

The Cuba Question



Cuba and Colonialism

- Cuba used for plantation style agriculture as part of Spanish Empire
 - Primarily sugar and tobacco
 - Famous for cigars
 - Used slave labor from Africa
- Natives mostly wiped out
 - Some Taino allowed to remain untouched
 - Have linguistically influenced Cuban culture



The Spanish American War

- United States attacks Spanish in Puerto Rico and Cuba
 - Spanish Influence almost completely gone
- United States grants independence to Cuba, Puerto Rico taken as a territory



Cuba and the Cold War

- Under leadership of Fidel Castro Cuba establishes a communist government in 1959
 - Geographically important due to proximity to the United States



A Land Frozen in Time

- United States cut off diplomatic ties from Cuba in 1961
 - Placed Trade Embargo against Cuba in 1962
 - Encouraged allies to do the same
- Cuba technologically cut off from MDCs



A Commodity Economy

- Technically a planned economy
 - Heavily agricultural – cash crops, needs to import food
 - Gaining importance in pharmaceutical companies



Cuban Tourism

- Cuba has long been a popular tourist destination
 - Popular as a beach vacation
- United States Citizens finally formally allowed to visit Cuba in 2015
 - Starting to open up cultural relations with Cuba
- Tourism accounts for more than \$2 Billion a year



Cuban Refugees

- Since 1959 many have fled Cuba to United States
- Wet Feet/Dry Feet Policy
 - United States has a policy of returning refugees unless they actually make it to dry land
- Elian Gonzalez
 - Famous battle in late 90's that opened debate of refugee system



Guantanamo Bay

- Guantanamo Naval Base has been under United States jurisdiction since 1898
 - Used as a detention center for foreign fighters
 - Became infamous during War on Terror for use of torture



Re-Opening Relations

- In 2014 president Barack Obama ordered the normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba
 - Re-open embassy
 - Re-establish trade
- Slowly allowed more tourism and cultural/economic exchange

