

Lobbyists for Archer Daniels Midland, Easier for Cuba to Buy American Goods

Embargo?--WHAT Embargo?

By Humberto Fontova Tuesday, May 19, 2009

A legislative scheme is gaining steam in Washington, greatly aided by lobbyists for Archer Daniels Midland, to “make it easier” for Cuba to “buy” from U.S. vendors. Castro

Despite all the scribbling and gabble about the “U.S. embargo of Cuba,” or “blockade” as termed by The Congressional Black Caucus and Castro lobbyists (but I repeat myself), the U.S. has done over a 3 billion dollars worth of business with Cuba the last few years and currently ranks as her biggest food supplier and fifth biggest import partner. Last year U.S. companies did \$700 million worth of business with Castro. Much of this business is with ADM.

Nevertheless, ADM executives and Castro lobbyists (but I repeat myself) whine that restrictions on doing business with Cuba are “too onerous.” These “restrictions” stipulate one thing primarily: that the Castroites pay cash for U.S. imports. Well, as Strother Martin asked Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid as they descended that Bolivian hill: “Do you want to know why?”

Glad you asked. Following please find a list of items many in the Mainstream Media and Castro lobbyists (but I repeat myself) are frantically trying to erase or obscure:

In its first year in power the Castro regime received \$200 million in subsidies from U.S. taxpayers while denouncing U.S. economic ties with Cuba as “Yankee imperialism!”

The following year Castro’s KGB-trained security forces stormed into 5,911 U.S. owned businesses in Cuba and stole \$2 billion from outraged U.S. businessmen and stockholders at gunpoint. Rubbing his hands in triumphant glee, Castro boasted at maximum volume to the entire world that he was freeing Cuba from “Yankee economic slavery!” (Che’s term, actually) and that “he would never repay a penny!”

This is the only promise Fidel Castro has ever kept in his life.

“Okay, fine,” said a bewildered U.S. in 1962. (between 1950-1960 a befuddled U.S. made several back-channel contacts attempting to ascertain the nature of Castroite grievances and trying to mend fences. Argentina’s president, Arturo Frondizi, was the conduit for many. Every overture was haughtily rebuffed.) “Well, If that’s the way you Cuban Communists feel,” finally said an exasperated U.S. “Then fine, consider yourselves formally emancipated.”

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Thus the original embargo.

Far from a "Blockade" as the World Council of Churches and Castro lobbyists (but I repeat myself) label it, Cuba, even then, remained perfectly free to transact with most of the nations of the world. But the deals with the East-Bloc were the sweetest.

The Soviets sent the equivalent in economic subsidies of eight Marshall Plans to Cuba, which was not a war-ravaged continent of 300 million people but an island of 6 million people who shortly before had enjoyed a higher-per-capita income than half of Europe. These Cuban citizens had owned more TVs' per capita than any European country, had enjoyed the services (some free, most extremely cheap) of more doctors and dentists per capita than citizens in the U.S. or Britain and had never emigrated from their homeland. Instead, in the 40's and 50's when Cubans could get U.S. visas for the asking and Cubans were perfectly free to emigrate with all their property and family, fewer Cubans lived in the U.S. than Americans in Cuba. At the time Cuban laborers earned the 8th highest wages--- not in Latin America-- but in the world.

By a process that defies not just the laws of economics, but seemingly the very laws of physics, 40 years later Castroite Cuba emerged from this Soviet largesse with among the lowest per-capita incomes in the Hemisphere, a lower credit rating than Somalia, fewer phones per capita than Papua New Guinea, fewer internet connections than Uganda, and 20 per cent of her population gone - all at total cost of their property and many at extreme cost to life and limb.

An estimated 70 thousand perished by exposure, drowning or the jaws of sharks while desperately fleeing a nation formerly richer than Japan and swamped with European immigrants.

"Typical Communist mismanagement," say most about Cuba's wretched economy. Actually, given the goals of Cuba's rulers, (undisputed political and economic power) the Cuban economy is EXPERTLY managed.

In 1984 ADM chief Dwayne Andreas became U.S. chairman of something called the U.S.-USSR Trade and Economic Council. Just from 1991 to 1993, the U.S., Dept. of Agriculture Department extended \$5 billion in credits to the Soviet Union and the newly designated states resulting from her break-up.

A study by the CATO Institute in 1995, attempted to asses the cost to the U.S. taxpayer of this bit of ADM lobbying but was foiled. "The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation refuses to disclose the amount of ADM exports to the Soviet Union and Russia that might have been covered by U.S. government credit guarantees on which those countries later defaulted," it reads. But the report does disclose that 43 per cent of ADM's profits come from products subsidized by the U.S. taxpayer and that from 1980 to 1995 ADM profits cost U.S taxpayers \$40 billion.

In 1998 a lobbying group called Americans for Humanitarian Trade with Cuba found Dwayne Andreas on its board. A few years later he also co-chaired the U.S.-Cuban Trade and Economic Council. Andreas, (now retired from ADM) is among the primary benefactors of the World Council of Churches whose manifesto advocates that: "Economic sanctions should be used to enforce compliance with international law and humanitarian principles. We call on the international community to apply immediate and comprehensive sanctions. We promote an end to all investments."

The WCC's humanitarian admonition applied exclusively to segregationist regimes. South Africa, you see, did not buy U.S. grain. They grew their own. Now regimes that are Stalinist, deadbeat

AND segregationist ... well, we must lavish them with commerce.

Jimmy Carter, who as President backed unholy tariffs against foreign ethanol imports to the enormous satisfaction of ABM and who upon retiring as gentleman farmer, sold ADM his peanut warehouses, proclaimed that: "the embargo against Cuba is the stupidest law ever passed in the U.S."

Yet President Jimmy Carter, imposed more economic sanctions against more nations than any American president in modern history. These sanctions were against, Rhodesia, South Africa, Uruguay Paraguay, Chile, (the Shah's) Iran and (Somoza's) Nicaragua. Carter was extremely selective in imposing his sanctions, let's give him that. He was careful to punish only U.S. allies.

Last year, one of the worlds most respected economic forecasting firms, the London-based Economist Intelligence Unit, ranked Cuba as virtually the world's worst country business-wise. Only Iran and Angola ranked lower. This firm predicts that Cuba's abysmal business climate will remain that way for the next four years, at the very least.

Dun & Bradstreet also rates Cuba among the world's worst, right below Belarus. Moody's rating is off the bottom of the chart as "very poor." Their reasoning: Standard & Poors refuses even to rate Cuba, regarding the economic figures released by the regime as utterly bogus.

Today Cuba's foreign debt, including to the former Soviet Union, approaches \$40 billion. In 1986 Cuba defaulted on most of its foreign debt to Europe. France's version of the U.S. government's Export- Import Bank, (named COFACE) recently cut off Cuba's credit line. Mexico's Bancomex recently did likewise. This came about because the Castro regime stuck it to French taxpayers for \$175 million and to Mexican taxpayers for \$365 million. Bancomex was forced to impound Cuban assets in three different countries in an attempt to recoup its losses.

Yet Castro lobbyists on the hill insist that more trade with Cuba (on Castro's terms) will be a boon and blessing to the U.S.

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