Timeline for Castro’s Cuba

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/castro/timeline/index.html>

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Summer: Batista's forces launch a last, unsuccessful push against a small guerrilla army led by [Fidel Castro](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/castro/peopleevents/p_castro.html) and based in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra. | | **1959** | January 1: Revolutionary leader Fidel Castro's forces enter Havana. Before dawn, President Batista, his family, and 180 of his associates flee the country.  January and February: Former Batista officials are tried as criminals; as many as 500 are executed. When the U.S. press calls the executions a "blood bath," Fidel Castro rallies Cubans to legitimize his policies, which many support. A new chant is heard across Cuba: *paredón*, "to the wall," meaning death by firing squad.  Fidel Castro reading the Oath of Office, February 16, 1959February 7: Members of Castro's 26th of July Movement underground and leaders of the anti-Batista political opposition form an interim government. Manuel Urrutia, a judge, becomes president; José Miró Cardona becomes prime minister. Elections are to be held within eighteen months.  February 16: Rebel army commander Fidel Castro becomes prime minister of the revolutionary government, replacing Miró Cardona.  March 3: Castro's government expropriates properties belonging to the International Telephone and Telegraph Company, and takes over its affiliate, the Cuban Telephone Company, lowering telephone rates.  Fidel Castro standing in front of Statler Hilton in New York, surrounded by press, waving and smilingApril 15-26: Castro visits the U.S. He is greeted everywhere by cheering crowds. The trip is overshadowed by suspicions that he might be a Communist, but he publicly denies the Communist leanings of some in his inner circle, including his brother Raúl.  May 17: Upon his return to Cuba, Castro signs the Agrarian Reform Act. The government expropriates farm lands over 1,000 acres and bans land ownership by foreigners. Two hundred thousand peasants receive titles to land.  July 16: Castro forces the resignation of President Manuel Urrutia. Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado, an obscure lawyer connected with the Cuban Communist Party, becomes president.  July 26: Castro calls for a rally in Havana on the anniversary of the storming of the Moncada Barracks. In celebration of the Agrarian Reform Law, tens of thousands of peasants are brought to the city, welcomed and housed by middle and upper class families. At a mass rally of one million people, Castro reveals the class content of his revolution. "Cuba's revolutionary government was like that of ancient Athens," he said, "except better, because Cuba's revolutionary government was not for the privileged classes or the oligarchy. This is true democracy."  October 15: Raúl Castro, Fidel's brother, is named Minister of Defense.  October 19: Along with 14 officers, Comandante Huber Matos, an important figure in the revolution, resigns his post as military commander of Camagüey province. He cites his concern with the growing influence of Communists in Cuba's revolutionary government. Within days, Castro publicly brands him "a traitor" and arrests him.  October 21: Pedro Luis Díaz Lanz, former chief of Castro's air force, who had defected in July, flies a B-25 plane from Miami to Havana, dropping leaflets calling on Fidel Castro to eliminate Communists from his government. Shrapnel from anti-aircraft weapons kills two; others are wounded. Fidel blames the United States for the deaths.  October 25: Camilo Cienfuegos' plane disappears. One of the most popular comandantes of the revolution, his death is to this day shrouded in mystery.  December 15: [Huber Matos](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/castro/peopleevents/e_moderates.html) is found guilty of treason and conspiracy. He will serve every day of a 20-year prison sentence. Matos' conviction marks the end of the "revolutionary coalition" between moderates and radicals. By the end of the first year, only nine of the original 21 ministers of the revolutionary government remain. With his brother Raúl as minister of defense, Ché Guevara in charge of Cuba's Central Bank and himself as prime minister, Fidel Castro holds the reins of power firmly in hand. | | **1960** | Castro and Khrushchev, September 1960February 6: Talks begin between the U.S.S.R and Castro. The Soviet Union agrees to buy five million tons of sugar over five years. They also agree to support Cuba with oil, grain, and credit.  March 17: President [Dwight Eisenhower](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/34_eisenhower/index.html) approves an anti-Castro plan. The U.S. will place embargos on sugar, oil and guns, and issue propaganda. In addition, the plan calls for Cuban exiles to attack Cuba and attempt to overthrow Castro.  April 19: Soviet oil begins to arrive in Cuba.  May 8: Cuba and the Soviet Union establish formal diplomatic relations.  June 7: U.S. oil companies in Cuba refuse to refine Soviet oil. Within the next month Texaco, Esso, and Shell oil refineries will be nationalized.  President Eisenhower hand under chinJuly 3: In response to these seizures, the U.S. Congress eliminates Cuba's remaining sugar quota.  July 5: Cuba nationalizes all U.S. companies and properties.  July 6: President Eisenhower cancels the 700,000 tons of sugar remaining in Cuba's quota for 1960.  July 8: The Soviet Union announces that it will purchase the 700,000 tons of sugar cut by the U.S.  September 17: Cuba nationalizes all U.S. banks, including First National City Bank of New York, First National Bank of Boston and Chase Manhattan Bank.  September 18: Fidel Castro addresses the [United Nations](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/rockefellers/maps/textmap.html#unhq) General Assembly, lashing out at the United States and flaunting his new friendship with Soviet premier [Nikita Khrushchev](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/bomb/peopleevents/pandeAMEX83.html).  September 28: Fidel Castro announces the creation of neighborhood committees to keep an eye on "enemies of the revolution." These eventually will become the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (C.D.R.). Under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior, the C.D.R. serve as surveillance agents, ferreting out dissidents, counterrevolutionaries, homosexuals. They will also carry out health and education campaigns and fuel revolutionary enthusiasm.  President Kennedy, Proclamation Signing, Cuba QuarantineOctober 6: As Election Day approaches in the U.S., anti-Cuban rhetoric heats up. In Cincinnati, Democratic candidate [John F. Kennedy](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/35_kennedy/index.html) says Castro has converted Cuba into a "Communist... satellite." Kennedy blames Eisenhower and Nixon's policies of "neglect and indifference" for allowing Cuba to slip "behind the [Iron Curtain](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/bomb/filmmore/reference/interview/holloway13.html)."  October 13: Rents are cut in half as Cuba's Urban Reform Act takes effect. Nearly 400 Cuban companies are nationalized.  October 19: The U.S. places a partial trade embargo on Cuba.  October 24: The Cuban government seizes more American-owned properties.  December 26: Operation Pedro Pan begins. Over the next two years, desperate Cuban parents send more than 14,000 children on their own to the U.S. | | **1961** | January 3: The United States ends diplomatic relations with Cuba.  The departure of Cubans to the United States becomes an exodus. Over the next two decades more than one million Cubans will emigrate. Many are businessmen and professionals, including more than 50 percent of Cuba's doctors and teachers in the first two years of the revolution.  January 28: President John Kennedy authorizes the CIA to proceed with Eisenhower's Cuban invasion plan. It calls for an army of 1,200 Cuban exiles to land in Cuba's southeast coast, take over the city of Trinidad, and call on Cubans to rise up against Castro.  February 16: Lino Fernandez and 500 members of the underground resistance against the Castro regime are captured and jailed.  March 18: Three other key opposition leaders are arrested at a meeting in Havana, including Humberto Sorí Marín, the architect of the revolution's Agrarian Reform Law.  April 9: Rolando Masferrer, a former Batista official, is indicted in Miami for an attack on Cuba violating the Neutrality Act -- an aborted invasion of Cuba the previous October 4th. The U.S. distances itself from pro-Batista exiles while supporting other anti-Castro groups.  April 13: A second bomb in several days destroys Cuba's finest department store, El Encanto.  April 15: President Kennedy launches the [Bay of Pigs](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/35_kennedy/filmmore/ra_cuban.html) operation. Eight B-26 bombers attack airfields at Ciudad Libertad in Havana, San Antonio de los Baños in Pinar del Río and Santiago de Cuba in an attempt to destroy Cuba's air force. A second wave, designed to wipe out any surviving aircraft, is inexplicably cancelled.  The Castro regime places dynamite under the cells in prisons, as a warning to any prisoner who might try to help Bay of Pigs combatants. Word spreads, so that no Cuban citizen with a family member in prison will aid the American invasion.  April 17: CIA-trained Cuban exiles land at Bay of Pigs (Playa Girón). The invasion will end three days later in the exiles' defeat by the Cuban army.  April 19: Castro announces that the revolution is "socialist." In Havana, former colleagues who have spoken out against him, including Humberto Sorí Marín, Manuel Puig, and Regelio Gonzalez Corso, are executed for treason.  May 1: Castro calls Cuba a "socialist country."  November 30: President Kennedy approves [Operation Mongoose](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/rfk/peopleevents/e_mongoose.html), a covert CIA plan to get rid of Castro. His brother, attorney general [Robert Kennedy](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/rfk/index.html), will lead the [effort](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/rfk/sfeature/sf_enemies_02.html). | | **1962** | January 22: With U.S. encouragement, Cuba loses its membership in the Organization of American States (O.A.S.).  February 4: Castro calls for all Latin American people to rise up against imperialists in his Second Declaration of Havana.  February 7: President Kennedy bans all trade with Cuba, excepting foods and medicines.  March: The Cuban government begins rationing food.  March 23: President Kennedy bans the import of all goods made from or containing Cuban materials.  May 29: Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces commander Marshal S. S. Biryuzov secretly arrives in Havana to discuss placing nuclear weapons in Cuba.  July 2: Fidel's brother, Raúl Castro, Cuba's Minister of the Armed Forces, goes to Moscow. The two nations agree to deploy nuclear missiles under Soviet jurisdiction in Cuba.  July 21: University of Havana professor [Ricardo Bofill](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/castro/sfeature/sf_views_bofill.html) organizes a clandestine seminar called *Los Derechos Humanos a la Luz del Derecho Internacional* ("Human Rights in the Light of International Rights"). Three days later, he is dismissed from his teaching post.  September 8: A Soviet freighter arrives in Cuba with the first nuclear weapons shipment, a cargo of middle-range ballistic missiles.  September 15: A second Soviet freighter delivers another shipment of middle-range ballistic missiles to Cuba.  October 14: After two weeks of being deterred by clouds, a U.S. U-2 reconnaissance flight over Cuba photographs the Soviet construction of intermediate-range missile sites. The next day, analysis of the photographs will trigger the [Cuban Missile Crisis](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/35_kennedy/psources/index.html#b).  October 22: President Kennedy [addresses the nation](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/35_kennedy/psources/ps_armsbild.html) about the crisis. The Soviets realize that they have been spotted in Cuba. Kennedy announces a [naval blockade](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/35_kennedy/psources/ps_quarantine.html) of Cuba and declares that a Soviet nuclear attack launched from Cuba would require a response in kind.  October 27: Castro writes a letter to Khrushchev urging him to use nuclear weapons and sacrifice Cuba if necessary.  October 28: Radio Moscow announces a deal has been reached: Khrushchev is ready to remove the missiles from Cuba. In exchange, Kennedy promises to remove U.S. missiles from Turkey and pledges not to invade Cuba.  December 24: The U.S. sends Cuba medicines and food in exchange for exiles captured in the Bay of Pigs invasion. | | **1963** | Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro at the invitation of Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev spent the day at the latter's suburban house in Moscow, April 30, 1963February 8: The Kennedy administration bars Americans from any transactions with Cuba.  April-May: Fidel Castro visits the Soviet Union. Given a hero's welcome, the young revolutionary revives Soviet spirits and faith in the future. After a disastrous experiment with rapid industrialization, Cuba agrees to focus on producing sugar. The Soviets agree to purchase sugar at inflated prices while selling Cuba oil at deflated prices. Also Cuba will receive free of charge all military equipment it requests.  July 8: All Cuban-owned assets in the United States are frozen.  November 17: President Kennedy sends a message to Castro that he is now ready to negotiate normal relations and drop the embargo. According to former Press Secretary Pierre Salinger, Kennedy would have negotiated the agreement if he had lived.  November 22: President Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Vice president [Lyndon Johnson](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/36_l_johnson/index.html) is sworn in as the new U.S. president.  November: Cuba enacts the Second Agrarian Reform Law. The government expropriates all private holdings larger than 167 acres. A total of 11,000 farms are confiscated. Only subsistence farms remain in private hands. | | **1964** | January: Castro visits the Soviet Union and signs a new trade agreement.  July 26: When the Organization of American States (O.A.S.) requires its members to discontinue diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba, Mexico is the only country to refuse.  December: Guevara begins a world tour. He will visit eight African countries and China. | | **1965** | February 26: In a speech in Algiers, Guevara harshly criticizes the Soviet Union. "The socialist countries are, in a way, accomplices of imperialist exploitation."  April: Guevara disappears from view. Speculation as to his whereabouts becomes rampant.  October 3: Cuba inaugurates a new Communist Party and Central Committee. That same day, Fidel Castro reads a letter Guevara had written him the previous May. In it Guevara resigned all his official posts and his Cuban citizenship before leaving to fight in other lands. Months later, defeated and humiliated, Ché Guevara will return secretly to Cuba.  October: Over 3,000 Cubans leave in a boatlift from the port of Camarioca to the U.S.  December 1: An airlift of Cuban refugees to the U.S. begins. It will carry more than 45,000 emigrants in its first year. | | **1966** | January 3-15: At a conference of solidarity with the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America, Fidel Castro proclaims that "revolutionaries in any corner of the world" can count on the assistance of Cuban fighters.  September: After spending months recovering and training in the mountains of Cuba, Ché Guevara leaves for Bolivia to try to spark a continental revolution.  November 2: U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson grants the right to apply for permanent residency to any Cuban who arrived in the U.S. after January 1, 1959. More than 123,000 Cubans apply immediately.  December: Addressing the Federation of Cuban Women, Fidel Castro makes wild promises about his cattle breeding program. He predicts Cuba will produce enough milk to satisfy the demands of the entire population. | | **1967** | Lyndon Baines Johnson talking to Soviet Premier Aleksei KosyginJune 26: Soviet premier Aleksei Kosygin pays a surprise visit to Havana after meeting with President Johnson. He advises the Cubans that the Soviets will not support wars of national liberation in Latin America. His visit is followed by a letter from Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev warning Castro that the Soviets will not prevent a U.S. invasion if Castro continues fomenting revolution in Latin America.  October 9: After capturing Guevara in Bolivia the day before, U.S.-trained rangers execute the Cuban revolutionary. | | **1968** | January 2: The Cuban government begins rationing petroleum in response to a reduction in supply from the Soviet Union.  January 28: A trial of 37 members of the Cuban Communist Party results in the expulsion of nine members, including Anibal Escalante, for treason. Their "microfactionalist" activities are seen to compromise Cuba's sovereignty.  March 13: Castro takes most of the remaining private Cuban businesses into state control.  June 5: While campaigning for president, U.S. Senator [Robert F. Kennedy](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/rfk/index.html)is fatally shot in Los Angeles, California.  August 23: Soviet tanks enter Czechoslovakia to suppress the reform efforts of president Anton Dubcek and the resistance movement known as the Prague Spring. Castro takes the side of the U.S.S.R., justifying the intervention.  September 28: In an address to the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution Castro warns "we know the rules of the game." With its enemies "the saboteurs, the worms, the parasites," the revolution would be "harsh, implacable and inflexible." People defined as anti-social -- homosexuals, hippies, artists -- are rounded up. The armed forces magazine *Verde Olivo* launches a campaign to "cleanse" Cuba's arts and literature of all pernicious foreign influence. | | **1969** | January 2: The Cuban government announces sugar rationing.  July 26: In the latest of Castro's economic schemes, all of Cuba is mobilized and resources diverted to a single goal of producing ten million tons of sugar in the next harvest.  December: A group of volunteer workers from the U.S. arrives to work on the sugar harvest. Other volunteers come from Korea, Vietnam, and the Eastern block countries. | | **1970** | May 19: With the economy in a shambles as all resources -- human and economic -- consumed by the harvest, Castro announces that the largest harvest of sugar in Cuban history has missed its goal by 15 percent.  September 25: The U.S. warns the Soviet Union to discontinue construction of a nuclear submarine base in Cienfuegos. | | **1971** | March 20: The arrest and detention of poet Herberto Padilla for political differences with the Cuban government signals a dangerous crisis between the government and intellectuals.  September: Cuba is accepted as a member of the Non Aligned Movement, a ten-year-old conference of nations created in opposition to the U.S.-Soviet arms race and to Western colonialism.  November 10: On his first visit to a Latin American country since 1959, Castro is welcomed in Chile by President Salvador Allende, a Socialist who had been elected to office in September 1970. | | **1972** | May 3: Castro begins a 63-day tour of Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union.  July 11: Cuba becomes a member of the Soviet Union's trade association, the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance. As many as ten thousand Soviet advisers are now in Cuba. Cuban economic and political institutions are increasingly modeled on those of the Soviet Union. Both Fidel and Raul Castro take the title "General."  Health indexes, which had dropped in the 1960s, begin to rise as a consequence of Cuba's large investments in a [health care system](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/castro/sfeature/sf_views_uriarte.html).  November 19: Cuba and the U.S. begin negotiations over the problem of airline hijackings. They will sign an anti-hijacking agreement the following February. | | **1973** | April 6: The 8-year Cuban airlift ends. More than 260,000 Cuban refugees have come to the U.S.  September: Fidel attends the Fourth Conference of the Non-aligned Nations in Algiers. He argues that a "natural alliance exists between the Soviet Union and the Third World. "The Non Aligned Movement's theory of two imperialisms ignores the "glorious heroic and extraordinary services rendered to the human race by the Soviet people," he states.  September 11: In Chile, Salvador Allende's government is overthrown by a military *coup d'etat*. Allende kills himself. On September 13, the Chilean junta breaks relations with Cuba. | | **1974** | Leonid BrezhnevJanuary 28: Soviet premier Leonid Brezhnev visits Cuba.  September 11: In Miami, Florida, a group of seven anti-Castro militants forms Omega 7, a terrorist group that will target Cuban governmental representatives or Castro sympathizers in the United States.  September 28: Two U.S. senators visit Cuba, the first U.S. officials to visit since the break in relations.  November: With the goal of re-establishing diplomatic relations, the U.S. State Department conducts high-level secret talks with Cuban officials. | | **1975** | March 1: Secretary of State Henry Kissinger announces the United States is "ready to move in a new direction," normalizing relations with Cuba, and prepared to lift the 15-year-old trade embargo. Following months of secret negotiations, the announcement indicates both nations are on the verge of a breakthrough.  July 28: The Organization of American States ends sanctions against Cuba, allowing member nations to determine their own relations with Cuba.  August 21: The U.S. allows foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies to do business in Cuba, and drops penalties to other nations for trade with Cuba.  August: Top members of the Cuban general staff begin appearing in Angola, a mineral-rich Portuguese colony in South West Africa. In Cuba troops hold military training exercises.  November 7: Planeloads of Cuban special troops are sent to Angola, followed by two passenger ships.  November 11: With the military backing of Cubans, the Angolan independence group M.P.L.A. takes over the capital city of Luanda and proclaims Angola's independence from Portugal.  November 20: U.S. intelligence discloses more than eight failed attempts by the CIA to assassinate Fidel Castro between the years 1960 and 1965.  December 20: U.S. president [Gerald Ford](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/38_ford/index.html) announces that Cuban involvement in Angola will prevent the restoration of full U.S.-Cuban diplomatic relations for the near future. | | **1976** | For the first time since the Constitution of 1940, Cuba gets new constitution. It officially becomes a socialist state.  April 5: U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger announces that there is no possibility of normalized U.S.-Cuban relations while Cuba has troops in Africa. By now there are more than 15,000 Soviet-armed Cubans fighting in Angola.  April 30: In Miami, radio commentator Emilio Milán loses both his legs when a bomb explodes in his car. Milán serves as news director at WQBA radio, and hosts the popular show *Habla el Pueblo* ("The People Speak"). He will later assert that he was attacked because of his public opposition to terrorism.  October 6: A Cuban airliner crashes after an explosion near Barbados, killing 73 people. Luis Posada Carrilles, an anti-Castro activist trained by the CIA, is charged with the bombing. |   http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/castro/subimages/2_1_2grey.gif  **1958-1976** | [1977-2004](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/castro/timeline/timeline2.html) | | | http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/castro/subimages/spacer.gif | http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/castro/subimages/spacer.gif |
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He allows U.S. citizens to travel to Cuba and spend $100 there.  April 27: The U.S. and Cuba sign a maritime boundary and fishing rights accord.  May 25: The U.S. State Department warns that Cuba's recent deployment of military advisers to Ethiopia, a northeast African country experiencing political turmoil following a coup, could "impede the improvement of U.S.-Cuban relations."  September: The U.S. and Cuba open interest sections in each other's capitals.  November 5: Somalia expels all Soviet advisers and breaks diplomatic relations with Cuba, citing the presence of Cuban and Soviet advisers in Ethiopia.  Mid-December: Cuban combat troops begin to arrive in Ethiopia (eventually totaling nearly 20,000). They will fight Somali forces with Soviet weapons and under Soviet command. | | **1978** | January: Cuban troops help block the Somali invasion of Ethiopia with the aid of East German and Soviet officers.  February 27: Because of Cuban military activity in Africa, U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance declares that he does not immediately anticipate better relations with Cuba, much like the failed Kissinger initiative over Angola in 1975.  July 31: Castro demands the eviction of U.S. military bases from Guantanamo Bay. Anti-Castro exiles begin a bombing campaign against the Soviet mission, Cuban United Nations mission, and the Cuban interests section in the United States.  December: In an announcement by the U.S. government, officials declare that those responsible for the July bombings will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. | | **1979** | January 1: Cuban-Americans are now allowed to visit their families in Cuba. More than 100,000 visitors will make the trip in the coming year.  March 12: Cubans begin construction of a new airport. U.S. officials believe that it could be used for military purposes.  June 19: In an attempt to abolish the trade embargo, U.S. Congressman Ted Weiss (D-NY) introduces an ambitious, yet unsuccessful bill to re-establish diplomatic relations with Cuba.  July: Since 1977, Cuba has supported the Sandinista insurgency against Anastasio Somoza's rule in Nicaragua. In July, the Sandinista Liberation Front takes power, resulting in a new western ally for Castro.  September 3-9: In Havana, Castro is elected chair of the Non Aligned Movement. He will travel to New York to speak to the United Nations in October.  October 21: [Huber Matos](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/castro/peopleevents/e_moderates.html) is freed after 20 years in a Cuban prison, and transported to Nicaragua. He creates Cuba Independiente y Democrática, an organization that will work to raise awareness of human rights violations in Cuba.  December 31-January 1: Cuba supports the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, a non-aligned nation. As a result, the U.N. takes punitive measures against Cuba. | | **1980** | March: For the first time, Cuban farmers are allowed to sell the remaining produce above their state quotas in an unregulated market to private individuals.  April 1: After a shooting incident leaves the Peruvian embassy unguarded, ten thousand Cubans descend upon it seeking sanctuary. This begins the Mariel boatlift during which 125,000 refugees make their way to the U.S. Twice as many are left behind to wait at the port of El Mariel.  April 15: Cuban human rights activist [Ricardo Bofill](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/castro/sfeature/sf_views_bofill.html) is arrested for disseminating "enemy propaganda" and sentenced to another fourteen years in prison. While he had succeeded in sending his reports on human rights abuses out of Cuba, most friends and university colleagues avoided contact with him. During this prison term, many political prisoners will ask to become members of the group Bofill co-founded, the Cuban Committee for Human Rights (C.C.C.P.D.H.), and compile accounts of prison atrocities.  September 11: Anti-Castro terrorists assassinate a representative of the Cuban mission to the United States. | | **1981** | January: The new U.S. president, [Ronald Reagan](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/40_reagan/index.html), enters office committed to [fighting Communism](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/40_reagan/filmmore/ra_foreign.html). He establishes the most aggressive policy against Cuba since the Bay of Pigs invasion.  Jorge Mas Canosa institutes an anti-Castro lobbying group in the U.S., the Cuban-American National Foundation (C.A.N.F.), which quickly gains power.  October 30: For four weeks, the U.S. Navy carries out maneuvers in the Caribbean. A week later Pentagon officials state that the maneuvers were expected to send a message to Cuba.  October 31: Cuba anticipates a U.S. invasion and goes on full alert, preparing the country's entire military.  November 23: In a secret meeting in Mexico, Cuban vice president Carlos Rafael Rodriguez and U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig discuss the escalating situation, but reach no compromise. | | **1982** | April 19: The Reagan administration reissues the ban on U.S. citizens traveling to Cuba. The administration also allows the 1977 fishing accord to end.  June 16: Cuban vice president Rodriguez announces to the U.N. that Cuba's military power has nearly doubled since 1981, in reaction to the U.S.'s aggressive stance.  October: Armando Valladares is released from prison and flown to France. Regis Debray, a socialist French writer who once fought in Havana with Castro's forces, travels to Cuba to escort him. Valladares is received with great fanfare, and he founds Resistance International. Though nobody knows it, he is already working with Bofill and the C.C.P.D.H. | | **1983** | October 25: Suspicious of Cuban involvement in Grenada following a coup, the U.S. [invades](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reagan/peopleevents/pande07.html) the small Caribbean island with 8,000 troops and establishes a provisional government. Of the 784 Cubans on the island, 636 are construction workers and 43 are military personnel. The U.S. captures 642 Cubans, kills 24, and wounds 57. | | **1984** | March 19: Cuba and Angola outline provisions for the removal of Cuban troops from Namibia and support U.N. Security Council Resolution 435, which calls for Namibian independence.  May 14: The U.S. Department of Defense announces that it will spend $43 million restoring Guantanamo Naval Base.  June 29: U.S. presidential candidate Jesse Jackson meets with Cuban officials and negotiates the release of 26 prisoners, establishment of more churches, and a promise to open up discussions on immigration issues with the U.S.  December 14: The U.S. and Cuba reach an immigration agreement, beginning with the return of 2,746 Mariel refugees to Cuba. The U.S. will allow 20,000 Cubans to emigrate each year. | | **1985** | January 1: A new housing law allows Cubans to purchase, and eventually sell, property they rent from the government.  January 24: Castro and other high Cuban officials meet with five U.S. Catholic Church leaders. In early January, the Office of Religious Affairs opens its doors, signaling a deeper relationship between church and state.  May 20: Radio Martí starts in Miami. Backed by Reagan Republicans and Cuban hard-liners, the station broadcasts news and information from the U.S. to Cuba. Its constant mention of the C.C.P.D.H. offers Bofill and his colleagues some protection -- they become better known than ever, and much harder to silence. | | **1985** | Armando Valladares's memoir of his time in a Cuban prison, *Contra Toda Esperanza* ("Against All Hope"), is published. President Reagan's daughter gives a copy to her father and introduces them. Reagan names Valladares as a delegate to the United Nations's Human Rights Committee.  October 4: Reagan prohibits Cuban government or Communist party officials to travel to the U.S., thus banning most artists, students, and scholars. | | **1986** | February 17: An international conference on the church in Cuba is sponsored and hosted by the Cuban Catholic Church.  May 18: Farmers markets, which have been legal for six years, are banned in Cuba. | | **1987** | Cuban infant mortality is lowered to 13.6 deaths per 1000, a lower figure than the rest of South America and even the U.S.  March 11: A U.S. resolution criticizing Cuba for supposed human rights violations is voted down by the United Nations Human Rights Commission.  March: Armando Valladares brings up the issue of Cuban human rights abuses at a U.N. meeting, and the U.S. demands Cuba be inspected. Cuba's deputy minister of foreign affairs, Raul Roa Kouri responds, "any attempt by the United Nations Human Rights Commission to send an investigative team would be rejected outright." Ultimately, the resolution will fail in a 19 to 18 vote because many Latin American countries doubt U.S. reports of the problems.  November 11: "Stalinism and Repression in Cuba," a report created by Ricardo Bofill and other members of the C.C.P.D.H., is broadcast on Radio Marti. | | **1988** | February 14: Armando Valladares once again asks the U.N. to look into Cuba's possible rights violations. Facing mounting pressure, the Cuban government gives in and invites U.N.H.C.R. members from countries including Ireland, Columbia, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Bulgaria to visit Cuba and assess the situation.  February 21: In an interview with Castro in Havana, American journalist Maria Shriver asks about the C.C.P.D.H. He responds irritably that there is only a "tiny little group of counterrevolutionaries being manipulated by the American Interest Section." He firmly denies the existence of human rights organizations and calls any who might be involved liars and cheats.  April 21: The Archbishop of New York, John Cardinal O'Connor, makes the first visit to Cuba by a Roman Catholic cardinal since 1959.  September 16- 25: The U.N. delegation visits Cuba to investigate human rights issues. Because of an endorsement on Radio Martí, almost 4,500 people gather to testify on human rights violations. Some of the abuses include torture, executions, disappearances, and inhumane medical experiments in the prisons of Cuba. Fidel Castro sends police to the delegation's hotel, where more than 300 of the gathered people are physically abused. The visiting delegation finds out and protests further. Castro tries to distract the committee by showing them flourishing hospitals and well treated prisoners in rehabilitation programs. However, back at the Hotel Commodoro, the group hears over 1,500 testimonies about rights violations. | | **1989** | Castro's revolution turns 30.  February 21: The U.N. delegation publishes its findings in an extensive, 400-page report. It states that Cuban citizens are deprived of freedoms such as speech, movement and the right to assemble, and details specifics including the names of people abused for political and social reasons.  November: The [Berlin Wall](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/rfk/filmmore/ps_berlin.html) falls. | | **1990** | March 23: An anti-Castro station funded by U.S. tax dollars, TV Martí, is launched. The Cuban government blocks the signal.  October: Congress passes the Mack Amendment, prohibiting all trade with Cuba by subsidiaries of U.S. companies located outside the U.S., and proposing sanctions or cessation of aid to any country that buys sugar or other products from Cuba. | | **1991** | December 8: The Soviet Union is dissolved, resulting in a severe loss in economic subsidies to the Cuban government ($6 billion in aid per year). | | **1992** | January: An e-mail link between Cuba and Canada is established.  February 5: U.S. Congressman Robert Torricelli introduces the Cuban Democracy Act, which prevents foreign-based subsidiaries of U.S. businesses from trading with Cuba, travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens, and families to transfer funds to Cuba. He says the bill is designed to "wreak havoc on the island."  October 15: The Cuban Democracy Act is passed. Over two-thirds of the trade between Cuba and the U.S. is in food and drugs. However, the law does permit private businesses to deliver food and medicine to Cuba. Because of this, the act is believed to violate an international law stating that food and drugs can not be used as weapons in international disputes.  October 23: President [George H. W. Bush](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/41_g_h_w_bush/index.html) signs the Cuban Democracy Act into law. Congressman Torricelli predicts Castro's regime will fall. | | **1993** | August 14: Castro ends the ban on U.S. currency in Cuba as the nation's economy declines without Soviet subsidies. | | **1994** | June 13: Angling to update Cuba's telephone network, Grupo Domos, a Mexican telecommunications company, signs a work agreement with the Cuban Ministry of Defense.  July 13: The tugboat "13 de Marzo" sinks a few miles outside of Havana. Out of 66 passengers, 31 survivors get picked up by the Coast Guard and claim that two other boats tried to sink theirs, and did nothing to help save them.  August: As the economic situation in Cuba worsens, a new boat lift begins. More than 32,000 Cubans are picked up by the U.S. Coast Guard and taken to the U.S. naval base in Guantanamo Bay.  September 9: The U.S. and Cuban governments decide on a cap of 20,000 Cuban immigrants annually. | | **1995** | May 2: The U.S. and Cuba endorse their agreement that all rafters leaving Cuba will be returned.  October: More than 100 social, political and scholarly groups form Concilio Cubano to seek a peaceful solution to Cuba's problems. Their five-point plan includes pardons for political captives, nonviolence, a peaceful evolution toward democracy, a system that enforces human rights, and the right of Cubans all over the world to take part in that transition.  November 2: For the fourth time, voting 117 to 3, the U.N. General Assembly advocates abolishing the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba. Israel and Uzbekistan join the U.S. in the minority. | | **1996** | January 9 and 13: Fliers urging citizens to revolt against the government are dropped over Havana by planes owned by a Miami-based group, Brothers to the Rescue.  January 15: The Cuban government asks the U.S. government to stop actions by exile groups like Consilio Cubano and Brothers to the Rescue. The Cuban government warns that it will shoot down exile planes in Cuban airspace.  January 16: A Radio Martí reporter challenges the Cuban military to follow up on their threat of shooting down rebel aircraft.  February 24: Four exiles are killed when the Cuban military shoots down two Brothers to the Rescue airplanes over international waters.  March 12: President [Bill Clinton](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/42_clinton/index.html) signs the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act. This law, also known as the Helms-Burton Act, enforces penalties on foreign companies conducting business in Cuba. It also permits U.S. citizens to sue foreign investors who use property that the Cuban government took from America, and denies them entrance into the U.S.  November 12: The United Nations General Assembly votes 137-3 for an end to the U.S. embargo against Cuba.  November 19: Castro visits the Vatican. Pope John Paul II reciprocates by agreeing to visit Cuba. | | **1997** | April: Terrorists bomb a dance club in the Melia Cohiba, Havana's premiere hotel. A series of attacks on local nighttime attractions in Havana and Varadero follows.  June 29: According to the *Miami Herald*, a majority of young Cuban Americans wish to begin a dialogue with Cuba, even though Cuban-Americans over the age of 45 oppose such talks.  July 16: Cubans Vladimiro Roca, Félix Bonne, René Gómez and Marta Beatriz Roque, the authors of *La Patria Es de Todos* ("The Homeland Belongs to Us All"), are arrested. They are imprisoned without a trial. Not until 2002 will the last to be released, Vladimiro Roca, leave the high security prison where he has been kept in isolation.  August 13: In a paid advertisement that supports the Havana bombings, C.A.N.F. president Francisco Hernandez states, "We don't consider these actions terrorism because people fighting for liberty cannot be limited by a system that is itself terrorist."  September: Salvadoran Raúl Ernesto Cruz León is arrested for committing six of the attacks in Havana and Varadero.  October 27: The FBI begins an investigation of seven Cuban exiles after the U.S. Coast Guard examines a boat in international waters requesting assistance. The boat has military equipment including weapons and ammunition. One man on the boat admits plans to kill Fidel Castro. As a result of the investigation, the seven will be indicted in August 1998.  November 5: For the sixth year in a row, the U.N. votes to end the Cuban embargo by a vote of 143-3.  November; The founder of C.A.N.F., Jorge Mas Canosa, dies in Miami, Florida. | | **1998** | January: Pope John Paul II visits Cuba.  March: The Pentagon decides that Cuba is no longer a significant threat to the U.S., and urges dialogue with Cuban officials.  May-June: European countries claim parts of the Helms-Burton Act violate international law and call for an end to the Cuban embargo.  July 12: Luis Posada Carriles admits to over ten years of anti-Castro terrorist actions in Cuba in an article in *The New York Times*.  August 24: In Puerto Rico, seven Cuban exiles are convicted of plotting to assassinate Fidel Castro. Some are members of the Cuban American National Foundation.  October 13: Senator John W. Warner and over 20 other U.S. Senators recommend the formation of a bipartisan commission to review U.S. policies on Cuba.  October 16: The U.N. General Assembly once again tries to end the U.S. embargo of Cuba in a vote of 157 to 2. Only the U.S. and Israel favor keeping the embargo. | | **1999** | The Cuban Revolution turns 40.  January 5: President Bill Clinton refuses to establish a commission to review Cuban policy.  February 22: Cuba calls for a Salvadoran bomber, Raúl Ernesto Cruz León, who has been convicted of attacking Cuban businesses, to receive the death penalty.  February 23: The Coalition of Americans for Humanitarian Trade with Cuba unite with former members of the U.S. Congress and ask the Clinton administration to end restrictions on food and medicine supplies to Cuba. They argue that it is unfair to supply it to other countries, such as Iraq, when Cuba's people are in desperate need.  November 9: For the eighth time, the United Nations General Assembly votes to end the U.S. embargo against Cuba by a vote of 155 to 2.  November 25: Eleven Cuban refugees are killed when their boat capsizes in the Caribbean Sea. A five-year-old boy, Elián Gonzalez, survives, but his mother is among those who die. Brought to America to stay with relatives, Elian becomes a symbol of the struggle between Cuba and the U.S. | | **2000** | June 28: After seven months of a bitter legal and political battle, Elián Gonzalez is sent home to his father in Cuba.  September 7: The Cuban government announces that two American newspapers, the *Dallas Morning News* and *Chicago Tribune*, will join CNN and The Associated Press by opening branches in Cuba.  November 17: At the 10th Ibero-American Summit, Posada Carriles and three other Cubans are arrested for plotting to assassinate Castro.  November 29: A bipartisan task force in the U.S. calls for end to the trade embargo.  December 13: Russian president Vladimir Putin visits Cuba. | | **2001** | March 16: Norwegian legislator Hallgeir Langeland nominates Fidel Castro to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his help to other developing nations. On October 12, former U.S. president Jimmy Carter receives the prize.  March 22: On the 40th anniversary of the Bay of Pigs invasion, a 3-day conference is held in Havana. Attendees include the CIA chief for the Miami base, five members of the Brigade 2506, two former Kennedy administration officials, and scholars.  March 28: A lobbying group created by former State Department officials, scholars, and businessmen, the Cuba Policy Foundation, announces itself to be a "centrist organization." The C.P.F. will challenge the lobbying power of the anti-Castro exile group C.A.N.F.  April 1: The Cuban Foundation for Human Rights issues a report stating that 30 of Cuba's 300 political prisoners have been jailed simply for expressing their opinions.  April 5: The Cuban government awards over 4,000 scholarships to students to study medicine in the Latin American School of Medical Science.  April 18: A C.P.F. poll determines that the majority of Americans think the U.S. should do business with Cuba and allow travel there. They also agree that reuniting Elián González with his father in Cuba was the appropriate decision.  September 12: Former U.S. Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders tours Cuba's hospitals. She states that Cuba is better than the U.S. at keeping people healthy and out of the hospital, but that America has a better health care system for those who are already sick.  September 16: A memorial Mass in Havana Cathedral is held for the victims of the September 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York.  November 4: Hurricane Michelle hits Havana. It is the worst hurricane to hit in a half century.  November 22: The U.S. Food and Drug Administration announces that Cuba has purchased 130,000 tons of grain from two American suppliers, Cargill, Inc. and Archer-Daniels-Midland.  November 28: The U.N. votes 167 to 3 to end the embargo against Cuba.  November 30: Cuban officials offer to compensate Cuban Americans for properties seized during the revolution 40 years ago. The U.S. turns down the proposal.  December 14: Cuban test scores and literacy levels top those of the rest of Latin America, reports the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization. | | **2002** | January 3: The U.S. Treasury Department grants licenses for Cuban travel, and 2,000 Americans make the trip.  January 8: In Havana, six members of the U.S. Congress meet with Fidel Castro and members of two insurgent groups. In the coming months, more U.S. elected officials will tour Cuba.  May 6: Undersecretary of State John R. Bolton accuses Cuba of developing biological terrorism capabilities.  May 10: At the Cuban National Assembly, the Varela Project presents a petition with over 11,000 signatures calling for electoral reforms, free speech, and the release of 250 political prisoners.  May 14: Former president Jimmy Carter travels to Cuba. In a three-minute address on Cuban television, he says he believes it is time to end the embargo. He also makes direct reference to the Varela Project, urging Cuban authorities to institute democratic reform.  May 15: Carter's speech runs in *Granma*, Cuba's official newspaper.  June 3: Firebombs are thrown at the buildings of the rebel groups C.A.N.F. and Alpha 66. No one is hurt, little damage is reported. | | **2003** | March 18: On the day before the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Cuba arrests 80 people for their political beliefs. The government also searches homes, seizing personal papers and electronic equipment.  April 3-7: Of those detained in March, 75 are tried and convicted on treason charges. Denied lawyers before the start of the trial, the defendents are tried in coutrooms closed to all but immediate family members. Foreign diplomats and reporters are barred from the proceedings. The sentences range from six to 28 years in prison, and average over 19 years.  April 11: After summary trials, the Cuban government executes three men who were captured while attempting to hijack a ferry leaving Havana and take it to the U.S.  April: Human rights watchdogs denounce Cuba's re-election into the U.N.H.R.C., claiming the country's presence in the organization is shameful. | | **2004** | February: President George W. Bush restricts travel to Cuba from one visit per year to one visit in three years, and reduces the amount of money that can be spent.  October 26: Cuba's central bank announces a ban on the use of U.S. dollars. Castro tells Cubans to ask their U.S. relatives to send other foreign currencies. |   http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/castro/subimages/2_1_2grey.gif  [1958-1976](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/castro/timeline/index.html) | **1977-2004** | | | http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/castro/subimages/spacer.gif |
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