

NOTE

US Domination Over Cuba

Raymond Lotta writes :

For more than 100 years, the United States has caused incalculable misery and suffering for the Cuban people. Any moves by the Bush administration against Cuba must be resolutely opposed.

Cuba came under the domination of US imperialism as a result of the Spanish-American War of 1898. The Cubans had been fighting for their independence from Spain, but the US seized on the situation to turn Cuba into a neo-colony.

Cuba achieved formal independence in 1898. But in 1901, the US Congress passed the Platt Amendment. This amendment, which was incorporated into the Cuban constitution until 1934, set conditions for US intervention in Cuba's domestic affairs. And the US landed marines in Cuba in 1906, 1912, 1917, and 1920. The amendment also established a US military colony in Cuba—the Guantanamo naval base—that is now used as a detention camp and torture chamber in the US's war on the world.

By the 1950s, the US controlled 80 percent of Cuban utilities, 90 percent of Cuban mines, close to 100 percent of the country's oil refineries, 90 percent of its cattle ranches, and 40 percent of the sugar industry. Cuba also became an investor paradise for US gambling syndicates, real estate operators, hotel owners, and mobsters. The US propped up the repressive and widely hated regime of Fulgencio Batista. This was the backdrop for the Cuban revolution of 1959.

The Cuban revolution was a just and popular rising against US imperialism. The US was not reconciled to its defeat. The US wanted to regain its lost holdings and profits. But of even greater concern, it worried about the example Cuba set for others in Latin America. The US moved along two tracks in the early 1960s: to crush Cuba and stamp out revolutionary movements throughout the region; and to launch the Alliance for Progress—promoted as a free-market solution to poverty but serving only to deepen US economic penetration of Latin America.

In 1961, the US carried out the Bay of Pigs invasion, which the Cuban people defeated. The CIA tried several times to assassinate Castro. The US blocked Cuba's ability to have normal trade with Western countries.

By the mid-1960s, Cuba became tightly enmeshed in the Soviet bloc. Castro supported the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and of Afghanistan in 1979. He launched ideological attacks on Mao and the Cultural Revolution. Castro also provided foot-soldiers for Soviet operations to expand imperial influence in Africa.

Cuba called itself socialist. But the entire Cuban economy was subordinated to a capitalist economic logic—produce, produce, and produce what you produce best: sugar.

Based on these economic arrangements, Castro was able to pump revenues from sugar sales into social programs, like health care and education. These measures produced certain benefits for Cuba's poor. Politically, this helped solidify a base of popular support for Castro. ~~████~~