

THE HISTORIC SWING IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS CUBA DURING
OBAMA'S ADMINISTRATION

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PERUBAHAN BERSEJARAH DALAM DASAR LUAR AMERIKA SYARIKAT TERHADAP
NEGARA CUBA SEMASA ERA PENTADBIRAN PRESIDEN OBAMA

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis is my own except for quotations and summaries which have been duly acknowledged.



29 August 2018



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ABSTRACT

The U.S.-Cuba relationship has been strongly plagued by series of distrust and antagonism ever since Fidel Castro came to power in 1959. The U.S.A had sanctioned Cuba for decades, as the result of its Presidents' choice of foreign policy and the domestic pressure from the first generation of Cuban Americans or also known as the "*Cuban early exiles*" who fled their home country during the Cuban Revolution. As the result of being oppressed, their resentment last beyond generations. Over the years, U.S Presidents pursued hostile foreign policy intended to isolate Cuba economically and diplomatically. However, something beyond 'ordinary' happened during president Obama's administration. The historic swing in the U.S foreign policy towards Cuba had normalized relations between the two countries. Thus, this study is all about trying to understand why did the historic swing in the U.S foreign policy towards Cuba happen and what were the dominant factors that had influenced and driven the swing. As the research employs process-tracing methodology, the findings indicate that the swing in the U.S foreign policy towards Cuba were the results of both 'internal' and 'external' factors. The analysis, however, shows the domineering role the internal factors played that had resulted in the swing. These factors include Obama's presidential leadership and the renewed domestic pressure in the U.S political sphere that came mainly from the changing opinions of the Cuban-American community in Miami. Both the Obama's presidential leadership and the domestic pressure created 'readiness' for the U.S to make a change in their foreign policy towards Cuba. Such readiness, the analysis further shows, was further boosted by the external factor namely the regional dynamics. Cuba's deepening relations with the then leftist Latin American governments, China's growing economic influence and ties with Latin America, and U.S declining credibility in Latin America had aggregately catalyzed the 'readiness' in Obama's administration to make the historic change in U.S foreign policy towards Cuba.

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