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Latin America, the European Union and Cuba: Approaches towards Totalitarianism

This document seeks to study the UPR corresponding to the Cuban regime, which took place during the fourth working session of the UPR Working Group, in the period February 2nd-13th 2009, and its corresponding context. The focus is comparative between two regions of the world: Latin American governments and European governments. The relevance of these two regions to the subject of human rights in Cuba is due to historical reasons. On one hand, Cuba is a Latin American country, and all its neighbors are signatories to the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Governments from that region frequently self-proclaim their roles as protectors and promoters of human rights, and the issue has a greater sensitivity in countries that endured dictatorships in recent decades. Additionally, Latin America has historically been the main stage for the Cuban government's actions, both in terms of propaganda and official relations and of anti-democratic subversion. Furthermore, it is in that region where, even under democratic systems of government, there remains a significant amount of sympathizers of the regime. When comparing European countries with this important portion of the Americas, it can be clearly ascertained that the former is far more critical towards the Cuban regime. Chile, on the other hand, is the only one of these countries to present a more critical exposition. Its intervention included phrases such as: "(...) we believe an effective independence of procedures and in judicial administration, a duly narrowed martial law, an adequate protection for human rights defenders as well as political opponents, an effective guarantee of liberty of expression and the respect for the liberty to move within and out of Cuba will be important in achieving an enjoyment of human rights, whatever their nature."

By Pablo Brum and Mariana Dambolena



Puente Democrático is a program within the area Political Opening and Development of the Center for Opening and Development of Latin America (CADAL) with the objective of the international promotion of civic and political freedoms.

The fragility of Central and South American democracies is not new. There are several governments in the region with authoritarian slants, but only one in the western hemisphere holds the dubious honor of having a totalitarian system of government. Cuba is one of the poorest countries in the world: a place where there are constant shortages of food stocks, electricity, sewage treatment, protection from the elements and, of course, human rights.

Despite the fact that it is an illegitimate regime, like many others the Cuban government represents its country in the United Nations. As a member of that body it complies with one of many obligations, which is being submitted to scrutiny by the Human Rights Council, a multilateral assembly established in Geneva. Under a mechanism called Universal Periodic Review -UPR from now onwards- each government that is a member of the United Nations, be it democratic or not, is the object of an evaluation from the organization itself, from other governments and even from non-governmental organizations. These are some of the most propitious instances in which to study the commitment of countries to the universality of human rights. After all, if in practice only certain countries' violations of human rights are criticized -while others are ignored-, or there is simply no mention of any violation of human rights when in fact there are, it means there is a notorious erosion of the concept of human rights itself. This document seeks to study the UPR corresponding to the Cuban regime, which took place during the fourth working session of the UPR Working Group, in the period February 2nd-13th 2009, and its corresponding context. The focus is comparative between two regions of the world: Latin American governments and European governments. The relevance of these two regions to the subject of human rights in Cuba is due to historical reasons.

On one hand, Cuba is a Latin American country, and all its neighbors are signatories to the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Governments from that region frequently self-proclaim their roles as protectors and promoters of human rights, and the issue has a greater sensitivity in countries that endured dictatorships in recent decades. Additionally, Latin America has historically been the main stage for the Cuban government's actions, both in terms of propaganda and official relations and of anti-democratic subversion. Furthermore, it is in that region where, even under democratic systems of government, there remains a significant amount of sympathizers of the regime.

On the other hand, liberal democracy prevails almost without exception in Europe, and yet even then there persist some political players who are sympathetic towards the Cuban regime. However, does that mean that residual sympathy or the acceptance of propaganda at face value translate to government policies?

One more question remains: why not study also the reactions of governments that do not belong to any of these regions? The answer lies in the same principle: the specific logic that surrounds Cuba-related controversies. For example, usually it would be mandatory to include the opinions of the Canadian and American governments, but the reality is that particularly in the case of the second, it has had a relation with Cuba that is far too complex. In practice, although American reports and actions referring to Cuba are usually favorable to a defense of human rights, there is far too much propaganda surrounding that entire relationship. Therefore, it is convenient to deal with countries towards which Cuba shows itself as willing to talk to. One additional complication emerges when considering numerous countries in Africa and Asia, several of which have authoritarian governments. In the specific context of the United Nations, Cuba has had for many decades an alliance with those regimes dedicated to mutual protection at the time of voting.¹

What follows is the positions expressed by the governments of the two regions that concern this report.

European Countries and Cuba's UPR

Governments in this region aspire to common policies as a consequence of their integration through an organization as ambitious as the European Union. On the Cuban issue there has been an "EU Common Position" since 1996, which is annually revised based on contextual political events. On June 15th 2009, the common policy was updated in a meeting in Luxembourg of the Council of the EU.² The European policy set forth in that document seeks dialogue and cooperation with the Cuban government with the objective of establishing a "*pluralist democracy*" in the island and, most of all, ensuring an effective promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental liberties. This strategy is usually framed as the inverse of the more aggressive American position, which seeks similar ends but through the application of economic measures and hostile bilateral relations.

The European Union's position includes members of Cuban civil society and political opposition figures in its dialogue. In that sense, the document establishes that during visits to Cuba by high-ranking European officials, meetings shall be held with members of the opposition and representatives of civil society.

Additionally, the EU document expresses its serious concern with the lack of progress in Cuba's human rights situation, specifically in what are called civil and political rights.

At the same time, the European position includes a commitment to aiding the island with measures oriented towards a significant improvement in the economic and social conditions of the Cuban people through cooperation for development. However, the common European position covers -at least at the moment- only a generic commitment to the cause of individual rights and liberties, as well as other issues like cooperation for development. Since it is not expressed in the negotiated position, there is no common position for institutions like the Human Rights Council. This was on display during the UPR, since in spite of a general commitment to “*respect and promotion of human rights*”, each government allowed itself to express different evaluations. The result was that a common position on the part of European countries when examining Cuba was *not* detected.

During Cuba’s UPR most European countries which participated in this process adopted a critical or a neutral position with regard to the human rights situation in that country.

The most numerous group expressed strong criticism of the human rights situation in the island, as well as questions and

Countries	Freedom in the World	Rank in <i>Democracy, Markets & Transparency 2008</i>	Tone
Argentina	Free	66	Sympathetic
Bolivia	Partly Free	85	Sympathetic
Brazil	Free	59	Neutral
Chile	Free	17	Critical
Colombia	Partly Free	66	Sympathetic
Guatemala	Partly Free	85	Sympathetic
Honduras	Partly Free	80	Sympathetic
Mexico	Free	55	Sympathetic
Nicaragua	Partly Free	81	Sympathetic
Venezuela	Partly Free	115	Sympathetic

requests for information on freedom of expression, of transit and of association. Cuba was also questioned about political prisoners it keeps kidnapped in its prisons, as well as about the independence of the judiciary (or rather the lack thereof). For example, the Austrian government said that “*We recommend to the Government [of Cuba] to halt the prosecution of citizens who are exercising the rights guaranteed under articles 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*”. The Czech representative expressed the following: “(…) *we recommend Cuba to (...) release all prisoners of conscience* [emphasis in the original]”.

The Hungarian delegate, who additionally addressed the session in Spanish, went even further: “*Cuban citizens are still forced to seek exit visas in order to visit foreign countries (...) Hungary recommends Cuba adopts measures that facilitate exits from the country. Presently Cubans face restrictions on the use of the Internet and therefore freedom of expression (...)*”.

Other countries, even when mentioning some of the same concerns as the previous group, used a far more amicable tone, and recognized advances in some fields. More specifically, the “progress” that impressed these rather more neutral governments were in the fields of health care, education and female participation in the country’s politics. For example, the Spanish government did not mention any of the issues brought up by its Central European colleagues, and limited itself to asking about ratifications of treaties and visits by UN officials.

Lastly, there was a group of governments which seemed to sympathize with Cuba. In these cases recommendations -no longer critical- are reduced to one or two points, and most of both texts focuses on recognizing “advances” and the good will of the Cuban government in cooperating with the UPR mechanism.

For example, the Romanian delegate said that “*We congratulate Cuban authorities over the efforts they have deployed in the realm of economic, social and cultural rights (...) With regard to cooperation in the realm of human rights there are positive advances (...)*”.³

The attitude of some of these European countries might reflect a single word: ingenuity. Consider a recent example. An important European Socialist leader, the German Martin Schulz, visited Havana in 2008 with the objective of starting a dialogue with the regime, so as to improve relations with the European Union. A journalist was able to witness the dialogue between the German legislator and the now-purged Carlos Lage. “(…) *Lage (...) tells Schulz that Cuba is not prepared to offer anything in exchange for the permanent removal of the sanctions. The Europeans, he says, are nothing but America’s lackeys.*” Schulz answers: “*Let me tell you how your country is viewed in Europe. You impose the death penalty. You torture and lock up political prisoners. Cuba is a dictatorship.*”

Schulz, who as a European Social Democrat has the simultaneous capacity to recognize the totalitarianism of Cuba's government while seeking good relations with it, proposed to Lage a lifting of European sanctions in exchange for the unrestricted opening of a German NGO in Havana. Naturally, the office has not opened – nor will it.⁴

Latin American Countries and Cuba's UPR

The main characteristic of the Cuban UPR as conducted by other Latin American countries is that there are several countries that maintain such a biased and elegiac position with regard to the regime that they almost sing paeans to it. The members of this group are Ecuador, Bolivia, Honduras, Argentina, Nicaragua and Guatemala.

These governments not only abstain from criticizing the regime, but actually use their time slots to ask Cuba to *share* its experiences in education and health care⁵, with the purpose of implementing such good practices themselves.

Country	Freedom in the World	Rank in <i>Democracy, Markets & Transparency 2008</i>	Tone
Germany	Free	15	Critical
Austria	Free	14	Critical
Belgium	Free	18	Critical
Slovakia	Free	33	Critical
Slovenia	Free	26	Sympathetic
Spain	Free	25	Neutral
France	Free	24	Neutral
Hungary	Free	35	Critical
Ireland	Free	10	Critical
Italy	Free	40	Neutral
Latvia	Free	41	Sympathetic
Norway	Free	16	Neutral
Poland	Free	43	Critical
Portugal	Free	27	Neutral
United Kingdom	Free	12	Critical
Czech Rep.	Free	30	Critical
Romania	Free	52	Sympathetic

When comparing European countries with this important portion of the Americas, it can be clearly ascertained that the former is far more critical towards the Cuban regime. It is not exactly difficult to achieve this, since the other side holds Cuba in a pedestal.

One employee of the Communist regime expresses in an interview the discourse from which foreign ministries allied to Havana take note, in order to later relay it themselves: *“The revolution has been a success (...) It overthrew a tyrannical regime. We got our national sovereignty. We got our pride. We survived aggression by the most powerful country in the world for 50 years. We preserved the essence of what Fidel fought for (...) we are an example to others, an example to all those looking for an alternative to capitalism.”*⁶

Among the recommendations and statements by countries in the Americas that sympathize with the Cuban regime may be found the following:

“The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has been a witness to the commitment assumed by the Cuban Revolution in its struggle for the dignity of its people against the oppression, the injustice and the inhuman economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the North-American empire (...). [We recommend] it continues in its path towards the construction of socialism, under the principles of solidarity and justice; advancing in the strengthening of participative and protagonic democracy (...).”

One of the Cuban innovations Venezuela might be interested in emulating are the Councils for the Defense of the Revolution. *“Every Cuban is expected to join the local CDR and participate in committee activities whether or not they are Communist Party members (...) Some Cubans don't join or don't participate, but at great risk of being labeled an “enemy of the Revolution.” CDR presidents can organize “acts of repudiation,”⁷ in which neighbors stand outside the homes of those suspected of illegal activity and scream insults — sometimes for days. When a Cuban wants a job in the lucrative tourism industry — where a worker can earn three or four times the usual state*

salary — the CDR president's imprimatur is essential. Applicants labeled “anti-social,” code for transgressions such as dissident activity or lack of interest in volunteer projects, are almost assured of being turned down. If a child is born, active CDR presidents pay a visit to the parents. ‘We know who the dissidents are, where they work, who they meet with -- we know everything that happens on this block,’ DeLeon [president of a CDR interviewed by the Washington Post] said. ‘Anyone who is not a revolutionary is an enemy of the Revolution’.”⁸

Even with full knowledge of these situations, governments like Guatemala's expressed opinions such as these in the UPR: “[We advise Cuba to] continue sharing with other developing countries its good practices and strategies; among others in the areas of health, education and culture (...).”

Cuba's spectacular performance in the enjoyment of human rights also extends to housing. Since the regime prohibits private property and, by extension, the purchasing and selling of real estate, Cubans turn to the pre-historic system: barter. Thus, each family or individual intending to move to a different dwelling must find another person willing to inhabit the house or apartment being left – or in many cases triangulating with more people. “The trading occurs in plain sight. Under the watchful eye of a police officer, hundreds of people gather every Saturday under the ficus trees on El Prado, one of Havana's grand avenues. Some carry cardboard signs describing their units: the neighborhoods, number of bedrooms and whether there are patios, garages, hot water, private bathrooms and gas supplies. Less desirable dwellings use tanks of gas for cooking and require residents to share toilets with others down the hall.”⁹

The reader will judge whether this reality is consequent with the merry portrait drawn by the Nicaraguan delegate, who expressed the following: “In Cuba human rights are a reality for everyone (...) Congratulations Cuba for your relentless struggle”.

Continuing with examples, Evo Morales' envoy opined that “Cuba is demonstrating to the international community that with few economic resources it is also possible to help people; the most important thing is to have political will and, of course, a deep and real commitment to human rights.”

Cuba's self-proclaimed “example” sometimes reaches extremes in order to “help people”, like the Bolivian delegate suggests. Caught on tape speaking to a group of unexpectedly pugnacious students, Ricardo Alarcón explained that the Cuban regime he is part of imprisons its subjects in the island -a flagrant violation of the right of free transit- because “if everyone who wished to were allowed to travel, there would not be enough airspace for the planes”.¹⁰ One of the most emblematic cases referring to exiting the country is that of medical doctor Hilda Molina, who was forced to wait for fifteen years before being allowed to leave the island and visit his family in Argentina.¹¹

It is precisely the Argentinean government which also fell in disgrace when considering Cuba's UPR. In an orthographically challenged exposition its delegate said that: “(...) my country is part of the international campaign that promotes the immediate ratification and entry into force of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance . In that sense we highlight the importance of Cuba's entry into such an important instrument.”

The Argentinean position is one of the most alarming witnessed in this case, considering the country it emanates from. In an interview with the Spanish daily ABC, only four days after Cuba's UPR, President Cristina Fernández referred to the Cuban dictator as “Fidel”, whom he compared to Nelson Mandela. With regard to the most pressing matter concerning the island, she held that “The issue of human rights is related to the characteristics in which the island has been immersed, with a blockade, with attacks, with people who have captured airplanes and are still living in the United States (...) I do not think that is the central issue in a visit to Cuba”.¹²

This is also alarming because there have been at least 8.000 murders and disappearances, documented name by name, orchestrated by the Cuban government – although the finally tally is probably higher.¹³ It is a similar number to the victims of the Argentinean dictatorship, which is so present in that country's political debates.

Even governments considered to be more “serious”, like Mexico or Colombia's, kept their distance in their interventions during the Cuban UPR. Mexico added positively to the debate with regard to the need for creating mechanisms that include the participation of civil society in implementing the recommendations of the review, but in general the text is centered on recognizing “achievements” in the field of so-called social, economic and cultural rights. Colombia simply avoids making any recommendations and limits itself to requesting information on achievements in HIV reduction programs.

No Latin American country intervened with strong criticism. The “harshest”, by Latin American standards, were Chile and, on a much smaller scale, Brazil. That country, always in a cordial tone and faithful to its style, initially focuses on some accolades directed at Cuba. However, in the middle of the speech it allows itself to slide some criticisms in. One clear

example is the question, almost lost in the text, demanding “(...) *aside from all the efforts already undertaken, which measures could the Cuban government take to guarantee a respect for the principle of indivisibility of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights?*”.

Chile, on the other hand, is the only one of these countries to present a more critical exposition. Its intervention included phrases such as: “(...) *we believe an effective independence of procedures and in judicial administration, a duly narrowed martial law, an adequate protection for human rights defenders as well as political opponents, an effective guarantee of liberty of expression and the respect for the liberty to move within and out of Cuba will be important in achieving an enjoyment of human rights, whatever their nature.*”

Final Considerations: How can such disparity be explained? Cuba and inter-American diplomacy

There are several factors that contribute to having a common object of study having such diverse opinions around it. It is proper to mention some of these in order to understand, at least partially, why certain countries are so bent on defending the Cuban regime, and why comparatively few others dare criticize it.

The first factor is the propaganda Havana has been broadcasting for decades. In this area the Castro brothers' government needs to be properly recognized, since -always faithful to their Stalinist inspirations- they have managed to implement an enviable public relations apparatus. The efficiency of this machine is beyond any doubt: it is enough to compare the reality of Cuba's streets and homes with the falsehoods that are part of conventional knowledge regarding that country.¹⁴ This happens to a great degree in the Americas, but still in many other places around the world the same story is heard: Cuba has an exemplary health-care system. Cuba faces economic “troubles” exclusively due to the American “blockade”.¹⁵ The Cuban educational system is among the best in the world. Cuba's political and social system is based on solidarity and fraternity, instead of cold-hearted consumerism.

After being repeated so many times, these impossibilities have become folksy truths, which are also repeated obediently by Cuba's many acolytes around the world. In fact, these snuck into the UPR itself, under the category of “advances in matters of economic and social rights”. Additionally, even some of the most advanced democracies were unable to avoid highlighting, perhaps out of diplomatic equilibrium, some of these imaginary achievements. Cuba's historical relations with countries in the Americas are also a factor in the complexity of the issue. There is a wide residual cultural sympathy for the regime in its “home region”, significantly linked to the other factor just mentioned. This sympathy has many sources: one comes from progressivism and its historical love affair with the Cuban “revolution”. Cuban writer Rafael Rojas has summed up this trend as follows: “(...) *this left [wing] dares not recognize the failure of Cuban socialism, because doing so would mean letting go of the last myth that grants it a respirator in the 21st century*”.¹⁶ Another source is anti-Americanism, which once again Rojas explains improvedly as follows: “*supporting Cuba diplomatically has become the easiest and cheapest way of signaling distance from the United States*”. Yet another one is the continental tradition that prefers dialogue over persistent harassment -comparable to what the United States has practiced towards Cuba.

The result is that Cuba is part of an intellectual construct called “Latin America”, and therefore there are fewer incentives to criticize the island on governments that are also part of it.

Regrettably, this ethnic-cultural sympathy far too often exceeds humanist or legal criteria that should be applied, and ends up either with timid admonishments or straightforward alliances. For example, Mexico -which is easily one of the most powerful countries in the region-, maintains a foreign policy that is very favorable towards Cuba, and which has not been altered even after a rotation of parties in power.¹⁷ Additionally, many governments in the Americas invest their energies in working for the Cuban regime. Just like the Uruguayan newspaper *La República* detailed that same year, on the occasion of the Port-of-Spain summit and in reference to the reinstatement of Havana to the inter-American system: “*The request over Cuba was there in practically all interventions by South American presidents. Cristina Fernández, Inácio Lula Da Silva, Rafael Correa, Hugo Chávez, Evo Morales, Fernando Lugo and Tabaré Vázquez, among others, mentioned it directly. Lula was very emphatic in his position and stated that ‘it is very difficult for the next summit to take place without Cuba’.*”¹⁸

There is one last factor of great importance left to mention: the actual human rights situation of Cubans. Logically, the purpose of propaganda is to spread an idyllic and false version of this matter – but which then are the trustworthy sources needed to scrutinize Cuban reality?

The initial answer is that they are too many and impossible to cover in this short space: testimony by Cuban citizens broadcast directly from the island, the political opposition's clandestine press and reports by governments and intelligence agencies. However, for the purposes of this paper, it is worth stopping on one in particular: the multilateral mechanisms for supervision of human rights situations.

Starting in 1945 and the beginning of the UN era in international relations, there has been a system for monitoring and debating human rights in which almost all countries participate. One of its most important components is the Human Rights Council itself. However, the UPR debates are not the only ones worth mentioning. There are other instances within and outside the United Nations that are very relevant to the Cuban issue.

The first is the mother treaty referring to individual rights and liberties: the Universal Declaration. Practically all objective analyses conclude that all rights whose guarantee is mandated to states in that document are violated in Cuba. The second is the set of *in situ* inspection mechanisms the UN deploys in order to produce reports on each situation. In this area Cuba has traditionally adopted two strategies: either impeding the entry of the organization's rapporteurs to the country, or stage-managing visits that camouflage the true state of affairs.

A third area that is germane to this topic is the inter-American mechanisms that exist to discuss human rights. The Cuban regime has had strong disputes with organizations such as the OAS, which it has discounted as an American satellite. Important treaties like the Inter-American Democratic Charter¹⁹ are of nil importance to Havana, something that has been worryingly reflected in some events during 2009.

In effect, in April of this year the novel Obama Administration was the protagonist of a few diplomatic maneuvers around the issue of Cuba. In the domestic arena, the administration lifted some absurd sanctions covering travel and trade permits between the United States and the island, which depended on the will of the Executive Branch.²⁰ At the inter-American level, a coalition of regimes allied with Cuba hammered their demand for a reintegration of that country to the system to its maximum expression. Indeed, the OAS General Assembly voted in favor of revoking the 1962 resolution that suspended the regime's participation in that forum. *Apparatchik* Ricardo Alarcón considered it to be a "great victory" for his government.²¹

Like Jaime Daremblum said when considering diplomatic initiatives on the Cuban topic at the OAS: "*The push to let Cuba rejoin the OAS is part of a larger Latin American effort to end Cuba's isolation in the Western Hemisphere (...) They would have more credibility in arguing this position if they showed greater concern over Cuba's severe human rights violations*"²²

The totalitarian nature of Cuba automatically excludes it from this system, even when some of the Cold War dynamics that led to the original suspension have expired – like many analysts point out. However, this does not seem to be an impediment for the diplomacies of several countries in the Americas to ignore their own constitutions, treaties and systems of government in favor of sympathy for Cuba. This can be observed both in the inter-American case as well as in the UPR that motivates this study. In both instances there is a worrying obsession on the part of ibero-American countries with presenting positions that are favorable or delicate towards Cuba.

Teodoro Petkoff, a former Communist guerrilla who now opposes Hugo Chávez and therefore incarnates the contradictions of the region's progressive politics, holds that "*There are two major lines (...) There's a left that's democratic and modern in its economic concept. And then there's a left that is lost in history, a left that's rooted in the anachronism of Marxist-Leninism of the past.*"²³

It is not surprising that the latter, which is dominated by Cuba, Venezuela and other countries, has also managed to become the majority in a place like the Human Rights Council. Former political prisoner and later Czech president Vaclav Havel denounced this dynamic in the following manner, which provides a very proper closing to this report:

*"Imagine an election where the results are largely preordained and a number of candidates are widely recognized as unqualified. Any supposedly democratic ballot conducted in this way would be considered a farce (...) The council was supposed to be different. For the first time, countries agreed to take human rights records into account when voting for the council's members, and those member-states that failed to, in the words of the founding resolution, "uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights" would find themselves up for review and their seats endangered. For victims of human rights abuses and advocates for human rights worldwide, the reforms offered the hope of a credible and effective body. Now, it seems, principle has given way to expediency. Governments have resumed trading votes for membership in various other United Nations bodies, putting political considerations ahead of human rights. The absence of competition suggests that states that care about human rights simply don't care enough. Latin America, a region of flourishing democracies, has allowed Cuba to bid to renew its membership."*²⁴

Notes:

¹ More specifically in the Non-Aligned Movement, resurrected from its ideological mission of yore to a simple UN voting cartel.

² This institution, not to be confused with the Council of Europe, is the greatest coordination forum for the executive branches of European Union countries. The document may be accessed [here](#).

³ Translated from the original statement in French

⁴ [EU Seeks Deal With Cuba](#), Ralf Beste, Der Spiegel, 2/14/2008.

⁵ Cited to the point of exhaustion by Cuban propaganda and, consequently, its followers in other countries. It is worth noting that, in spite of being hammered continuously as if they were a universal truth, these “achievements” are based on statistics provided by a totalitarian regime, and are therefore untrustworthy. [After 50 years, Cuba has little to show](#). Andrés Oppenheimer, The Miami Herald, 12/14/2008

⁶ [The End of the End of the Revolution](#), Roger Cohen, The New York Times, 12/7/2008

⁷ These acts have extended their reach even to Geneva, precisely in the middle of a debate on that very issue. “*Castro has instructed his ambassadors to behave similarly outside the island. That’s why Cuban embassies, using their supporters and sometimes the diplomats themselves, “bust” the press conferences or public appearances of noted opposition figures such as (...) human rights activist Frank Calzón, who was beaten into unconsciousness by a Cuban functionary at the United Nations palace in Geneva, no less, during a debate over whether the liberties of citizens in Cuba are violated.*” [Fidel Castro y su ‘cosa nostra’](#), Carlos Montaner, 5/7/2006

⁸ [Cuba’s Waning System of Block-Watchers](#), Manuel Roig-Franzia, The Washington Post, 10/30/2007

⁹ [With a Whisper, Cuba’s Housing Market Booms](#), Marc Lacey, The New York Times, 1/28/2008

¹⁰ [Cyber-Rebels in Cuba Defy State’s Limits](#), James McKinley, The New York Times, 3/6/2008

¹¹ Hilda Molina’s [work](#) may be accessed on CADAL’s website.

¹² [«La expropiación de Aerolíneas recupera un servicio que no se prestaba»](#), ABC, 2/9/2009. See also [Cristina dejó en Cuba la poca credibilidad que tenía sobre su honesta defensa de los derechos humanos](#). Gabriel C. Salvia, CADAL, 1/21/2009

¹³ [After 50 years, Cuba has little to show](#). Andrés Oppenheimer, The Miami Herald, 12/14/2008

¹⁴ The regime even manages to inhibit the reading of American street billboards with “subversive” messages. [Havana’s 148 Flags Prove Mightier Than the Billboard](#), Manuel Roig-Franzia, The Washington Post, 5/13/2006

¹⁵ “*In fact, the United States is now the largest exporter of food to Cuba, earning upward of \$600 million this year. It’s among Cuba’s five biggest trading partners. (The others are Venezuela, China, Spain and Canada.)*”. [The End of the End of the Revolution](#), Roger Cohen, The New York Times, 12/7/2008

¹⁶ [La persistencia del mito cubano](#), Rafael Rojas, El País (España), 7/25/2005

¹⁷ [Mexico might turn back on Cuban opposition](#), Oppenheimer, Miami Herald, 1/24/2008

¹⁸ [Vázquez planteó la integración de Cuba y entendimiento con EEUU](#), La República, 4/19/2009

¹⁹ Which [states](#), throughout several articles: “*The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it. (...) Essential elements of representative democracy include, inter alia, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, access to and the exercise of power in accordance with the rule of law, the holding of periodic, free, and fair elections based on secret balloting and universal suffrage (...)*”.

²⁰ [Obama Lifts Broad Set Of Sanctions Against Cuba](#), The Washington Post, 4/14/2009

²¹ [U.S. Pushed Hard for OAS Accord](#), Mary Beth Sheridan, The Washington Post, 6/5/2009

²² [Dictatorships and Double Standards](#), Jaime Daremblum, The Weekly Standard, 9/6/2009

²³ [The Two Paths of Castro’s Legacy in Latin America](#), Juan Forero, The Washington Post, 20/2/2008

²⁴ [A Table for Tyrants, Vaclav Havel](#), The New York Times, 11/5/2009

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Av. Roque Sáenz Peña 628 piso 2º Of. R
(C1035AAO) Buenos Aires - Argentina
Tel: (54-11) 4343-1447 - Fax: (54-11) 4343-1554
E-mail: centro@cadal.org