheless serve notice that people want a different world than the one in which we currently live, with a different way of understanding and responding to disasters. They want a world where risk is not leveraged for profit or political gain, but sensibly planned for with the needs of all socio-economic groups in mind. They want a world where preemptive strategies are used to anticipate the real threats posed by global climate change and global inequality, rather than to invent fears of ethnic others and justify unnecessary wars. They want a world where people can come together not simply as a market, but as a public, to exert real agency over the policies made in the name of their safety and security. And, when disaster does strike, they want a world where the goodwill and compassion shown by their neighbors, by strangers in their communities, and even by distant spectators and consumers, will be matched by their own government. Though this vision of the world is utopian, it is not unreasonable, and if contemporary American culture is ever to give us **more than just an illusion** of safety, or empathy, or authenticity, then it is this vision that we must advocate on a daily basis, not only when disaster strikes.

### 2ac --- Cuban Democracy DA

**The embargo fails at spreading democracy --- empirics go aff**

**Weber 09**

(Allan Weber, Center for Democracy in the Americas, 2009, 9 Ways for the US to Talk to Cuba and for Cuba to Talk to the US, http://bauscharddebate.com/2013/06/answering-the-cuba-economic-democracy-good-da/)//HA

After the Cuban Missile Crisis, the U.S. committed itself to a “nouse of force” policy, agreeing not to invade Cuba militarily. U.S. strategy has instead used a strict and unyielding economic embargo — the only policy tool available aside from covert operations — to create conditions that would lead people within Cuba to rise up and over-throw the government of Fidel and Raúl Castro, and replace it with a democratically-elected government. The U.S. regime change goal toward Cuba persists, but any objective observer would have to conclude that the strategy has failed. Ten U.S. presidents have come and gone and the revolutionary government of Cuba is still in command. It is hard to think of an instance in U.S. political history when economic sanctions alone have precipitated regime change, particularly from within a hostile country. Sudden, radical political change from within Cuba is, at best, highly unlikely.

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#### Embargo strengthens the regime

**Jaffe and Soligo 09**

(Amy Meyers Jaffe & Rinaldo Soligo, 2009, “The US-Cuba Trade-Sanctions, and the Potential for Energy Trade” “ 9 Ways for the US to Talk to Cuba and for Cuba to Talk to the US, http://www.scribd.com/doc/10323598/9-Ways-for-US-to-Talk-to-Cuba-and-for-Cuba-to-Talk-to-US#download, Ed Sarah Stephens and Alice Dunscomb, Amy Meyers Jaff Wallace S. Wilson Fellow in Energy Studies at the Baker Institute. Rinaldo Silago — professor of economics at Rice University and a Rice Scholar at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy)

Sanctions have failed to dislodge the Castro government or prompt a reversal in Cuba’s social and economic policies. Indeed, the U.S. embargo may have unintentionally fostered the continuation of the current regime by providing an external villain for the failure of the Cuban government to improve their public’s standard of living.

#### lifting the embargo hurts the regime, the money would cycle back into the US’s hands and US influence would spread.

Griswold 9- director of the Center for Trade Policy Studies at the Cato Institute

(Daniel, “The US Embargo of Cuba Is a Failure” CATO institute, June 15, 2009, [http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/us-embargo-cuba-is-failure)//HA](http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/us-embargo-cuba-is-failure)/HA)

Advocates of the embargo argue that trading with Cuba will only put dollars into the coffers of the Castro regime. And it’s true that the government in Havana, because it controls the economy, can skim off a large share of the remittances and tourist dollars spent in Cuba. But of course, selling more US products to Cuba would quickly relieve the Castro regime of those same dollars.

If more US tourists were permitted to visit Cuba, and at the same time US exports to Cuba were further liberalised, the US economy could reclaim dollars from the Castro regime as fast as the regime could acquire them. In effect, the exchange would be of agricultural products for tourism services, a kind of “bread for beaches”, “food for fun” trade relationship.

Meanwhile, the increase in Americans visiting Cuba would dramatically increase contact between Cubans and Americans. The unique US-Cuban relationship that flourished before Castro could be renewed, which would increase US influence and potentially hasten the decline of the communist regime.

Congress and President Barack Obama should act now to lift the embargo to allow more travel and farm exports to Cuba. Expanding our freedom to travel to, trade with and invest in Cuba would make Americans better off and would help the Cuban people and speed the day when they can enjoy the freedom they deserve.

#### There is no correlation between democracy and peace.

**Rosato ’3** – Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame (Sebastian, “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory,” The American Political Science Review, November 2003, <http://rrii.150m.com/t08/Sebastian%20Rosato%20-%20The%20Flawed%20Logic%20of%20Democratic%20Peace%20Theory.pdf>)

The causal logics that underpin democratic peace the- ¶ ory cannot explain why democracies remain at peace ¶ with one another because the mechanisms that make up ¶ these logics do not operate as stipulated by the theory's ¶ proponents. In the case of the normative logic, liberal ¶ democracies do not reliably externalize their domestic ¶ norms of conflict resolution and do not treat one an- ¶ other with trust and respect when their interests clash. ¶ Similarly, in the case of the institutional logic, demo- ¶ cratic leaders are not especially accountable to peace- ¶ loving publics or pacific interest groups, democracies ¶ are not particularly slow to mobilize or incapable of sur- ¶ prise attack, and open political competition offers no ¶ guarantee that a democracy will reveal private informa- ¶ tion about its level of resolve. In view of these findings ¶ there are good reasons to doubt that joint democracy ¶ causes peace. ¶ Democratic peace theorists could counter this claim ¶ by pointing out that even in the absence of a good ex- ¶ planation for the democratic peace, the fact remains ¶ that democracies have rarely fought one another. In ¶ addition to casting doubt on existing explanations for ¶ the democratic peace, then, a comprehensive critique ¶ should also offer a positive account of the finding. ¶ One potential explanation is that the democratic ¶ peace is in fact an imperial peace based on American ¶ power. This claim rests on two observations. First, the ¶ democratic peace is essentially a post-World War II ¶ phenomenon restricted to the Americas and Western ¶ Europe. Second, the United States has been the dom- ¶ inant power in both these regions since World War II ¶ and has placed an overriding emphasis on regional ¶ peace. ¶ There are three reasons we should expect democratic ¶ peace theory's empirical claims to hold only in the post- ¶ 1945 period. First, as even proponents of the demo- ¶ cratic peace have admitted, there were few democracies¶ in the international system prior to 1945 and even fewer ¶ that were in a position to fight one another. Since 1945, ¶ however, both the number of democracies in the in- ¶ ternational system and the number that have had an ¶ opportunity to fight one another have grown markedly ¶ (e.g., Russett 1993,20). Second, while members of dou- ¶ ble democratic dyads were not significantly less likely to ¶ fight one another than members of other types of dyads ¶ prior to World War 11, they have been significantly ¶ more peaceful since then (e.g., Farber and Gowa 1997). ¶ Third, the farther back we go in history the harder it ¶ is to find a consensus among both scholars and poli- ¶ cymakers on what states qualify as democracies. De- ¶ pending on whose criteria we use, there may have been ¶ no democratic wars prior to 1945, or there may have ¶ been several (see, e.g., Layne 1994; Ray 1995; Russett ¶ 1993; Spiro 1994). Since then, however, we can be fairly ¶ certain that democracies have hardly fought each other ¶ at all. ¶ Most of the purely democratic dyads since World ¶ War I1 can be found in the Americas and Western ¶ Europe. My analysis includes all pairs of democracies ¶ directly or indirectly contiguous to one another or sep- ¶ arated by less than 150 miles of water between 1950 and ¶ 1990 (Przeworski et al. 2000; Schafer 1993). This yields ¶ 2,427 double democratic dyads, of which 1.306 (54%) ¶ were comprised of two European states, 465 (19%) ¶ were comprised of two American states, and 418 (17%) ¶ comprised one American state and one European state. ¶ In short, 90% of purely democratic dyads have been ¶ confined to two geographic regions, the Americas and ¶ Western Europe. ¶ American preponderance has underpinned, and con- ¶ tinues to underpin stability and peace in both of these ¶ regions. In the Americas the United States has suc- ¶ cessfully adopted a two-pronged strategy of driving ¶ out the European colonial powers and selectively in- ¶ tervening either to ensure that regional conflicts do ¶ not escalate to the level of serious military conflict or ¶ to install regimes that are sympathetic to its interests. ¶ The result has been a region in which most states are ¶ prepared to toe the American line and none have pre- ¶ tensions to alter the status quo. In Europe, the expe- ¶ rience of both World Wars persuaded American poli- ¶ cymakers that U.S. interests lay in preventing the con- ¶ tinent ever returning to the security competition that ¶ had plagued it since the Napoleonic Wars. Major ini- ¶ tiatives including the Marshall Plan, the North Atlantic ¶ Treaty, European integration, and the forward deploy- ¶ ment of American troops on German soil should all ¶ be viewed from this perspective. Each was designed ¶ either to protect the European powers from one an- ¶ other or to constrain their ability to act as sovereign ¶ states, thereby preventing a return to multipolarity ¶ and eliminating the security dilemma as a factor in ¶ European politics. These objectives continue to pro- ¶ vide the basis for Washington's European policy today ¶ and explain its continued attachment to NATO and its ¶ support for the eastward expansion of the European ¶ Union. In sum, the United States has been by far the ¶ most dominant state in both the Americas and Western ¶ Europe since World War II and has been committed,¶ above all, to ensuring that both regions remain at peace. Evaluating whether the democratic peace finding is ¶ caused by democracy or by some other factor such ¶ as American preponderance has implications far be- ¶ yond the academy. If peace and security are indeed a ¶ consequence of shared democracy, then international ¶ democratization should continue to lie at the heart of ¶ American grand strategy. But if, as I have suggested, ¶ democracy does not cause peace, then American poli- ¶ cymakers are expending valuable resources on a policy ¶ that, while morally praiseworthy, does not make ¶ America more secure.

### 2ac --- Patent Reform

#### No impact to leigtamcy .

**Fettweis 11** Christopher J. Fettweis, Department of Political Science, Tulane University, 9/26/11, Free Riding or Restraint? Examining European Grand Strategy, Comparative Strategy, 30:316–332, EBSCO

It is perhaps worth noting that there is no evidence to support a direct relationship between the relative level of U.S. activism and international stability. In fact, the limited data we do have suggest the opposite may be true. During the 1990s, the United States cut back on its defense spending fairly substantially. By 1998, the United States was spending $100 billion less on defense in real terms than it had in 1990.51 To internationalists, defense hawks and believers in hegemonic stability, this irresponsible “peace dividend” endangered both national and global security. “No serious analyst of American military capabilities,” argued Kristol and Kagan, “doubts that the defense budget has been cut much too far to meet America’s responsibilities to itself and to world peace.”52 On the other hand, if the pacific trends were not based upon U.S. hegemony but a strengthening norm against interstate war, one would not have expected an increase in global instability and violence. The verdict from the past two decades is fairly plain: The world grew more peaceful while the United States cut its forces. No state seemed to believe that its security was endangered by a less-capable United States military, or at least none took any action that would suggest such a belief. No militaries were enhanced to address power vacuums, no security dilemmas drove insecurity or arms races, and no regional balancing occurred once the stabilizing presence of the U.S. military was diminished. The rest of the world acted as if the threat of international war was not a pressing concern, despite the reduction in U.S. capabilities. Most of all, the United States and its allies were no less safe. The incidence and magnitude of global conflict declined while the United States cut its military spending under President Clinton, and kept declining as the Bush Administration ramped the spending back up. No complex statistical analysis should be necessary to reach the conclusion that the two are unrelated. Military spending figures by themselves are insufficient to disprove a connection between overall U.S. actions and international stability. Once again, one could presumably argue that spending is not the only or even the best indication of hegemony, and that it is instead U.S. foreign political and security commitments that maintain stability. Since neither was significantly altered during this period, instability should not have been expected. Alternately, advocates of hegemonic stability could believe that relative rather than absolute spending is decisive in bringing peace. Although the United States cut back on its spending during the 1990s, its relative advantage never wavered. However, even if it is true that either U.S. commitments or relative spending account for global pacific trends, then at the very least stability can evidently be maintained at drastically lower levels of both. In other words, even if one can be allowed to argue in the alternative for a moment and suppose that there is in fact a level of engagement below which the United States cannot drop without increasing international disorder, a rational grand strategist would still recommend cutting back on engagement and spending until that level is determined. Grand strategic decisions are never final; continual adjustments can and must be made as time goes on. Basic logic suggests that the United States ought to spend the minimum amount of its blood and treasure while seeking the maximum return on its investment. And if the current era of stability is as stable as many believe it to be, no increase in conflict would ever occur irrespective of U.S. spending, which would save untold trillions for an increasingly debt-ridden nation. It is also perhaps worth noting that if opposite trends had unfolded, if other states had reacted to news of cuts in U.S. defense spending with more aggressive or insecure behavior, then internationalists would surely argue that their expectations had been fulfilled. If increases in conflict would have been interpreted as proof of the wisdom of internationalist strategies, then logical consistency demands that the lack thereof should at least pose a problem. As it stands, the only evidence we have regarding the likely systemic reaction to a more restrained United States suggests that the current peaceful trends are unrelated to U.S. military spending. Evidently the rest of the world can operate quite effectively without the presence of a global policeman. Those who think otherwise base their view on faith alone.

#### Innovation irrelevant – no boundaries

Bhidé 9

Amar Bhidé, Glaubinger Professor of Business at Columbia University, Winter 2009, “The Venturesome Economy: How Innovation Sustains Prosperity in a More Connected World,” Journal of Applied Corporate Finance, Vol. 2, No. 1

Any catch-up, even if it takes place gradually and in the normal course of development, will to some degree reduce the U.S. “lead.” Furthermore, the global influence of techno-nationalism could accelerate this process. As alarmists in the United States don’t fail to remind us, governments in “emerging” countries such as China and India—also in the thrall of techno-nationalist thinking—are making a determined effort to leap ahead in cutting-edge science and technology. I am skeptical that these efforts are going to do any more good for China’s and India’s economy than did similar efforts in Europe and Japan in the 1970s and 1980s.11 But put aside the issue of whether investing in cutting-edge research represents a good use of Chinese and Indian resources; does whatever erosion of U.S. primacy in developing high-level know-how that this might cause really threaten U.S. prosperity? Should the U.S. government respond in kind by putting even more money into research? Princeton economist Paul Krugman, in a 1994 Foreign Affairs essay, decried a “dangerous obsession” with “national competitiveness.” The tendency to think that “the United States and Japan are competitors in the same sense that Coca-Cola competes with Pepsi,” Krugman pointed out, is widespread; he quoted President Clinton’s claim that “each nation is like a big corporation competing in the global marketplace.” This premise, which is at the heart of techno-nationalism, Krugman persuasively argues, is “flatly, completely and demonstrably wrong.”12 Although “competitive problems could arise in principle, as a practical, empirical matter, the major nations of the world are not to any significant degree in economic competition with each other.”13 The techno-nationalist claim that U.S. prosperity requires that the country “maintain its scientific and technological lead” is particularly dubious: the argument fails to recognize that the development of scientific knowledge or cutting-edge technology is not a zero-sum competition. The results of scientific research are available at no charge to anyone anywhere in the world. Most arguments for the public funding of scientific research are in fact based on the unwillingness of private investors to undertake research that cannot yield a profit. Cutting-edge technology (as opposed to scientific research) has commercial value because it can be patented; but patent owners generally don’t charge higher fees to foreign licensors. The then tiny Japanese company Sony was one of the first licensors of Bell Labs’ transistor patent. It paid $50,000 for a license (after obtaining special permission from the Japanese Ministry of Finance) that started it on the road to becoming a household name in consumer electronics. If patent holders choose to exploit their invention on their own (i.e., not grant licenses to anyone), this does not mean that the country of origin secures most of the benefit at the expense of other countries. Suppose IBM chooses to exploit internally, rather than freely license, a breakthrough from its China Research Laboratory (employing 150 research staff in Beijing). This does not help China and hurt everyone else. Rather, as I discuss at length later in this book, the benefits go to IBM’s stockholders, to employees who make or market the product that embodies the invention, and— above all—to customers, who secure the lion’s share of the benefit from most innovations. These stockholders, employees, and customers, who number in the tens of millions, are located all over the world. In a world where breakthrough ideas easily cross national borders, the origin of ideas is inconsequential. Contrary to Thomas Friedman’s assertion, it does not matter that Google’s search algorithm was invented in California. After all, a Briton invented the protocols of the World Wide Web—in a lab in Switzerland. A Swede and a Dane in Tallinn, Estonia, started Skype, the leading provider of peer-to-peer Internet telephony. How did the foreign origins of these innovations harm the U.S. economy?

#### Reform fails – design patents

**Kolassa 3/4**

Jeremy, The Hill, Congress shouldn’t overlook design patents in its push for reform, 3/4/14, http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/technology/199844-congress-shouldnt-overlook-design-patents-in-its-push-for

With legislation passed in the House, the U.S. Senate is set to move forward on multiple bills to combat the costly problem of patent trolls. While current proposals address issues with transparency, patent quality and litigation procedure, they do little to address growing problems with “design patents.”¶ What most people imagine when they think of patents are “utility patents,” which offer protection for new technologies as a way to foster innovation. But intellectual property law also extends protection to the non-functional elements of a product's design. This can include the shape of a camisole or generic-looking fuzzy slippers. In practice, an item’s shape and ornamentation often is patented to restrict competition, rather than to protect genuine innovation.¶ Moreover, these design patents have an application process that differs from utility patents in ways that are sometimes problematic. Where utility patent applications allow lots of time for public comment and input, design patent applications are not published before they are granted and have no mechanism for feedback about prior art.¶ Where the terms of utility patents are dated to the day the application was filed, design patents are dated to the day they are issued. This quirk creates a loophole that allows a design patent applicant to enjoy perpetual protection by simply filing a series of "continuations" in conjunction with the patent application.¶ Design patents once were considered fairly unimportant, but circumstances have changed. In addition to the Hague agreement that took effect last year, the 2008 decision in Egyptian Goddess vs. Swisa did a lot to strengthen design patents. That decision made design patent infringement much easier to prove by replacing the “point of novelty” test with a test that finds, if an ordinary observer would find the designs of two products to be substantially the same, then the patent is infringed. Design patents also are cheap, easy to procure and, unlike utility patents, require no maintenance fees, making them attractive to firms who wish to bolster their patent portfolios.¶ Under current infringement standards, if your fuzzy slippers, your camisole or – more crucially — the rounded edges on your smartphone are substantially similar to some patented competitor, you can be held liable for potentially hundreds of millions in damages. This is particularly problematic when there is no effective process to raise the objection that certain patented designs are not novel, and may have already existed for decades.¶ These differences also pose a problem for Congress as it drafts patent reform legislation. At The Faculty Lounge, professor Sarah Burstein highlights some unintended consequences of current patent reform proposals, which overlook how design patents work. The House’s patent bill, for instance, requires putative patent trolls to do things that either aren’t possible or don’t make sense in design patent cases.

#### Patent reform won’t pass – bill details and midterms AND PC isn’t key – tech industry --- their ev is from may

Wilson and Tummarello 4/7

Megan and Kate, The Hill, Friction tests patent reform push, 4/7/14, http://thehill.com/blogs/hillicon-valley/technology/202868-friction-tests-patent-reform-push

The tech industry is making an aggressive push to get patent reform across the finish line as senators haggle over the details of the legislation.¶ The House has already passed a reform bill, and Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) hopes to mark up legislation this week that would crack down on so-called “patent trolls” — companies that profit by bringing frivolous infringement lawsuits.¶ While lawmakers and tech companies broadly agree about the need to cut down on abuse of patent litigation, negotiations among senators over Leahy’s bill have grown contentious, sources close to the talks say.¶ One area of disagreement is a provision on “fee shifting” that committee Republicans want to add to the bill. The provision would require the losing party of a meritless infringement lawsuit to pay the winning party’s legal fees.¶ Several lobbyists said consensus on the bill — between both lawmakers and the various industries involved — is proving difficult, and the markup could be delayed.¶ “Talks are on life support because the principal negotiators seem to be miles apart,” said a lobbyist for a software company, who asked for anonymity because he is not authorized to speak publicly about the negotiations.¶ “The bill is in danger of not moving forward; a lot of staff on both sides has reached the limit on the amount they can take.”¶ Lawmakers have come up with several drafts of how to deal with fee shifting, each of which has been floated from Capitol Hill to K Street, in hopes of garnering support from the various industries that have a stake in the bill, according to people involved in the talks.¶ “There is a sense of frustration with the fee-shifting issue,” the lobbyist, who has been involved with the negotiations, said. “That frustration has led to an impasse.”¶ With Congress heading off for a two-week recess on Friday, the window for action is narrowing. With midterm election politics set to intensify this summer, action on the bill could get tricky.

#### Oil lobbies love the plan --- determines congressional sentiment, they definitely outweigh the Cuban lobbies

Sadowski 11 – Richard Sadowski 11, J.D., Hofstra University School of Law, Fall 2011, “IN THIS ISSUE: NATURAL RESOURCE CONFLICT: CUBAN OFFSHORE DRILLING: PREPARATION AND PREVENTION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE UNITED STATES' EMBARGO,” Sustainable Development Law & Policy, 12 Sustainable Dev. L. & Pol'y 37, p. lexis

A U.S. Geological Survey estimates that Cuba's offshore oil fields hold at least four and a half billion barrels of recoverable oil and ten trillion cubic feet of natural gas. n29 Cupet, the state-owned Cuban energy company, insists that actual reserves are double that of the U.S. estimate. n30 One estimate indicates that Cuba could be producing 525,000 barrels of oil per day. n31 Given this vast resource, Cuba has already leased offshore oil exploration blocks to operators from Spain, Norway, and India. n32 Offshore oil discoveries in Cuba are placing increasing pressure for the United States to end the embargo. First, U.S. energy companies are eager to compete for access to Cuban oil reserves. n33 [\*38] Secondly, fears of a Cuban oil spill are argued to warrant U.S. investment and technology. n34 Finally, the concern over Cuban offshore drilling renews cries that the embargo is largely a failure and harms human rights.¶ ECONOMICS: U.S. COMPANIES WANT IN¶ For U.S. companies, the embargo creates concern that they will lose out on an opportunity to develop a nearby resource. n35 Oil companies have a long history of utilizing political pressure for self-serving purposes. n36 American politicians, ever fearful of high energy costs, are especially susceptible to oil-lobby pressures. n37 This dynamic was exemplified in 2008, when then-Vice President Dick Cheney told the board of directors of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce that "oil is being drilled right now sixty miles off the coast of Florida**.** But we're not doing it, the Chinese are, in cooperation with the Cuban government. Even the communists have figured out that a good answer to high prices is more supply" n38¶ This pressure for U.S. investment in oil is exacerbated by America's expected increase in consumption rates. n39 Oil company stocks are valued in large part on access to reserves. n40 Thus, more leases, including those in Cuban waters, equal higher stock valuation. n41 "The last thing that American energy companies want is to be trapped on the sidelines by sanctions while European, Canadian and Latin American rivals are free to develop new oil resources on the doorstep of the United States." n42

#### No impact to patent trolls

Merritt, EE Times, 3-12-14

[Rick, “Patent Data Missing in Troll Debate” http://www.eetimes.com/document.asp?doc\_id=1321364&\_mc=MP\_IW\_EDT\_STUB]

While the US Congress debates legislation aimed at addressing a troubling increase in patent infringement suits from so-called trolls, experts are debating whether the rise even exists or should trouble anyone.¶ A handful of studies and papers say patent cases are not rising significantly. The non-practicing entities (NPEs) that assert patents but do not make products are not playing a destructive role, they argue. However, some experts say more data still needs to be collected. "Right now it's like the fear of the unknown -- we actually don't know that much about patents despite a large amount of study," says Daniel F. Spulber, research director of Northwestern University's Searle Center on Law, which received a $2 million grant from Qualcomm that's funding a five-year research project.¶ The program is focusing on so-called "standards-essential" patents from the top three of an estimated 700 standards organizations that release thousands of technical standards a year. "What I hope to do is create as comprehensive a database as is feasible. Then empirically analyze the standards and organizations and make that data available for free to academic researchers," says Spulber.¶ "We've barely begun to scratch the surface of what we need to know, so policy makers should probably not rush to judgment."¶ However, he does have his own opinions. "I do not believe there is a problem with patent suits and NPEs in particular -- there's no evidence, and even people who [say there is] are relying on horror stories and anecdotes." A rise of patent infringement suits from NPEs is not the big problem, according to an August 2013 report from the US Government Accounting Office. The real issue is a rise in cases about software patents and a lack of clarity about what software patents mean and who owns them, it said, concluding:¶ Our analysis indicates that regardless of the type of litigant, lawsuits involving software-related patents accounted for about 89 percent of the increase in defendants between 2007 and 2011, and most of the suits brought by [NPEs] involved software-related patents. This suggests that the focus on the identity of the litigant -- rather than the type of patent -- may be misplaced.

#### The president could do the plan which avoids the link

Huddleston 9 (Vicki Huddleston, deputy assistant secretary of defense for Africa at the Department of Defense, visiting fellow at Brookings and co-director of the Brookings Project on U.S. Policy Toward a Cuba in Transition from 2007 to 2009, Carlos Pascual, U.S. ambassador to Mexico, He was vice president and director of Foreign Policy at Brookings from 2006 to 2009, “Use "Smart Power" to Help Cubans,” http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2009/02/24-cuba-huddleston)

Executive authority¶ Again and again we hear that the embargo can't be changed because the Helms-Burton law codified it. Nothing could be further from the truth. Whether you agree or disagree with the current commercial embargo, the president can effectively dismantle it by using his executive authority. Helms-Burton codified the embargo regulation, but those regulations provide that ``all transactions are prohibited except as specifically authorized by the Secretary of the Treasury by means of regulations, rulings, instructions, and licenses.''¶ This means that the president's power remains unfettered. He can instruct the secretary to extend, revise or modify embargo regulations. The proof of this statement is that President Bill Clinton issued new regulations for expanded travel and remittances in order to help individuals and grow civil society.¶ Obama will have to modify Office of Foreign Assets Control regulations to fulfill his campaign promise to increase Cuban-American travel and remittances. If he wants to reproduce the more open conditions in Cuba that led to the ''Cuban Spring'' of 2002 and Oswaldo Payá's Varela Project, he could reinstate people-to-people and educational travel. By a simple rule change, he could also speed the entry of life-saving medicines from Cuba, rather than subjecting them to delays from cumbersome OFAC licensing procedures.¶ Since 1992, U.S. law -- the Cuban Democracy Act -- has sought to expand access to ideas, knowledge and information by licensing telecommunications goods and services. Yet, in practice, regulations are so strictly interpreted that the United States in effect is imposing a communications embargo on Cuba. To lift it, the president can authorize a general license for the donation and sale of radios, televisions and computers. In addition, rather than helping Cuban state security keep Yoani Sánchez and others off the Internet, the Obama administration could make Internet technology readily available so that any barriers to communications would be clearly the fault of the Cuban government, and not ours.¶ Environmental concerns rate high with the Obama administration. So it might open bilateral discussions, exchange information and license the provision of scientific equipment to improve the health of the ocean and success of commercial fisheries.¶ The United States Geological Survey estimates that the North Cuba Basin holds 5.5 billion barrels of oil and 9.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserves. If the president wishes, he can instruct the secretary of the treasury to license U.S. companies to explore, exploit and transport these resources that we and the region so badly need.¶ Failed policy¶ After a half-century of failed policy, there is enormous support in the Cuban-American community for initiatives that will improve the well being and independence of the Cuban people. What they didn't know -- but know now -- is that there is no reason they can't reach out to the Cuban people and still retain the embargo as symbol of their concern about the Cuban government's failure to live up to international norms of human rights, democracy and transparency.

#### Obama not pushing a bill, he’s doing XOs AND Congressional legislation insufficient

**Mershon and Byers 2/19**

Erin and Alex, Politico, White House pushes forward with patent reforms, 2/19/14, http://dyn.politico.com/printstory.cfm?uuid=02579809-C9C8-4ECD-9E88-3C9419AB5675

The White House on Thursday will unveil a handful of new actions designed to improve the patent system by stopping bad applications in their tracks, part of an ongoing effort against litigious “patent trolls,” according to several people familiar with the announcement.¶ This marks the next phase of the administration’s patent work, although final details remained fluid Wednesday. President Barack Obama mentioned patent reform in last month’s State of the Union — an address built around the idea that the White House was prepared to take unilateral action on important issues.¶ The announcements are set to come at an afternoon event with key economic and technology advisers, including Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker and National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling.¶ The administration will unveil an initiative with private-sector companies and, potentially, universities to make available more “prior art” — essentially making it easier for Patent and Trademark Office officials to determine whether or not a patent idea is original, the sources said. The administration also is working with companies to provide additional technical training to patent examiners, they said.¶ The president set his sights on patent trolls as far back as last February, but the White House push began in earnest last summer with several legislative recommendations and executive actions. The House of Representatives quickly passed a patent reform bill, the Innovation Act, last December. But activity is moving slower in the Senate this year.¶ Officials are expected to provide updates on the work started last June. For example, the administration is moving forward with an online presence to provide resources for recipients of patent demand letters, sources said — that idea was first revealed during last summer’s executive actions.¶ A spokeswoman for the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy declined to comment.¶ Patent reform resurfaced as a Washington focus last year, even as Congress cleared patent legislation in 2011. Senate Judiciary Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) has said clearing a bill is a priority of his, but legislators are still debating competing proposals — some of which are particularly controversial with parts of patent-dependent industries.¶ For reform supporters, the administration’s efforts certainly don’t hurt. But they don’t address issues that many see as crucial to meaningful reform, like fee-shifting — a rule that could make companies that lose patent cases pay the winner’s legal fees in some cases. Getting more comprehensive legislation through Capitol Hill, they say, is a must-do.

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#### No patent deal – industry opposition

Smith 4/8

Ernie, social media journalist for Associations Now, PATENT REFORM FACES A FRESH FIGHT IN THE SENATE, 4/8/14, http://associationsnow.com/2014/04/patent-reform-faces-fresh-fight-senate/

A bill intended to take a bite out of what some call frivolous patent lawsuits is currently tied up in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Now, reported friction at the bargaining table—and the rise of new opposition—could stop it entirely.¶ The long fight to weaken litigious “patent trolls” could be nearing some action with a bill in the Senate, but that progress comes at a time when patent industry groups appear to be coalescing in opposition.¶ There’s still plenty of support for patent reform targeting what many critics say are abusive lawsuits. The House passed its Innovation Act late last year.¶ Its Senate counterpart, the Patent Transparency and Improvements Act, is being worked on by the Judiciary Committee, though the panel said Tuesday it will delay consideration of the measure until at least Thursday. The legislation could face a final committee vote by the end of April, but there are several issues to be resolved, including a “fee-shifting” provision that would put the burden of legal costs on the plaintiff in the event a lawsuit fails.¶ The Hill notes that groups as diverse as the Consumer Electronics Association, the National Restaurant Association, and the Application Developers Alliance have offered their input on the bill both directly and through coalitions. In recent days, however, attention has shifted to opponents who are raising new concerns about its scope and the danger they say it could pose to the overall patent system.¶ And with the 2014 elections likely to divert attention from the effort by summer, the clock is ticking.¶ OPPOSITION GROWS¶ A coalition of trade groups, large businesses, and others led by the pro-patent Innovation Alliance has pledged to fight the bill unless key compromises are made. They conveyed that message in a letter to the two top Judiciary Committee members, Sens. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Charles Grassley (R-IA). Other signatories include well-known entities like the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), Monsanto, and General Electric.¶ “We are concerned that some of the measures under consideration go far beyond what is necessary or desirable to combat abusive patent litigation, and, in fact, would do serious damage to the patent system,” the group stated in the letter. “As it stands, many of the provisions assume that every patent holder is a patent troll. Drafting legislation in this way seriously weakens the ability of every patent holder to enforce a patent.”¶ Support for that stance appears to be growing. On Monday, a number of additional groups signed on to the letter, including the U.S. chapter of IEEE, the National Small Business Association, and the Texas Association of Business.

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#### Cuba lobby weak – it’s all a bluff --- your ev.

William **LeoGrande** 4/21/**2013** “The Cuban Chill”,

<http://www.registerguard.com/rg/opinion/29740770-78/cuba-lobby-policy-china-political.html.csp>

Likewise, the Cuba Lobby has blocked a sensible policy toward Cuba for half a century, with growing damage to U.S. relations with Latin America. When a courageous U.S. president finally decides to defy the Cuba Lobby with a stroke as bold as Nixon’s trip to China, she or he will discover that the Cuba Lobby no longer has the political clout it once had . The strategic importance of repairing the United States’ frayed relations with Latin America has come to outweigh the political risk of reconciliation with Havana.