

Indigenous Peoples and Nations Coalition

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When examining the human rights situation in Cuba and weighing the balance between human rights obligations and their implementation in order to better promote and protect its human rights, States must consider the challenges faced by the assault on its national sovereignty, national character, right to development and right to self-determination by the neighboring superpower United States of America. The Cuban revolution is born out the need to protect and defend its territory against unrelenting attempts to usurp its national sovereignty, including, *inter alia*, several attempts to assassinate its longtime and now retired Head of State Fidel Castro and overthrow the Cuban Government. The United States of America has suppressed the Cuban economy and attempted to undermine its territorial sovereignty by recruiting Cuban nationals to undermine its national pride and sovereign existence in the name of democracy and freedom so Cuba can be easily opened up to foreign development and exploitation; this is the same rationalization and framework of democracy and freedom that has led to the subjugation, domination and exploitation of other Territories such as Alaska and Hawaii and even Puerto Rico. Alaska and Hawaii are now controlled by the majority of outside influence and interest in the name of national security and territorial aggrandizement for the occupying State. That is why the Cuban peoples are seen as the real truly free voice against aggression; Cuba will tell the truth with its unrelenting courage to deny to the United States of America and their complicit collaborators the right to subjugate, dominate and exploit it as an independent country. As any other peoples, the Cuban peoples have the right to its right to self-determination as enunciated in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and common Article I of the international Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Cuba has heroically mounted a historical defense and ideological offense in response to the so-called "Breckenridge Memorandum" dispatched by the U.S. Undersecretary of War from the United States Department of War on the 24 December 1897. In this memorandum the United States had its provocative eye on Cuba and Puerto Rico and the Hawaiian Islands. For Hawaii Breckenridge stated that it was, " **more complex and dangerous, given the diversity of races and...the Japanese interests there are on the same footing as ours**". Breckenridge stated that Puerto Rico will be easy to take over stating outright that, "**Conquest will only require relatively mild measures. Our occupation of the territory must be carried out with extreme care and respect for all the laws between civilized and Christian nations, only resorting in extreme cases to bombing certain of their strongholds.**" As for Cuba, the Undersecretary was very direct: "**[We] must clean up the country, even if this means using the methods Divine Providence used on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. *** We must impose a harsh blockade so that hunger and its constant companion, disease, undermine the peaceful population and decimate the Cuban army. *** [W]e must create conflicts for the independent government. *** To sum up, our policy must always be to support the weaker against the stronger, until we have obtained the extermination of them both [Cuba and Puerto Rico], in order to annex the Pearl of the Antilles.**" The elements of the Breckenridge Memorandum have become a prophetic summary for what Cuba is faced with and has endured despite the superpowers efforts to overthrow its Government and independence. As any other State, Cuba desires a better standard of living through its ability to free economic development that would lead to economic and political security, yet it must brace itself for a continuing struggle to defend its sovereignty.

What may inspire Cuba to more effectively uphold its human rights obligations in the face of unrelenting obstacles is to receive support and influential action to relieve it from the burdens of the violations that it is subject to. Defending your human rights against an obvious violation of your own sovereignty and right to self-determination needs to be considered and addressed by the Human Rights Council. What mechanism can we put into place to relieve any State from its burdens so it can more effectively serve its own peoples?

If there are legitimate human rights violations then how do you inspect and gauge the response by the Cuban Government to these collaborators when the actions taken are measures of self-defense against the persistent attacks on the political life of the peoples and subversive infiltration by another State who is promoting its own interests?

Cuba has successfully denied hegemony and imperialism for a long protracted time like no one else has as a result of its revolution and against all odds of being on the front porch of the superpower aggressor. That is why the NGO's rose to their feet when Castro walked into the room to deliver his speech and participation in the high level roundtable event at the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa.

When the United States of America suffered that attacks of 9/11, the repressive laws and policies were instituted in the name of national security; its own citizens were denied travel at times and unrecognized retired judges and law enforcement officials working off duty experienced and complained of oppression and suppression by their own law enforcement officials. The events of 9/11 changed the laws and policies so that those who rendered justice had to take repressive measures in the name of national security.

Cuba has had to sacrifice to maintain its sovereignty; the Americans did the same in the heat of the battle of World War II. That war ended. The political and economic war of attrition did not end for Cuba since the beginning of its revolution or since the Breckenridge Memorandum. Remember the measures that were taken by the United States of America after 9/11; are they not reminiscent of what Cuba is sometimes accused to sometimes simply maintain its independent dignity?

The Indigenous Peoples and Nations Coalition recommend that that measures of implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/3 of the 16 November 2007 to relieve Cuba of its economic hardships due to the embargo imposed by the United States of America. The action taken should be aimed at strengthening the ability of Cuba to more directly promote and protect the rights of its peoples rather than defending itself from aggression.