

Townhall

FINANCE

Bernie Sanders' Perverse Love For Cuba

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Last week, I shared a 24-question quiz that ostensibly determines whether you're a communist.

Though it might be just as accurate to ask one simple question: Do you have warm feelings about the Marxist dictatorship in Cuba?

On that basis, Bernie Sanders fails.

At best, he's an ignorant dupe and apologist. At worst, he's a true believer.

Regardless, his views are wrong and easy to debunk.

Writing in the Washington Post, Francisco Toro opines about Bernie Sanders and Cuba.

...you can begin to glimpse the enormous concern Venezuelans and Cubans feel when we hear Bernie Sanders praise Fidel Castro's education system. ...Cuba's overall educational performance is middling for the region: roughly similar to that of many other Latin American countries... There was never any need to build a police state to bring people to school — an insight so obvious, it's ludicrous to even have to write it. ...To Cubans and Venezuelans — who have witnessed much the same kind of propaganda — talk of Cuban educational prowess grates not because it's wrong, exactly, but because it serves as a simple way to identify who's ready to be duped by regime apologists. ...When Sanders parrots Fidel's propaganda, he fails the test.

What's especially grating is that the propaganda is either false or misleading.

Marian Tupy and Chelsea Follett summarize just a few of the problems with fawning claims about Cuba's performance.

...in a recent 60 Minutes interview on CBS. Senator Sanders applauded Cuba's education and healthcare system. Potential Sanders supporters should know that Cuba's literacy rate and healthcare system are nothing to lionize. First, consider literacy. ...Cuba's literacy rate rose by 26 percent between 1950/53 and 2000. But literacy rose even more, by 37 percent, in Paraguay. Food consumption in Cuba actually declined by 12 percent between 1954/57 and 1995/97. It rose by 19 percent in Chile and by 28 percent in Mexico over the

same time period. ...Next, consider healthcare. Sanders has repeatedly extolled Cuba's healthcare system... Life expectancy is the best proxy measure of health. According to Cuba's official data, it rose by 25 percent between 1960 and 2017. Yet life expectancy increased even faster in comparable countries: in Mexico it improved by 35 percent, in the Dominican Republic by 43 percent, and in impoverished Haiti by 51 percent.

For what it's worth, President Obama's favorable comments about Cuban health care also were embarrassingly inaccurate.

The bottom line is that Cuba performs poorly when looking at education, health, nutrition, and other variables.

But none of that should be a surprise since poor countries generally can't afford good things or deliver good outcomes.

And the lesson we should learn is that Cuba is poor because government is far too big. Simply stated, the absence of capitalism has been a recipe for misery.

The most shocking statistic is that living standards in Cuba and Hong Kong were very similar when Castro first imposed his version of Marxist socialism.

Yet now there's a giant gap, with people in Hong Kong enjoying unimaginable prosperity compared to the impoverished residents of Cuba.

Let's close with two additional items. First, here's a video from four guys who traveled to Cuba for an up-close view of socialism.

And if you liked that video, here's another first-hand account of the (nonexistent) glories of Cuban socialism.

Our final item is this look at a street, both as it looked before communism and how it looks today

The lesson, of course, is similar to the one that we get when examining North Korea from outer space. Communism simply doesn't work.

P.S. On the topic of silly propaganda, Jeffrey Sachs actually rates Cuba above the United States for meeting development goals, and Cuba also was placed above the United States by a radical environmental group.