



January 20, 2025 Statement from Cuba Si NY/NJ Coalition on Cuba's Removal— Again — from the Bogus “SSOT” List

On January 14, 2025, just six days before his departure from the White House, President Joseph Biden and his Secretary of State Antony Blinken, removed the nation-state of Cuba from the spurious State Sponsors of Terrorism” list.

They further waived the Title III stipulation of the “Helms-Burton” federal legislation for six months. Helms -Burton is the “legal” basis for the bipartisan, extraterritorial economic war on the Caribbean island of Cuba carried out by the mighty United States government that has been on-going for decades.

Cuba's inclusion on the SSOT list never had any factual or evidential basis. Ludicrous charges of “terrorism” have always been a cover for US anti-Cuba policy. On the contrary, it has always been a conscious and particularly sharp tool to undermine, weaken, and sabotage Cuba's economy, its industrial development, and the living standards of the Cuban working class and population. Putting Cuba on the SSOT list has always been an obscene lie!

From Reagan to Trump

President Ronald Reagan ((1980-1988) first included Cuba on the SSOT list during the 1980's. This was when bipartisan Washington was determined to prevent the extension of the 1979 Nicaraguan Revolution. It was a period when a regional revolutionary upsurge was sweeping Central America. Washington under Reagan was arming the thoroughly terrorist Nicaraguan “contras”; backing the death-squad state-terrorist government in El Salvador; backing the genocidal terrorist regime of Efraín Ríos Montt in Guatemala; and turning Honduras into base for US covert military intervention.

Cuban foreign policy in that period was of course the direct opposite. Cuba supported the Nicaraguan Revolution and opposed Reagan's “dirty war” which slaughtered thousands. Cuba championed the struggles against the Central American neocolonial dependencies and military dictatorships backed by bipartisan Washington.

President Barack Obama (2008-2016) removed Cuba from the SSOT list as a pre-condition — along with the return to Cuba of the remaining incarcerated “Cuban 5” anti-terrorists from federal prisons — for the establishment of diplomatic relations between Washington and Havana.

Continuity from Trump 1 to Biden

What could have become a path towards genuine US-Cuba normalization — even as the extra-territorial US blockade remained legally in place — was instead short-lived. The first Trump Administration (2016-2020) steadily moved to reverse Obama's course and carry out the “maximum pressure” (of which Senator Marco Rubio claimed direction) policy to overthrow the Cuban government and destroy — once and for all — the living example of the Cuban Revolution.

In a parting shot in their last nine days in office, Trump and his Secretary of State Michael Pompeo

put Cuba back on the SSOT list. And there it stayed —with devastating, accumulating consequences for the Cuban nation — until the last days of Biden-Blinken.

The first thing to be said about the last-minute removal by the Biden-Blinken Administration is its unbounded cynicism. During its four years in office, Biden-Blinken did everything they could to subvert and implement “regime change” in Cuba, even as the COVID-19 pandemic raged and devastated Cuba’s tourism industry, a main pillar of much-needed foreign exchange.

This was an unforgivable policy of evil in contrast to Cuba’s medical internationalism and solidarity from that terrible period.

Nevertheless, the SSOT removal is a relative political advance which registers the permanent domestic, hemispheric, and international pressures and movement against the extraterritorial US economic and political war against Cuba.

It certainly represents a further delegitimization of the spurious inclusion of Cuba on the SSOT list in the first place. It opens up the prospect of hemispheric and international resistance and defiance of US diktats and arrogance in a world political situation fraught with intensified political, economic, and military conflict.

As Trump takes office, he has delivered direct economic and military threats — with calculated bluster — against Mexico, Panama, Canada, and Venezuela. Rubio, in his Senate confirmation hearings to replace Blinken at the State Department, was blunt in stating he has “no doubt” that Cuba is a “terrorist” state and that he will move to put Cuba back on the SSOT list. Mauricio Claver-Carone, a Rubio ally and Trump’s incoming “envoy” to Latin America, stated that new US anti-Cuba sanctions, will be “bigger and harder, with broader effects than last time.”

This is the political terrain that the growing — and increasingly organized and coordinated — US, Canadian, hemispheric, and international Cuba solidarity and anti-blockade movements find ourselves in.

The upcoming March 15-16, 2025 International US-Cuba Normalization Conference will be an important gathering of a broad range of organizations and activists — live-streamed across the globe — to discuss and decide on a course of organization and action to challenge and defeat the US blockade.



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Ike Nahem

for the Cuba Si NY/NJ Coalition

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**International US-Cuba Normalization
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