

## **Fidel Castro responds to Obama in lengthy, bristling essay**

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And while he was in Cuba, militant Islamic terrorists carried out two bombing attacks in Brussels that killed 31 people and injured at least 270, sending shock waves throughout Europe and showing us what real evil in the real world looks like.

The regime made it clear it wouldn't bother with maintaining a pretense of relaxing its grip with the arrest of protesters at a march of the dissident group Ladies in White while President Obama was en route to the country.

For decades, the United States and Cuba have turned their backs on one another, like estranged brothers, as the president said, but with the same blood. They've been in power a long time.

Our nation has had an embargo on the country of Cuba since before a little nuclear incident called the Cuban Missile Crisis, when Russia attempted to stockpile nuclear missiles in silos on the small island about ninety miles away from the U.S. The situation frightened Americans, driving the nation to bring out a blockade of warships to prevent Russian ships from completing their delivery. Change will come to the Caribbean's largest island, and it is hoped that its process of adjusting to the 21st century will be as painless as possible.

Economic and political osmosis are powerful forces. After all, Obama enjoys enormous popularity in Cuba. The U.S. should be working to help the Cuban people to maybe become a full-fledged democracy again.

This is not meant to dismiss Obama's speech in Havana as a waste of time, nor his opening to Cuba as a mistake, as Obama's right-wing critics are already saying.

"We will continue to speak out loudly on the things that we care about", Obama said near the end of his visit. "Castro denied Cuba holds political prisoners, but then told another reporter, "...give me a list of the political prisoners and I will release them immediately".

Ahead of his trip, Obama's aides said a key goal was to make his rapprochement with Cuba irreversible.

"You had two Cuban-Americans in the Republican Party running against the legacy of a black man who was president while arguing that they're the best person to beat the Democratic nominee who will either be a woman or a democratic socialist", he said.

Central to Obama's strategy is to raise the Cuban people's expectations, driving up pressure on Castro's government to accelerate the pace of change.

"I think the measures he's taken to dismantle the blockade are good, but I wonder why the majority dodge working with the Cuban government", Martinez added.

Referring to Obama, Sánchez told me that "Castro may allow him to say whatever he wants because later, with his huge domestic and foreign propaganda machine, and with police intimidation, Castro can erase his message from people's memory". The Cato Institute said this embargo is an economic, political and social blockade from the U.S. This forced the Cuban government, and by chain of events, their people, to depend on the Russians for oil and trade.