



Department of Political Science

Chair of History of Political Institutions

CUBA AND THE UNITED STATES

**History of the diplomatic dispute between the “last remnant”
of the Cold War in the Americas and the Capitalist giant in
the last sixty years**

SUPERVISOR

Professor Domenico Maria Bruni

CANDIDATE

Rosanna Mammato

078032

a.y. 2017/2018

Abstract

The Republic of Cuba and the United States of America have been at odds since the outbreak of the Revolution led by Fidel Castro in the 1950s. However this has not always been the case, indeed the US administration was really supportive of Fulgencio Batista's regime due to the vast economic interests that the Caribbean island opposite to the coasts of Florida represented. From the times of the Cuban Revolution from the Spanish colonization, the United States gained more and more influence in the territory, which was not only economic, but political as well, with the aim of annexing Cuba to the US federation.

Things radically changed after the Revolution led by Commanders Fidel Castro and Ernesto *Che* Guevara, who in 1958 overthrew the Batista regime. Since then, the reforms implemented by the new government, and the drastic shift to a communist regime, signed the end of the diplomatic relations between the two states, which escalated in the shortest while in the complete interruption of any kind of relationship and brought not only to the by now sixty year embargo, but also led to the Nuclear Missile Crisis of the 1960s.

The contrast between the Cuba and the United States remained mostly unvaried for more than fifty years, and had a complete turnover since the early years of the XXI century. Indeed, during the Obama administration of the last decade, the liaison between the Castro Republic and the hegemon in the fight to communism softened up, mostly thanks to the repeatedly resolutions issued by the General Assembly of the United Nations and to President Barack Obama who had already asserted during his senate mandate in 2004 that:

*«The Cuban embargo has failed to provide the sorts of rising standards of living
[...] It is now time to acknowledge that that particular policy has failed.»*

Subsequently, some of the economic restrictions against Cuba since 2011 were lifted, an act that gave birth to the so called "Cuban Thaw", better known as "el Deshielo" in the Caribbean island, and which led to the reopening of the diplomatic relations with the United States in 2014.

Unfortunately for the two countries, by the time President Donald Trump took over the Oval Office, things took a complete different turn, due to the declarations of the new US head of state, who stated that he would have re-imposed the economic restrictions of the embargo on Cuba, a declaration that stirred up the international community which had seen a flicker for the end of the Cuban question.

President Trump's decision was taken on the grounds that the United States ninety miles away neighbor did not comply with democratic standards and the economic sanctions were actually seen as a punishment to set up a reaction from the Cuban government to fasten up the democratization process. However, the

resolution did not represent much of a concern for Cuba, since the island had been able to survive almost sixty years of economic exclusion and isolation from the United States.

The crucial point for a turnover in the Cuban political framework was represented by the general elections of 2018, and by the appointment of the new President of the Republic, who resulted to be the university professor Miguel Díaz-Canel. His appointment represents a dramatic clean cut from the presidencies of more than a half century. Indeed, Díaz-Canel is the first head of state in the country who was born after the Castro Revolution, and he clearly is an emblematic figure for the new Cuban generations.

This thesis aims to analyze the history of the diplomatic relationship between the Republic of Cuba and the United States retracing the actual path of the two nations since the end of the Batista regime. Then it will move on to analyzing the main political events of the last half century, from the communist government settlement and its reforms through the years, and the American policies implemented towards Cuba until 2008. The final part of the thesis concerns a confrontation of President Obama and President Trump administrations, their decisions about the Cuban matter, and in conclusion there will be discussion related to the end of the Castro era, and the new elected President of the Republic of Cuba.

Table of contents

1. History of the “Bloqueo” against the Republic of Cuba.....	1
1.1. The embargo.....	1
1.1.1 <i>From the origins of the Cuban Embargo to 1980s.....</i>	<i>1</i>
1.1.2 <i>US policies from 1990s to 2008 and the UN resolutions.....</i>	<i>2</i>
1.2 The reasons of the US.....	7
1.2.1 <i>Cuba economic dependence from the US from the XIX century to 1958.....</i>	<i>8</i>
1.2.2 <i>Cuban economic reforms after the Revolution.....</i>	<i>9</i>
1.3 The embargo, economic sanctions and their relevance in an international context.....	10
1.3.1 <i>Economic sanctions in International Law.....</i>	<i>11</i>
2. Recent historical developments.....	13
2.1 The “Deshielo Cubano”.....	13
2.1.1 <i>The first steps of the two governments and the bilateral talks.....</i>	<i>15</i>
2.1.2 <i>Economic manoeuvres.....</i>	<i>18</i>
2.2 President Trump revoking of the former president Obama’s policies towards Cuba..	20
2.2.1 <i>Reactions from Cuba, the US and the international community.....</i>	<i>21</i>
3. The end of Castro’s regime and 2018 elections.....	24
3.1 The elections.....	24
3.1.1 <i>Cuba’s electoral system.....</i>	<i>24</i>
3.1.2 <i>The Constitutional reform.....</i>	<i>25</i>
3.1.3 <i>Miguel Díaz-Canel’s position on Trump’s policy.....</i>	<i>26</i>
Conclusions.....	28
Bibliography.....	30
List of UN resolutions.....	34

1. History of the “Bloqueo” against the Republic of Cuba

1.1 The embargo

1.1.1 *From the origins of the Cuban Embargo to 1980s*

The Republic of Cuba and the United States of America have been on the outs since the dawn of Castro’s revolution. Indeed, the embargo (also known as “bloqueo” by Cubans) imposed by the United States was firstly implemented in 1958, during the most crucial moment of the revolution, when rebels were closer and closer to approaching the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista’s regime, whom, had been ruling since 1952 revoking many of the constitutional guarantees of the 1940 Constitution.

The United States pressured Batista to restore some of the constitutional guarantees in the island, which he did in January, but he revoked them again after few weeks, therefore leading the fight to the rebellion to a more critical step. Due to this reason the Eisenhower administration implemented an arms embargo on Cuba, on March 14, 1958, and the military started intercepting every ship headed to the island, with the purpose of enrooting them back to US ports. The reason for this very first blockade was expressed by the administration as the intention of the United States of not wanting any of its weapons to be used in a civil war, indeed, the embargo was then even extended to the prohibition of the use of any arm previously supplied for the suppression of the rebellion. This further step taken by the US administration strengthened the rebels’ position in their fight for freedom, since they continued to receive military supply instead of Batista’s army.

By the beginning of 1959, revolutionaries finally achieved their ambitions, and Fidel Castro took control of the Cuban government, and he started to implement many reforms, but the most important act by *el Comandante* was the establishment of the Communist regime throughout the island, that made Cuba the first communist state in the Western Hemisphere, just 90 km away from the coasts of the United States, which had confirmed itself as the major actor involved in the fight against the “Bolshevik monster”.

Almost two years after the weaponry blockade, President Eisenhower signed a partial embargo concerning exports to Cuba, except food and medicine, in 1960. Since then there has been an escalation in the enlargement of the sanctions towards the island by the United States in a way that Cubans started to consider it as a proper blockade, and it is for this reason that the people of the Republic of Cuba refer to it as the *Bloqueo*. Nevertheless under the Eisenhower administration all diplomatic relations between the two countries were ended and the US embassy in Havana was

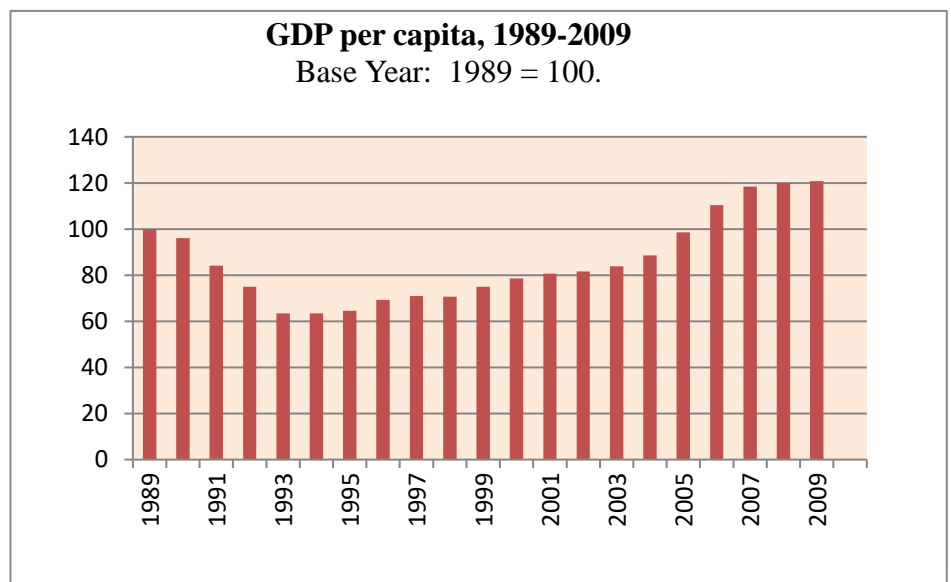
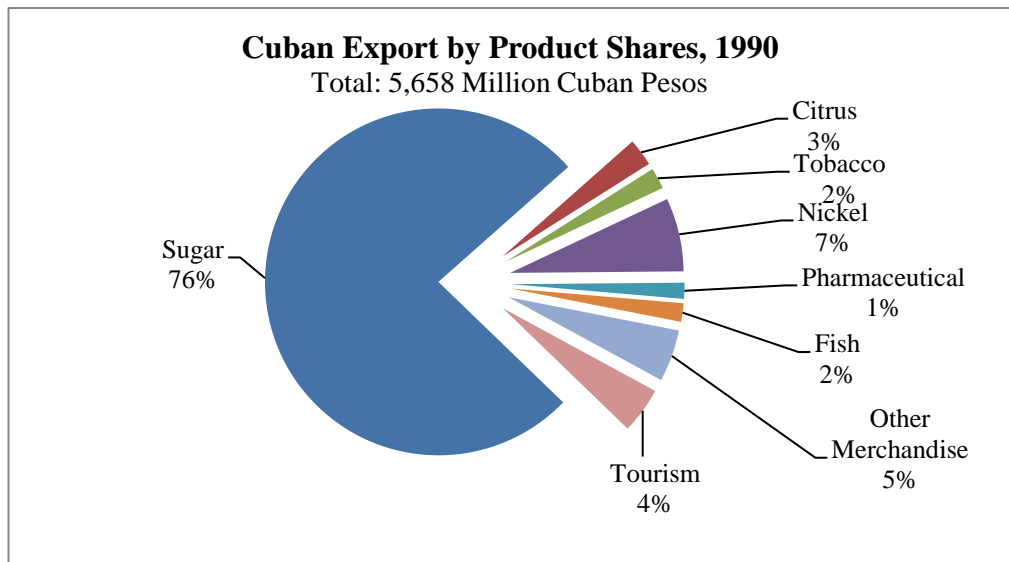
closed, and since 1977 the building has been later used as the siege of a de facto embassy, that worked under the name of US Interests Section.

The United States policy towards the Isla Bonita were heavily strengthened under President Kennedy's leadership, after the US failed attempt of invading the Bay of Pigs in 1961, and moreover, after the evidence caught by a spy plane that observed some ships transferring nuclear missiles from the USSR to Cuba, that caused the Cuban Missile Crisis. This last episode contributed to President Kennedy's declaration of a complete embargo, concerning all kind of trade between Cuba and the United States of America, which were specified in Proclamation 3447, 1962. One year later a travel ban was set, together with economic sanctions concerning different issues, such as: outlawing financial transactions with Cuba, forbidding any importation except information materials.

As cited above, 1977 saw the opening of the U.S. Interests Section in the Cuban capital city, thanks to President James Earl Carter attempts to re-open relations with the island also through the authorization of secret talks with Cuba, from the Carter administration. However this stage only lasted for a few years, apparently unto 1982, when Cuba was added to the "States Sponsors of Terrorism" list that had been drawn up by the US State Department. The reasons for this choice by the Reagan administration was given by the Cuban support for communist rebellions in Latin America and Africa.

1.1.2. US policies from 1990s to 2008 and the UN resolutions

1990s saw a bilateral change in the Cuban Embargo issue: on one hand the US administrations tightened the restrictions towards the Republic of Cuba, but on the other hand these years signed the entrance of the United Nations on the stage. Furthermore the fall of USSR in 1991 caused a major shift in the attention posed to the Embargo by the international community. Indeed, since the first steps of the revolution, the Bolshevik country had been a considerable, if not the most important, trading partner of the Republic of Cuba, granting to the nation an annual aid of three billion dollars, energy, food, raw materials and machinery supplies. The collapse of the USSR resulted in a heavy decline of the Cuban economy, which in 1990 still relied on sugar exports for the 76%. Between the years 1989-1993, and as it is possible to notice from data, the island underwent losses between 35% and 50% during that period, causing a crisis that was later overcome since 1994, when Castro's government decided to allow some foreign investment and thanks to the promotion of tourism, although limited.



In 1992 the Cuban Democracy Act, also known as *Torricelli Act* (then chairman of the House Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs), aimed at strengthening the Embargo effects by affecting other states other than Cuba, prohibiting the trading with the country to all US foreign subsidiaries, and restricting remittances. It was at this time that the international community made its first steps forward expressing their concern about the Cuban matter. United Kingdom, Canada, France, Mexico and Brazil condemned the newly established US policy in the first place, and they were quickly followed by other nations.

¹ Source: UN CEPAL, 2000 Table A.38 and Mesa-Lago, 2000. 366

² Source: *ONE*, *AEC* various issues and UN ECLAC, Preliminary Overview, various issues

Thanks to the opposition of the major states previously cited that the engine of the United Nation was turned over, giving birth to a mobilization in favour of the end of the Cuban embargo that has lasted until nowadays. In 1992 the chief representative of Cuba, Alcibaldes Hidalgo Basulto stated in the General Assembly that the embargo had cost the country more than 30 billion dollars in about thirty years, and he introduced the first resolution on the matter. Indeed, from 1992 on the General Assembly has issued one resolution per year soliciting the end of the sanctions to Cuba. The A/RES/47/19 of November 24, 1992 states as following:

*«Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo
imposed by the United States of America against Cuba*

The General Assembly,

*Determined to encourage strict compliance with the purposes and
principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,*

*Reaffirming, among other principles, the sovereign equality of States,
non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs and freedom of
trade and international navigation, which are also enshrined in many
international legal instruments,*

*Concerned about the promulgation and application by Member States of laws
and regulations whose extraterritorial effects affect the sovereignty of other
States and the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their
jurisdiction, as well as the freedom of trade and navigation,*

*Having learned of the recent promulgation of measures of that nature
aimed at strengthening and extending the economic, commercial and financial
embargo against Cuba,*

*1. Calls upon all States to refrain from promulgating and applying laws
and measures of the kind referred to in the preamble to the present resolution
in conformity with their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations
and international law and with the commitments that they have freely entered*

into in acceding to international legal instruments that, inter alia, reaffirm the freedom of trade and navigation;

2. Urges States that have such laws or measures to take the necessary steps to repeal or invalidate them as soon as possible in accordance with their legal regime;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

*4. Decides to include the item in the provisional agenda of its forty-eighth session.»*³

The vote outcome resulted in 59 states in favour of the resolution, 79 abstentions among which there were the 12 countries of the European Community and Russia, and only 3 votes against, namely: the United States, Israel and Romania.⁴

The 1992 resolution was then followed by two others, namely: A/RES/48/16 of 3 November 1993 and A/RES/49/9 of 26 October 1994. It is possible to notice a shift in the General Assembly vote: indeed in 1993 88 states voted in favour of the resolution, 4 against and there were 57 abstentions, while one year later there were 101 favourable votes, 48 abstentions and only the United States and Israel voted against the resolution.⁵ Year by year the outcome of the General Assembly vote for resolutions regarding the Cuban embargo was intended to always grow in favour of its end.

Some steps toward a “softer” approach to the embargo started taking place during President Clinton administration in 1995. The President signed an executive order allowing the opening of a Western Union office in the Cuban capital, and he lightened some travel restrictions. These actions met with a lot of criticism from many members of the Republican party and as the President stated he received such a pressure that alt him from taking a strong attitude against the embargo, in spite of his idea that the sanctions should have been softened. Clinton also said that «anybody with half a

³A/RES/47/19, 70th plenary meeting, 24 November 1992

⁴ http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide/r47_resolutions_table_eng.htm

⁵ http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide/r48_resolutions_table_eng.htm
http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide/r49_resolutions_table_eng.htm

brain could see the embargo was counterproductive”.⁶ In the same year the US State Department also managed to deal with the immigration question thanks to the *Cuban Migration Agreement*, mainly known as the *wet foot – dry foot* policy. The new practice provided the return to Cuba for all people that were intercepted off shore, namely the “wet foot”, except in cases in which expatriates expressed their concern of being persecuted in the fatherland. On the other hand the “dry foot” people were those who had been able to reach the land, and therefore they were allowed to stay in the United States. Despite these new policies aimed to reproaching the United States and the Republic of Cuba, November 2, 1995 the General Assembly adopted a new resolution, the A/RES/50/10, after the report of the Secretary-General (Add.1) containing the feedbacks from 48 governments and six Agencies of the United Nations, about the resolution adopted the previous year, namely A/RES/49/9. The resolution received 177 votes in favour, three against and 38 abstentions.⁷

In 1996 the United States introduced a new bill concerning the Cuban embargo: the Democratic Solidarity Act, mainly known as the *Helms-Burton Act*. Again the United States did aim at affecting external states and not only the island. Indeed, this act allowed sanctions toward companies and states that invested in those that were American properties on Cuban soil at the time of Castro’s revolution.



8

⁶ Taylor Branch, *The Clinton Tapes: Wrestling History with the President*, 2009

⁷ http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide/r50_resolutions_table_eng.htm

⁸ Photo Credit: Rosanna Mammato, El Rincon de los Cretinos, Museo de la Revolución, La Havana

Less has been done by the US government to comply with the annual General Assembly resolutions that have been issued between 1996 and 2001. It was in this year that due to the extreme critical circumstances given by the devastating Hurricane Michelle, that the United States agreed on allowing US companies to sell food to the island for humanitarian reasons. Despite Fidel Castro's reluctance to allow American imports in the Cuban Republic, the United States turned out to be the major food supplier of the country by 2008. Anyway in this same period, under President George W. Bush administration restrictions towards the embargo became even harsher. Whoever violated them was charged either with a penalty of 10 years in prison, or with a fine up to one million dollar. At this time also the American public opinion started to make its voice heard, so much that even the pro-embargo asked for a lift of the restrictions, to allow people to visit families in Cuba or at least to send money to help them.

In 2008, Fidel Castro stepped down from his position of president of Cuba, leaving the floor to his younger brother Raúl who showed the will of implementing economic and political reforms, and of normalizing the relationship with the United States. However in the same year a series of devastating hurricanes hit the island, providing huge damages to the local industry and agriculture, therefore, the Cuban government attention to the political maneuvers shifted in favour of the highly critical situation that the nation was passing through.

1.2 The reasons of the US

The reason why the United States decided to embargo the Republic of Cuba are to be found in the extreme economic presence and influence of the former state on the latter state's soil before Castro's Revolution, and later also due to the ideological conflict that was already taking place because of the Cold War, and saw Cuba stepping in as the first Communist country in the Western Hemisphere, and of course as a threat for the giant of Capitalism. But to deeply understand the economic implication it is necessary to go further back in time, even before the Revolution and before Fulgencio Batista's regime. Indeed the US economic speculation in started in the late XIX century, when the island of Cuba was fighting to achieve its own independence from Spain.

During that period the United States represented the major trading partner of Cuba, and when the former underwent an economic collapse, the latter followed back, bringing the bankruptcy of the tobacco industries, and leaving the sugar production as the only "remunerative" activity of the island, with the United States as the sole buyer. Moreover, less than 20% of sugar mills owner were

reportedly Cubans, the rest was in the hands of Americans landlords and the 95% of sugar production was exported to the United States.⁹

1.2.1. Cuba economic dependence from the US from the XIX century to 1958

Between 1898 and 1906 the US stake in Cuba went from fifty million dollars to two hundred million, also thanks to the move played by the United Fruit Company in 1903, of buying 200,000 acres of Cuban land. That same year the two countries signed a treaty concerning commercial reciprocity, in which Cuba allowed the United States to take control of its market, and later another treaty provided the Americans with the permission of settling coal and naval basis on the island. Two years later one quarter of the whole Cuban soil was owned by US citizens, namely “colonists” that had purchased the land for a sum of about fifty million dollars.¹⁰

During the 1920s US investments in Cuba have exponentially grown, touching 1.24 billion dollars, the state interests were in control of more than a half of the sugar production of the island, federal banks transported millions of dollars to Havana, and private citizens continued on purchasing Cuban land, to build mansions and casino. Only in 1929, due to the Great Depression all kinds of trade with the island suddenly dropped, leading Cuba to bankruptcy. However the crisis was overcome thanks to a new treaty that included Cuba in Roosevelt’s New Deal, and with loans from the United States.¹¹

In 1952 Fulgencio Batista took over the Cuban government, refuting the elections outcome that saw the Communist Carlos Prio as the winner. President Eisenhower immediately recognized the new formed government of Cuba and sent economic aids to the island, despite the fact that the new Cuban president had suspended the 1940 Constitution, causing the rising of the revolutionary movement. However during the first year of Batista’s rule many contracts were given to US corporations in order to start massive construction projects in Cuba, and this led the United State to control the 80% of the island railroads, 90% of electrical facilities and 75% of Cuban land by 1958.¹²

⁹ Johnson, Leland L., *U.S. Business Interests in Cuba and the Rise of Castro, World Politics, 1965*

¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 9

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

1.2.2. *Cuban economic reforms after the Revolution*

The new economic era in Cuba begun in 1959 when Fidel Castro, the winner of the Revolution and the new President of the Republic, nationalized and reduced the telephone rates of the Cuban Telephone Company which was an affiliate of a US corporation. This was just the first of the many maneuvers that the newly established Cuban government pursued. Indeed, Castro also intended to change the regulations on sugar trade between the two states, and during an unofficial visit to the United States he explained that it did not bring any advantage to Cuba. The next step of the administration was a bilateral agreement between the two states concerning the cooperation for developing the agrarian reform on the island, but the first Agrarian Reform Law passed by the Cuban government put limits on land property, and bonds were offered in compensation for expropriation. At that point in history, US citizens owned 75% of arable land of the island of Cuba, while 5 companies from United States controlled around two million acres for sugar production.¹³

Castro's nationalization policies were perpetrated on the whole territory and in every economic field. In 1960 the government expropriated tens of thousands of acres that at the time were property of US sugar companies, also encompassing 35.000 acres owned by the United Fruit Company that owned more than 200 thousand acres of Cuban land. Later on, all properties of the cited company were nationalized. This act by Castro's administration was intended to lower the presence of the company in the state of Cuba due to its widely known strong affiliation with the United States and CIA. Indeed there was evidence that the company was instrumental in overthrowing the recently elected government in Guatemala, and evidently Castro did not want to take the same risk.

During the same year, Cuba negotiated a deal with the USSR concerning a supply program from the Bolshevik country of oil, raw materials, machineries, fertilizers and food, not excluding a credit of 100 billion dollars to the Communist island. The US administration forbade to all of its affiliated companies not to refine any oil coming from the USSR, and as a consequence the Cuban government nationalized all refineries such as Esso, Shell and Texaco that were present on the state territory. The United States replied with the cancellation of the sugar trade that included half the crop that was produced by Cuba, and moreover prohibited exports to the island. Castro then expropriated and nationalized all foreign-owned properties. At this point approximately one billion dollars of US assets were nationalized by the Cuban government.¹⁴

¹³ Philip, Peters, *A Viewers Guide to Cuba's Economic Reforms*", Lexington Institute, 2012

¹⁴ Ibid.

A further reform, namely the Urban Reform Law, ended all private commercial estates, industrial and transportation companies, 20 of which were owned by the United States. Moreover banks, and phone companies were nationalized. This last step brought the US administration to impose the embargo on Cuba, whose initial justification was to aim to the destabilization of Castro's regime, causing as much damage as possible to the country, and trying to lead to the collapse of the regime.¹⁵

Having analyzed all the historical and economic developments that took place between the two states it is possible to state that the United States wanted to punish Cuba for the huge loss of properties and assets that were uncompensated due to the fact that every kind of compensation that was offered by Castro had always been rejected by the major counterpart, namely the United States, while other countries that had small companies on the island territory (such as the United Kingdom, Canada and France) agreed to the proposals. Moreover the United States were deeply concerned about the Communist regime that had been imposed in Cuba, because in the hostile climate of the Cold War, a new Soviet ally only 90km far from the shores of Florida clearly represented a major threat.

1.3 The embargo, economic sanctions and their relevance in an international context

Economic sanctions such as embargoes have been widely used throughout history because it was widely accepted that they represented a more "humane alternative" to armed conflicts. In 1919 President Woodrow Wilson stated:

*« A nation that is boycotted is a nation that is in sight of surrender. Apply this economic, peaceful, silent, deadly remedy and there will be no need for force. It is a terrible remedy. It does not cost life outside the nation boycotted, but it brings a pressure upon the nation which, in my judgment, no modern nation could resist. »*¹⁶

Indeed, the modern assumption related to economic sanctions dates back to the creation of the League of Nations, which allowed the use of coercive, non-military measures in order to dispose of an alternative to the use of force. Article 16, paragraph 1 of the Covenant of the League of Nations cited:

¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 11

¹⁶ G.C. Hufbauer, J.J. Schott, K.A. Elliott, *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered*, 1990

« Should any Member of the League resort to war in disregard of its covenants under Articles 12, 13 or 15, it shall ipso facto be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other Members of the League, which hereby undertake immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the covenant-breaking State, and the prevention of all financial, commercial or personal intercourse between the nationals of the covenant-breaking State and the nationals of any other State, whether a Member of the League or not.»¹⁷

1.3.1 *Economic sanctions in International Law*

During the 1970s the United Nations brought back economic statecraft as a tool for dealing with foreign policy, and nowadays, economic sanctions are widely common in international relations and moreover in disputes. Thus a sanction is referred to as «a “reaction” to a prior internationally wrongful act»,¹⁸ and they seek to coerce political behaviours of states, striking their welfare by reducing or even completely blocking international trade towards them. The coercion can result in being direct or indirect, in the former case governments are convinced to change their policies, while in the latter, sanctions can bring on popular discontent and therefore pressure on governments in order to achieve the needed reforms.

In international law sanctions can be decentralized, namely horizontal, in the sense that each member state is free to implement or not them, and this was mainly the case in the League of Nations, or they can be centralized or vertical: in this case member state have the obligation to implement sanctions when they have been decided.

According to Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the Security Council may adopt some measures against a state, in order to maintain international security, and these measures do not include the use of force, but the suspension of economic and diplomatic relations with the state that is accounted as guilty of unlawful behavior under International Law. Article 41, Chapter VII of the UN Charter cites:

«The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption

¹⁷ Art. 16, par. 1, Covenant of the League of Nations

¹⁸International Law Commission, Art. 22, par. 3, *Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts*, 2001

of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.»¹⁹

Before the adoption of any measure the Security Council has to determine «the existence of any threat to the peace or breach of peace, or an act of aggression” and make recommendations or decide what measures are to be taken “to maintain or restore international peace and security»²⁰ according to Article 39 of the UN Charter,

However there are some limits to the coercion of sanctions due the fact that there is no clear mention of their scope and duration, but instead it is widely recognized that humanitarian issues could place limits to economic sanctions. These issues include:

- ~ the prohibition of starvation as a method of warfare, cited in Article 54 of the Additional Protocol I and Article 14 of Additional Protocol II;
- ~ the relief assistance in naval blockades, in article 23 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and Article 70 of Additional Protocol I, according to which it is possible to suspend a naval blockade in case civilians witness shortages of medical supplies or food;
- ~ the Rule of Distinction, a fundamental principle of international humanitarian law, according to which collective sanctions must be aimed at the regime, and must not endanger the entire population.

Considering the last point regarding the Rule of Distinction, it is possible to not involve civilians in the economic coercion thanks to the smart sanctions that aim at striking precise actors, in most of the cases the policy elites or even non-governmental groups by cutting their resources to keep their regimes or unlawful actions.

The Cuban embargo follows a different path from the economic sanctions of International law, since it was born, and still exists as a US domestic foreign policy that had begun with a tacit consensus of the International community due to the Cold War, but right after the USSR collapse it has been widely recognized as an unlawful, unauthorized practice that has been carried on from one single state, and the proves of the international dissent are to be found in the annual resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly pushing for the end of the sanctions since 1992 unto nowadays.

¹⁹ UN Charter, Ch. VII, Art.41

²⁰ UN Charter, Ch. VII, Art. 39

2. Recent historical developments

2.1 The “Deshielo Cubano”



The first signs of a rapprochement between the Cuban Republic and the United States of America started back in year 2008 in the occasion of two political events for both States: on one hand the resignation of Fidel Castro as President of Cuba and the subsequent election of his brother Raúl, on the other one the US elections which saw Barack Obama as the new head of State. Castro left the country's leadership, which he was leading since 1959, due to the aggravation of his health reasons and left a statement to the communist newspaper “Granma”:

« A mis entrañables compatriotas, que me hicieron el inmenso honor de elegirme en días recientes como miembro del Parlamento (...) les comunico que no aspiraré ni aceptaré -repito- no aspiraré ni aceptaré, el cargo de Presidente del Consejo de Estado y Comandante en Jefe. »²²

« To my dearest compatriots, who have recently honoured me so much by electing me a member of the Parliament (...) I am saying that I will neither aspire to nor accept - I repeat, I will neither aspire to nor accept - the positions of President of the State Council and Commander in Chief. »

²¹ Photo Credit: Rosanna Mammato, Cuba Contra el Boqueo

²² Fidel Castro, *Mensaje del Comandante en Jefe*, Diario Granma 19 febrero 2008

Historically, Raúl Castro has always been the most keen towards the regulations of the relationship between Cuba and the United States, and his elections represented the big step forward that was needed by the Cuban Republic.

From the United States instead President Obama opened a completely new era for the diplomatic relations between the two countries, keeping faith to a statement he released back in 2004, when he still was a senator:

*«The Cuban embargo has failed to provide the sorts of rising standards of living, and has squeezed the innocents in Cuba and utterly failed to overthrow Castro, who has now been there since I was born. It is now time to acknowledge that that particular policy has failed.»*²³

2011 was the year in which President Obama administration started its real battle to the Cuban embargo by easing some of the restrictions concerning the remittances and the travel ban for American citizens²⁴. Despite these moves towards the Caribbean state, the United States still preferred to maintain the status of the economic blockade, while waiting for a concrete signal of change from the Cuban government for matters regarding basically the guarantee and respect of Human Rights and the release of the political prisoners.²⁵

The above mentioned expectations were at the core of a new discussion back in 2012 between the Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez and the US ambassador Ronald Godard at the United Nations General Assembly. Indeed Minister Rodriguez brought about the issue of the failure of the over fifty year US administration policies, which were blamed of inhumanity by the Cuban representative²⁶. On the other hand Ambassador Godard replied in a statement that the sanctions used towards Cuba were an instrument to help the nation increase its concern in Human Rights and basic freedoms, and let them be actualized in the island political context.²⁷ Moreover the ambassador added some financial data to its speech assessing that since 2011, the United States had already sent back around two billion dollar in remittances and another \$300 million in terms of medical and agricultural products, while the Cuban government had

²³ Barack Obama on Cuban Embargo

²⁴ Ginger Thompson, *Restrictions on Travel to Cuba Are Eased*, New York Times, Jan. 14, 2011

²⁵ The White House Office of the Press Secretary, *Remarks by the President in an 'Open for Questions' Roundtable*, "www.whitehouse.gov, 2011

²⁶ AFP, Record Vote for UN Resolution Against Cuba Embargo, 2012

²⁷ Ibid.

detained above four thousand people for political reasons, a point that was contrary to the requests that were made by President Obama Administration.²⁸

The discussion led to the 22nd UN resolution concerning the condemnation of the US embargo against the Cuban Republic, which passed with 188 votes, leaving only Israel and the United States voting against it.²⁹ was condemned again, the United Nations passed a resolution condemning the embargo for the 22nd consecutive year.

2.1.1 The first steps of the two governments and the bilateral talks

The first official announcement of the reestablishment of the diplomatic relations between the United States and the Republic of Cuba, was released by President Barack Obama on December 17, 2014, a date that set a complete turning point in the history of the two countries which had been at odds for 53 years, since 1961. Indeed this moment was seen as the erasing the last traces of a Cold War hostility, and the meeting point was obtained thanks to eighteen months of secret diplomatic talks which were mediated both by Canada and Pope Francis in the Vatican City.³⁰ President Obama referred to this historical moment as a move beyond a “rigid policy that is rooted in events that took place before most of us were born.”³¹ At the same time President Raúl Castro delivered a statement to the Cuban citizens in which he declared the decision taken by the two government, highlighting the pressure on the end of the economic blockade against the island:

*« [...] hemos acordado el restablecimiento de las relaciones diplomáticas. Esto no quiere decir que lo principal se haya resuelto. El bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero que provoca enormes daños humanos y económicos a nuestro país debe cesar. »*³²

« [...] We have agreed to reestablish diplomatic relations. This in no way means that the heart of the issue has been solved. The economic, commercial, and

²⁸ Ronald D. Godard, *Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Ronald D. Godard, U.S. Senior Advisor for Western Hemisphere Affairs, on the Cuba Resolution in the General Assembly Hall*, www.usun.state.gov, Nov. 13, 2012

²⁹ Peter James Spielmann, "UN General Assembly Votes Against US Cuba Embargo," Associated Press, 2013

³⁰ Peter Baker, *U.S. to Restore Full Relations With Cuba, Erasing a Last Trace of Cold War Hostility*, New York Times, December 17, 2014

³¹ *Statement by the President on Cuba Policy Changes*, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, December 17, 2014

³² Raúl Castro Ruz, *Alocución del Presidente cubano: Los Cinco ya están en Cuba*, Cubadebate, 2014

financial blockade, which causes enormous human and economic damages to our country, must cease. »

From that day on it is possible to talk about “Cuban Thaw”, or as Cubans mean it “*El Deshielo*”.

The bilateral talks between Cuba and the United States started in January 2015 in Havana Convention Center, by a US delegation headed by Roberta S. Jacobson, Assistant Secretary of State, and on the other side the Cuban head of North American Affairs, Josefina Vidal Ferreiro.³³ In this occasion the representative of Cuba put pressure on the end of the US migration policies towards the island citizens which were subject to the wet feet, dry feet system, a practice started in 1995, which was included in the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966. Indeed Cuba argued that this policy facilitated the migration from the island to the United States, since the latter guaranteed the US citizenship to all the people seeking asylum which were found on US soil.³⁴

On the other hand the United States interests regarded mainly the improvement and respect of human rights, and freedoms by the Cuban Government. Furthermore, the US representatives decided to temporarily maintain the Cuban Adjustment Act, included the migration policy.³⁵ The practice however was ended by President Obama in 2017.³⁶

The talks went on for two more encounters between the diplomatic corps of the two States, until March 16, 2015, when the dialogue was cut off without any statement. After this event, President Barack Obama and President Raúl Castro met in April in occasion of the Summit of the Americas, which was held in Panama. The presidents seemed to find a meeting point, stating that the two governments would have had to work harder together to overcome their differences and find a solution for the common good.³⁷

Following the Summit of the America, the Cuban government complied to the US request of releasing 53 prisoners which were identified as political prisoners, together with two American citizens, one of whom had been incarcerated for about twenty years, since he was a

³³ Klapper, Bradley & Weissenstein, Michael, *US, Cuba Spar Over Migration Policy at Historic Havana Talks*, Yahoo! News. Associated Press, 2015

³⁴ Cuban Adjustment Act, 1966

³⁵ Trotta, Daniel & Wroughton, Lesley, *U.S. Presses Cuba on Human Rights in Talks on Restoring Ties*, Reuters, 2015

³⁶ Barack Obama, *Statement by the President on Cuban Immigration Policy*, whitehouse.gov, Jan. 12, 2017

³⁷ Bobic, Igor, *Barack Obama and Cuba President Raul Castro Make History with First Sit-Down Meeting*, The Huffington Post, 2015

member of the US intelligence. In the meanwhile, the first act of the Obama administration towards the Republic of Cuba was to remove the State from the list of states which are considered sponsors of terrorism, on May 29.³⁸ Nevertheless the Embargo on Cuba was not lifted yet, since it could only be repealed by a Congressional act, as declared by US Secretary of State John Kerry.³⁹

The official reinstitution of the diplomatic relations between the United States and the Republic of Cuba was officialized on July 20, 2015, with the formal opening of a Cuban embassy in Washington D.C. and of the US one in Havana. The two embassies substituted the Cuban interest section and the US interest section, which had represented the two nations on the respective soil since 1977.⁴⁰

Another historical momentum in the rapprochement process between the two countries was the official visit of President Barack Obama to Cuba on March 20, 2016, becoming the first US president to do so after eighty-eight years, the last being President Calvin Coolidge in 1928.⁴¹



42

³⁸ Katie Wall, *U.S. Officially Removes Cuba From State Sponsors of Terrorism List*, NBC News, 2015

³⁹ Oren Dorell, *Cuban Flag Flies at Embassy in Washington*, USA Today, 2015

⁴⁰ *U.S., Cuba restore full diplomatic ties after 5 decades*, CBC News, 2015

⁴¹ Michelle Hackman, *Barack Obama Will Be the First Sitting President to Visit Cuba in 88 Years*, vox.com, 2016

⁴² Photo Credit: Chuck Kennedy – Official White House Photo

That same year former Cuban President Fidel Castro passed away on November 25. However the *Lider Maximo*, left his statement concerning the relations between Cuba and the United States the year before his death in which he declared:

*« No confío en la política de Estados Unidos ni he intercambiado una palabra con ellos, sin que esto signifique, ni mucho menos, un rechazo a una solución pacífica de los conflictos o peligros de guerra. Defender la paz es un deber de todos. Cualquier solución pacífica y negociada a los problemas entre Estados Unidos y los pueblos o cualquier pueblo de América Latina, que no implique la fuerza o el empleo de la fuerza, deberá ser tratada de acuerdo a los principios y normas internacionales. Defenderemos siempre la cooperación y la amistad con todos los pueblos del mundo y entre ellos los de nuestros adversarios políticos. Es lo que estamos reclamando para todos.»*⁴³

« I do not trust the policy of the United States nor have I exchanged a word with them, without this meaning, far from it, a rejection of a peaceful solution to conflicts or war dangers. Defending peace is everyone's duty. Any peaceful and negotiated solution to the problems between the United States and the peoples or any people of Latin America, which does not imply force or the use of force, should be treated according to international principles and norms. We will always defend cooperation and friendship with all the peoples of the world and among them those of our political adversaries. It is what we are claiming for all. »

2.1.2 Economic maneuvers

During the last years of President Obama administration, conspicuous steps ahead were made between Cuba and the United States concerning economic matters. Indeed, many initiatives were taken to lift many travel restrictions, and moreover on import and export of goods, albeit the trade embargo on Cuba could only be put to an end by the lawmaking body of the United States, namely, the Congress, an action that was pointed out by the former President in many occasions since the beginning of the bilateral talks with the Cuban government.⁴⁴

⁴³ Fidel Castro, *Para mis compañeros de la Federación Estudiantil Universitaria*, Granma, 2015

⁴⁴ Adams, David, *Obama Must Work with Congress to Reform Cuba Embargo: Policy Experts*, Reuters, 2015

The first improvements were made in terms of travelling means from the United States to the island of Cuba. Indeed by March 2015 many American airlines, together with ferry companies⁴⁵ and cruises inaugurated their first lines connecting the two States, the first being the Sun Country Airlines⁴⁶, which was then followed by the Carnival Cruise Line⁴⁷, which had not been operating on Cuba for about fifty years. This company initially found some problems with the Cuban government, since the declarations it released concerning the “Cuban-born” immigrants. The government actually stated that Cuban-born people which wanted to visit the island coming from the sea would not have been accepted at the security checks. This issue resulted to be very controversial for the Carnival Cruise Line, because it precluded a moderate slice of costumers to book their trip to Cuba, and also caused some protests against what could be referred as a discriminatory policy. The matter was then solved later in 2016 when the Cuban government finally accepted to lift the ban to Cuban-born travelers.⁴⁸

Another important achievement unraveling the economic relations between the two countries was the establishment of the Cuban government bank account at the Stonegate Bank, Florida, in May 2015.⁴⁹ News reported that since the announcement was made the bank stock increased of the 4%.⁵⁰ Moreover, this event also improved the conditions for American banks to open on Cuban soil. Not only banks were encouraged, but also telecommunication companies. Indeed the United States helped Cuba improving its Internet and mobile phone services, giving the opportunity to big companies, such as Netflix, or Airbnb, to start operating on the island.⁵¹ In 2017 Airbnb published a report, indicating the data of two years of activity on Cuban soil, which fruited the company \$40 million.⁵² These changes favoured an increasing American tourism in Cuba, is possible to see by the rising number of US citizens visiting the country: almost 163.000 in 2015⁵³ to 284.552 in 2016⁵⁴, a number never before reached.

⁴⁵ Hemlock, Doreen; Satchell, Arlene, *At least four Florida companies approved for ferry service to Cuba*, Sun-Sentinel, 2015

⁴⁶ *Direct Flights Between Cuba and New York Have Started*, Skift. Associated Press, 2015

⁴⁷ Herrera, Chabeli, *Carnival gets approval to start cruising from Miami to Cuba in May*, Sun-Sentinel, 2016

⁴⁸ Satchell, Arlene, *Historic Cuba cruise can sail with Cuban-born passengers, Carnival says*, Sun-Sentinel, 2016

⁴⁹ Owen Davis, *Cuban Government Opens US Bank Account, Strengthening Diplomatic Thaw*, International Business Times, 2015

⁵⁰ Patrick Gillespie, *Cuba just opened a U.S. bank account*, CNN Money, 2015

⁵¹ Stefano Mongardi, *NETFLIX IS NOW AVAILABLE IN CUBA: A NICE MARKETING MOVE*, The Web Mate, 2015

⁵² *Airbnb Reports On First Two Years In Cuba: US\$40 Million*, 2017

⁵³ *ANUARIO ESTADÍSTICO DE CUBA 2016*

⁵⁴ Ibid.

2.2 President Trump revoking of the former president Obama's policies towards Cuba

Elected on January 20, 2017, the new US President Donald Trump very soon delivered his own considerations on the Cuban matter. Although during former President Obama administration, Trump stated his support to the reestablishment of the diplomatic and economic relations between the United States and the Republic of Cuba⁵⁵, he soon made some step backwards. With a Presidential Memorandum issued on June 16, 2017, President Trump revoked some of the policies which had been enforced by the previous administration, and which were already giving some good results in economic, diplomatic and political terms. On ground of human rights breach and demanding a radical change in the Cuban governing system, the US President stated:

*« [...] Effective immediately, I am canceling the last administration's completely one-sided deal with Cuba... We will enforce the ban on tourism. We will enforce the embargo. »*⁵⁶

Furthermore, a communication by the White House was released, pointing out the core objectives of the new policies:

« Enhance compliance with United States law—in particular the provisions that govern the embargo of Cuba and the ban on tourism;

Hold the Cuban regime accountable for oppression and human rights abuses ignored under the Obama policy;

Further the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States and those of the Cuban people; and

*Lay the groundwork for empowering the Cuban people to develop greater economic and political liberty. »*⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Jonathan Masters, *Trump on the issues, Cuba*, Council of Foreign Relations, Transition 2017

⁵⁶ Remarks by President Trump on the Policy of the United States Towards Cuba, www.whitehouse.gov, June 16, 2017

⁵⁷ Fact Sheet on Cuba Policy, www.whitehouse.gov, June 16, 2017

Moreover the document stated that the United States would have reinforced the Cuban embargo and that it would have rebated any opposition or appeal coming from international organizations, the United Nations, or other bodies.⁵⁸

2.2.1 Reactions from Cuba, the US and the international community

Criticism to President Trump ideas and policies was not late to come, not only from the direct interested State of Cuba, but also from inside the US government, some state bodies and from the international community.

The Cuban authorities lamented the return to "coercive methods of the past". Indeed according to the regime the reinforcement of sanctions would have affected only the poorest and most vulnerable layers of the Cuban society. Furthermore the government highlighted the fact that the negotiation with the United States were under no circumstances a matter of pressure against the political social and economic system in Cuba.⁵⁹

Since President Trump moved his accusations towards Cuba on grounds of human rights breaches, Raúl Castro pointed out the major achievements reached on the island in terms of public health, education, social security and equal pay, which are a stark reality in Cuba, which in the meantime is also working on developing further rights concerning food, and children. Moreover Castro accused the US President of being false moralist, by being the head of State of a country where human rights are not fully guaranteed, and underlined how Cuba was part of 44 international instruments on human rights against only 18 for the United States. To go deep into this issue, the Cuban leader listed many of the problems faced by the American citizens, such as the high rate of murders, the perpetrated violence against the African-American community, the discrimination on the workplace, school shootings and the private health system which does not guarantee a service to the whole population, but only to those who can afford it, and many more.⁶⁰

Although the strong accusation made from l'Havana to the United States, President Raúl Castro expressed his will to continue the dialogue and cooperation with the United States. Besides, the Cuba Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bruno Rodríguez, stated:

⁵⁸ *Fact Sheet on Cuba Policy*, www.whitehouse.gov, June 16, 2017

⁵⁹ Gobierno Revolucionario de Cuba, «*Declaración*», 16 de junio de 2017

⁶⁰ Ibid.

« Cuba y Estados Unidos pueden cooperar y convivir civilizadamente, respetando las profundas diferencias entre sus gobiernos y promoviendo todo aquello que beneficie a ambas naciones y pueblos. »⁶¹

« Cuba and the United States can cooperate and live together civilly, respecting the deep differences between their governments and promoting everything that benefits both nations and peoples. »

The reaction of the American State came directly from inside its governmental bodies. Many politicians expressed their solidarity to the Cuban cause, many of which were also coming from President Trump faction, such as Arizona Republican Senator Jeff Flake, who declared that the new restrictions against Cuba were not in the best interest of the United States or its partner.⁶² Moreover Senator Flake also moved forward a bill against the enforcement of the travel restrictions on Cuba, which found the support of other fifty-five Senators out of a hundred.⁶³

Another Republican, namely, Mark Sanford, argued that the embargo was a republican measure and it did not give the expected results in fifty years, and that the reestablishment of such policies would not have been a smart move, since change was unlikely to occur that way.⁶⁴

Michigan congressman, Justin Amash, instead, pointed out that President Trump position in this situation resulted to be very controversial since the protection of human rights did not seem much of a concern for the head of State, due to the well established relationship with Saudi Arabia (a leader in the breach of human rights), for Whom the United States represent the major weapon exporter.⁶⁵

Apart from politicians, some United States body entered the discussion concerning the new restriction on Cuba, namely the Chamber of Commerce, the religious communities and the Tourism Organization⁶⁶, and not only, the White House reasons did not gain the support either

⁶¹ Bruno Rodríguez, *Bruno Rodríguez ofrece conferencia de prensa: Cuba no realizará concesiones*, Cubadebate, 19 de junio de 2017

⁶² Alex Daugherty, *Trump Defies Congressional Republicans Who Want Closer Relations With Cuba*, The News & Observer, 2017

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ U.S. Chamber of Commerce, *U.S. Chamber Statement on Administration's Cuba Policy Announcement*, 2017

from the American press⁶⁷ and from the public opinion. Indeed according to data, 75% of US citizens wanted to maintain relations with Cuba and 73% wanted an end to economic sanctions.⁶⁸

At last, also the international community opposed the United States sanctionary policy against the Republic of Cuba, and this event led the General Assembly to issue a new resolution concerning the abolition of the Cuban embargo in October 2016. The document, was the twenty-ninth of its kind, and was adopted with a historical vote which did not receive votes against, since 191 voting members of the United Nations General Assembly out of 193 voted in favour, and Israel and US abstained from the vote.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ The New York Times, *A Cynical Reversal on Cuba*, 2017

⁶⁸ Pew Research Center survey, December 2016

⁶⁹ Nations unies, *ONU aprueba resolución contra bloqueo a Cuba sin votos en contra por primera vez en la historia*, 26 de octubre de 2016

3. The end of Castro's regime and 2018 elections

In April 2018 another historical event of the utmost importance occurred from the Republic of Cuba. President Raúl Castro resigned from his position right after the Parliamentary elections that took place on March 11. This action signed forever an era, meaning the end of the Castro regime which was initiated by Fidel at the times of the Revolution, and lasted almost sixty years, and giving the basis to start a real change inside the Cuban institutions. Camilo Condís, a manager of a project in the capital stated that the event was an important moment for Cuba, but at the same time, no one knows what to expect.

3.1 The elections

3.1.1 Cuba's electoral system

Cubans were called to the polls on March 11, 2018, in order to renew the *Asemblea Nacional del Poder Popular*, namely the Parliament, and to vote for provincial elections. The Republic of Cuba elections are held around a single party, namely the *Partido Comunista Cubano*, which was founded in 1965. The Cuban electoral system is explicated in Chapter XIV, art. 131-137 of the Cuban Constitution of 1976, which was amended in 2002:

- ~ Cuban citizens who are over 18 years have the right to vote;
- ~ The people from the municipalities nominate by direct vote held in assemblies half of the candidates, while the other half is to be nominated by assemblies of the representatives of all members of the society, including members of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.
- ~ The National Candidature Commission has the duty to chose the best candidates on grounds of merit, patriotism, ethical values and revolutionary history, in a number which is in accordance with the seats of the Parliament.
- ~ Candidates must obtain more than 50% of the votes in their constituency, in order to be elected, since the electoral system has been thought as a mean to give the majority to the winners. In case the votes are less than the quorum required, and the Council does not decide to held a second round of voting, the seat must remain vacant⁷⁰.

⁷⁰ Union, Inter-Parliamentary. IPU PARLINE database: CUBA (Asemblea nacional del Poder popular), Electoral system, archive.ipu.org.

The vote of March 11, 2018, resulted in the election of all 605 candidates as Deputies to the Asamblea Nacional.⁷¹ Following the election, this body, unanimously nominated on April 29, the new Cuban President, which was already designated by his predecessor Raúl Castro: Miguel Díaz-Canel⁷², a man representing a real wind of change for the Republic of Cuba.

Born in 1960, a year after the revolution, President Canel is the first head of State in the island who did not fight, or even saw the rebellion led by the Castros, and is of course representative of the new generations of Cuban citizens. The newly nominated President led his political life under the wing of Raúl Castro, becoming an effective leader, prone to the changes that the future will bring. However he did not experience the Revolution, Canel defends its moral, historical and political values, but he detaches from the Party political view on economic matters: his idea is that in order to take part in the globalized economy, it is impossible for Cuba to try to avoid the modernization of the country in social, economic and political terms.⁷³

Notwithstanding this, President Canel underlined in his speech at the United Nations which was directed especially to US President Trump that he was not a reformer, and that his intentions as leader of Cuba were to keep faith to the country's political tradition:

« El cambio generacional en nuestro gobierno no debe ilusionar a los adversarios de la revolución. Somos la continuidad, no ruptura »⁷⁴

« the generational change in our government must not deceive the political enemies of the Revolution. We are the continuity, not the disruption »

3.1.2 The Constitutional reform

In July 2018, the Cuban Communist Party submitted a draft for an upcoming Constitutional reform to Asamblea Nacional in order to gain its approval,⁷⁵ and to be put on a referendum vote in 2019. One of the most important features of the renovated *Magna Carta* – as the

⁷¹ Redacción Digital, *National Electoral Commission releases preliminary data*, Granma, 2018

⁷² Redacción Digital, *Nominan a Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel Bermúdez como candidato a Presidente del Consejo de Estado de Cuba*, Granma, 2018

⁷³ Azam Ahmed and Frances Robles, *Who Is Miguel Díaz-Canel, Cuba's New President?*, New York Times, 2018

⁷⁴ Nora Gámez Torres, *Díaz-Canel le contesta a Trump en la ONU y descarta ser un reformador*, el Nuevo Herald, 26 Septiembre 2018

⁷⁵ Juan Jesús Aznarez, *Cuba revisa una Constitución obsoleta*, El País, 12 Junio 2018

Constitution is referred to in Cuba – is certainly the elimination of the word “communism”.⁷⁶ The reform forecasts a controlled liberalization of the economy, with the recognition of private property.⁷⁷ Despite this new principle which was included in the reform, President Canel stated that Cuba is not going to become a capitalist state.⁷⁸ The other key points of the reform are the limit to the mandate of the President of the Republic, which was set to two five year terms, and the instauration of the figure of the Prime Minister which shall be different from the President.

One of the most appreciated parts of the new constitutional text is the one concerning gay marriages. Indeed the 1976 Cuban Constitution stated at art. 36 that a marriage is the «voluntary union between a man and woman».⁷⁹ This part of the text was change in the drafting of the reform as «consensual union of two people, regardless of gender».⁸⁰

Cuba is not new to civil rights, and it had already provided many guarantees to the LGBT community, such as the criminalization of employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and the legalization in 2008 of operations for the gender transition, which do not have any costs for patients.⁸¹

3.1.3 Miguel Díaz-Canel's position on Trump's policy

In September, President Miguel Díaz-Canel released his first interview in which he addressed to the United States President Donald Trump. Canel, indeed stated that the aberrant actitud of the American administration against Cuba, does not guarantee the basis for a diplomatic dialogue, and continued:

« *Queremos diálogo, pero tiene que ser entre iguales, que nos se respete y no se nos condicione nuestra soberanía y nuestra independencia.* »⁸²

« *We want a dialogue, but it must be between equals, respecting us, and not conditioning our sovereignty and our independence.* »

⁷⁶ Pablo De Llano, *Cuba elimina la palabra “comunismo” en su anteproyecto de reforma constitucional*, El Pais, 21 julio 2018

⁷⁷ Nelson Acosta and Sarah Marsh, *Communist-run Cuba to recognise private property in new constitution*, Reuters, 2018

⁷⁸ “*Cuba no sera capitalista*” advierte Díaz-Canel ante reforma del libre mercado, El Sol del Centro, octubre 2018

⁷⁹ Art, 36, Constitucion Cubana, 1976

⁸⁰Ed Augustin, *Cuba's new constitution paves way for same-sex marriage*, The Guardian, 2018

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² *Díaz-Canel pide a Trump más respeto para mejorar los lazos*, La Nacion, Sept. 2018

According to the data, the economic and diplomatic effort started by former President Obama and former President Castro are now declining and going through a deteriorating process from the times of President Trump announcement. Moreover President Díaz-Canel asserted that the ongoing blockade against Cuba results to be the main obstacle to the country economic development.⁸³

⁸³ *Cuban leader says US relations 'in decline' under Trump*, France 24, Sept. 2018

Conclusions

The friendly relationship entertained between the United States of America and Cuba during the Batista regime on the island found a complete change in 1959 with the subversion of the dictatorship by the Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro. This event led to the complete closure of the diplomatic relations between the two countries, a situation which was even worsened by the establishment of the communist regime in Cuba, and its subsequent alliance with the USSR, which was at the times the greatest enemy of the United States in the Cold War.

The United States tried to contain the “Cuban threat” already in 1959, by enforcing a commercial embargo on the island, a blockade that is still lasting nowadays despite all the repeated appeals from the international community to interrupt it. indeed the United Nations issued since 1992, twenty nine resolutions in favour of the end of the Cuban embargo.

In the early years of the XXI century, after fifty years of freezed relations between the Republic of Cuba and the United States of America, some steps forward, towards a normalization were taken, thanks to the engagement of President Barack Obama and President Raúl Castro, who worked together to restore the diplomatic dialogue between their two countries. Furthermore, President Obama expressed his will to end the commercial embargo and lifted some of the restrictions that punished Cuba.

When President Donald Trump was elected, he stated that his administration would have completely changed the course of the events as they had been settled by the previous US administration, by re-enforcing the blockade against the Republic of Cuba asserting that the island government did not comply with democratic standards expected by the United States, and that there was the perpetration of the breach off human rights in the country. The president affirmations and actions received the criticism not only by Cuba, but also from inside the government and from the international community that declared itself favourable to the rapproach between the two countries.

In the meantime, change in Cuba is about to occur, thanks to the appointment of Miguel Díaz-Canel as new President of the Republic after the 2018 elections. Canel is the representative of the new generations of Cubans, born after the revolution and the first to cut the Castro dynasty that had been in power for fifty-nine years.

The elections and the new President brought with them a substantial change which is above all represented by the Cuban Constitutional reform, taking place in 2019 after a popular referendum. The draft of the reform has different important points for Cuba: first of all the recognition of the private property, and the propensity of the nation towards a liberalization of the market. Then there is the institutional reform concerning the inclusion of the figure of the Prime Minister which shall

be different from the President of the Republic, and the imposition of a limit of two five years term to the presidential mandate. At last, a gladly welcomed reform was the recognition of gay marriages in the Constitution.

Since the beginning of President Trump administration in the United States the economic and diplomatic effort started by former President Obama and former President Castro are now declining and going through a deteriorating process. Moreover President Díaz-Canel asserted that the ongoing blockade against Cuba results to be the main obstacle to the country economic development.

In this new era for the Republic of Cuba, the wind of change is blowing, and there are high expectations in the international community, that the new administration and the subsequent reforms, and an opening to global trade, will lead to a stark development of the country, with important improvements for the life of its population. A new dialogue could start between the United States and the Republic of Cuba, in the hope that it could bring to the definitive take up between the two states, determining the very end of the Cold War.

Bibliography

Adams, David, *Obama Must Work with Congress to Reform Cuba Embargo: Policy Experts*, Reuters, 2015

AFP, Record Vote for UN Resolution Against Cuba Embargo, 2012

Airbnb Reports On First Two Years In Cuba: US\$40 Million, 2017

Alex Daugherty, *Trump Defies Congressional Republicans Who Want Closer Relations With Cuba*, The News & Observer, 2017

ANUARIO ESTADÍSTICO DE CUBA 2016

Azam Ahmed and Frances Robles, *Who Is Miguel Díaz-Canel, Cuba's New President?*, New York Times, 2018

Barack Obama on Cuba Embargo, 2004

Barack Obama, *Statement by the President on Cuban Immigration Policy*, whitehouse.gov, Jan. 12, 2017

Bruno Rodríguez, *Bruno Rodríguez ofrece conferencia de prensa: Cuba no realizará concesiones*, Cubadebate, 19 de junio de 2017

Constitución de la Republica de Cuba, 1976 (as Amended to 2002)

Cuban Adjustment Act, 1966

Cuban leader says US relations 'in decline' under Trump, France 24, Sept. 2018

"Cuba no sera capitalista" advierte Díaz-Canel ante reforma del libre mercado, El Sol del Centro, octubre 2018

D. Merica, J. Acosta, *Tightening Cuba restrictions, Trump again chips away at Obama's legacy*, CNN, 2017

Daniel Tannebaum, A. Strokes, *Key Points from the President's Announcement on Cuba Sanctions*, PwC Financial Services Regulatory Practice, 2014

Daniel Trotta, S. Holland, *U.S., Cuba restore ties after 50 years*, Reuters, 2014

Díaz-Canel pide a Trump más respeto para mejorar los lazos, La Nacion, Sept. 2018

Direct Flights Between Cuba and New York Have Started, Skift. Associated Press, 2015

Ed Augustin, *Cuba's new constitution paves way for same-sex marriage*, The Guardian, 2018

Fact Sheet on Cuba Policy, www.whitehouse.gov, June 16, 2017

Fidel Castro, *La Historia Me Absolverá*, 1953

Fidel Castro, *Mensaje del Comandante en Jefe*, Diario Granma, 19 febrero 2008

Fidel Castro, *Para mis compañeros de la Federación Estudiantil Universitaria*, Granma, 2015

G.C. Hufbauer, J.J. Schott, K.A. Elliott, *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered*, 1990

Ginger Thompson, *Restrictions on Travel to Cuba Are Eased*, New York Times, Jan. 14, 2011

Gobierno Revolucionario de Cuba, «*Declaración*», 16 de junio de 2017

Hemlock, Doreen; Satchell, Arlene, *At least four Florida companies approved for ferry service to Cuba*, Sun-Sentinel, 2015

Herrera, Chabeli, *Carnival gets approval to start cruising from Miami to Cuba in May*, Sun-Sentinel, 2016

Hugh Thomas, *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom*, Picador, 2001

Jane Franklin, *Cuba and the United States: A Chronological History*, Ocean Press, 1997

Jim Lobe, *Bush Tightens Cuba Embargo*, antiwar.com, 2004

Joe Atikian, *Cuba Under Embargo*, 2013

Johnson, Leland L., *U.S. Business Interests in Cuba and the Rise of Castro*, World Politics, 1965

Jonathan Masters, *Trump on the issues, Cuba*, Council of Foreign Relations, Transition 2017

Juan Jesús Aznarez, *Cuba revisa una Constitución obsoleta*, El País, 12 Junio 2018

Joseph S. Tulchin, Rafael Hernández, *Cuba and the United States: Will the Cold War in the Caribbean End?*, Woodrow Wilson Center Current Studies on Latin America, 1991

Katie Wall, *U.S. Officially Removes Cuba From State Sponsors of Terrorism List*, NBC News, 2015

Mariano Ospina Peña, *Las Elecciones Presidenciales de 1960*, caballerosandantes.net

Meyer Lansky, *La mafia juive et italienne dans le Cuba des années 1950*, 2012

Michelle Hackman, *Barack Obama Will Be the First Sitting President to Visit Cuba in 88 Years*, vox.com, 2016

Nations unies, *ONU aprueba resolución contra bloqueo a Cuba sin votos en contra por primera vez en la historia*, 26 de octubre de 2016

Nelson Acosta and Sarah Marsh, *Communist-run Cuba to recognise private property in new constitution*, Reuters, 2018

Nick Caistor, *Planning for a Cuba without Castro*, BBC World Service, 2006

Nigel D.White, *The Cuban Embargo under International Law: El Bloqueo*, Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2015

Nora Gámez Torres, *Díaz-Canel le contesta a Trump en la ONU y descarta ser un reformador*, el Nuevo Herald, 26 Septiembre 2018

Oren Dorell, *Cuban Flag Flies at Embassy in Washington*, USA Today, 2015

Owen Davis, *Cuban Government Opens US Bank Account, Strengthening Diplomatic Thaw*, International Business Times, 2015

Pablo De Llano, *Cuba elimina la palabra “comunismo” en su anteproyecto de reforma constitucional*, El Pais, 21 julio 2018

Patrick Gillespie, *Cuba just opened a U.S. bank account*, CNN Money, 2015

Peter Baker, *U.S. to Restore Full Relations With Cuba, Erasing a Last Trace of Cold War Hostility*, New York Times, December 17, 2014

Peter James Spielmann, *UN General Assembly Votes Against US Cuba Embargo*, Associated Press, 2013

P. J. Haney, W. Vanderbush, *The Cuban Embargo: The Domestic Politics Of An American Foreign Policy*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005

Philip, Peters, *A Viewers Guide to Cuba's Economic Reforms*, Lexington Institute, 2012

Primera Ley de Reforma Agraria, 1959

Raúl Castro Ruz, *Alocución del Presidente cubano: Los Cinco ya están en Cuba*, Cubadebate, 2014

Redacción Digital, *National Electoral Commission releases preliminary data*, Granma, 2018

Redacción Digital, *Nominan a Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel Bermúdez como candidato a Presidente del Consejo de Estado de Cuba*, Granma, 2018

Redacción y Agencias, La Habana, *ADIÓS A LA ERA CASTRO Miguel Díaz-Canel, elegido nuevo presidente de Cuba*, La Vanguardia, 2018

Remarks by President Trump on the Policy of the United States Towards Cuba, www.whitehouse.gov, June 16, 2017

Ronald D. Godard, *Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Ronald D. Godard, U.S. Senior Advisor for Western Hemisphere Affairs, on the Cuba Resolution in the General Assembly Hall*, www.usun.state.gov, 2012

Satchell, Arlene, *Historic Cuba cruise can sail with Cuban-born passengers, Carnival says*, Sun-Sentinel, 2016

Statement by the President on Cuba Policy Changes, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, December 17, 2014

Stefano Mongardi, *NETFLIX IS NOW AVAILABLE IN CUBA: A NICE MARKETING MOVE*, The Web Mate, 2015

Taylor Branch, *The Clinton Tapes: Wrestling History with the President*, 2009

The New York Times, *A Cynical Reversal on Cuba*, 2017

The White House Office of the Press Secretary, *Remarks by the President in an 'Open for Questions' Roundtable*, www.whitehouse.gov, 2011

Union, Inter-Parliamentary. IPU PARLINE database: CUBA (Asamblea nacional del Poder popular), Electoral system, *archive.ipu.org*.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce, *U.S. Chamber Statement on Administration's Cuba Policy Announcement*, 2017

U.S., Cuba restore full diplomatic ties after 5 decades, CBC News, 2015

William M. Leo Grande, *Chipping Away at the Embargo: President Obama and the U.S. Economic Sanctions Against Cuba*, Institute of Latin American Studies, 2016

List of UN resolutions

A/RES/47/19, 70th plenary meeting, 24 November 1992

http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide/r47_resolutions_table_eng.htm

http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide/r48_resolutions_table_eng.htm

http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide/r49_resolutions_table_eng.htm

http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide/r50_resolutions_table_eng.htm

Estratto

La Repubblica di Cuba e gli Stati Uniti d'America sono stati ai ferri corti sin dopo lo scoppio della rivoluzione guidata da Fidel Castro negli anni '50. Tuttavia questo non è sempre stato il caso, anzi l'amministrazione degli Stati Uniti in passato si era dimostrata molto favorevole al regime di Fulgencio Batista a causa dei vasti interessi economici rappresentati dall'isola caraibica di fronte alle coste della Florida. Dai tempi della colonizzazione spagnola fino alla Rivoluzione Cubana, gli Stati Uniti hanno acquisito sempre più influenza sul territorio, che non era solo economico, ma anche politico, con l'obiettivo di annettere Cuba alla federazione degli Stati Uniti.

Le cose cambiarono radicalmente dopo la rivoluzione guidata dai comandanti Fidel Castro ed Ernesto *Che* Guevara, che nel 1958 rovesciarono il regime di Batista. Da allora, le riforme attuate dal nuovo governo, e il drastico passaggio a un regime comunista, hanno segnato la fine delle relazioni diplomatiche tra i due stati che, in un brevissimo lasso di tempo, ha portato non solo all'ormai sessantennale embargo, ma anche alla crisi missilistica nucleare degli anni '60.

Il motivo per cui gli Stati Uniti posero l'embargo nei confronti della Repubblica di Cuba è da trovare negli interessi economici e l'influenza del primo paese sopracitato sul secondo prima della Rivoluzione di Castro, e in seguito anche a causa del grande conflitto ideologico che stava già avendo luogo a causa della Guerra Fredda. Cuba rappresentava il primo paese comunista nell'emisfero occidentale, e all'epoca rappresentò naturalmente una minaccia per il gigante del capitalismo. Ma per capire profondamente le implicazioni economiche è necessario andare più indietro nel tempo, anche prima della Rivoluzione e prima del regime di Fulgencio Batista. In effetti, la speculazione economica degli Stati Uniti iniziò alla fine del XIX secolo, quando l'isola di Cuba stava combattendo per raggiungere la propria indipendenza dalla Spagna.

In quel periodo gli Stati Uniti rappresentavano il principale partner commerciale di Cuba, e quando in seguito al collasso economico, la bancarotta colpì le industrie del tabacco e lasciò la produzione di zucchero come l'unica attività "remunerativa" dell'isola, con gli Stati Uniti come unico acquirente. Inoltre, meno del 20% dei proprietari di zuccherifici erano cubani, il resto era nelle mani dei proprietari americani e il 95% della produzione di zucchero veniva esportato negli Stati Uniti.

La nuova era economica a Cuba iniziò nel 1959 quando Fidel Castro, il vincitore della Rivoluzione e nuovo Presidente della Repubblica, nazionalizzò e ridusse le tariffe telefoniche della compagnia telefonica cubana che era affiliata ad una corporazione statunitense. Questa fu solo la prima delle numerose manovre che il nuovo governo cubano perseguì. In effetti, Castro intendeva anche cambiare le regole sul commercio di zucchero tra i due stati, e durante una visita non ufficiale negli Stati Uniti spiegò come il commercio di questa merce non avesse portato alcun vantaggio a Cuba. Il passo successivo dell'amministrazione fu un accordo bilaterale tra i due stati in merito alla cooperazione per lo sviluppo della riforma agraria sull'isola, ma la prima legge di riforma agraria approvata dal governo cubano stabilì limiti sulla proprietà fondiaria, e le obbligazioni furono offerte a titolo di risarcimento per espropriazione. A quel tempo, i cittadini statunitensi possedevano il 75% delle terre arabili dell'isola di Cuba, mentre cinque compagnie degli Stati Uniti controllavano circa due milioni di acri per la produzione di zucchero.

Le politiche di nazionalizzazione di Castro furono perpetrate su tutto il territorio e in ogni sfera dell'economia nazionale. Nel 1960 il governo espropriò decine di migliaia di ettari di proprietà delle compagnie statunitensi per la produzione di zucchero, comprendendo anche 35.000 acri di proprietà della United Fruit Company che possedeva più di 200 mila acri di terra cubana. Più tardi, tutte le proprietà dell'azienda citata furono nazionalizzate.

Durante lo stesso anno, Cuba negoziò un accordo con l'Unione Sovietica su un programma di fornitura di petrolio, materie prime, fertilizzanti e cibo, non escludendo un credito di 100 miliardi di dollari da parte del paese bolscevico nei confronti dell'isola. L'amministrazione statunitense proibì a tutte le sue società affiliate di non affinare il petrolio proveniente dall'URSS, e di conseguenza il governo cubano nazionalizzò tutte le raffinerie come Esso, Shell e Texaco che presenti sul territorio dello stato. Gli Stati Uniti risposero con la cancellazione del commercio di zucchero che comprendeva metà del raccolto prodotto da Cuba e inoltre le esportazioni vietate sull'isola. Castro quindi espropriò e nazionalizzò tutte le proprietà di proprietà straniera. A questo punto circa un miliardo di dollari di beni statunitensi furono nazionalizzati dal governo cubano.

Un'ulteriore riforma, vale a dire la Legge sulla riforma urbana, pose fine a tutte le proprietà commerciali private, alle società industriali e di trasporto, venti delle quali erano di proprietà degli Stati Uniti. Inoltre, anche le banche e le compagnie telefoniche furono nazionalizzate. Quest'ultimo passo portò l'amministrazione statunitense a imporre l'embargo su Cuba, la cui

giustificazione iniziale era mirare alla destabilizzazione del regime di Castro, causando il maggior danno possibile al paese e cercando di portare al collasso del regime.

Nel 1992 il principale rappresentante di Cuba, Alcibaldes Hidalgo Basulto, dichiarò nell'Assemblea Generale che l'embargo era costato al paese più di 30 miliardi di dollari in circa trenta anni e introdusse la prima risoluzione in merito. Infatti, dal 1992, l'Assemblea Generale ha emesso una risoluzione all'anno per sollecitare la fine delle sanzioni a Cuba.

Il contrasto tra Cuba e Stati Uniti è rimasto per lo più invariato per oltre cinquanta anni e ha avuto un completo cambiamento dai primi anni del XXI secolo. Infatti, durante l'amministrazione Obama dell'ultimo decennio, il rapporto conflittuale tra la Repubblica di Castro e l'egemone nella lotta al comunismo si è attenuato, soprattutto grazie alle ripetute risoluzioni dell'Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite e al Presidente Barack Obama.

Il primo annuncio ufficiale del ristabilimento delle relazioni diplomatiche tra gli Stati Uniti e la Repubblica di Cuba, è stato rilasciato dal Presidente Barack Obama il 17 dicembre 2014, una data che ha segnato una svolta completa nella storia dei due paesi i cui rapporti erano congelati da ben 53 anni, più precisamente dal 1961. In effetti questo momento fu considerato come la cancellazione delle ultime tracce di un'ostilità della Guerra Fredda, e il punto d'incontro venne ottenuto grazie a diciotto mesi di colloqui diplomatici segreti mediati sia dal Canada che da Papa Francesco nella Città del Vaticano.

La ufficializzazione della ripresa delle relazioni diplomatiche tra gli Stati Uniti e la Repubblica di Cuba fu ufficializzato il 20 luglio 2015, con l'apertura formale dell'ambasciata cubana a Washington D.C. e di quella statunitense a L'Avana. Le due ambasciate sostituirono la sezione di interessi cubani e la sezione di interessi degli Stati Uniti, che dal 1977 rappresentava le due nazioni sui rispettivi suoli nazionali.

Un altro momento storico nel processo di riavvicinamento tra i due paesi fu la visita ufficiale del Presidente Barack Obama a Cuba il 20 marzo 2016, il quale fu il primo presidente degli Stati Uniti a farlo dopo ottantotto anni.

Durante gli ultimi anni dell'amministrazione del presidente Obama, furono mossi importanti passi avanti tra Cuba e gli Stati Uniti in materia economica. In effetti, molte furono le iniziative per rimuovere le restrizioni sui viaggi e, inoltre, sull'importazione e l'esportazione di merci, nonostante l'embargo commerciale su Cuba potesse essere cancellato solo dall'organo legislativo degli Stati Uniti, cioè il Congresso.

Sfortunatamente per i due paesi, quando il presidente Donald Trump rilevò l'Ufficio Ovale, le cose cambiarono completamente, a causa delle dichiarazioni del nuovo capo di stato americano, il quale dichiarò che avrebbe reimposto le restrizioni economiche dell'embargo contro Cuba.

La decisione del presidente Trump fu presa sulla base del fatto che Cuba non rispettasse gli standard democratici, e i diritti umani come previsto dagli accordi presi con la precedente amministrazione statunitense, dunque le sanzioni economiche, erano viste come una punizione per istigare una reazione del governo cubano al processo di democratizzazione. Le affermazioni e le azioni del presidente ricevettero molte critiche non solo da Cuba, ma anche dall'interno del governo statunitense e dalla comunità internazionale che si è dichiarata favorevole alla rappacificazione tra i due paesi.

Il punto cruciale nel quadro politico cubano è stato rappresentato dalle elezioni generali del 2018 e dalla nomina del nuovo Presidente della Repubblica, che è risultato essere il professore universitario Miguel Díaz-Canel. La sua nomina rappresenta un drammatico taglio netto dalla lunga presidenza di Fidel Castro e quella del fratello Raúl, più breve, ma pur sempre legate all'ideologia rivoluzionaria dei due leader. In effetti, Díaz-Canel è il primo capo di stato del paese ad essere nato dopo la Rivoluzione di Castro, ed è chiaramente una figura emblematica per le nuove generazioni cubane.

Le elezioni e il nuovo presidente hanno portato con sé un cambiamento sostanziale che è soprattutto rappresentato dalla riforma costituzionale cubana, che sarà approvata nel 2019 con un referendum popolare. La bozza della riforma ha diversi punti importanti per Cuba: innanzitutto il riconoscimento della proprietà privata e la propensione della nazione verso una liberalizzazione del mercato. Poi c'è la riforma istituzionale riguardante l'inclusione della figura del Primo Ministro, che sarà diversa dal Presidente della Repubblica, e l'imposizione di un limite di due mandati di cinque anni per il Presidente della nazione. Alla fine, una riforma ben accolta dalla popolazione cubana è stata quella riguardante il riconoscimento dei matrimoni gay nella Costituzione.

Dall'inizio dell'amministrazione del presidente Trump negli Stati Uniti, gli sforzi economici e diplomatici avviati dall'ex presidente Obama e dall'ex presidente Castro stanno ora declinando e attraversando un processo di deterioramento. Inoltre, il presidente Díaz-Canel ha affermato che il blocco in atto contro Cuba risulta essere il principale ostacolo allo sviluppo economico del paese.

In questa nuova era per la Repubblica di Cuba, in cui soffia il vento del cambiamento, vi sono grandi aspettative da parte della comunità internazionale, che la nuova amministrazione, le successive riforme e un'apertura al commercio globale porteranno a un netto sviluppo per il paese, con importanti miglioramenti per la vita della sua popolazione. Un nuovo dialogo potrebbe iniziare tra gli Stati Uniti e la Repubblica di Cuba, nella speranza che possa portare alla presa definitiva tra i due stati, determinando la fine stessa di quella Guerra Fredda che ancora si perpetra nelle relazioni diplomatiche da ormai sessant'anni.

Questa tesi si propone di analizzare la storia delle relazioni diplomatiche tra la Repubblica di Cuba e gli Stati Uniti ripercorrendo il percorso storico delle due nazioni dalla fine del regime di Batista. Si passerà ad analizzare i principali eventi politici dell'ultimo mezzo secolo, dall'insediamento del governo comunista, le sue riforme nel corso degli anni, e le politiche americane attuate nei confronti di Cuba fino al 2008. La parte finale della tesi riguarda un confronto delle amministrazioni dell'ex presidente Obama e del presidente Trump, le loro decisioni sulla questione cubana, e in conclusione si tratterà della fine dell'era dei "Castro" del nuovo presidente della Repubblica di Cuba, e delle riforme che saranno effettuate nel paese.