

RICHARD G. LUGAR  
INDIANA

306 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510  
202-224-4814

senator\_lugar@lugar.senate.gov  
<http://lugar.senate.gov>

COMMITTEES:  
FOREIGN RELATIONS, RANKING MEMBER  
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1401

March 5, 2009

Dear Colleague:

I would like to draw your attention to a report prepared by the Foreign Relations Committee minority staff following travel to Havana, Cuba. This report, "Changing Cuba Policy—In the United States National Interest," recognizes that current U.S. policy has come at the expense of broader U.S. interests in Latin America and has not furthered progress in human rights or democracy in Cuba.

The sanctions-based policy towards Cuba has impeded cooperation with Cuba on matters of shared concern, such as migration and counternarcotics. This report recommends replacing conditionality, i.e. the lifting of sanctions only after democratic reforms in Cuba, with sequenced engagement. Such gradual measures could ultimately create the conditions for effective dialogue over more contentious issues. This approach would allow the U.S. government to halt the engagement process at any point if U.S. interests are no longer being served.

The report does not call for the unilateral lifting of the embargo. It recommends initial unilateral measures within the framework of the embargo, such as the elimination of restrictions on family travel, a review of U.S. policy limiting cooperation on drug interdiction, and the easing of restrictions on the sale of agricultural products to the island.

A realistic and carefully phased approach will benefit our long-term economic and security interests in the Straits of Florida and will increase our diplomatic options and influence throughout the Western Hemisphere.

I have held these beliefs for some time, but the opportunities for reform have improved. As you consider the Cuba provisions in the omnibus bill, I hope that this report will be of value to you and your staff.

Sincerely,



Richard G. Lugar  
United States Senator