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Trends. United States Government (USG) Policy Towards Cuba: Holier Than the Pope?

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For close to 40 years the USG has instituted significant sanctions against the Cuban government. For close to 40 years, this has facilitated political control of a country by leaders who in many ways have failed their followers as well as other citizens. For close to 40 years, the USG response has been to maintain or even exacerbate sanctions in the face of their failure. For close to 40 years, the USG rationale for continuing a failing policy has alternatively been the need to block the victory of worldwide communism, to give the failing policy the time to "work," and--behind closed doors--the need to curry favor with anti-Castro Cuban-Americans for electoral purposes. For close to 40 years, an opponent of USG policy has risked being labeled as a communist, a fellow traveler, an apologist, an atheist, and a hater of freedom, democracy, liberty and fraternity, if not equality.

Now what do we make of Pope John Paul II's recent visit to Cuba wherein he once again came out again against USG policy? Does supporting USG policy require one to be holier than the Pope? (Addendum: Political psychologists interested in informing policy might review existing research on cognitive and behavioral perseveration.) (See Hotz, G., & Helm-Eastabrooks, N. (1995). Perseveration II: A review. *Brain Injury*, 9, 151-159; Navarro, M. (January 30, 1998). Cuban exile group wants strings attached to aid. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Strelau, J. (1996). The regulative theory of temperament: Current status. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 20, 131-142; Zohar, A.H., La Buda, M., & Moschel-Ravid, O. (1995). *Neuropsychiatry, Neuropsychology, & Behavioral Neurology*, 8, 163-167.)