

TESTIMONY OF
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE
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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on this important topic.

It is a pleasure and honor to appear before you with Assistant Secretary Roberta Jacobson, who has served so ably and successfully as our principal diplomat in the Americas.

She has addressed in her testimony President Obama's policy towards Cuba, and the steps we are taking to implement that policy. She is well placed to respond to specific questions you might have about that policy, and is familiar with the reaction around our Hemisphere to our policy.

My purpose today is to address the regional context in which this policy is unfolding, and to lay out some of the strategic dimensions of our diplomacy.

In starting, I would like to note that in my current assignment as Counselor of the Department of State I have had the pleasure to work on key administration priorities around the globe. During my travels throughout Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, as well as my specific and incidental engagement in the Western Hemisphere, I have had many opportunities to see, experience, and reflect on the importance of the United States in the world, and the enduring role and relevance of American diplomacy.

The great American theorist of international relations, Hans Morgenthau, once wrote, "Our purpose is not to defend or preserve a present or restore a past, it is to create the future." He noted that our global engagement is meant to defend one kind of future against another kind of future.

It is in this light that we should understand the President's policy towards Cuba. The decision to engage with Cuba and seek normalization of our bilateral relationship attempts to create a new terrain on which to pursue a future that meets our interests and corresponds to our values. Our commitment to democracy and human rights, and our desire and hope that the Cuban people will know the benefits of liberty and become the sovereigns of their own destiny, is no less for our action.

The President has been clear about the commitment in our Cuba policy to our enduring and fundamental principles of self-government and individual liberty. However, he has also been clear about our inability to effect significant change in Cuba acting alone across so many decades. Instead, he determined that our efforts would be more effective if we could position Cuba squarely within an inter-American system that recognizes democracy as a right that belongs to all the peoples of our Hemisphere, believes that democracy is essential to the political, economic, and social development of our peoples, and has the juridical instruments, treaties, and agreements to give shape, form, and weight to these commitments. It was our determination that this kind of environment would be the most propitious to support the only legitimate agent of peaceful and enduring political change in Cuba: the Cuban people.

To understand this point better, it would be worthwhile to take a closer look at what kind of Hemisphere Cuba is a part of in the second decade of the 21st century.

The Americas, and specifically Latin America, has anticipated many of the events that are shaping our world. It is a region that has moved largely from authoritarian to democratic government, from closed to open economies, from exclusive to inclusive societies, from autarkical development to regional integration, and from isolation to globalization.

Latin America is the first developing region of the world to commit itself explicitly to democratic governance through the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the first to build a democratic model of development, and the first to establish regional structures to promote and protect human rights.

While creating a broad base of shared political values, Latin America has also constructed shared economic understandings and a commitment by many of the most successful countries in the Hemisphere to market economies and free

trade. In the process, it has built sub-regional integration and political dialogue through organizations like the Common Market of the South, the Andean Community, the Union of South American Nations, and the Central American Integration System, all the while preserving larger hemispheric institutions, such as the Organization of American States and the Summit of the Americas process, that connect Latin America to the Caribbean and North America.

As Latin America advances into the 21st century, it is undergoing a second generation of change. Politically, it has consolidated democratic government and is strengthening democratic states and societies. This has opened up political institutions to new voices and actors, deepening the representativeness of many Latin American governments and challenging traditional elites and interests. In some countries, weak democratic institutions have not been able to contain the social energy unlocked by democratization, leading to populism and political polarization as groups struggle for control of the state. As troubling as this phenomenon can be, it does not define the democratization of the region but instead presents a challenge for the region to show how it can address such incidents through the organizations and institutional mechanisms it has created.

Economically, Latin America is building innovative integration mechanisms such as the Pacific Alliance, and reaching into Asia and North America to find new and important economic partners. We have FTAs with 12 countries in the Hemisphere, and the continued globalization of Latin America is driven not only by the regions abundant commodities, especially food and energy, but also by growing middle classes that have created attractive markets for manufactured goods and services.

The profound changes unleashed in Latin America show clearly that democracy and markets can deliver economic development and address long-standing social inequities such as poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. In effect, Latin America has used democracy and markets to launch peaceful social revolutions that are transforming many countries in important and long lasting ways. Our ability to promote profound and dramatic change in Latin America is an example of what the United States can accomplish through diplomacy and engagement.

If we accomplished such a profound transformation in our Hemisphere through engagement, why not try the same approach with Cuba? And better yet, why not try it in partnership with countries and institutions that are now prepared to work with us because of the President's new policy?

Cuba today finds itself part of a dynamic, vibrant region where transformative change has been the watchword for several decades. And it finds itself in a region where the momentum of that change will continue to reshape political, economic, and social landscapes. In such an environment, the Cuban people will find many models and partners from which to learn and choose. We should be one of those models and partners.

Hans Morgenthau wrote, "The world has been conscious of America's purpose in the measure that America is determined to achieve it." The President's actions in regard to Cuba are a clear indication of our determination to achieve our purpose. How we achieve that purpose opens a great opportunity for cooperation between the Executive and Legislative Branches of government. We hope this hearing deepens the dialogue between us on how we can shape our policy and diplomacy to achieve our ends while further advancing the integration and well-being of our Hemisphere.