

MONIQUE AND ROLAND WEYL PEOPLE'S ACADEMY OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

The Return of the Red Scare

Cuba, McCarthyism, and the Consolidating Legal Architecture of
Fascism

A talk on the State Department's attack on Cuba
and the Cuba solidarity movement

Corinna Mullin, 2026

I. INTRODUCTION

A Declaration of War Against Cuba

The document

On July 20, 2026, the U.S. State Department released a 100-page document bearing Secretary of State Marco Rubio's name, titled *Cuba: The Capital of 21st Century Communism*.

It presents itself as an intelligence assessment. In reality it is a McCarthyite propaganda report: ideological justification for an escalating assault on Cuba, the solidarity movement, and dissent on the left.

THE NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD

It "casts a wide net of unfounded accusations," painting over 40 left-leaning social movement organizations as purported Cuban "front groups," using guilt by association to smear even elected officials like Zohran Mamdani, and citing the long discredited House Un-American Activities Committee to revive 1950s Cold War conspiracy theories for the present.

I. INTRODUCTION

Not an Isolated Document

A dated escalation, not an isolated report: the "Donroe Doctrine" in action against Cuba and its supporters.

01

JAN 29

EO threatens sanctions on any country supplying oil to Cuba

02

JUN 4, 2026

OFAC adds Díaz-Canel, ICAP and Amistur to the SDN list

03

ONGOING

OFAC "Requests for Information" letters to solidarity organizers

04

JUL 16, 2026

State Dept. summit; Miller announces the NSPM-7 directive

05

JUL 20, 2026

State Dept. releases the 100-page Rubio report on Cuba

SINCE 1959

Washington has sought to overthrow Cuba's government since 1959 to destroy the example the revolution set. The 1960 memo stated the embargo was designed "to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government."

II. WHY THE REPORT IS McCARTHYITE

Five Dimensions of a Witch Hunt

FIRST

Begins with a conclusion and works backward

SECOND

Revives the language and logic of the 1950s Red Scare

THIRD

Demonizes and criminalizes lawful Cuba solidarity

FOURTH

Erases U.S. responsibility for its own crises

FIFTH

Targets the communities red scares have always targeted

"A mediocre propaganda pamphlet."

Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs

II. WHY THE REPORT IS McCARTHYITE

The Method: Propaganda, Not “Intelligence”

The report opens with a false thesis, that Cuba has waged a "sustained campaign of subversion against the United States" for nearly seven decades. Every chapter then selects facts to fit it. The method repeats:

Praising McCarthyite “Blacklists”

The report references the "blacklists, McCarthy-era investigations and prosecutions" of the 1950s and their effectiveness at dismembering the Communist Party USA. It does so admiringly. The implication: a modern-day blacklist of the American left, with Cuba as the justification.

"The transnational neo-McCarthyism that is being revived in the U.S., driven by a clearly fascist movement, resorts to lies to create pretexts to wage attacks against Cuba and curtail civil liberties in the U.S."

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel

II. WHY THE REPORT IS McCARTHYITE

Solidarity Redefined as Terrorism

For the first time, the State Department formally designated lawful U.S. solidarity and opposition groups as part of a global, Cuban-influenced network of "left-wing terrorism."

NAMED IN THE REPORT

- National Lawyers Guild
- Pastors for Peace
- CodePink
- The People's Forum
- Anti-ICE collectives
- Black Lives Matter
- Black Alliance for Peace
- Various individuals

By framing these organizations as part of a "subversive network," the report provides the narrative cover for the administration to deploy existing legal tools—OFAC sanctions, FARA, and criminal investigations—against the named individuals and groups. The report is the propaganda; the legal architecture is the enforcement mechanism.

"Every accusation is a confession: it is the United States that has tried to overthrow the Cuban government since 1960."

Medea Benjamin, co-founder of CODEPINK

III. THE HISTORY OF RED SCARES

McCarthyism as Counterrevolutionary Governance

Red scares are "not singular events" but "a portable set of tropes, racial scripts, constructions, and legal forms of repression that can be deployed against the Left."

Charisse Burden-Stelly

1919 – 1920

Aftermath of World War I, U.S. intervention against the Bolsheviks, high inflation, and the anti-Black "Red Summer" of 1919. The Socialist Party, IWW, UNIA and African Blood Brotherhood drew state repression. The Overman Committee investigated "un-American activities."

1950 – 1954

Korean and Cold Wars, a class assault on unions, Jim Crow and racist violence. The Attorney General's List of Subversive Organizations marked groups for censure and blacklisting. The U.S. imposed first sanctions on Cuba in 1960 and formalized the blockade in 1962.

TODAY

Genocide in Gaza, bombing across West Asia, sanctions on more than two dozen countries, mass firings, assaults on anti-ICE organizers, Palestine movement, & resurgent labor movement. Against mass mobilizations and a growing Cuba solidarity movement, a new red scare has emerged.

III. THE HISTORY OF RED SCARES

Charisse Burden-Stelly: The Red Scare and the Black Scare Are Conjoined

The Black Scare

Rooted in white Americans' fear of Black liberation and dread of social transformation. Antiradical repression targeted Black radicals and communists with particular ferocity.

Inseparable struggles

The two scares unfolded together as the United States pursued capitalist domination. The fight against racial oppression and the fight against capitalism could not be separated.

WHY THIS TARGETS CUBA

Cuba has been the foremost internationalist supporter of Black liberation struggles: from the African National Congress in South Africa, to solidarity with the Black Panther Party, to the protection of Black fugitives like Assata Shakur. The report's attack on Cuba is an attack on that legacy. It seeks to break the connection Cuba forged between the struggles of the Global South and the struggles of oppressed peoples inside the United States.

Built Layer by Layer, Generation After Generation

1940

The Smith Act

Criminalized advocating the overthrow of the government by force. Used to cast communist and Black leftist activists as "foreign, alien, and undesirable." The same logic now reframes support for Cuban self-determination as a threat to the state.

1950

McCarran Internal Security Act

Created the Subversive Activities Control Board, which could designate "communist-front" organizations and force them to register financial records and membership lists. The current report works the same way, naming over forty Cuban "front groups."

1956 – 1971

COINTELPRO

Over 2,300 covert FBI operations to infiltrate, disrupt, discredit and neutralize the Communist Party, the Black Panther Party, the Puerto Rican independence movement and anti-war groups: wiretaps, forged letters, agent provocateurs, and murder.

IV. THE LEGAL ARCHITECTURE OF FASCISM

The Architecture Today, With Cuba at the Center

NSPM-7

National Security Presidential Memorandum-7: a domestic counterinsurgency mechanism criminalizing assembly, speech and cross-state organizing, used against solidarity organizers who travel lawfully to Cuba.

Alien Enemies Act and Alien Terrorist Removal Court

Wartime laws now deployed against immigrants. The secretive removal court, created in 1996 and never used, has been activated: it permits deportation of foreign nationals, or their immediate family, on secret evidence.

FARA

Selectively weaponized to stigmatize organizing that challenges U.S. imperialism. Used against W.E.B. Du Bois, against anti-war and solidarity organizations, and most recently against the African People's Socialist Party. The report explicitly threatens FARA prosecutions of Cuba solidarity groups.

OFAC

On June 4, 2026, OFAC added President Díaz-Canel, the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), and the Amistur travel agency to the Specially Designated Nationals list. OFAC has also sent "Requests for Information" letters to solidarity organizers to harass and isolate them.

Criminalizing Dissent and the Press

BREAKTHROUGH NEWS SUBPOENAED

The Republican-led House Ways and Means Committee subpoenaed the independent outlet, demanding internal communications and financial records, over its coverage of mass deportations, ICE abuses, Cuba, Palestine solidarity and U.S. foreign policy.

"They're attempting to criminalize dissent and an independent press. Everybody who cares about a free press and cares about free speech should be alarmed about an attack like this."

Rania Khalek, BreakThrough News

A "GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO CRUSH RADICAL LEFT TERRORISM"

On July 16, 2026, the State Department hosted an international summit at which White House adviser Stephen Miller described the left as "enemies of civilization" and announced NSPM-7 as a directive for law enforcement and intelligence agencies:

"to work together to disrupt, identify, defund, debank, arrest and prosecute these political terrorists."

V. THE RENEWED MONROE DOCTRINE

The "Donroe Doctrine": Haiti, Venezuela, Cuba

A declining U.S. imperialism, having lost the capacity to dominate the region by economic and ideological means alone, has returned to openly violent coercion. The 2025 National Security Strategy pledged to "reassert and enforce American preeminence in the western hemisphere."

HAITI: THE LABORATORY

In 2004 President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was deposed in a CIA-bankrolled coup and flown into exile by U.S. Marines. The Security Council authorized a Multinational Interim Force without Haitian consent, and the Core Group, with no Haitian representatives, was set up to oversee governance.

VENEZUELA: THE TEST CASE

The January 3, 2026 invasion kidnapped President Nicolás Maduro and First Combatant Cilia Flores and killed over a hundred people. Among the fallen were thirty-two Cuban security personnel, their martyrdom "the highest expression of revolutionary internationalism."

CUBA: THE PRIMARY TARGET

Trump and Rubio have openly hinted Cuba is next, describing it as "ready to fall" after the loss of Venezuelan oil and boasting that no direct intervention is needed because economic collapse will finish the job. The strategy also aims to expel China from the hemisphere.

"We ignore how these tactics may be used on the rest of the region at our peril." Dr. Jemima Pierre

V. THE RENEWED MONROE DOCTRINE

Cuba: The Worst Crisis Since 1959

Trump's January 29 Executive Order threatening sanctions on any country supplying oil to Cuba has produced cascading crises across every sector of Cuban society.

Hospitals lack fuel for emergency services

Infant mortality is rising

Women are giving birth to low-weight babies

Cancer and other medicines are unavailable

"Despite more than six decades of economic warfare, the country has made significant advances in science and technology, saved lives through international medical missions, eradicated illiteracy, built a highly educated society, promoted gender equality, and implemented state-supported, anti-racism initiatives. Cuba stands as a notable example of social progress".

Rosemari Mealy

WHAT IS BEING STRANGLING

A country that once had infant mortality and life expectancy rivaling the United States, and whose medical missions saved millions of lives in some of the world's poorest countries, is now being starved of the resources needed for survival.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Cuba Is the Fight

WHY CUBA IS TARGETED

Because it has stood in solidarity with oppressed peoples around the world.

Because it has offered internationalist support to African liberation struggles, including those inside the United States.

Because it has provided a living example that another world is possible.

Because it refuses to submit to U.S. hegemony.

Losing the argument

The administration is deeply unpopular and its agenda is unpopular. As Rania Khalek reminds us, "this foreign plot smear is all they have left, because they can't win on their merits."

What The Cuba Solidarity Movement Demands

- End the blockade of Cuba
- Remove Cuba from the State Sponsor of Terrorism list
- No War on Cuba
- Defend the Cuban revolution & Cuba's sovereignty End the repression of the Cuba solidarity movement

"We will not be silenced in the face of resurgent fascism. We will not be divided. We will not retreat. The more they attack our movement, the more determined we become.

It is our right and responsibility as lawyers, legal workers, civil society organizations, and individuals in the Belly of the Beast to challenge this illegal and inhumane policy and uphold domestic and international law in furtherance of justice and people-centered human rights.

Venceremos!