

Negative Strategies on the Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela Topic

Dr. Rich Edwards
Professor of Communication Studies
Baylor University

1. Economic engagement perpetuates poverty.

This strategy involves a frontal attack on free trade – on the “neoliberal” model.

Michael Parenti, (Ph.D., Yale U.), THE FACE OF IMPERIALISM, 2011, 73.

Around the world the empire builders and plutocrats extend their reach, expropriating land, labor, resources, and markets, gathering still more and more riches unto themselves. Marinating in their immense wealth, the laissez-faire disciples tirelessly sing hosannas to the empire's prime mythic creation, the free market, that magical blend of individual greed and supposedly collective benefit. In this chapter we investigate in some detail the blessings of the free market as bestowed upon the victimized populations of several countries.

2. Morality is more important than economics.

Daniel Fisk, (Former, Deputy Assistant U.S. Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs), THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI INTER-AMERICAN LAW REVIEW, Fall 2010, 85-86.

The second reality is life as it is lived by average Cubans on a day-by-day basis and how U.S. policy decisions may affect them. This was summed up in early 2009 in a letter from seventeen independent Cuban civil society activists to President Obama. Speaking in the name of "Cubans who have defied the repression [and] the intimidation" of the Cuban government, they wrote: "We ask that you do not put commercial considerations ahead of political freedom for our people. We invite you not to sacrifice the moral leadership of the United States in the face of commercial temptations. Your presidency is a tribute to everything that can be conquered when a cause is just and correct. We dedicate our lives to the movement for the freedom of Cuba and expect -- one day -- to have a democratically-elected Cuban president who would welcome you to Havana. Do not forget us. We need your support. We, too, 'have a dream' of freedom."

3. Economic engagement in the form of mass tourism devastates the environment.

Franco Ordonez, (Staff), PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE, May 24, 2012, A10.

The U.S. trade embargo, which has been in place for 50 years, has in many ways been a gift to Cuba's forests, fish populations and coral reefs. It helped insulate Cuba's ecosystem from the type of tourist development that's wracked other nations. Sea turtles that feed in Florida journey back each year to nest in Cuba. Many grunts and snapper fish that live off the North Carolina coast also spawn in Cuba. The oceanic whitetip shark has almost disappeared from U.S. waters, but preliminary studies show the predators in abundance around the island.

4. Economic engagement is bad for the United States.

Paulette Stenzel, (Prof., International Business, Michigan State U.),
AMERICAN BUSINESS LAW JOURNAL, Fall 2012, 602.

NAFTA has also hurt the United States economically. By November 2002, 507,000 U.S. workers had received extended unemployment benefits because their employers had moved their jobs to Mexico. This figure may not fully represent U.S. jobs lost under NAFTA because many workers did not realize they qualified for benefits.

5. Squeezing drug cartels will shift the violence to other more harmful areas.

Paul Kan, (Prof., Military Studies, U.S. Army War College), CARTELS AT WAR: MEXICO'S DRUG-FUELED VIOLENCE AND THE THREAT TO U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY, 2012, 136.

With well-established smuggling routes in place, cartels can turn their networks toward other illicit trade unrelated to drugs. Human trafficking, for example, is a lucrative trade whose profits are competitive with illicit narcotics.

6. Economic engagement will undermine democracy.

Christopher Simmons, (Retired Supervisory Officer, U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency), CUBA'S GLOBAL NETWORK OF TERRORISM, INTELLIGENCE, AND WARFARE, Hrg., House Comm. on Foreign Affairs, May 17, 2012, 26.

Several years ago, shortly, we believe, after the end of Soviet subsidies, the Castro brothers turned over the tourism sector to military intelligence services. And now it is run as just that, a profit-making center and we know from defectors that these services are actually allowed to take earnings and recycle it into their own budgets so they are further incentivized in what they do. When you look at the tourism industry, virtually every facet from a visitor applying for the visa to arriving in Cuba on a Cuban airline to the Hotel Nacional and the other hotels, it funds nothing but the Cuban intelligence services and military and the regime's ability to repress its own people.

7. Politics: The plan will set in motion destructive political forces.

Adoption of the plan will change the outcome of the mid-term elections in harmful ways, or will cause a harmful political backlash, or will impact political capital in unfortunate ways (Most common impact in 2013: Failure to pass comprehensive immigration reform)



8. Economic engagement will marginalize oil producers in Russia or Saudi Arabia.

Adoption of the plan will cause a resurgence of an aggressive Russian foreign policy or will bring down the Saudi Royal Family leading to wars in Eastern Europe or the Middle East.



9. Oil Drilling Will Devastate the Environment.

Foreign drilling operations in the North Cuba Basin have failed; only the entrance of U.S. drilling firms will allow this development to proceed, resulting in another Deepwater Horizon-type disaster to the environment.



10. Hegemony: Expanded U.S. influence is harmful.

Hal Weitzman, (Staff Writer, Financial Times), LATIN LESSONS: HOW SOUTH AMERICA STOPPED LISTENING TO THE UNITED STATES AND STARTED PROSPERING, 2012, 254-255.

The cry for the United States to engage with Latin America is by now familiar and repetitive. But it has always been made on the premise that the region was in desperate need of being rescued by the United States—that its political, economic, and social well-being depended on Washington "rediscovering" its neighbors to the south. Latin America was Sleeping Beauty, the United States the prince who could raise the sleeper from slumber—if only it could be bothered to cut through the weeds and kiss the region back to life. But with the United States in relative economic decline, it is Washington that needs international partners and allies.

ALBA: Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas

Founded by Venezuela and Cuba

Current Members: (8) -- Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Dominica, Ecuador, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Antigua and Barbuda; Paraguay is an observer nation, expected to join in the future

Purpose: Create an alternative to the neo-liberal model of international trade as represented by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund

Instruments: UNASUR (Union of South American Nations), Banco del Sur (The Bank of the South)

Soft Balancing Explained

Javier Corrales, (Prof., Political Science, Amherst College), VENEZUELA'S PETRO-DIPLOMACY: HUGO CHÁVEZ'S FOREIGN POLICY, 2011, 33.

Soft balancing is the term used to describe efforts short of military action to frustrate the foreign policy objective of larger nations. Venezuela is, rhetorically at least, actively trying to counter and frustrate U.S. goals in the region. Second, Venezuela has declared an overt commitment to promote development and, especially, help the poor at home and abroad. To further these goals, the Chávez government has gone on an international spending spree. It has offered investment to as many nations as possible, most of it billed as development aid. Venezuela's main innovation in foreign policy is to use this type of foreign economic largesse as a way to balance the United States. Few nations since the end of the Cold War have exploited this foreign policy tool to the same degree as Venezuela.

Extensive Foreign Assistance

Sean Goforth, (Prof., World Politics, Coastal Carolina U.), *AXIS OF UNITY: VENEZUELA, IRAN & THE THREAT TO AMERICA*, 2012, 143-144.

According to a calculation made by University of California-San Diego professor Richard Feinberg, Chávez's aid pledges rival that of the Marshall Plan in real terms. Even by the most conservative estimates, Chávez's aid to other Latin American nations eclipsed that from the U.S. Agency for International Development and the World Bank combined.

11. Asia Pivot: Focus on Latin America Trades Off.

Helen Milner, (Prof., Politics, Princeton U.), INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION, Winter 2011, 42.

A central core of support for international engagement in trade and aid lies in the constituencies that gain economically from trade and aid. Surprisingly, political economy preferences affect legislative voting in aid as much as they do in trade and in the same way. This lends support to the idea of a single coalition supporting international economic engagement and to the claim of foreign policy substitutability.

John Mearsheimer, (Prof., Int. Relations, U. Chicago), 2004. WHY CHINA'S RISE WILL NOT BE PEACEFUL. Retrieved July 9, 2013 from <http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/A0034b.pdf>.

The question at hand is simple and profound: Can China rise peacefully? My answer is no. If China continues its impressive economic growth over the next few decades, the United States and China are likely to engage in an intense security competition with considerable potential for war. Most of China's neighbors, to include India, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Russia, and Vietnam, will join with the United States to contain China's power.

12. New spending will cause the deficit to balloon.

John Makin, (Staff), THE GUARDIAN, Apr. 26, 2013. Retrieved July 9, 2013 from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/apr/26/sequester-washington-deficit-reduction-sabotage>.

The good news is that the sequester should make a big dent in US debt. The bad news is that political squabbles will undo that.

Daniel Mitchell (Senior Fellow, Cato Institute) ““The Budget Deficit and U.S. Competitiveness,” May 6, 2011. Retrieved Apr. 21, 2012 at

<http://www.cfr.org/economics/budget-deficit-us-competitiveness/p24910>

In extreme cases, high budget deficits can destabilize entire economies, either because a government resorts to the printing press to finance deficits or because investors lose faith in a government's ability to service debt, thus leading to a sovereign debt crisis. The United States hopefully is not close to becoming either Argentina or Greece, but the trend in recent years is not very encouraging. The burden of government spending has exploded, which, combined with temporarily low tax receipts because of a weak economy, has pushed annual red ink above \$1 trillion per year.

13. Pouring outside money into poor countries is counterproductive.

This disad essentially says that pouring money into a poor country's economy ends up doing more harm than good; it causes currency inflation, limiting the export capability of that country and increasing the cost of all goods.

Accordingly, the influx of currency may actually end up hurting more than it helps.

The term “Dutch Disease” was coined by the British newspaper, The Economist, to describe what happened to the economy of The Netherlands in 1959 when natural gas was discovered. The generalized economic model was made popular by economists W. Max Corden and J. Peter Neary in a 1982 paper.