

Exploring U.S.-Latin America Relations



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WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL

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EXPLORING U.S.-LATIN AMERICA RELATIONS

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USING THIS RESOURCE GUIDE

NOTE: Many of these descriptions were excerpted directly from the source website.



Recommended



The Day After: Common Core Connection



Visual Media



Lesson Plans/Education Resources



Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)



Audio



Opinion



<http://pixshark.com/latin-american-flags-with-names.htm>

INTRODUCING THE SPEAKERS



Marc McLeod is Director of International Studies and Associate Professor of History at Seattle University. His research explores the social and cultural history of pre-revolutionary Cuba with a particular focus on the experiences of Haitian and British West Indian immigrants. At Seattle University, he teaches a range of courses on Latin American and Caribbean history, including History of the Caribbean, History of Cuba, History of Mexico, Colonial Latin America, and Revolution in Latin America. He is currently working on a book-length manuscript entitled *The Strange and Tragic Case of La Niña Cuca: Infanticide, Immigration, and Race in Early Republican Cuba*. Prior to this, his research has been published in several academic journals and he served as a contributing editor for the history of Garveyism in Cuba for Volume XI of *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers* (Duke University Press, 2011). Originally from Shelton, Connecticut, he received his undergraduate education at the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University and obtained his M.A. in Latin American Studies and a Ph.D. in History from the University of Texas at Austin.

The Seattle Area Peace Corps Association (SEAPAX) is a group of former **Peace Corps** volunteers dedicated to improving international understanding at all levels. Founded in 1977 by returning Peace Corps volunteers, their aim is to fulfill the 3rd goal of the Peace Corps, "Bringing the World Back Home," by utilizing the lessons they learned from living in the two-thirds world to promote increased understanding of the social, political, and economic circumstances, as well as the global interdependence, of people worldwide. Below are members of SEAPAX who will be discussing their personal experience in various Latin American countries:

Rachel Huguet, Costa Rica 2011-2013

Dina Davis, Paraguay 2009-2011

Joana Ramos, Brazil

Emily Topalanchik, Peru 2009-2013



The Peace Corps is widely considered to be America's premier international service organization. Peace Corps volunteers are sent all over the world to aid citizens with the most pressing needs. Volunteers work intimately with local people toward changes that are not only helpful, but also sustainable long after they return home. Primary missions include, but are not limited to food security, HIV/AIDS risk reduction, Malaria prevention, and promoting general equality. Today, there are over 1,600 Peace Corps volunteers serving in Central and South America and nearly all Latin American countries have received Peace Corps volunteers at some point during the last 70 years.

DEFINING LATIN AMERICA



http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-zSLuTM_kPPo/T3zeRWOJail/AAAAAAAAAAv4/e2SwXJ4Yj50/s1600/Latin_America_Map.gif

Fast Facts:

- ⇒ Latin America is the most urbanized region in the world, with about 80% of its population living in cities.
- ⇒ The Amazon sprawls across eight countries, comprises 1.4 billion acres of dense forest, and is home to 1 in 10 of all known species on earth.
- ⇒ The Amazon River is the only river that can clearly be seen from outer space.
- ⇒ More than 20 million Latin American and Caribbean people live outside their country of birth; some 3/4 are in the US and many are in Argentina, Venezuela, Spain, and Canada.

Source: <https://agenda.weforum.org/2013/04/did-you-know-ten->



Think you know Latin America?

Take this geography quiz:

<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/2011/0203/Think-you-know-Latin-America-Take-our-geography-quiz/Which-country-is-South-America-s-second-largest>

Power Shift in Latin America (04/07/2015)

<http://rt.com/op-edge/247157-americas-summit-power-shift-us/>

Panama is hosting the Seventh Summit of the Americas on April 10-11. Organized by the OAS – Organization of American States – this event will bring together the heads of state and foreign ministers of 34 nations including, for the first time, Cuba. Under the title “Prosperity and Equity: The Challenge of Cooperation in the Americas”, the summit is set to address a myriad of increasingly complex regional issues. Hopefully, it will also bring to the table the impact of global superpower conflicts and maneuvering they are having in this part of the world.

Latin America 2015: Time for Reform (01/09/2015)

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2015/01/09-latin-america-2015-time-for-reform-zovatto>

Latin America is starting off 2015 with a clear economic slowdown. The world economy is not helping. The downward trend in raw materials prices, scant dynamism in global demand, and the appreciation of the dollar are three factors that work against the region today.

Elections to Watch in 2015 (01/05/2015)

<http://blogs.cfr.org/oneil/2015/01/05/elections-to-watch-in-2015/>

The region will hold just two presidential elections this year, choosing new leaders in Guatemala and Argentina. More prevalent will be congressional and local elections. Midterms in Mexico, Venezuela, and Colombia in particular may prove bellwethers for the direction of these three important regional economies.

Religion in Latin America (11/13/2014)

<http://www.pewforum.org/2014/11/13/religion-in-latin-america/>

Latin America is home to more than 425 million Catholics – nearly 40% of the world’s total Catholic population – and the Roman Catholic Church now has a Latin American pope for the first time in its history. Yet identification with Catholicism has declined throughout the region, according to a major new Pew Research Center survey that examines religious affiliations, beliefs and practices in 18 countries and one U.S. territory (Puerto Rico) across Latin America and the Caribbean.

U.S.-LATIN AMERICA RELATIONS

U.S.-Latin America Relations (05/2008)

<http://www.cfr.org/mexico/us-latin-america-relations/p16279>

This report makes clear that the era of the United States as the dominant influence in Latin America is over. Countries in the region have not only grown stronger but have expanded relations with others, including China and India. U.S. attention has also focused elsewhere in recent years, particularly on challenges in the Middle East. The result is a region shaping its future far more than it shaped its past.

"Latin America has never mattered more for the United States. The region is the largest foreign supplier of oil to the United States and a strong partner in the development of alternative fuels. It is the United States' fastest-growing trading partner, as well as its biggest supplier of illegal drugs. Latin America is also the largest source of U.S. immigrants, both documented and not. All of this reinforces deep U.S. ties with the region—strategic, economic, and cultural—but also deep concerns."

"U.S.-Latin America Relations", Council of Foreign Relations

U.S.-Latin American Relations

<http://latinamericanstudies.uncc.edu/news-and-resources/us-latin-american-relations>

This webpage sorts out different resources pertaining to various periods in U.S.-Latin American relations.

With a Handshake and More, Obama Shifts U.S.-Latin America Policy (04/13/2015)

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/itsallpolitics/2015/04/13/399236626/with-a-handshake-and-more-obama-shifts-u-s-latin-america-policy>

The hemispheric summit that just wrapped up in Panama was the first to include the president of Cuba. But even if Raúl Castro and his brother Fidel were kept out of sign at past Summits of the Americas, they were never out of mind. Obama promoted cheaper, cleaner energy, illegal immigration into the U.S., and economic relations, but the most visible symbol of newfound engagement with Latin America is Obama's decision to seek normal diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Obama-Castro Handshake: What it means, and what it doesn't (04/12/2015)

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Foreign-Policy/2015/0412/Obama-Castro-handshake-What-it-means-and-what-it-doesn-t-video>

President Obama's reaching out to Cuba, symbolized in a handshake with Raúl Castro Saturday, is lauded in Latin America. But regional leaders aren't convinced the United States is genuine.

Obama to meet Latin American leaders amid positive views of U.S. in the region (04/07/2015)

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/04/07/obama-to-meet-latin-american-leaders-amid-positive-views-of-u-s-in-the-region/>

When President Obama joins 34 other heads of state from North America, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean this week in Panama City for the seventh Summit of the Americas, he'll be doing so at a time when the United States' image in the region is largely positive.

Obama Legacy Set to Fail in Latin America (04/03/2015)

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/Obamas-Legacy-Set-to-Fail-in-Latin-America-20150403-0019.html>

As Latin America prepares for the upcoming Summit of the Americas in Panama City on May 9-10, the big elephant in the room is not going to be the long awaited reunion of Cuba with the organization, but rather President Obama's latest act of aggression against Venezuela. In an unprecedented statement on March 26, 2015, all 33 members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), which represents the entire region, expressed opposition to U.S. government sanctions against Venezuelan officials, referring to them as "the application of unilateral coercive measures contrary to International Law".

Latin America Unites Against U.S. Attack on Venezuelan Democracy (02/09/2015)

<http://www.coha.org/latin-america-unites-against-u-s-attack-on-venezuelan-democracy/>

A special commission of the two largest associations of Latin American nations, CELAC and UNASUR, met in Montevideo, Uruguay to analyze the relationship between the United States and Venezuela as well as the situation inside Venezuela. Early indications are that this broad based association is calling for the U.S. to cease interference in the internal affairs of Venezuela; for Caracas to resume a dialogue inside Venezuela; as well as for the commencement of a U.S.-Venezuela dialogue.

Latin American Leaders Cheer Historical Opening of U.S.-Cuba Relations (12/17/2014)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/17/leaders-in-latin-america-n_6343524.html

Leaders across Latin America from both the right and the left cheered on the historic steps taken by the governments of the United States and Cuba to thaw their long-frozen relations. For most heads of state in Latin America, where the embargo on Cuba is unpopular and Cuba generally isn't viewed as a pariah, the move was long overdue.

U.S.-LATIN AMERICA RELATIONS

Is the U.S. 'losing' Latin America?

(09/04/2014)

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/09/us-losing-latin-america-201409411713646156.html>

The assertion that the United States is "losing" Latin America is a persistent and bipartisan obsession. In an era of intense domestic polarization, analysts - especially in the United States but elsewhere as well - of all different political stripes seem to find agreement. This line of reasoning gathered steam in the past decade in large part because of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez's rise to power. It is a straightforward and tempting thesis, but it is also inaccurate and fosters problematic directions for U.S. foreign policy.

Latin America and the USA: Creating More Win-Win Relationships (08/28/2014)

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/alejandrochafuen/2014/08/28/latin-america-and-the-usa-creating-more-win-win-relationships/>

Whenever a Latin American country shares a headline with the U.S., it is usually attached to a crisis. American audiences rarely hear about good news coming from the region. This includes honest discussions on why the U.S. government, as well as private actors, should play a more intelligent and active role in the region.

Fact Sheet: Look South Initiative (01/09/2014)

<http://www.commerce.gov/news/fact-sheets/2014/01/09/fact-sheet-look-south-initiative>

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker has unveiled Look South, a new coordinated federal government effort led by the U.S. Department of Commerce to help more American companies "Look South" to do business with Mexico and the United States' 10 other Free Trade Agreement (FTA) partners in Latin America. With half of the U.S.' FTA partners in Latin America and their adherence to similar trade and tariff laws, South America should be the new target of U.S. exports.

The governance of natural resources in Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean has plenty of natural resources, but historically the region has had difficulties translating its wealth into long-term economic development processes.



ECLAC's recommendations

To adapt with progressivity criteria the percentage the state receives from the exploitation of natural resources.

To develop institutional mechanisms that allow for investment on next generations.

To foster a State policy oriented towards a structural change with long-term productive diversification.

ECLAC

Source: Natural Resources Report: tendencies and conditions for a regional development agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean.

http://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/infographic/images/eclac_rmn.jpg

What is the Look South Initiative?

Source: <http://www.commerce.gov/news/fact-sheets/2015/02/fact-sheet-fy-2016-us-department-commerce-budget>

During President Obama's Weekly Address, he expressed that 40 percent of U.S. exports go to the Americas. While the U.S. continues to increase its exports, many companies are only taking advantage of a single market, and statistics have shown that diversifying markets can increase business. Furthermore, the Department of Commerce notes that Latin America has one of the fastest-growing middle classes in the world. The Free Trade Agreement already establishes trade relations with most Latin American countries, but the Look South Initiative seeks to lower or cancel tariff rates, reduce market access barriers, and improve business environments. Federal agencies also aim to provide the resources to equip small to medium-sized businesses to penetrate these emerging Latin American markets.

VENEZUELA

U.S.-VENEZUELA RELATIONS

Venezuela-U.S. Tensions: Maduro's Rule by Decree Powers Won't Change Much, Analysts Say (03/16/2015)

<http://www.ibtimes.com/venezuela-us-tensions-maduros-rule-decree-powers-wont-change-much-analysts-say-1848432>

Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro received special powers this weekend to rule by decree on matters of national security in light of a perceived threat posed by the U.S.'s recent sanctions on Venezuelan officials. But while critics are cautioning against a potential abuse of power, analysts say the law gives the president few new abilities that he didn't already have.

U.S.-Venezuela relations sour in new spat (03/15/2015)

<http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/live-news/articles/2015/3/16/us-venezuela-relations-sour-after-recent-spat.html>

Relations between the U.S. and Venezuela have soured once again.

On Sunday the National Assembly gave Venezuelan President Nicolás

Maduro the power to legislate by decree for the rest of 2015. He requested the expanded powers to counter what he sees as threats from the U.S. government. Foreign ministers of the 12-nation Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) have stood behind Caracas, calling Obama's executive order a threat to Venezuelan sovereignty, and they're demanding that Washington revoke the decree. Cuba's government has added that the sanctions are "arbitrary and aggressive."

Venezuela Stages Military Exercise to Counter U.S. 'Threat' (03/14/2015)

<http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2015/03/14/world/americas/14reuters-venezuela-usa-military.html>

After the United States declared Venezuela a threat, Venezuela began prepping their military. President Nicolás Maduro framed U.S. sanctions on Venezuelan officials as a bid to topple him. In response, his government mobilized 80,000 soldiers.

Obama Declares Venezuela a Threat to U.S. National Security (03/09/2015)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/09/obama-venezuela_n_6831890.html

The United States declared Venezuela a national security threat on Monday and ordered sanctions against seven officials from the oil-rich country in the worst bilateral diplomatic dispute since socialist President Nicolás Maduro took office in 2013. Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro denounced the sanctions as an attempt to topple his government. At the end of a thundering two-hour speech, Maduro said he would seek decree powers to counter the "imperialist" threat, and appointed one of the sanctioned officials as the new interior minister.

U.S.-Venezuelan relations deteriorate over visa restrictions (02/02/2015)

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/u-s-venezuelan-relations-deteriorate-visa-restrictions/>

Fraught relations between the United States and Venezuela turned openly hostile on Monday as the U.S. slapped new visa restrictions on Venezuelan officials and their families and Venezuela's president accused Vice President Joe Biden of plotting to overthrow him. The exchange of barbs undermined hopes that the U.S. and Venezuela could pursue improved ties following a rapid deterioration of relations last year.

Venezuela sanctions highlight U.S. hypocrisy on human rights (12/18/2014)

<http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/12/venezuela-sanctionsobamacubausrelationslatinamerica.html>

On Wednesday, President Barack Obama announced a prisoner swap with Cuba, plans to normalize diplomatic relations and an easing of financial and travel restrictions against Havana. Obama's actions on Cuba, however welcome, stand in stark contrast to efforts to impose sanctions on Venezuelan leaders. On Dec. 10, the U.S. Congress passed the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act, imposing sanctions on a number of Venezuelan leaders for human rights abuses committed against anti-government protesters earlier this year.

GlobalPost: Pros and Cons of U.S. Sanctions Against Venezuela (12/16/2014)

<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/globalpost-pros-cons-u-s-sanctions-against-venezuela-n269221>

There are plenty of issues for the United States to consider before it smacks one of Latin America's biggest economies with sanctions. US legislators allege that the targeted Venezuelan officials violated citizens' human rights during nationwide protests here earlier this year. The bill would freeze their US assets and deny them visas. A little protesting is not likely to stop Obama. But in case he's having second thoughts, GlobalPost lays out the pros and cons of sanctions.



President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela

<http://thesheet.ng/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/nicolas.jpg>

VENEZUELA

POLITICS

Human Rights Watch World Report 2015: Venezuela

<http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/venezuela?page=1>

Under the leadership of President Hugo Chávez and now President Nicolás Maduro, the accumulation of power in the executive branch and the erosion of human rights guarantees have enabled the government to intimidate, censor, and prosecute its critics. While some Venezuelans continue to criticize the government, the prospect of reprisals—in the form of arbitrary or abusive state action—has undercut judicial independence, and forced journalists and rights defenders to weigh the consequences of publicizing information and opinions that are critical of the government.



<http://c1.thejournal.ie/media/2014/03/venezuela-protests-florida.jpg>

South American Governments Slam Obama Over Venezuela Sanctions (03/16/2015)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/16/unasur-venezuela-sanctions_n_6881886.html

South America's governments aren't pleased with the Obama administration's recent characterization of Venezuela as a "national security threat." President Barack Obama issued an executive order on March 9 sanctioning seven Venezuelan government and military officials accused of committing human rights abuses and participating in the detention of opposition leaders. But the main object of South American ire may be the language leading off Obama's order. It describes the situation in Venezuela as constituting an "unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States."

In Chávez, Maduro Trusts, Maybe to His Detriment and Venezuela's (03/09/2015)

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/10/world/americas/in-chavez-maduro-trusts-maybe-to-his-detriment-and-venezuelas.html?_r=0

Mr. Maduro came into office seeking to imitate his charismatic predecessor and mentor, Hugo Chávez, in nearly every way: the way he talked, the way he dressed and in his fulminations against American imperialism. But now, two years after the death of Mr. Chávez, with his country sinking deeper into an economic crisis, what was once Mr. Maduro's greatest advantage — his absolute loyalty to the former leader — may have become his greatest handicap.

Sliding Toward Dictatorship (02/20/2015)

<http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21644540-arrest-mayor-caracas-sign-regime-will-do-whatever-it-takes-hold>

The arrest of the mayor of Caracas is a sign that the Maduro regime will do whatever it takes to hold on to power. Mayor Antonio Ledezma was arrested for the accusation that he was part of a conspiracy to mount a coup against Venezuela's leftist regime. The government may hope that the spectacular arrest of one of the opposition's leading figures will spark violent demonstrations.

Why Sanctions are Right in the Case of Venezuela (08/11/2014)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sergio-munoz-bata/venezuela-us-sanctions_b_5668766.html

I beg to differ with liberals who say the recent U.S. sanctions against individual members of the Venezuelan government are counterproductive. By the same token, I disagree with conservatives who dismiss them for being too light and applaud the White House and Congress' efforts to punish Venezuelan drug traffickers and human rights violators for a very simple reason: in the rigged system of justice that Hugo Chávez set up in the country, it is impossible for any member of its repressive political system to ever face justice in a court of law.

VENEZUELA

ECONOMICS

How Bad is Venezuela's Economic Chaos? (02/18/2015)

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/nathanielparishflannery/2015/02/18/how-venezuelas-economic-crisis-hurts-u-s-companies/>

Within Venezuela the effects of the economic chaos are seen at the supermarket, where empty shelves are a constant reminder of the economic dysfunction that has come to define South America's fifth largest economy. The economic distress is also felt on the balance sheets of dozens of major U.S. companies who hold sizable assets in Venezuela.

Running out of Time: Dimming Prospects for Reform in Venezuela (01/28/2015)

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2015/01/28-economic-reform-venezuela-trinkunas>

The collapse of global oil prices is putting particularly severe pressure on Venezuela, with unpredictable but serious economic and political consequences. For a country that imports over 70 percent of all consumer goods (including food) and depends on oil exports for over 95 percent of its foreign exchange, the effects on Venezuelans' well-being are severe. Declining Venezuelan oil sales to the United States have weakened the economic relationship between the two countries.

Human Development Report 2014: Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/VEN.pdf

The 2014 Human Development Report (HDR) presents the 2014 Human Development Index (HDI) (values and ranks) for 187 countries and UN-recognized territories, along with the Inequality-adjusted HDI for 145 countries, the Gender Development Index for 148 countries, the Gender Inequality Index for 149 countries, and the Multidimensional Poverty Index for 91 countries.

Venezuela's Economic Fractures (12/26/2014)

<http://www.cfr.org/economics/venezuelas-economic-fractures/p32853>

Hugo Chávez's transformative presidency left behind an economic model that has sown deep, heated divisions within Venezuelan society. The country's oil reserves largely sustain the state-controlled economy, in which social development and affordability for the poorest sectors of society are prioritized. But stringent currency and price controls and a thriving black market for U.S. dollars have contributed to inflation, stagnant production, and frequent goods shortages, catalyzing vocal discontent with the government's economic management.

Education in Venezuela: Reform, Expansion and an Uncertain Future (05/01/2013)

<http://wenr.wes.org/2013/05/education-in-venezuela-reform-expansion-and-an-uncertain-future/>

Education in Venezuela is administered and regulated by the Venezuelan Ministry of Education and is highly centralized. Traditionally autonomous universities – long the preserve of Venezuela's upper and middle classes – have fought hard to stave off challenges from the government to their academic freedom and institutional autonomy. There is also a severe underinvestment in autonomous universities and academic research, a reality that continues to force a significant migration of academic talent overseas.



<http://i.ytimg.com/vi/VEayH8A3QeA/maxresdefault.jpg>

An Oral History of Grassroots Venezuelans in the Midst of the Economic War (01/30/2015)

<http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/11177>

While the shortages and long-lines are creating serious inconveniences and undeniable burdens on most Venezuelans, beyond the frustration, the voices of grassroots Venezuelans are getting lost beneath negative predictions of macroeconomic collapse. In this oral history collage, members of the Venezuelan grassroots and popular movements speak for themselves about the roots of the economic war, their strategies in the face of it, and the solutions that they propose.

Venezuela's Oil-Based Economy (02/09/2009)

<http://www.cfr.org/world/venezuelas-oil-based-economy/p12089#p6>

Though Venezuela has repeatedly threatened to cut off its oil exports to the United States, analysts say the two countries are mutually dependent. Venezuela supplies about 1.5 million barrels of crude oil and refined petroleum products to the U.S. market every day, according to the EIA. Venezuelan oil comprises about 11 percent of U.S. crude oil imports, which amounts to 60 percent of Venezuela's total exports. The sudden loss of Venezuelan oil in the world market would raise world oil prices and slow the economic growth of the United States.

VENEZUELA

CULTURE

Timeline: Venezuela

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1229348.stm>

A chronology of key events throughout Venezuelan history.

Coro and its Port

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/658>

Coro, also known as Santa Ana de Coro, is the oldest city in the Western side of Venezuela, and is protected as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Coro is the only surviving example of a rich fusion of local traditions with Spanish Mudéjar and Dutch architectural techniques. One of the first colonial towns, it has some 602 historic buildings at this site.

Venezuela

<http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Venezuela.html>

Did you know that Venezuela is still a very patriarchal society, and complimenting or remarking on a woman's appearance in public is considered acceptable? This page, in addition to history and culture, extends its information to cover other topics such as gender relations, family structures, ethnic relations, etiquette, and use of space.

Typical Venezuelan Food

<http://www.southamerica.cl/Venezuela/Food.htm>

The cuisine in Venezuela has a lot of European influences (especially Italian, Spanish and French) and is quite flavourful. But you can also find indigenous as well as African influence. As Venezuela is such a large and diverse country, each region has its own distinctive regional cooking. On this resource you will find a simple breakdown of some of the most popular and commonly-eaten dishes in Venezuela.

Food, Dining, and Drinks in Venezuela

<http://www.safaritheglobe.com/venezuela/culture/food-drinks/>

This page is a great example of using food as the medium to linking history and culture together. There is a beginning section on historical foundations of food, and gradually transitions to modern-day habits and travelling tips to eating around Venezuela.

Venezuelan Music Project

<http://www.venezuelanmusicproject.com/music.html>

This page contains samples of modern Venezuelan music in addition to information concerning origins and the hybrid characteristics of its music.

Joropo in Venezuela and Colombia (2004)

http://www.academia.edu/2167543/Joropo_in_Venezuela_and_Colombia

This is a PDF file of an entry in the Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World about *joropo*, a traditional dance derived from Spanish roots. Although it varies from region to region and religion to religion, *joropo* plays a large part in communal gatherings and festivals.

The Joropo: Venezuela's popular political dance (02:24)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z8ZYom1K8g>

The Joropo - a musical style resembling the waltz - was so favored by Hugo Chavez he, like his successor Nicolás Maduro included it in official events. But some are now criticizing the politicization of the dance.

Joropo recio con furruco y danza Llanera (02:42)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7legHERdNs&feature=youtu.be>

This video clip shows the traditional joropo dance, as well as the typical instruments played to produce the music.



<http://i.dawn.com/2013/04/78.jpg>

BRAZIL

U.S.-BRAZIL RELATIONS

A Million Cries to Kick Out Brazil's President (03/16/2015)

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/03/One-Million-Protesters-Demand-Brazilian-President-Dilma-Rousseff-resign/387868/>

Protesters demanded that Dilma Rousseff step down amid allegations of massive corruption and a sputtering economy. Motives behind the protest and dislike for President Dilma are outlined with the Petrobras scandal at the epicenter. The article discusses what the unrest and scandal will mean for Brazil.

A changed context favors better US–Brazil relations as President Rousseff begins second term (01/01/2015)

<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/changed-context-favors-better-us%E2%80%93brazil-relations-president-rousseff-begins-second-term>

Brazil's urgency to confront their recent issues, including a corruption scandal, is likely to favorably impact Brazil–United States relations and lead to a more productive dialogue than the two countries had in recent years. There have been three major developments contributing to better relations between the two countries as well as a directional change for economic policy announced by Rousseff in Brazil.

POLITICS

The Wisdom of Crowds (03/21/2015)

<http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21646787-after-massive-demonstrations-against-her-dilma-rousseff-will-struggle-relaunch-her>

Dilma Rousseff, Brazil's president, expected the anti-government protests on March 15th to be big. She convened a meeting of a crisis group at her official residence to monitor them. But nobody, including the organizers, imagined they would be as massive as they turned out to be.

Brazil in Crisis mode as ruling party sees public trust rapidly dissolving (03/17/2015)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/17/brazil-crisis-petrobas-scandal-dilma-rousseff-protests>

The bad news just keeps coming for Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff. On Monday, the treasurer of the ruling Workers' Party was formally charged with corruption. The day before, enormous anti-government demonstrations filled the streets of more than 160 cities. The economy is faltering, inflation is rising, and poverty reduction is at risk of stalling.

Brazil's Foreign Policy and Latin America: A New Chapter? (12/01/2014)

<http://blog.crisisgroup.org/latin-america/2014/12/01/brazils-foreign-policy-and-latin-america-a-new-chapter/>

Foreign policy has never had a substantial impact on election campaigns in Brazil. It is no surprise, then, that recent presidential and congressional elections revolved around domestic, not international issues. Nonetheless, the intense debate during the campaign regarding Brazil's place in the world will have foreign policy consequences for the immediate neighborhood: Latin America. Brazil's aspiration to a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, its desire to increase trade and investment, and the likely need for austerity measures may bring about a thorough review of its role in Latin America.



An Odd Hostility in the Americas (04/21/2014)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/22/opinion/cohen-an-odd-hostility-in-the-americas.html>

Brazil, a kind of tropical United States, finds it difficult to connect to Washington, and vice versa. The nation that might have been America's closest ally (even without a formal alliance) among the rising powers is now anything but. Relations between President Obama and the Brazilian leader have been frozen. Brazil wants an apology, which it will not get, or at least a significant American gesture, of which there is no sign. Unhappy with Brazil's political direction, the Obama administration is not on the verge of a bout of contrition.



President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil and President Obama

http://abcnews.go.com/images/Politics/WireAP_ff37e17fd78142b7979a2f9a24e51cb2.jpg

BRAZIL

Human Rights Violations in Brazil: Report of the National Truth Commission (12/16/2014)

<http://www.coha.org/human-rights-violations-in-brazil-report-of-the-national-truth-commission/>

After two years and seven months of investigation, the Brazilian National Truth Commission (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, CNV) delivered on December 10 its final report on human rights violations during the time of the military dictatorship, 1964 to 1985. Drawing upon 1,116 interviews, the 4,328 page report concluded that there were 434 politically-motivated murderers during this dark period. The Truth Commission listed the names of the nearly 300 military, ex-military, and police officers who carried out the crimes. The report has brought a stunning day of reckoning for Brazil.

Brazil's Presidential Elections: Expectations for Foreign Policy (10/2014)

http://csis.org/files/publication/141001_Meacham_BrazilPresElections_Web.pdf

Amidst all this curiosity and uncertainty, there remain countless unanswered questions as to what this election will mean for Brazil—both domestically and in a broader global context. In short, what can we expect from Brazil on the international stage? More than everything else, this report seeks to provide clarity, answering the pressing questions about Brazilian foreign policy under the next government, and demonstrating where the country's interests overlap with the United States and its other primary partners in every part of the world.

ECONOMY

How Much Of Brazil's Economy Got Lost In Petrobras Scandal? (04/04/2015)

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2015/04/04/how-much-of-brazils-economy-got-lost-in-petrobras-scandal/>

A study in Brazil estimates how much Brazil lost in the Petrobras scandal. The price tag: R\$87 billion (\$27.1 billion) that is expected to have been lost in GDP this year. All told, that comes out to a little more than 1% of Brazil's GDP burned up in scandal.

After Brazil's Boom, Bust? (04/03/2015)

<http://www.cfr.org/brazil/after-brazils-boom-bust/p36393>

A graft scheme involving Brazil's state-owned oil giant, Petrobras, has compounded problems in Brazil's shaky economy and threatens to do lasting damage to President Dilma Rousseff's government and the ruling Workers' Party (known by its Portuguese acronym, PT), says expert João Augusto de Castro Neves. This interview makes clear the implications of the Petrobras scandal to Brazil's changing position in the international system.

Brazil-U.S. Relations: Common Ideas, Little Dialogue (02/20/2015)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/monica-de-bolle/brazil-us-relations-commo_b_6720664.html

It is unfortunate that Brazilian-American relations have become strained in recent years. This sense of frustration is further enhanced by the fact that the two largest countries in the Americas have very similar agendas when it comes to tackling inequality and income disparity. And yet, rather than coming together, the distance between the two countries has widened.

Petrobras May Help Push Brazil Stock Market Down 35 Percent (02/19/2015)

<http://riotimesonline.com/brazil-news/rio-politics/petrobras-scandal-helps-brazilian-stock-market-drop-35-percent/#>

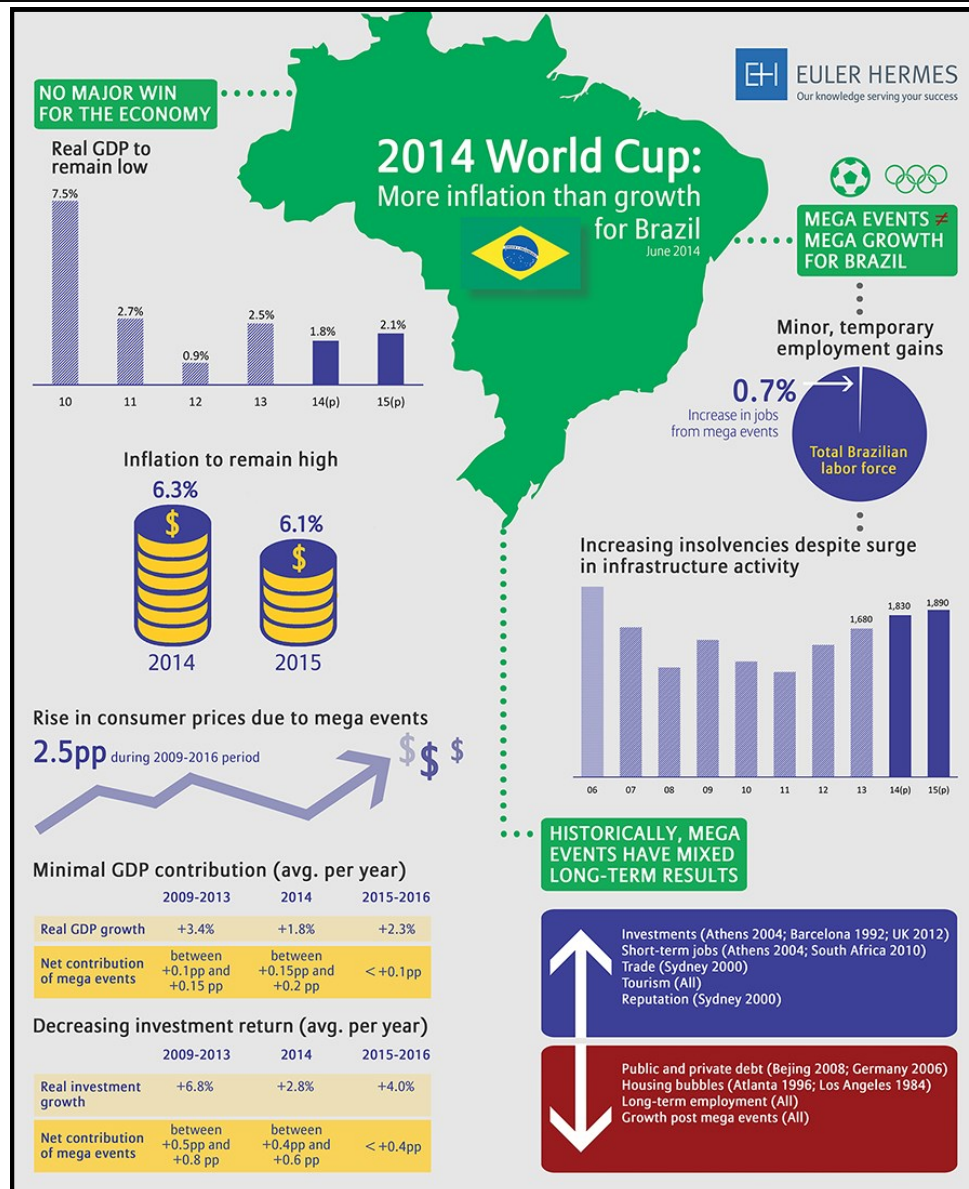
A new report by market research company Capital Economics has tried to calculate the cost of the Petrobras scandal in Brazil, which has caused political and financial ripples across the country. However even without the fall in Petrobras shares, Capital Economics estimates that Brazil's stock market would still have dropped by about twenty percent over the same period. This is in part due to a swing of currency exchange, slowing of demand for exports, and the drop in oil prices globally.

How to Bring Brazil's Economy Back to Life (10/11/2014)

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/10/11/how-to-bring-brazils-economy-back-to-life/>

The policies that helped Brazil to healthy growth over the past decade have lost momentum. The next president will need bold new ideas that look beyond the short term. The Brazilian electorate faces a very distinct choice between two candidates with completely different economic philosophies and policies. Brazil, which suffers from serious macroeconomic imbalances, fell into recession in the first half of this year. Whoever wins in the final stage of the election on Oct. 26 will face the daunting task of restoring dynamism to a slow-moving economy.

BRAZIL



<http://www.eulerhermes.com/mediacenter/Lists/mediacenter-documents/Infographic-World-Cup-Brazil-2014.jpg>

BRIC in Danger of Becoming 'IC,' Says Acronym Coiner O'Neil (01/08/2015)

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-01-08/bric-in-danger-of-becoming-ic-says-acronym-coiner-jim-o-neill>

Brazil and Russia's membership of the BRICs may expire by the end of this decade if they fail to revive their flagging economies. After being asked if he would still group Brazil, Russia and China together as emerging market powerhouses as he did in 2001 Jim O'Neill, former Goldman Sachs Group Inc. chief economist, said "I might be tempted to call it just 'IC' or if the next three years are the same as the last for Brazil and Russia I might in 2019!!"

Brazil's economy: rough weather ahead (01/03/2015)

<http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21637436-mistakes-dilma-rousseff-made-during-her-first-presidential-term-mean-her-second-will-be>

The mistakes Dilma Rousseff made during her first presidential term mean her second will be stormy. The outlook for the next four years is gloomy. Her daunting to-do list includes repairing ties with America, damaged by the revelation in 2013 that its spies had tapped her phone calls. Deforestation in the Amazon region is rising after a decade of decline, and the worst drought on record threatens to bring energy and water rationing to the industrial south-east. If her second term is to be any better, she will need to undo much of what she did in the first.

BRAZIL

CULTURE

Brazil Culture

<http://www.brazil.org.za/brazil-culture.html>

The Brazilian culture is one of the world's most varied and diverse. This is due to its being a melting pot of nationalities, as a result of centuries of European domination as well as slavery, which brought hordes of African migrants across Brazil's borders to live in and influence the local cultures with their ancient customs and ideas. The European settlers also brought ideas, innovations and belief systems with them, shaping the local societies significantly. All of these different influences have meant that the modern-day Brazilian culture is unique and very complex.



Brazil

<http://www.everyculture.com/Bo-Co/Brazil.html>

This page is part of a larger website that contains country-specific information, and in addition to history and culture, extends its information to cover other topics such as gender relations, family structures, ethnic relations, etiquette, and use of space.

Centre for Intercultural Learning: Brazil

<http://www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/overview-apercu-eng.asp?iso=br>

This website is managed by Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, and gives an interesting overview on Brazilian culture through a situational business role. This resource leans heavily towards cross-cultural communication in a business setting, but this can be an interesting source on Brazilian business culture.

Brazil—Language, Culture, Customs, and Etiquette

<http://www.globalsmes.org/news/index.php?func=detail&detailid=558&catalog=28&lan=en>

This page will give a brief overview of major aspects of Brazilian culture, such as language, diversity, and class system.

Family and Socialization Factors in Brazil: An Overview

<http://www.wvu.edu/culture/DennenTorres.htm>

The structure of the Brazilian family is related to the five sub-cultures that, in turn, represent the geographic regions of the country. This reading presents a brief characterization of the Brazilian culture and family and describes changes in the structural relations and in the redefinition of models of Brazilian family organization in the last century. Ultimately, this resource will illustrate that the family has a privileged place in the creation, protection, support, and maintenance of relationships in Brazilian society.

Samba Food: The National Dishes of Brazil

<http://theculturetrip.com/south-america/brazil/articles/samba-food-the-national-dishes-of-brazil/>

Brazil's hearty, flavorsome cuisine embodies the rich panorama of cultural influences in the South American country. It combines indigenous ingredients with the influence of Portuguese and West African culinary traditions, which account for its unique combination of spice, gusto and depth of flavor. Explore the best that Brazilian food has to offer through the regional varieties of this rich cuisine, and find the best places to experience Brazil's most famous dishes.

Brazil Dance World: Dance Styles

<http://brazildanceworld.com/about-us/dance-styles/>

This page gives a historical and stylistic overview of the major social dances in Brazil. In addition to a written overview, there are also video clips that give a visual example of the dances introduced in this article.

From Samba to carnival: Brazil's thriving African culture (07/24/2013)

<http://www.cnn.com/2012/10/23/world/africa/african-culture-brazil/>

From samba and carnival to food, music and religion, African culture is everywhere in Brazil. The cultural heritage stems from the estimated four million slaves who were brought to the country over a 300-year period, at least four times as many as to the United States. After the abolition of slavery, the rituals of the Catholic former colonialists and their former slaves merged to form the origins of modern carnival, according to the Rio Times. This article focuses on the African influence on Brazilian culture.



http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/bb/Carnival_in_Rio_de_Janeiro.jpg



ARGENTINA

POLITICS

Human Rights Watch World Report 2014: Argentina

<http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/argentina>

A vibrant but increasingly polarized debate exists in Argentina between the government and its critics. However, the Fernández administration has sanctioned individuals for publishing unofficial inflation statistics challenging official ones, and has failed to adopt rules regarding the distribution of public advertising funds. There is no national law regulating access to information. Other ongoing human rights concerns include police abuse, poor prison conditions, torture, and failure to protect indigenous rights.

New York Times Topic: Argentina

<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/argentina/index.html>

This page compiled by the New York Times gives a comprehensive overview of current events in Argentina as well as basic facts about population, economics, and history.

Never the next great power: Argentina's future is always stuck in the past (03/23/2015)

<http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2015/03/23/alberto-nisman-argentina-and-the-discourse-of-failure/>

Argentina, mired in corruption and ineptitude, has swallowed Alberto Nisman — and the truth. Argentina entered the modern world with great expectations. Its European genealogy and natural resources were taken as virtual guarantees of prosperity and progress. But the stunning death of the federal prosecutor has confirmed that Argentina is its own worst enemy.



http://i.huffpost.com/gadgets/slideshows/262410/slide_262410_1742018_free.jpg

Opinion: Foreign Policy during the Kirchnerite Era (03/16/2015)

<http://www.buenosairesherald.com/article/184425/opinion-foreign-policy-during-the-kirchnerite-era>

Hyper-presidentialism had two other important consequences in the definition of a foreign policy: it favoured a certain tendency to overreact and contributed to projecting an image of dispersion and volatility.

Fake it Till You Make It: Argentina's Crisis (03/16/2015)

<http://harvardpolitics.com/world/argentinas-crisis/>

From 1976 to 1983, Argentina's military government waged what is now called the Dirty War: a seven-year campaign against suspected dissidents and subversives. People were abducted from their homes, tortured, and then killed. These people came to be known as *los desaparecidos*, "the disappeared." It was neither the first nor last time the Argentine government would be suspected of murdering its own citizens.

Murder, Espionage, and Debt in Argentina (03/09/2015)

<http://www.coha.org/murder-espionage-and-debt-in-argentina/>

President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner asked Argentina's congress to restructure completely the nation's intelligence service and on February 26 both houses passed the bill, authorizing the country's new Federal Intelligence Agency. President Kirchner's reaction to Nisman's death has been inconsistent. At first she publicly stated that she believed Nisman committed suicide. Then, a few days later, she announced that she believed he was murdered in a plot against her. Meanwhile, the investigation of Nisman's death has not produced a definitive explanation and conspiracy theories still abound.

Alberto Nisman and Argentina's Presidential Elections (01/27/2015)

<http://csis.org/publication/alberto-nisman-and-argentinas-presidential-elections>

On Sunday, January 18, Argentine federal prosecutor Alberto Nisman was found shot dead in his Buenos Aires apartment. The circumstances of his death remain suspect. Whatever the case, Nisman's death has upended the political environment in the country—all as presidential elections approach this fall. So what could it mean for Argentina?

ARGENTINA

A Mysterious Death Rocks Argentina

<http://www.cfr.org/argentina/mysterious-death-rocks-argentina/p36132>

Argentina has drawn international attention for the January 18 death of Alberto Nisman, a prosecutor who was investigating the 1994 bombing of a Jewish center in Buenos Aires that killed eighty-five people. Nisman's death and the investigation around it have exposed deep flaws in Argentina's justice and intelligence systems, says Sergio Berensztein, an Argentine political analyst. The case may also shed light on murky, shifting relations with Iran that may tarnish Kirchner's already troubled legacy as she prepares to leave office at year's end, he says.

Russia Today, Argentina Tomorrow (10/21/2014)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/22/opinion/russia-today-argentina-tomorrow.html>

Earlier this month, the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, and the president of Argentina, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, took part in a video conference to celebrate a new television partnership. Argentina and Russia currently have warm relations, but evident in the TV deal was a more disturbing convergence between the two states: a shared vision of the role that the mass media should play in the government and public life of the nation.

ECONOMICS

Human Development Report 2014: Argentina

http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/ARG.pdf

The 2014 Human Development Report (HDR) presents the 2014 Human Development Index (HDI) (values and ranks) for 187 countries and UN-recognized territories, along with the Inequality-adjusted HDI for 145 countries, the Gender Development Index for 148 countries, the Gender Inequality Index for 149 countries, and the Multidimensional Poverty Index for 91 countries.

A leading presidential candidate in Argentina would lift currency controls, negotiate debt (04/16/2015)

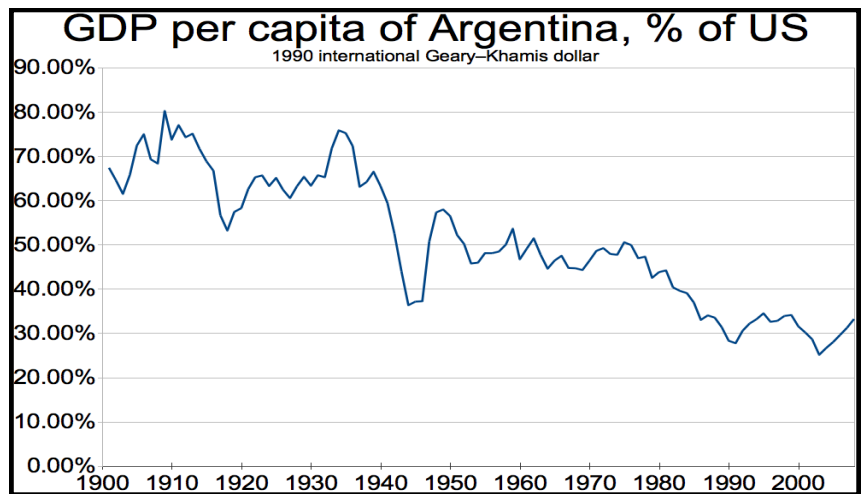
<http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2015/04/16/a-leading-candidate-in-argentina-would-overhaul-economy>

The man who could be Argentina's next president wants to put an end to tight government currency controls, make peace with the nation's creditors and improve severely frayed ties to the United States. In short, Mauricio Macri is promising to undo much of what President Cristina Fernandez and her late husband Nestor Kirchner created over the past 13 years. It's a platform that appears to be gaining traction.

Cash in Argentina: low bill (04/11/2015)

[http://www.economist.com/news/finance-and-economics/21648043-government-denial-over-inflation-low-bill?](http://www.economist.com/news/finance-and-economics/21648043-government-denial-over-inflation-low-bill?zid=305&ah=417bd5664dc76da5d98af4f7a64ofd8a)

[zid=305&ah=417bd5664dc76da5d98af4f7a64ofd8a](http://www.economist.com/news/finance-and-economics/21648043-government-denial-over-inflation-low-bill?zid=305&ah=417bd5664dc76da5d98af4f7a64ofd8a)
On March 26th Argentina's president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, announced a new 100-peso note honoring the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, a group whose children were "disappeared" during Argentina's military dictatorship. The colorful note got raucous applause from Ms. Fernández's clique. Others are less impressed. What the country needs, three private Argentine banking organizations argued in a letter to the Central Bank on April 1st, is not a new 100-peso note—the country now has three—but a more valuable one.



http://www.reddit.com/r/Economics/comments/1xf3cg/argentinas_great_decline_argentina_was_once_the/

Investors Getting Ready for Argentina's Real Estate Resurrection (03/10/2015)

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2015/03/10/investors-getting-ready-for-argentinas-real-estate-resurrection/>

The market has sung Argentina's swan song for the last two years. They had good reason. Kirchner has been commandeering a train wreck for the past eight. In one sector, real estate, South America was on a tear. The Paris of the South was burning by comparison, at least metaphorically. Here's the good news: Argentina has hit bottom and is now on pause. It doesn't get worse from here. One of the key places Argentinians and foreigners are looking to invest now is real estate.

ARGENTINA

Argentina's economic troubles and the U.S. factor (10/27/2014)

<https://www.aspeninstitute.it/aspenia-online/article/argentina%E2%80%99s-economic-troubles-and-us-factor>

The national economy is in recession, inflation is ballooning and the country's foreign-currency reserves are being rapidly eroded. It wasn't much of a choice for President Cristina Kirchner, as Argentina has been barred from international credit markets since it defaulted on its \$100 billion debt in 2001. That rather cataclysmic financial event has been in the news again this year, and the resulting standoff has plunged the relationship between the U.S. and Argentina to an all-time low.

Three things to know about the Supreme Court's ruling on Argentine debt – and why it matters to Argentina and the world (06/26/2014)

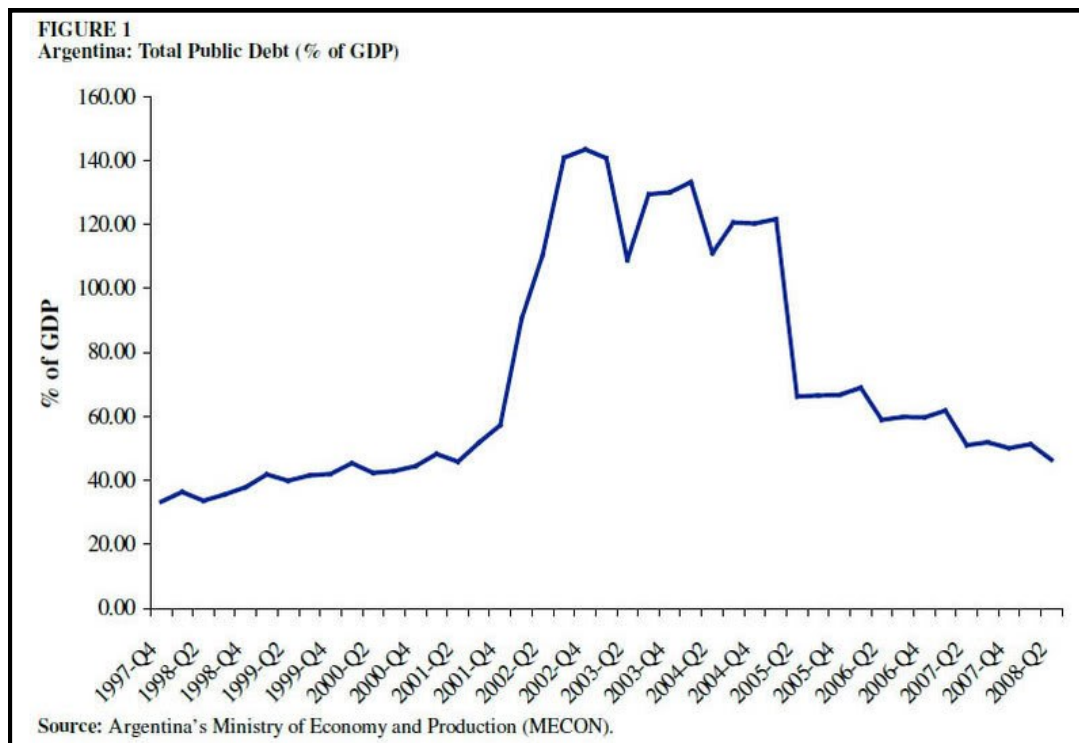
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/06/26/three-things-to-know-about-the-supreme-courts-ruling-on-argentine-debt-and-why-it-matters-to-argentina-and-the-world/>

This month the Supreme Court handed Argentina a legal, psychological, and financial defeat that continues to reverberate through the South American country — and the international financial community. By leaving in place lower court rulings, the Supreme Court required Argentina to pay \$1.3 billion before July 30 to holders of the country's sovereign debt bonds. The action, combined with a related ruling, effectively meant that Argentina lost a 13-year legal battle and must now struggle to limit the damage.

Trouble Looming for Fernández de Kirchner's Justicialists: Argentina Battered by Economic and Social Problems (05/19/2014)

<http://www.coha.org/trouble-looming-for-fernandez-de-kirchners-justicialists-argentina-battered-by-economic-and-social-problems/>

Having suffered through a financial meltdown following its \$80 billion USD debt default in 2001, Argentina, Latin America's third largest economy, has continued to experience crippling economic distress. The economy's largest constraint has arrived in the form of explosive inflation rates, and the situation will probably get worse before it gets better. President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's focus on paying off foreign debt has further exacerbated the situation for average Argentines. These economic troubles, coupled with persisting social strife in Argentina, create a recipe for disaster for Fernández's Justicialist party in the 2015 elections.



<http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2008/weisbroto41008p.html>

ARGENTINA

CULTURE

Argentina

<http://www.everyculture.com/A-Bo/Argentina.html>

Did you know that many of the indigenous groups in Argentina have disappeared because of the Spanish conquests, and it is estimated that about 1% of the population is Argentine Indian? This page extends its information to cover other topics such as gender relations, family structures, ethnic relations, etiquette, and use of space.

Argentina Culture and Traditions

<http://www.mapsofworld.com/argentina/culture-and-traditions.html>

The 8th largest country in the world, Argentina boasts of a culture and society that blends a wide variety of different European cultures to create its very own. The land of tango and football, Argentina is a place of multicultural influences. This page also contains links to various maps of Argentina.



<http://www.wildroad.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/street-tango-la-boca-argentina.jpg>

Centre for Intercultural Learning—Argentina

<http://www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/ci-ic-eng.asp?iso=ar>

This website is managed by Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, and gives an interesting overview on Argentine culture through a situational business role. This resource leans heavily towards cross-cultural communication in a business setting, but this can be an interesting source on Argentine business culture.

Argentina's love affair with polo (02/26/2015)

<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-31602941>

In the action-packed world of professional polo, such are the renowned skills of Argentine players that those who play for overseas clubs are called "hired assassins". The men are in high demand because the standard of polo in Argentina is widely regarded as the best in the world. Indeed, in the current world rankings nine of the top 10 players are Argentine, as are 15 of the top 20. The country leads the way in polo because people there are obsessed with the game.

Nine Argentinian Photographers You Need to Follow (02/19/2015)

<http://time.com/3684209/nine-argentinian-photographers-you-need-to-follow/>

Once one of the richest countries in the world, with a per capita income comparable to France and Germany, Argentina experienced political and economic turmoils during the latter half of the 20th century that saw the country fall into recession. This sense of instability, it could be argued, has influenced an entire generation of photographers and artists. Their creativity, perhaps, seems to arise not only from the country's strong visual tradition but also from a seeming lack of access to resources; a lack that seems to stimulate a process of analyzing, understanding, and narrating everyday life.

Tango: A Metaphor for Argentine Culture (09/20/2012)

http://www.fairobserver.com/region/latin_america/tango-metaphor-argentine-culture/

Tango is one of the most widely-known aspects of Argentine culture. This article gives a historical overview and tango's place in Argentine identity.

Food Tradition and Culture in Argentina (2011) - Grade 6

<http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/argentina11/sproull.pdf>

This is a one–two week unit (5 lessons) for grade 6. In this series of lessons, students will first learn about the topography of Argentina and the role the land has played in the history of the country and its agricultural industry. Next, students will see how the agricultural and livestock industry is reflected in the Argentine national history and diet. In the third segment of the unit, students will learn about two cultural elements that are unique to Argentina's landscape, history, and diet (the gaucho and yerba mate).

CUBA

HISTORY OF U.S.-CUBA RELATIONS



History of Cuban Nation, from Colonial Days to the Present

<http://www.cubahistory.org/>

Click through periods of Cuban history, beginning during the pre-Columbian period and including sections on "the Fight for Independence" and "Cuba's Revolutionary Years".

500 years of Cuban History

<http://www.historyofcuba.com/cuba.htm>

Brief overview of Cuban history including a more in depth look at the details of their past. Topics include Cuban sugar, Cuban Missile Crisis, boxing, and Cuba's struggle against Spain.



<http://www.nationofchange.org/2014/wp-content/uploads/USCubaRelations122014.jpg>

U.S.-Cuba Relations (04/15/2009)

<http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1891359,00.html>

When Fidel Castro came to power in 1959, relations between the two countries quickly devolved into bitter arguments, political grandstanding, and the occasional international crisis. And while Cuba lies less than 100 miles off the coast of Florida, the two nations have had no diplomatic relations since 1961 and use Switzerland as a mediator whenever they need to talk. This article looks back at U.S.-Cuba relations in light of recent diplomacy.

U.S.-Cuba Relations (04/12/2015)

<http://www.cfr.org/cuba/timeline-us-cuba-relations/p32817#!/>

Following Fidel Castro's ascent to power, U.S.-Cuba ties have endured a nuclear crisis, a long-lasting U.S. economic embargo, and ongoing political hostilities. Well beyond the end of the Cold War, the diplomatic relationship between Washington and Havana remains frozen.



5 Things Cuba Can Do to Speed the Normalization of Relations with the United States (03/05/2015)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/william-m-leogrande/five-things-cuba-can-do-t_b_6809824.html



Washington and Havana have taken the first steps toward normalizing relations after half a century of estrangement, but many tough issues remain to be resolved, and time is of the essence. President Obama has only two years left in his presidency, and Raúl Castro has only three. The pace at which the two presidents make progress will determine whether their rapprochement survives the coming successions.

Obama's Cuban Message to Moscow (01/12/2015)

<http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/01/obamas-cuban-message-to-moscow-114189.html#.VSO34PnF-VM>

The dramatic shift in U.S.-Cuba Policy is a long overdue development on its own terms, but it also has implications that go well beyond this hemisphere. After decades of diplomatic impasse, vitriol, and spy games, suddenly we have a chance to alter the course of history not only in Washington and Havana, but in Moscow too.

POLITICS

Cuba's Multi-level strategy at the Summit of the Americas (04/14/2015)

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/order-from-chaos/posts/2015/04/14-cubas-americas-summit-strategy-feinberg>

Last week's Seventh Summit of the Americas in Panama will be remembered for the historic handshakes and broad smiles shared by Presidents Barack Obama and Raúl Castro—the first sit-down meeting of leaders from the two nations since Fidel Castro marched triumphantly into Havana in early 1959. But this memorable encounter was merely the most visible piece of a much broader Cuban strategy at the Panama Summit.

Cuba Stays Stubborn Amid Venezuela Unrest (02/13/2015)

<http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/02/13/venezuela-unrest-not-pushing-cuba-toward-the-us>

Violence again broke out in Venezuela this week, marking the Thursday anniversary of last year's large-scale protests in the country on the same day the government debuted a new exchange rate system aimed at stabilizing the economy. And as Cuba's main regional benefactor, Venezuela's precarious political and economic situation creates a tricky situation for Cuban President Raúl Castro's regime as it works toward normalizing relations with the U.S.

CUBA



Remarks by President Castro at the Third Community of Latin American and Caribbean States Summit (01/28/2015)

<http://www.cfr.org/cuba/remarks-president-castro-third-community-latin-american-caribbean-states-summit/p36055>

Cuban President Raúl Castro Ruz spoke at the Third Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Summit on January 28, 2015. He discussed how CELAC countries have supported each other through economic, security, and political agreements. President Castro also laid out the conditions he wants as Cuba and the United States reestablish diplomatic relations. This is a transcript of the delivered speech.

Cuban-Latin American and Caribbean relations: challenges beyond normalization (07/2013)

http://www.peacebuilding.no/var/ezflow_site/storage/original/application/4dddo27eb8853fc6b6464705b630c332.pdf

Cuba's relations with Latin America and the Caribbean have expanded in scope and level during the last decade as a consequence of two combined developments: the changing political landscape in the region and the gradual process of reform carried out by the Cuban regime. This report offers an assessment of where this link now lies, focusing on the challenges and opportunities faced by the region and Havana to consolidate the ongoing rapprochement.

Though Still Repressive, Cuba Slowly Improving Human Rights Record (04/08/2015)

<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/trend-lines/15484/though-still-repressive-cuba-slowly-improving-human-rights-record#>

Last week, officials from the United States and Cuba held their first formal talks on human rights since both sides announced they were working to restore diplomatic ties last December. In an email interview, Ted Piccone, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, discussed the human rights situation in Cuba.

Embassy of Cuba in Iran: Bilateral Relations

<http://www.cubadiplomacia.cu/iran/EN/BilateralRelations.aspx>

This page, maintained by the Cuban Embassy in Iran, contains articles regarding its bilateral relations with Iran. As the Cuba-Iran relationship has been a point of concern for the U.S., learning about the nature of that relationship can shed light on reasons why U.S. foreign policy towards these two parties is wary and careful.

Cuba MinRex, Official Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba

<http://www.cubaminrex.cu/en>

This is the official foreign affairs page of Cuba. Navigate through this website for news articles, reports, and official statements from the Cuban government.

ECONOMICS

Airbnb Awaits Boost in Cuba Tourism (04/06/2015)

<http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/04/06/airbnb-awaits-boost-in-cuba-tourism>

A move by Airbnb to launch its services in Cuba shows the island nation is attracting attention from the tech and tourism industries, but any investment will prove largely symbolic until the Obama administration completes its goal of normalizing U.S. trade and diplomatic relations with the communist dictatorship.

Is Cuba ready for the business boom? (04/05/2015)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/centralamericaandthecaribbean/cuba/11514267/Is-Cuba-ready-for-the-business-boom.html>

On December 17 President Barack Obama and President Raúl Castro, in simultaneous addresses to their nations, announced that diplomatic ties would be restored – ending over half a century of Cold War era hostility. Communications, banking systems and travel connections would be improved, the two men promised. Since then Mastercard and Netflix have moved into Cuba – although given the speed of internet connections, their presence is as yet largely symbolic.

Inequality Becomes More Visible in Cuba as the Economy Shifts (02/24/2015)

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/25/world/americas/as-cuba-shifts-toward-capitalism-inequality-grows-more-visible.html?_r=0

As Cuba opens the door wider to private enterprise, the gap between the haves and have-nots, and between whites and blacks, that the revolution sought to diminish is growing more evident. That divide is expected to increase now that the United States is raising the amount of money that Americans can send to residents of the island to \$8,000 a year from \$2,000, as part of President Obama's historic thaw with Cuba.

CUBA

5 Things You Need to Know About Cuba's Economy (12/17/2014)

<http://blogs.wsj.com/briefly/2014/12/17/5-things-you-need-to-know-about-cubas-economy/>

As the White House charts a new course for relations with Cuba, here are five things to know about Cuba's economy. This article will cover the most relevant factors in the Cuban economy that will influence future economy investment and growth in the small country.

2015 Index of Economic Freedom: Cuba

<http://www.heritage.org/index/country/cuba>

Cuba's economic freedom score is 29.6, making its economy one of the world's least free. Cuba is ranked least free of 29 countries in the South and Central America/Caribbean region, and its overall score is significantly lower than the regional average. In recent years, the government has made measured concessions to encourage more entrepreneurship and private-sector growth. Despite membership in the World Trade Organization, the economy remains relatively cut off from the international marketplace. Only state enterprises are allowed to engage in international trade and investment.

Human Rights Watch World Report 2014: Cuba

<http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/cuba>

In 2010 and 2011, Cuba's government released dozens of political prisoners on condition they accept exile in exchange for freedom. Since then, it has relied less on long-term prison sentences to punish dissent and has relaxed draconian travel restrictions that divided families and prevented its critics from leaving and returning to the island. Nevertheless, the Cuban government continues to repress individuals and groups who criticize the government or call for basic human rights.

CULTURE

Autentica Cuba

<http://autenticacuba.com/culture/#axzz3XUVLD6t>

This is part of the official tourism site of the Cuban government. At the island's heart are the Cubans, brought here by the trade winds from all corners of the earth to forge a new people. Amerindian Taino, Spanish, African, French, Asian and English ways of life took root in Cuba, but in the mixing of the cultures became something new and utterly distinct. The search for the essence of Cuba is perhaps what drives the vital cultural tradition here.

Cuba

<http://www.everyculture.com/Cr-Ga/Cuba.html>

This page, in addition to history and culture, extends its information to cover other topics such as gender relations, family structures, ethnic relations, etiquette, and use of space. The information on this page is more detailed and can provide fun facts and other interesting tidbits.

Cuba

http://acad.depauw.edu/mkfinney_web/teaching/Com227/culturalPortfolios/CUBA/Cultural%20Traditions.html

This website is part of a larger Cultural Portfolio project for Intercultural Communications at DePauw University. Within this website are links at the top of the page covering various topics pertaining to Cuban culture.

Havana Journal

<http://havanajournal.com/culture/>

This website provides various articles and blurbs regarding Cuban culture and current events and movements within Cuban society. This website is great for getting information that may not be in the headlines or typically covered in media.

Cuba people-to-people tours: So nice to meet you, Havana (02/04/2012)

http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/travel/cuba-people-to-people-tours-so-nice-to-meet-you-havana/2012/01/27/gIQAUpVzmQ_story.html

Cuba is a poorly kept secret. As the largest island in the Caribbean, it sits like a fat mustache on the face of the Caribbean Sea. The country's hip-swinging music and lip-smacking cuisine have traversed the 90 miles to U.S. shores, defying an embargo that bans rum and cigars but can't restrain the more abstract keepsake of culture.



http://globalcitizendaily.com/assets/uploads/body/TravelToCubaLegally_8.1.jpg

U.S.—CUBA RELATIONS

Mack McLarty: Castro-Obama handshake not the real story (04/06/2015)

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2015/04/06/summits-americas-foreign-policy-column/70836748/>

The spotlight-stealing moment at next week's Summit of the Americas is likely to arrive in the form of a public handshake between President Obama and Cuban President Raúl Castro. But the biggest impact of the handshake may be the opposite of what it appears. With the diplomatic opening to Havana, President Obama has shifted the spotlight away from U.S. Cuba policy as a dominant theme of inter-American debate and a source of summit gridlock.

U.S.-Cuba Relations: What 'Big Steps' in Diplomacy Mean for Business (04/01/2015)

<http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/u-s-cuba-relations-what-big-steps-in-diplomacy-mean-for-business/>

In the wake of President Obama's move to re-establish diplomatic relations with Cuba and lift a 54-year trade embargo, the Communist nation has been pressing the U.S. to take it off the list, and for good reason: Companies doing business with nations on the list face steep fines. However, at the April 1 Cuba Opportunity Summit, held at the Nasdaq MarketSite in New York, the lead U.S. negotiator for talks in the normalization of relations with Cuba said that the government's review of Cuba's appearance on the list should be completed well before the President's deadline of June.

U.S. and Cuba face off on human rights in Washington meeting (03/31/2015)

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/cuba/article16930205.html>

The latest round in the U.S.-Cuba rapprochement got under way Tuesday when the two countries met in Washington to discuss the potentially divisive issue of human rights. A State Department spokesperson said the two sides will "discuss the methodology and structure of future human rights talks," so no major developments are expected. But even getting agreement on the substance for future talks could prove difficult because the two countries have strikingly different views on what constitutes respect for human rights.

Will the U.S.-Cuban Rapprochement Affect the Relationship Between the European Union and Cuba? (02/23/2015)

<http://www.coha.org/will-the-u-s-cuban-rapprochement-affect-the-relationship-between-the-european-union-and-cuba/>

The European Union (EU), which has been working to normalize its ties with Cuba since 2010, defined the announcement of the reestablishment of the United States-Cuban relations as a "historical turning point." New negotiations between the EU and Cuba in March can not help but bring on a high level of uncertainty because the turn in U.S.-Cuban relations will impact EU-Cuba relations. Among other concerns, the economic standing of the European Union in Cuba as its second largest trading partner remains at risk.

How America's Relationship with Cuba Will Change

http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/12/17/world/americas/cuba-sanctions.html?_r=0

- 1) Diplomatic Relations: the U.S. plans to establish an American embassy in Havana.
- 2) State-Sponsored Terror List: Obama has publicly announced intentions to remove Cuba from this list.
- 3) Travel Restrictions: Licenses for travel will be extended to those who travel for humanitarian work, travel related to export, and private foundations and institutes, among other reasons.
- 4) Banking and Trade Embargo: American and Cuban companies now have more access to each other's markets, but Congress needs to approve the motion to lift the trade embargo entirely.
- 5) Transfer of money: Limits of remittance amounts to Cuban nationals have been increased, and licenses to provide remittance are no longer required.

Understanding the Impact of U.S. Policy Changes on Human Rights and Democracy in Cuba (Testimony given: 02/03/2015)

<http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/237121.htm>

This is a transcript of Roberta Jacobson's testimony to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, briefing them on human rights, democracy, and the trajectory of U.S. policy to foster greater developments in these areas of U.S. foreign policy.

First Cuba-U.S. Talks End, Profound Differences Remain (01/23/2015)

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/First-Cuba-U.S.-Talks-End-Profound-Differences-Remain-20150123-0008.html>

While the Obama administration insists on its interventionist Cuban policy, Havana diplomats said throughout the negotiations that the United States needs to abandon hopes of using closer relations to impose its one-sided plans on the island. Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson told reporters Friday that the talks had left her with no clearer idea of whether Obama's new policy toward Cuba will result in any type of success for Washington. "It's very hard to say exactly how this will work," Jacobson said. "We think that we need to make decisions in our own interest ... but the verdict on whether that succeeds is still to be made."

U.S.—CUBA RELATIONS

The “New Normal” in Cuba, U.S. and China Relations (01/21/2015)

<http://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/the-new-normal-in-cuba-u-s-and-china-relations/>

In December 2014, President Obama announced plans to restore diplomatic relations with Cuba, ending over fifty years of official non-recognition. The decision does not lift the decades-long economic embargo, which only Congress can end, but the news unleashed speculation about the scope and nature of future U.S.-Cuba economic relations.

U.S.-Cuba relations (01/20/2015)

<http://www.cfr.org/cuba/us-cuba-relations/p11113>

On December 17, 2014, Presidents Barack Obama and Raúl Castro announced that the United States and Cuba would restore diplomatic ties. The change in the countries' relations prompted some experts to point to better prospects for Cuba's economy and U.S. relations more broadly in Latin America.

U.S. and Cuba Set to Start Work on Opening Diplomatic Relations (01/20/2015)

<http://www.latimes.com/world/mexico-americas/la-fg-us-cuba-20150120-story.html#page=1>

Cuba and the United States this week are expected to take the first concrete steps toward opening diplomatic relations and an entirely new relationship in trade, traffic, and tourism. It will be a major test for both sides of their commitment and ability to move the relationship beyond the historic decision announced last month to the nuts and bolts and the reality.

New U.S. – Cuba Policy Will Revitalize Hemispheric Relations (12/18/2014)

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2014/12/18-cuba-policy-will-revitalize-hemispheric-relations-trinkunas>

In recent years, Cuba had already been playing a more positive role in regional and global relations, for example by hosting the Colombian peace negotiations and by sending medical personnel to combat Ebola in West Africa. Although pressure in the United States for a change in Cuba policy had been building, the president's announcement goes beyond what had been discussed in the past and beyond what many thought possible.

Renewed U.S. – Cuba ties will benefit larger relations with Latin America (12/18/2014)

<http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/12/18/renewed-us-cuba-ties-will-benefit-relations-with-latin-america>

Previous U.S. policy towards Cuba has isolated the U.S. from important areas of engagement in Latin America and prevented progress on more pressing issues. Critics of the new policy say the U.S. is rewarding a regime with a track record of human rights abuses and suppressing free speech, but the administration contends it will continue to raise those issues with the Cubans.

“U.S. policy toward Cuba has long been a roadblock to productive relationships with other Latin American countries, but Wednesday's announcement that the two nations are renewing diplomatic ties will benefit the region as a whole.”

Fact Sheet: Charting a New Course on Cuba (12/17/2014)

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/12/17/fact-sheet-charting-new-course-cuba>

This is the official fact sheet, issued by the White House, on U.S. trajectory towards Cuba and specific action items that will be pursued in order to achieve U.S. foreign policy goals.



U.S. to Restore Full Relations with Cuba, Erasing a Last Trace of Cold War Hostility (12/17/2014)

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/18/world/americas/us-cuba-relations.html?_r=0

Normalized U.S.-Cuba relations came at the end of 18 months of secret talks that produced a prisoner swap negotiated with the help of Pope Francis and concluded by a telephone call between Mr. Obama and President Raúl Castro. The historic deal broke an enduring stalemate between two countries divided by just 90 miles of water but oceans of mistrust and hostility dating from the days of Theodore Roosevelt's charge up San Juan Hill and the nuclear brinkmanship of the Cuban missile crisis.



9 questions you were embarrassed to ask about the Cuban embargo (12/17/2014)

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/12/17/politics/cuban-embargo-questions-answers/>

The easing of U.S. sanctions on Cuba will deliver the most sweeping changes in the U.S. policy toward the nation that lies just 100 miles off the U.S. coast since the U.S. embargo on Cuba. Most Americans - including President Obama - weren't alive when the embargo went into effect. So get up to speed on the last five decades of American foreign policy toward Cuba.



Getting to Normal: A Legal Pathway or U.S.-Cuba policy Reform (12/02/2014) (2:58:47)

<http://csis.org/event/getting-normal-legal-pathway-us-cuba-policy-reform>

This video is a recording of an event held by the Center for Strategic and International Studies. The discussion explores the normalization process in its legal, practical, and diplomatic aspects, in the event that a U.S. president decides to pursue such a relationship.



OIL'S IMPACT ON LATIN AMERICA

Falling oil prices: Who are the winners and losers? (01/19/2015)

<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-29643612>

Global oil prices have fallen sharply over the past seven months, leading to significant revenue shortfalls in many energy exporting nations, while consumers in many importing countries are likely to have to pay less to heat their homes or drive their cars. The reasons for this change are twofold - weak demand in many countries due to insipid economic growth, coupled with surging U.S. production. So who are some of the winners and losers?

Venezuela Goes from Bling to Blat as Oil Wealth Squandered (02/17/2015)

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-02-18/venezuela-goes-from-bling-to-blat-as-oil-wealth-squandered>

Price controls have emptied stores of most goods, while the world's highest inflation has pushed what is available beyond the means of most Venezuelans. To make ends meet, they exploit the perks of their jobs to trade goods and services informally, mirroring networks that developed amid the scarcities in the former Soviet Union and came to be known as "blat." The prevalence and spread of such small-scale graft shows the failure of President Nicolás Maduro's strategy of expropriation, arrests and inspections to boost production and end shortages says one analyst.

Oil price war inflicts collateral damage in Latin America: Kemp (02/09/2015)

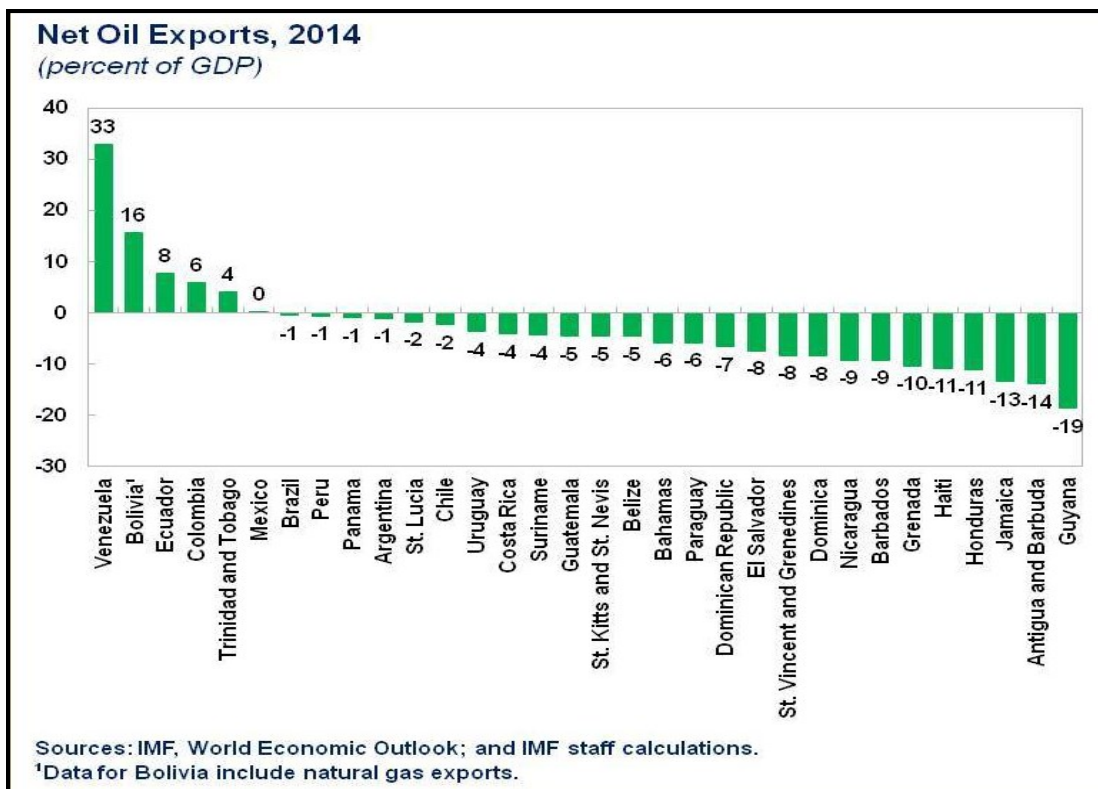
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/02/10/oil-latam-drilling-kemp-idUSL5NoVJ2P620150210>

Latin America's oil producers have become caught in the crossfire between OPEC and the North American shale drillers. The number of onshore rigs drilling for oil and gas in the region fell to just 272 in January, from 339 in July 2014, according to data published on Friday by oilfield services company Baker Hughes. The number of active land rigs has fallen sharply in OPEC members Ecuador (down by 46 percent) and Venezuela (21 percent) as well as non-OPEC Bolivia (60 percent), Colombia (18 percent) and Mexico (45 percent).

As Venezuelan Oil Prices Fall, Social Programs Suffer (01/30/2015)

<http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2015/01/30/world/americas/20150130.html>

This series of pictures from the New York Times depicts the struggles of every-day life in Venezuela as the economic situation becomes more and more dire. Highlighted in this series of pictures is how the economy has impacted society.



<http://blog-imfdirect.imf.org/2015/02/26/fiscal-impact-of-lower-oil-prices-on-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>

OIL'S IMPACT ON LATIN AMERICA

As oil prices drop, world looks to China, India, and America to lead growth (01/22/2015)

<http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1689218/oil-prices-drop-world-looks-china-india-and-america-lead>

This will be the year of the CIA. Not the Central Intelligence Agency in Langley, but the combined economies of China, India and America. Until recently, it has been the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) that have been the engine for growth. However, Brazil and Russia have struggled alarmingly and have been marginalized on account of internal policy debacles.



Economic snapshot for Latin America (01/20/2015)

<http://www.focus-economics.com/regions/latin-america>

Latin America continued to face important challenges at the outset of 2015 with several factors working against the economy, among which are persistently low commodity prices, weak currencies, and tepid growth. The outright recession Argentina is experiencing is also projected to continue until the first half of 2015, while Venezuela's total output is expected to continue contracting until the first quarter of 2016. Conversely, economic activity in Chile, Colombia, and Mexico is projected to continue growing, albeit moderately, in the coming quarters.

Latin America 2015 outlook darkens as commodities sink: poll (01/15/2015)

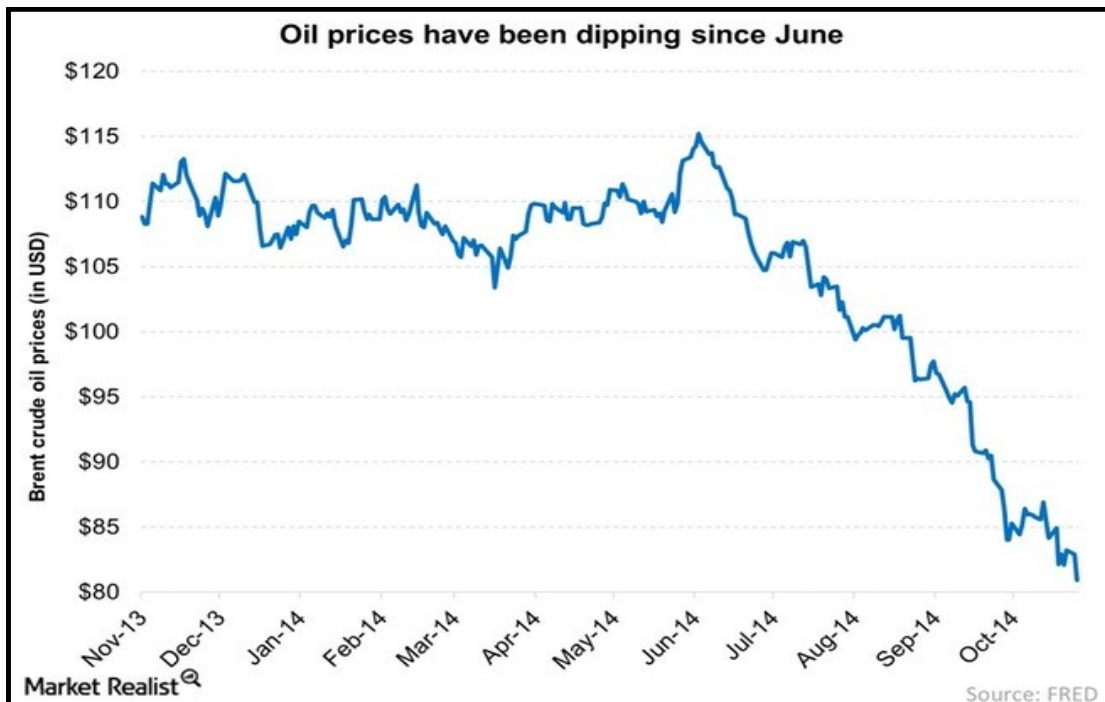
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/15/us-g20-economy-latam-poll-idUSKBN0KO1FS20150115>

Latin America has embarked on a painfully long period of greater austerity, and lower commodity prices and economic growth will barely pick up speed this year, a Reuters poll found Thursday. With nose-diving oil and metal prices weighing on government finances and jeopardizing investments, economists in the quarterly poll chopped 2015 growth forecasts again for the region's seven largest countries, from Mexico to Argentina.

The Good, Bad, and Ugly of Plunging Oil Prices (01/13/2015)

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/01/13/the-good-bad-and-ugly-of-plunging-oil-prices/>

Crude oil prices plunged to a six-year low Tuesday in a potentially painful threat to oil-exporting nations that rely on crude to power their economies. The drop brings some welcome relief to countries that have been struggling with economic headwinds, but brings a mixed bag for others, like the United States, that are both big producers and consumers of oil.



<http://marketrealist.com/2014/11/must-know-oil-prices-rise/>

OIL'S IMPACT ON LATIN AMERICA

Spillovers From Falling Oil Prices: Risks to Mexico and the United States (2014)

<http://blogs.cfr.org/oneil/2014/12/12/spillovers-from-falling-oil-prices-risks-to-mexico-and-the-united-states/>

Geopolitically, U.S. policymakers generally see high oil prices as bad and low oil prices as good for national interests. In this CFR working paper, the findings indicate a sustained drop in oil prices will affect at least one of the United States' closest trading partners and geopolitical allies negatively: Mexico. The PDF link of full report at bottom of article summary.

How falling oil prices will affect Latin America (10/20/2014)

<http://moneyweek.com/new-world-how-falling-oil-prices-will-affect-latin-america/>

The falling price of black gold is being felt over in Latin America, where it's hitting regional oil producers hard. This trend will affect individual economies and sectors in different ways, so it's worth taking a closer look.

CHINA'S INFLUENCE IN LATIN AMERICA

China-Latin America relations and the fall of oil prices (01/27/2015)

<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/179258/china-latin-america-relations-and-the-fall-of-oil-prices.html>

The first ministerial meeting of the Forum of China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) was held in Beijing. Three presidents, President Luis Guillermo Solís of Costa Rica, President Rafael Correa of Ecuador and President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela, as well as 22 foreign ministers came together for the first China-CELAC ministerial meeting. The meeting was very crucial for the countries of Latin America, particularly those that export oil, as many aim to increase the amount of oil exported to China and attract Chinese investment to their countries.

Will China Save Venezuela? (01/15/2015)

<http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/will-china-save-venezuela/>

As we head into 2015, one trend at least is carrying over from 2014 – plummeting oil prices. And with the falling price of oil, major producers are falling into economic recessions. One of the hardest-hit countries, Venezuela, is a longtime partner of China and now is looking to Beijing for an economic lifeline. China has already extended over \$50 billion in loans to Venezuela since 2007 in return for guarantees of oil deliveries in the future. Now, China has proven reluctant to extend more cash.

China agrees to invest \$20bn in Venezuela to help offset effects of oil price slump (01/08/2015)

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/08/china-venezuela-20bn-loans-financing-nicolas-maduro-beijing>

China has agreed to invest more than \$20bn (£13.2bn) in Venezuela to help it overcome an economic slump exacerbated by plummeting oil prices, the Venezuelan president has announced. The Venezuelan president did not give further details, and it remains unclear whether the sum represents a fresh arrangement or is part of pre-existing oil-for-loans deals. Even if the investments are new, it is far from certain that this is money that the Venezuelan government can use for imports or debt repayments.

As oil prices fall, Latin America and China get cozier (01/08/2015)

<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/2015/0108/As-oil-prices-fall-Latin-America-and-China-get-cozier>

Bilateral trade between China and the region has grown 20-fold over the last decade, and China has made more than \$100 billion in loans to the hemisphere's nations and companies, according to the Inter-American Dialogue. In 2010, China's \$37 billion in funding was more than the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and U.S. Export-Import Bank combined.



President Maduro of Venezuela

http://www.pulsamerica.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Venezuela-Chavista-In_Hugh.jpg



Why Do Gasoline Prices React to Things that Have Not Happened?

https://www.stlouisfed.org/legacy_assets/education_resources/assets/lesson_plans/07ITV_ShiftingCurves.pdf

To understand why U.S. gas prices respond now to things that might happen in the future, halfway around the world, one must understand how spot and futures prices for storable commodities, such as oil or gasoline, are related to each other. How do prices in a market economy serve as a signal to producers and consumers?

THE CUBA DEAL



The Cuba Deal: Why Now? (12/18/2014)

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/12/the-new-cuba-an-offspring-of-biology-and-technology/383893/>

What explains the timing of this historic change to a policy in place for over half a century? The short answer is that the decision to restore diplomatic ties between the two countries was driven by a surprising convergence of biology and technology. Biology in the sense that the aging populations altered old political balances both inside the Cuban regime and in U.S. electoral politics. Technology allowed the United States to push down the price of oil, thus undermining the ability of Venezuela to continue providing a lifeline to Cuba's bankrupt economy. Cuba needed an economic alternative, and the U.S. became one.



Two Data Points to Explain Cuba-U.S. Thaw (12/17/2014)

<http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/data-mine/2014/12/17/two-data-points-to-explain-cuba-us-thaw>

When Gallup surveyed Americans in 2014, 38 percent said they had a favorable opinion toward Cuba, up from 10 percent in 1997. Since 1974, Americans have been largely in favor of re-establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba. In Gallup's most recent poll from 2009, 60 percent favored those policies and 30 percent said they opposed such policies.

Can U.S. Internet Business Enable a Cuban Spring? (12/17/2014)

<http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/12/17/can-us-internet-business-enable-a-cuban-spring>

President Barack Obama on Wednesday announced the U.S. will normalize relations with Cuba, ending America's attempts to erode the Communist dictatorship through isolation but opening another possible battle for freedom of information by expanding the nation's access to the Internet.

With Cuba at Summit, U.S. Seeks Renewed Ties with Latin America (04/07/2015)

<http://www.voanews.com/content/with-cuba-at-summit-us-seeks-renewed-ties-with-latin-america/2709411.html>

The Summit of the Americas normally receives little media attention in the United States. But this year is different because Cuba, unlike previous years, is invited to the gathering in Panama, which will take place April 10-11. U.S. officials say President Obama will interact with Cuban President Raúl Castro for the first time since announcing steps to normalize U.S.-Cuba relations. It is by welcoming Cuba the U.S. hopes to renew its leadership role in Latin America - a role that has been waning due to what analysts say is U.S. economic weakness and the region's increasing engagement with China and others.

Cuba Thaw, Venezuela Sanctions Frame Summit of the Americas Setting (04/07/2015)

<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/summit-n337296>

The U.S. wants to emphasize trade, economic development, and security, but the upcoming seventh Summit of the Americas will be greatly shaped by America's new policies toward Cuba and sanctions on Venezuelan officials. Cuba's president Raúl Castro plans to attend, and administration officials said that he and Obama are likely to have some interactions at various events. The U.S. had hoped it would be seen at the Summit as having turned the page on relations with Latin America, but that has been altered by the U.S. decision to freeze assets and revoke the visas of Venezuelan officials.



The Panama Summit and the Withering of Inter-American Ideal (03/19/2015)

http://www.cfr.org/councilofcouncils/global_memos/p36298?cid=ppc-facebook-pp-coc-the_panamá_summit_and_the_withering_interamerican_ideal-032315

Beyond its official theme—"Prosperity with Equity: The Challenge of Cooperation in the Americas"—the truly important thing about this gathering is that for the first time the whole region will be included. This is the result of at least two processes. On the one hand, the increasing pressure exercised by the Latin American countries in this regard; and, on the other hand, Washington's decision to initiate a path of normalization of its bilateral relations with Cuba.



The Cuba Deal: How Raúl Castro Duped Obama (02/27/2015)

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2015/02/27/the-cuba-deal-how-raul-castro-duped-obama/>

On December 17, following a year and a half of secret negotiations with the Castro regime, President Obama trumpeted what many have called a historic breakthrough—a new course to normalize relations with Cuba. What's new about President's Obama's détente is that he is engaging Raúl Castro—not his ailing brother Fidel—and has not established any preconditions for normalization.



U.S.-Cuban Relations Aren't Normalizing As Fast As You Might Think (02/09/2015)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/02/09/us-cuba-relations-normali_n_6648612.html



The U.S. and Cuba joint announcement on Dec. 17 that they would work toward re-establishing diplomatic relations seemed to symbolize the dawning of a new era for the Cold War foes. But in the weeks that followed, Cuban officials have demanded that the U.S. meet ambitious conditions before describing diplomatic relations as "normalized," highlighting obstacles that remain to mending the fractured relationship.

THE CUBA DEAL

On Cuba, Expect Steady by Slow Progress on Both Sides (01/20/2015)

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2015/01/20-sotu-cuba-us-steady-but-slow-progress-piccone>

At this week's State of the Union address, President Obama will use his new Cuba policy as a leading example of how he intends to do business for the next two years—with bold strokes and big tent coalitions to secure his legacy, with or without Congress. The good news is that the momentum created by the dramatic joint announcement on December 17 likely will have a long shelf life (in Washington politics that means two years). Both sides, however, face domestic challenges that could slow things down.



The new normal: The loosening of the embargo will pay dividends far beyond Cuba (01/03/2015)

<http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21637388-loosening-embargo-will-pay-dividends-far-beyond-cuba-new-normal>

The Economist has long argued that the embargo is self-defeating. Rather than ending the Castros' rule, it has provided an evergreen excuse for their failures and so helped maintain them in power. So far most of the attention has been on Cuba, but the biggest prize should be the advance of democracy and open markets in Latin America.

Cuba Thaw lets Rest of Latin America Warm to Washington (12/18/2014)

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/19/world/americas/a-brave-move-by-obama-removes-a-wedge-in-relations-with-latin-america.html?_r=0

President Obama has been lambasted for spying in Brazil, accused of being a warmonger by Bolivia, dismissed as a "lost opportunity" by Argentina, and taunted in Nicaragua by calls for Latin America to draw up its own list of state sponsors of terrorism — with the United States in the No. 1 spot. But now Latin American leaders have a new kind of vocabulary to describe him: They are calling him "brave," "extraordinary," and "intelligent."

Latin Americans praise Obama easing Cuba embargo; Colombia rebels set cease-fire (12/17/2014)

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/latin-americans-praise-obama-easing-cuba-embargo-colombia-rebels-set-cess-fire/2014/12/17/cbccbdd6-8607-11e4-abcf-5a3d7b3b20b8_story.html

Latin American leaders across the political spectrum praised President Obama's announcement on Wednesday to reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba, a move that could spark more investment in the Caribbean island and ease Cold War-era resentments throughout the hemisphere. From hard-line leftists in Venezuela to more pro-American powers such as Mexico and Colombia, Latin Americans welcomed in glowing terms the thawing of relations between the decades-long rivals.



Raúl Castro, President of the Council of State of Cuba, and President Obama

http://extras.mnginteractive.com/live/media/site36/2015/0411/20150411__20150412_A2_ND12CUBA~p1.jpg

TRIANGLE RELATIONS: U.S., CHINA, AND LATIN AMERICA

China, Latin America, and the United States: The New Triangle (01/2011)

http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/LAP_120810_Triangle_rpt.pdf

The rise of China as a dominant economic power in the last decade represents one of the most significant changes in the international system since the end of the Cold War and one of the most rapid transformations the world has experienced. China's global ambitions do not yet appear to be principally influenced by traditional, nationalistic military intentions. Rather, the leading edge of China's interest in Latin America, and vice versa, is economic—and on a massive scale.

China's big chess move against the U.S.: Latin America (03/04/2015)

<http://money.cnn.com/2015/03/04/news/economy/china-latin-america-relations-united-states/>

Latin America is China's latest business buddy. Chinese banks increased investments in Latin America by 71% last year, and the country plans to double its trade volume with the Central and South American region over the next decade. This comes as U.S. power in the Americas is starting to erode. U.S. cash is actually fleeing the region as investors see better deals at home or elsewhere. China doesn't appear as worried about the short-term.



Great Power Politics at Play in Latin America? (02/17/2015)

<http://www.coha.org/great-power-politics-at-play-in-latin-america/>

On February 3, testimony was presented to the House Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere regarding U.S. strategic interests in the region. While drug violence, corruption, and economics were discussed as major issues for the region, the concerns of geo-strategic competition and great power politics have subtly begun to dominate the U.S. security strategy discourse. Latin America will become a battleground for influence in the great power game, but Latin American countries are becoming more committed to liberating themselves from dependence on great powers.

China Emerges as Latin America's Lender of Last Resort (02/05/2015)

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/02/05/world/asia/ap-as-china-latin-americas-lender.html>

Beijing has become a frequent destination for the Latin American region's presidents, especially populist ones who have spent freely over the past decade but are now grappling with a collapse in the prices of oil and other commodities. China has helped sustain Latin America by buying commodities, in the process lifting millions in the region into the middle class and helping shield governments from economic woes elsewhere. Now, as China's economy slows, and sends commodity prices to record lows, the Asian giant is moving even closer to its partner countries, especially in Latin America, by helping to rescue them.



Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, and President Maduro of Venezuela

<http://fotos2013.cloud.noticias24.com/maduro630smnsnmnsndnd.jpg>



Why Latin America should not squander the China boom (01/27/2015)

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-30982544>

Aside from the Chinese who helped build the Panama Canal, and the Maoist rebels of Peru who called themselves the Shining Path, China's presence and influence in Latin America was unremarkable until the turn of the 21st century. Today, China is the number one trading partner for some of the region's largest economies, and China's development banks pour more money into the region than the World Bank or the Inter-American Development Bank.

No Conflict Seen in U.S., China Influence in Latin America (01/09/2015)

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/01/09/world/asia/ap-as-china-latin-america.html>

Costa Rica's foreign minister Manuel Gonzalez said Friday he sees no conflict between the U.S.'s longstanding ties with Latin America and China's growing presence in the region. China's hosting this week of a forum with 33 Latin American and Caribbean countries highlighted what some see as a rivalry for influence in Washington's traditional backyard. However, Gonzalez said the region's foreign relations were not exclusive and there was no reason why it couldn't maintain harmonious ties with both China and the U.S.

TRIANGLE RELATIONS: U.S., CHINA, AND LATIN AMERICA

More U.S. and less China could be a good thing for Cuba (01/06/2015)

<http://www.cnbc.com/id/102306044>

Thawing diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba will allow the U.S. to offset growing Chinese influence on the Caribbean nation, experts say, and may be the first step to kindle further economic and political reforms in Cuba. The more than 50-year American hiatus from Cuba has "given the Chinese more playing room," said Richard Feinberg, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a former national security advisor for Latin America during the Clinton administration.

Falling oil prices push Venezuela deeper into China orbit (12/12/2014)

<http://www.bloomberg.com/bw/articles/2014-12-12/with-oil-prices-falling-venezuela-needs-china-more-than-ever>

The late Hugo Chávez cozied up to China as part of his drive to curb U.S. influence in the Americas. Maduro, like his predecessor, has relied on Beijing to underwrite Venezuela's flagging socialist revolution and finance the country's gaping fiscal deficits (this year's shortfall could amount to 15 percent of gross domestic product). Without loans from the Chinese, Maduro's government might not have been able to weather a deep economic crisis. Beijing has so far been happy to oblige Maduro, but now Maduro needs more.

The Dragon in Uncle Sam's Backyard: China in Latin America (07/06/2014)

<http://www.coha.org/the-dragon-in-uncle-sams-backyard-china-in-latin-america/>

The influence of foreign economic interests has been a crucial factor in Latin America's development. Many on the left argue that Western investment and exploitation are tools of neocolonialism and can explain many of Latin America's societal ills. Yet, a different consensus is emerging on Chinese investment in the region. With China's emergence on the global stage, many Latin American countries have welcomed Chinese investment with open arms, as they see China as a countermeasure to US hegemony in the region.

Are China and the United States Competing for Influence in the Western Hemisphere? (04/23/2014)

<http://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/are-china-and-the-united-states-competing-for-influence-in-the-western-hemisphere/>

It is a significant and worthy effort that the Obama administration's interests are in preserving U.S. influence and finding new ways to engage the region. Beijing has bent over backward to be seen as non-threatening, particularly to the United States, emphasizing economic relations while refusing to be drawn in to the region's political arguments or ideological debates. But when China's economy slows, as it is doing this year, commodities markets are affected and South America exporters get nervous.

China's Latin Connection: Eclipsing the U.S.? (02/2014)

<http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/china%E2%80%99s-latin-connection-eclipsing-us>

In general, China has made a significant effort to be seen as a good partner in Latin American development, not a threatening outsider using its leverage to beat down the price of the natural resources it procures. This policy puts China into a soft-power role of providing financing for structural investments that improve infrastructure and expand energy sources. This is part of the new global dynamic in trade and investment that is reshaping world power relations.



<http://im.ft-static.com/content/images/8a30a8bo-d538-4697-bb54-5b13c27abb3c.img>



What does this political cartoon say about the relationship between China and South America? Consider that this is drawn by an American political cartoonist.

LESSON PLANS



For Educators: The U.S. Trade Embargo on Cuba (Grades 9-12)

<http://www.pbs.org/now/classroom/cuba.html>


In this lesson, students will examine perspective for and against the U.S. trade embargo on Cuba, investigate the historical background of the embargo, develop a position on the embargo, and articulate viewpoints in a public forum.



U.S.-Cuba Relations (Grades 9-12)

<http://www.discoveryeducation.com/teachers/free-lesson-plans/us-cuba-relations.cfm>

This lesson begins with an in-depth look at the history of U.S.-Cuba relations and examines in detail one event or period to be included on a class time line of U.S.-Cuba Relations. Ultimately, the examination of events will help students link the importance of past events to the significance of renewed U.S.-Cuban ties.



The Choices Program: Castro's Legacy and the Future of Cuba

http://www.choices.edu/resources/twtn_cuba.php



In this lesson students will explore the reaction to Fidel Castro's decision to resign as Cuba's president, identify and categorize competing perspectives on Castro and the future of Cuba, and consider the international response to Castro's resignation and assess possible consequences.



The Choices Program: Contesting Cuba's Past and Future

http://www.choices.edu/resources/scholars_cuba.php




This page has links to videos that address various topics regarding Cuban history. Although these videos are to accompany the program's printed curriculum unit, it can be used to generate classroom discussion on U.S. and Cuban perspectives of history and address common questions students may have.



Lesson Plan: Race and Government Policy in Revolution Cuba

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/black-in-latin-america/resources/lesson-plan-race-and-government-policy-in-revolutionary-cuba/198/>

This lesson plan aims to interrogate ways in which Fidel Castro tried to eliminate racial inequality and racism in Cuba during the revolutionary period. Multimedia resources, readings, and activities will prompt students to ask questions such as "what factors influence how governments deal with racial inequality?" and "what is the relationship between domestic and foreign policy?"



Thawing Relations: Teaching About Cuba and the U.S. (01/15/2015)

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/01/15/thawing-relations-teaching-about-cuba-and-the-u-s/>

The Common Core
CONNECTION

Now that mutual hostility could be coming to an end with last month's announcement that the U.S. and Cuba will resume diplomatic relations, how will life change for people in both countries? In this lesson we explore different facets of this historic relationship and give students a chance to predict what might come next. Students can begin by taking a journey across Cuba, compare it with life in their own hometown, and take part in a role-playing exercise on different perspectives in the United States-Cuba relationship. In follow-up activities they can delve more deeply into the history, culture, economics, and politics of the communist nation 90 miles south of Florida.

1) Start with what students know. Spend a few minutes comparing and contrasting what students have heard about Cuba and the United States in terms of history, government, economy, daily life, and culture. Students can use a comparison matrix or Venn diagram to organize their thoughts.

2) Find out what's happened. Watch this Associated Press video, "[Key Events in U.S. and Cuba Relations](#)," for a quick overview of recent history. Ask students what surprised them in the video, and give them a moment to add to their diagrams. (If you have time, you can also review [last month's announcement](#) about the resumption of diplomatic relations and other recent changes between the United States and Cuba.)

3) Take a trip across Cuba and learn more. As a class, view [this slide show](#) with students reading the captions aloud. Then read "[On the Open Road, Signs of a Changing Cuba](#)," in which New York Times reporter William Neuman traveled across the island earlier this month. Before starting, teachers may wish to review the following vocabulary terms: *socialism*, *entrepreneurship*, *ideology*, *revolutionary*, *imperialism*, and *bureaucracy*. Afterward, students can discuss what they've learned and add further details to their diagrams.

4) Consider other perspectives. Organize students into the following broadly-characterized groups: Older Cuban citizens, Younger Cuban citizens, Older Cuban-Americans, Younger Cuban-Americans. Each group should take around 10 minutes to brainstorm an initial response to this question: What are the challenges and opportunities facing Cuba and the United States as they embark upon a closer relationship?

LESSON PLANS

Issues of International Trade: Lesson 5: Trade and the Environment

<http://www.fte.org/teacher-resources/lesson-plans/tradelessons/lesson-5-trade-and-the-environment/>

Perhaps the most emotional opposition to globalization comes from those who fear that international trade is wreaking environmental havoc in impoverished but resource-rich areas. This lesson will address two concerns related to Latin American economic development: does international trade increase pollution, and is international trade responsible for resource depletion.

Lesson 8: Trade and the Global Economy

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/sustecon/lessons/lesson8.html>

Trade has become an increasingly complex topic. Now that multinational corporations gather inputs, produce, and sell internationally, what constitutes an export or an import is no longer simple. Students will learn to think through these complexities to better understand core issues in international trade. Once students have gained a basic knowledge of global trade, they will assess what is imported into the United States, the role of the World Trade Organization and the idea of import substitution.

World Without Oil: Oil Dependency Among Nations (Grades 9-12)

<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/classroom/www/lesson5.html>

The long-term prospects of an oil shortage have caused some nations to reconsider their foreign policy objectives. While most nations have sped up their research into alternative energy sources, the short-term demand has forced large industrialized nations to acquire oil at any cost. This lesson encourages students to talk realistically about their concerns for the effects in their own lives.

World Without Oil: How Bad Can It Get? (Grades 9-12)

<http://worldwithoutoil.org/metalesson2.htm>

In this and succeeding lessons, you present developments in the oil crisis as though they were really happening, and ask the students to deal realistically with these developments in their own lives. As they try to anticipate what will happen next in the crisis, they will naturally explore the relationships between lifestyle and resources.

Lesson Plans: U.S. Hegemony and Latin American History

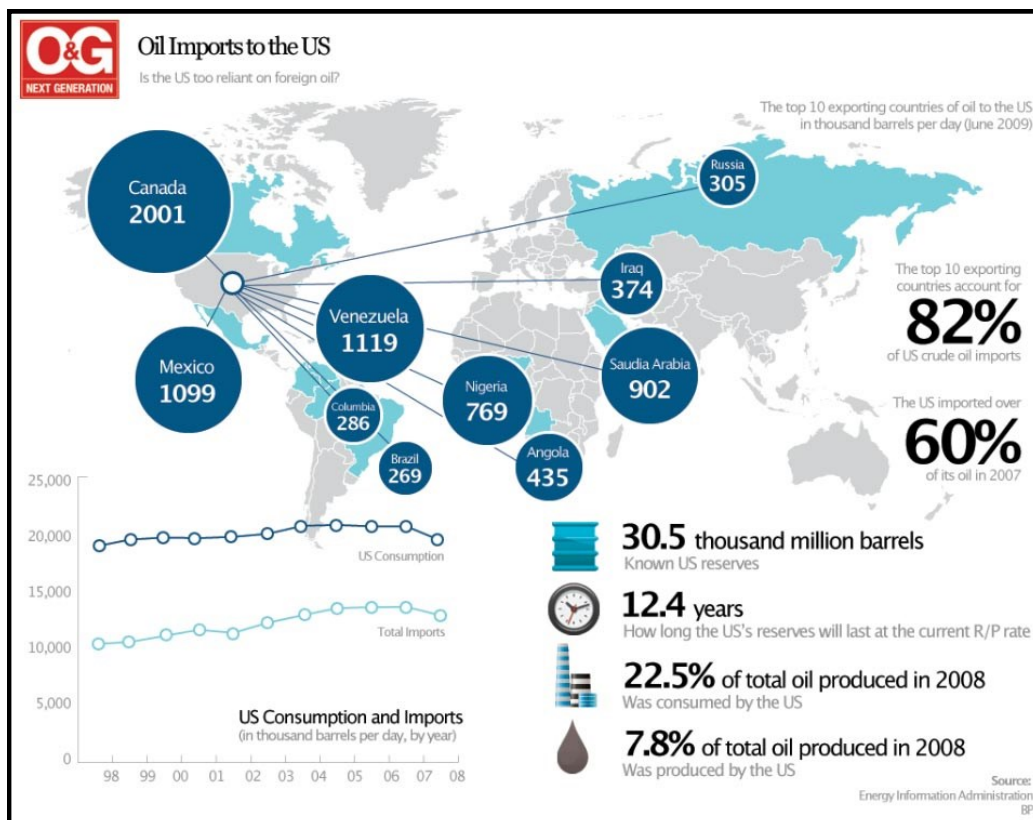
<http://libraryschool.libguidescms.com/content.php?pid=192088&sid=1610556>

This page contains the individual lesson plans for an eleven day unit on the Cold War in Latin America. Each box contains the content rationale for the individual lesson, the lesson document itself and a balloon summarizing the teaching strategy used in the lesson.

World Issues: Whose Side are We/They On? (Grades 9-12)

<http://www.globaled.org/curriculum/sides.html>

The goal in this lesson is to develop in students the ability to identify significant and meaningful issues as they peruse the newspapers, periodicals, television or Internet sources. They should gain the understanding that most issues and challenges are interrelated, and that most issues have a global dimension in which the United States may well have a stake.



<http://image.internetautoguide.com/f/gas-prices/americas-dependence-on-foreign-oil-reality-check/26432623/us-foreign-oil-dependence.jpg>