

## 8. Cuba and the U.S.

### Acronyms and abbreviations

**CAF**—*Corporación Andina de Fomento*, a development bank created made up of 17 Latin American countries as well as Spain and Portugal

**CELAC**—The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States

**CIMEX**—Cuban Export-Import Corporation

**CUC**—Cuban convertible peso, pegged to the U.S. dollar

**CUP**—Cuban peso, 25 CUPs are worth 1 CUC. Goods and services destined to locals are usually paid in CUP while “luxury” and imported goods are paid for in CUC

**FAR**—*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias*, The Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces

**IMF**—International Monetary Fund

**OAS**—Organization of American States

**USAID**—United States Agency for International Development

### Glossary

**Alan Gross:** A subcontractor working for USAID who was convicted of espionage by a Cuban court in 2011. He was released and brought back to the United States on December 17, 2014.

**Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba:** Commission created in 2003 by President George W. Bush with the goal of developing a plan for the U.S to support a transitional government in Cuba that guarantees free elections and economic opportunities.

**Communist Party of Cuba:** A political party in the Cuban government. Organized in 1965 by Fidel Castro but dating back to 1923, it is the only political party permitted to function in Cuba.

**Cuba Embargo:** Commercial, economic and financial

blockade currently imposed by the United States on Cuba. President John F. Kennedy signed the embargo on February 7, 1962.

**Cuban Five:** Group of Cubans arrested in the United States on September 1998 on charges of spying for the Cuban government. They were convicted in 2001, with two of the prisoners being released in 2011 and the other three in 2014.

**Cuba’s Two Currencies:** The two currencies accepted in Cuba are the CUP and the CUC. Residents and tourist can purchase CUCs at a rate of one for 25 CUPs. Neither currency is convertible outside the island.

**Cuentapropistas:** Cuban self-employed entrepreneurs. Although the government tightly regulates the Cuban economy, President Raul Castro reforms offered more leeway for the development of private small businesses.

**Elián González Affair:** Political controversy in 1999 when a five year old was found in Florida after he and his mother had tried to leave for the United States. Elián was left in the care of his maternal family in Miami, after his mother drowned in the crossing. U.S. courts ruled that Elián could not file for asylum due to his age and he was returned to his father in Cuba in 2000.

**Fidel Castro:** Former President and Prime Minister of Cuba and leader of the Cuban Revolution, Castro led the overthrow of the Cuban Government in 1959. He served as Prime Minister from 1959 until 1976 when he became President, which he served until 2008. He is known for his Marxist-Leninist ideology and his adversarial relationship with the U.S.

**Gen. Fulgencio Batista:** President of Cuba from 1952 to 1959. Batista seized power after the government of General Gerardo Machado fell and held the position

until the Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro overthrew him.

**Guantanamo Bay:** Territory in Cuba leased to the United States as part of the treaty that ended the Spanish-American War in 1903. Guantanamo Bay hosts a U.S. Naval Base as well as a detention center where the U.S. keeps known or suspected terrorists and other “high-value detainees.

**Helms-Burton Act:** The Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, better known as the Helms-Burton Act after the two U.S. Congressmen that sponsored the bill, expanded the scope of the U.S. embargo on Cuba. The law allows U.S. citizen, who had owned property seized by the Castro regime, to sue in U.S. courts foreign nationals who dealt or “trafficked” in the confiscated property.

**Miguel Díaz-Canel:** Current Vice-President of Cuba. He is likely to succeed Raúl Castro as President of Cuba, after the latter steps down in 2018.

**Período Especial:** “The Special Period” between 1989 and 1998 when the Cuban economy entered a deep crisis following the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was brought to an end when Hugo Chávez became President of Venezuela in 1998 and replaced the Soviet Union as the island’s main patron, exporting large amounts of oil at a subsidized price.

**Raul Castro:** Current President of Cuba, who took over for his brother Fidel in 2008. He previously was the Defense Minister for Cuba. While Raul shares Fidel’s communist convictions, he has also implemented many pragmatic reforms to the Cuban government and economy since taking office.

**Sierra Maestra:** The largest mountain range in Cuba. It remains a symbol for many Cubans as the mountains had been used as safe havens for revolutionary guerrilla groups, including the July 26th movement led by Fidel Castro.

**Straits of Florida:** Body of water that connects the Gulf of Mexico with the Atlantic Ocean. The strait separates The United States from Cuba by 93 miles.