

# America's five-decade blockade of Cuba

Cuban President Raul Castro and U.S. President Barack Obama have opened formal talks on restoring diplomatic relations, but only the U.S. Congress has the power to lift the 52-year-long trade embargo

■ **1959:** Cuban revolutionaries oust U.S.-backed dictator **Fulgencio Batista**

■ **1962:** Cuban government of **Fidel Castro** (right) nationalizes U.S. property. President **John F. Kennedy** (far right) retaliates with embargo



■ **Oct 1962, Missile Crisis:** – U.S. and USSR teeter on brink of war when Castro allows Soviet Union to base nuclear missiles on island

■ **1963:** Financial transactions and travel to Cuba banned for U.S. citizens

■ **1975:** Blockade becomes violent with CIA-linked mid-air bombing of Cuban airliner, 73 people killed

■ **1977:** U.S. President **Jimmy Carter** eases restrictions, drops travel ban

■ **1981-85:** President **Ronald Reagan** tightens embargo, strengthens travel ban, prohibits U.S. citizens from spending money in Cuba

■ **1992:** In bid to bring down Castro “within weeks”, President **George H. W. Bush** signs **Cuban Democracy Act**. Move prohibits U.S. subsidiaries from buying Cuban food and medicine

■ **1996:** President **Bill Clinton** signs **Helms-Burton Act** which imposes penalties on foreign companies doing business in Cuba. Act opposed by EU

■ **2000:** President **George W. Bush** approves sale of food and medicines to Cuba

■ **2002:** U.S. opens **Guantanamo Bay** for interrogation of Al Qaeda suspects. Cuba added to Bush administration’s list of **axis of evil** countries

■ **2008:** Fidel Castro steps down, **Raul Castro** takes over as president

■ **2009:** U.S. President **Barack Obama** takes office – says he wants new beginning with Cuba

■ **2012:** **Pope Benedict** visits Cuba

■ **2014:** Cuba agrees to EU invitation to begin talks to restore relations and boost economic ties, on condition of progress on human rights

■ **Sep-Oct:** Cuba sends hundreds of medical staff to West African countries hit by Ebola epidemic

■ **Dec:** President Obama orders opening of U.S. embassy in Havana and review of Cuba’s designation as state sponsor of terrorism