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OPINION

A President Not Interested in the Details

Just wants to undo what Obama did

BY JILL RICHARDSON

There's a lot to say about Trump reversing some of the Obama administration's policies on Cuba. The White House recently announced it was banning individual travel to the island and further restricting what business Americans can do there.

Yes, there's a lot to say, but I wonder if there's any point in saying it. After all, most Americans want to relax the embargo on Cuba. Even most Republicans disagree with Trump on Cuba, polls show.

That requires a bit of explanation. America has a longstanding embargo on Cuba, preventing the U.S. from selling much of anything there. The policy traces back to the Cold War. The economic harm to the island resulting from the policy is obvious when one sets foot in Cuba.



When I visited in 2010, life had gotten better for Cubans since the hardest times in the early 1990s. Still, life was difficult. Meat was a luxury for Cubans. Milk was only rationed to young children. I bought a handmade dress for \$15, a handsome sum to a Cuban but a pittance to me. Obama didn't end the

government permit, and by going for business instead of pleasure. The U.S. government also limited how much I could spend there. And, of course, I couldn't bring any Cuban rum or cigars home.

I've traveled all over on five different continents. In college, I spent an entire summer in China, a Communist country with a bad human rights record — quite a bit worse than Cuba's, arguably —

flight the next day to Cuba. On my return, I was questioned, searched, and scolded until I nearly missed my connecting flight.

The hypocrisy was jarring. Why is the U.S. on good terms with China but not Cuba?

After Obama relaxed America's anti-Cuba policies, you could literally fly Southwest to Havana.

I think the best comment on Trump's policies came in the

working to secure the hard liner Cuban vote in Florida by undoing Obama's Cuba policies.

But more than that, Trump wants us to believe that Obama made America a "mess." To show us what a great president he is, Trump wants us to believe that everything was awful before him — so bad that it required Trump to make it "great" again, by undoing obvious boons like Obama's mild Cuba reforms.

If Obama did it, it's bad. Therefore Trump will do the opposite. Yet he has no interest in understanding complex issues that cannot be solved easily. Health care, ISIS, and North Korea come to mind — and now Cuba, too.

To Trump, trying to understand the complex background of America's relationship with Cuba is superfluous, since Trump himself doesn't understand it. Yet he's hurting both Americans and Cubans in the process.

OtherWords columnist Jill Richardson is the author of *Recipe for America: Why Our Food System Is Broken and What We Can Do to Fix It*.

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embargo. It's still in place.

What Obama overturned were other Cold War-era measures. He restored diplomatic relations with Cuba and relaxed a travel ban on U.S. citizens visiting the island.

The only way I was able to visit Cuba in 2010 was with a special

that the U.S. is on perfectly good terms with, thank you very much.

Yet I've never been hassled, searched, and investigated as much upon my return home as I was when I came back from Cuba.

On the way out, I had to first fly to Cancun and then board a second

form of a satirical "news" article: "President Trump Orders the Execution of Five Turkeys Pardoned by Obama." No, not really. It's a joke. But it exposes the motives and sentiments behind many of Trump's actions.

In part, Trump is probably

The Unfinished Struggle for Equality for All

Where do we go from here

BY MARC H. MORIAL

As he prepared to step down as president and chief executive officer of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, it is likely Wade Henderson pondered the same question that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., did 50 years earlier as he sat alone in a secluded rental house in Ocho Rios, Jamaica — the question that would become the title of his final book: Where do we go from here.

Both men are part of the long, unfinished narrative of our nation's struggle for equality for all its citizens. And at critical points in our history, both reached a period in their work as activists and advocates that called for contemplation of the future of our country and its continuing fight for civil and human rights.

In his book, Dr. King reflected on economic and social reform that would benefit all Americans, and specifically looked at the state of racial equality for African



Americans at the very infancy of the civil rights movement following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. He also reflected on black nationalism, which appeared to be the next phase in the struggle of African Americans to attain basic civil rights—considering

for social justice did not stay on the mall of the Lincoln Memorial. Before taking the helm of the Leadership Conference for nearly 21 years, Henderson was the Washington Bureau director of the NAACP, directing the civil rights organization's government affairs and national legislative program and he worked as the associate director of the Washing-

rizing the Voting Rights Act, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and the Fair Sentencing Act.

And like Dr. King, Henderson recognized that a "generational change" was taking hold in the civil and human rights movement, including the rise of Black Lives Matter and newer forms of activism. Rather than resist that change, Henderson embraced

during his time, and we face the rollback of many hard-fought-for reforms and legislation, but to his credit, Henderson built a well-earned legacy and simultaneously forged a path for the Leadership Conference and the next generation of advocates to lead and succeed.

The coalition will now be directed by Vanita Gupta, the first woman and first child of immigrants to head the organization. A long-time civil rights litigator and former head of the Obama administration's Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, Gupta is confident in her belief that, "this organization is perfectly situated to address the current assault on civil rights that we are seeing today."

As a member of the Leadership Conference, the National Urban League firmly believes the coalition has been entrusted to capable and intelligent hands and we look forward to standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the Leadership Conference on the frontlines as we all work together to protect our progress.

Marc H. Morial is president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League.

Today, while progress has been made, we find ourselves fighting for much of what Dr. King fought during his time, and we face the rollback of many hard-fought-for reforms and legislation, but to his credit, Henderson built a well-earned legacy and simultaneously forged a path for the Leadership Conference and the next generation of advocates to lead and succeed.

the effectiveness of the ideology, its tactics, and its ability to shape, mark and transform the movement for civil rights.

At the age of 15, Henderson attended the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom where Dr. King famously delivered his "I Have a Dream Speech." Fortunately, Henderson's passion

ton office of the ACLU.

Under his direction, Henderson grew the Leadership Conference's number of member organizations from 170 to 200, including its first Muslim and Sikh civil rights groups, and he led the coalition through the passage of every major civil rights law in the past 20 years, including reautho-

this newest phase, deciding that his work at with the coalition had reached its highest level and concluded that, "it's at that point that I think it is best to step aside and to promote constructive change."

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