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MARCO RUBIO DESTROYS TOM HARKIN IN SENATE DEBATE

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One would think that American politicians would, by this time, have learned to keep their positive thoughts about the Fidel/Raul Castro regime to their drinking circles. That's especially true in the US Senate, where not one but two members with Cuban heritage now serve. After Tom Harkin offered a rosy view of Cuba's efforts on literacy and health care, Marco Rubio took fourteen minutes to destroy Harkin and remind Americans of what Cuba really is like, and how they support oppression in North Korea and especially Venezuela. - Ed Morrissey in Hot Air

For 14 minutes and 16 seconds, Rubio gave the best oration of his political career, speaking largely off the top of his head and with only the barest of notes The U.S. Senator from Florida had listened patiently to Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa speak favorably about his recent trip to Cuba, all the while omitting any real references to the oppression of the totalitarian government there. To Rubio, like many Cuban exiles and their descendants, it was too much to bear Let me tell you what the Cubans are really good at," Rubio said Monday when he took to the Senate floor. "What they are really good at is repression...They have exported repression in real time, in our hemisphere, right now." - Marc Caputo in The Miami Herald



Florida Republican Senator Rubio



Iowa Democrat Senator Harkin

Watch a video of the speech by Marco Rubio by clicking [HERE](#) - this from just last week. Following is the full transcript of the speech, delivered from the Senate floor.

A few moments ago, the body was treated to a report from the senator from Iowa about his recent trip to Cuba. Sounded like he had a wonderful trip visiting, what he described as, a real paradise. He bragged about a number of things that he learned on his trip to Cuba that I'd like to address briefly. He bragged about their health care system, medical school is free, doctors are free, clinics are free,

their infant mortality rate may be even lower than ours. I wonder if the senator, however, was informed, number one, that the infant mortality rate of Cuba is completely calculated on figures provided by the Cuban government. And, by the way, totalitarian communist regimes don't have the best history of accurately reporting things. I wonder if he was informed that before Castro, Cuba, by the way, was 13th in the whole world in infant mortality. I wonder if the government officials who hosted him, informed him that in Cuba there are instances reported, including by defectors, that if a child only lives a few hours after birth, they're not counted as a person who ever lived and therefore don't count against the mortality rate.

I wonder if our visitors to Cuba were informed that in Cuba, any time there is any sort of problem with the child in utero they are strongly encouraged to undergo abortions, and that's why they have an abortion rate that skyrockets, and some say, is perhaps the highest the world. I heard him also talk about these great doctors that they have in Cuba. I have no doubt they're very talented. I've met a bunch of them. You know where I met them? In the United States because they defected. Because in Cuba, doctors would rather drive a taxi cab or work in a hotel than be a doctor. I wonder if they spoke to him about the outbreak of cholera that they've been unable to control, or about the three-tiered system of health care that exists where foreigners and government officials get health care much better than that that's available to the general population.

I also heard him speak about baseball and I know that Cubans love baseball, since my parents were from there and I grew up in a community surrounded by it. He talked about these great baseball players that are coming from Cuba — and they are. But I wonder if they informed him — in fact, I bet you they didn't talk about those players to him because every single one of those guys playing in the Major Leagues defected. They left Cuba to play here.

He also talked about how people would come up to him in the streets and not a single person said anything negative about America. Nobody came up to him wagging their fingers saying, 'You Americans and your embargo is hurting us.' I'm glad to hear that. Because everyone who wants to lift the embargo is constantly telling us that the Castros use that to turn the people against us. So obviously, that's not true. So I'm glad to hear confirmation of what I already knew to be true. I heard about their wonderful literacy rate, how everyone in Cuba knows how to read. That's fantastic. Here's the problem: they can only read censored stuff. They're not allowed access to the Internet. The only newspapers they're allowed to read are Granma or the ones produced by the government.

I wish that someone on that trip would have asked the average Cuban, 'With your wonderful literacy skills, are you allowed to read The New York Times or the Wall Street Journal or any blog, for that matter?' Because the answer's, 'No.' So it's great to have literacy, but if you don't have access to the information, what's the point of it? So I wish somebody would have asked about that on that trip. We heard about Mr. Gross, who is not in jail. He's not a prisoner. He is a hostage. He is a hostage. And in the speech I heard a moment ago, I heard allusions to the idea that maybe we should — he didn't say it, but I know the language, I know the code in this — that maybe there should be a spy swap. Here's the problem: Mr. Gross was not a spy. You know what his crime was, if that's what you can call it? He went to Cuba to hand out satellite radios to the Jewish community. But, we're glad to hear that the Cubans are so nice to him that they let him walk 10,000 steps a day and do pull-ups and they let him build a necklace out of bottle cap tops. Very nice of them to allow him to do those things. How generous.

I wonder if anybody asked about terrorism, because Cuba is a state sponsor of terrorism. I wonder if anybody asked about the fact that, just a few months ago, a North Korean ship going from Cuba to North Korea was stopped in the Panama Canal and it contained items in violation of international

sanctions against a government in North Korea that, a report just came out confirming what we already knew, has death camps and prison camps. And the Cubans are allowing them to evade these sanctions. Did that come up in any of the wonderful conversations in this socialist paradise in the Caribbean? I bet you it didn't.

Let me tell you what the Cubans are really good at, because they don't know how to run their economy, they don't know how to build, they don't know how to govern a people. What they are really good at is repression. What they are really good at is shutting off information to the Internet and to radio and television and social media. That's what they're really good at. And they're not just good at it domestically, they're good exporters of these things. And you want to see exhibit A, B, C and D? I'm going to show them to you right now. They have exported repression in real-time, in our hemisphere, right now.

Let me show you the first slide here. This gentleman here is the former mayor of a municipality in Caracas. His name is Leopoldo Lopez. And this is the National Guard of Venezuela pulling him into an armored truck last week. You know why? Because he's protesting against the government. He's protesting against the government of Venezuela, which are puppets of Havana, completely infiltrated by Cubans and agents from Havana. Not agents, openly, foreign military affairs officials involved in Venezuela. You know why? Because the Venezuela government is giving them cheap oil and free oil, in exchange for help during these sorts of repressions. So here he is, he's sitting in jail right now because he's protesting against the government. He's sitting in jail right now.

So here's the next slide. This is Genesis Carmona. She's a beauty queen and a student in a city called Valencia. She's on that motorcycle because the government in Venezuela and the thug, these so-called civilian groups that they've armed — another export from Cuba, a model the Cubans follow — they shot her in the head. She died last week. This is the government that the Cubans support. Not just verbally, not just emotionally, but with training and tactics. This is who they export — this is what they do. And she's dead. And this is her being taken on a motorcycle to the hospital where they were unable to save her life because she was shot in the head by Venezuelan security forces.

Here's another slide. Remember I showed you Mr. Lopez? These are his supporters being hit with water cannons — by water cannons in the street because they're protesting against the government. This has been going on now for two weeks. This is the allies of Cuba, Venezuela, the puppets of Cuba. And this is what they do to their own people. Water cannons knocking people to the ground. Why? Because they're protesting the government.

Let me show you the next slide. Here's a demonstrator detained by police. Look how they drag him through the streets. This is in Caracas, Venezuela.

Let me show you another demonstrator. This is a student — by the way, these are all students in the street. You see this young man here? He was also shot in the head by security forces and pro-government groups in Caracas. This happened on February 11. This is what they do in Venezuela. This is what the allies of the Castro regime does, this is what they export. This is what they teach. This is what they support. And it doesn't stop here.

Who are Cuba's allies in the world? North Korea. Before he fell, the dictator in Libya, the dictator in Syria, the tyrant in Moscow. This is who they line up with. This is this wonderful paradise? By the way, this in and of itself deserves attention, what's happening in Venezuela, in our own hemisphere. It is shameful that only three heads of state in this hemisphere have spoken out forcefully against what's happening. It is shameful that many members of Congress who traveled to Venezuela and

were friendly with Chavez, some even went to his funeral, sit by saying nothing while this is happening in our own hemisphere. And this wonderful Cuban paradise government that we heard about? This is what they support. Just this morning, the dictator that calls himself a president — never been elected to anything, Raul Castro — announced he is there for whatever they need to help them do this.

I listen to this stuff about Cuba and I listen to what's happening in Venezuela, they're very similar. Not just in the repression part, but the economics part. You know Venezuela's an oil-rich country with hardworking people? They have a shortage — we don't have an embargo against Venezuela. They have a shortage of toilet paper and tooth paste. Why? Because they are incompetent. Because communism doesn't work. They look more and more like Cuba economically and politically every single day.

What's the first thing the Venezuelan government did when these broke out? They cut off access to Twitter and Facebook and the Internet. They ran CNN out of there. They closed down the only Colombian station. Years before, they had closed down all the independent media outlets that criticized the government. Where did they learn that from? From Cuba. And yet we have to listen to what a paradise Cuba is. Well, I wonder how come I never read about boatloads of American refugees going to Cuba? Why have close to one and a half million people left Cuba to come here? But the only people that leave here to move there, are fugitives from the law and people that steal money from Medicare that go there to hide? Why? How come no American baseball players defect to Cuba? Why don't any American doctors defect to Cuba if it's such a paradise?

He cited a poll, 'More Americans want normal relations with Cuba.' So do I — a democratic and free Cuba. But you want us to reach out and develop friendly relationships with a serial violator of human rights, who supports what's going on in Venezuela and every other atrocity on the planet? On issue after issue, they are always on the side of the tyrants. Look it up. And this is who we should be opening up to? Why don't they change? Why doesn't the Cuban government change? Why doesn't the Venezuelan government change?

Throughout this week, I will be outlining proposals and ideas about what we need to do, the sanctions we should be pursuing against the individuals responsible for these atrocities. So with North Korea, we have sanctions. Why? Because they're a terrorist government and an illegitimate one. Against Iran we have sanctions. Why? Because they support terrorism and they're an illegitimate government. And against the Cubans we have sanctions. Why? Well, you just saw why. Sanctions are a tool in our foreign policy toolbox, and we, as the freest nation on Earth, are looked to by people in this country, and all around the world, to stand by them in their moment of need when they clamor for freedom and liberty and human rights. They look for America to be on their side, not for America to be cutting geopolitical deals or making it easier to sell tractors to the government there. We should be clear about these things.

But here's the great news. I don't know if they get C-SPAN in Cuba. I bet you the government people do. I hope you see that in America, we're a free society. You're allowed to come on the floor and you're allowed to say and spread whatever you want. You think Cuba's a paradise? You think it's an example and a model that we should be following? You're free to say that, here, in the press and anywhere you want. But we're also free to come here and tell the truth. We're also free to come here and denounce the violations of human rights and brutality. And I would suggest to my colleagues, the next time they go to Cuba, ask to meet with the Ladies in White. Ask to meet with the Yoani Sanchez. Ask to meet with the dissidents and the human rights activists that are jailed and repressed and exiled. Ask to meet with them. I bet you're going to hear something very different

than what you got from your hosts on your last trip to the wonderful Cuba, this extraordinary socialist paradise. Because it's a joke. It's a farce.

And I don't think we should stand by here with our arms crossed, watching these things happen in our hemisphere and say nothing about them. I can close by saying this: Over the last week, I have tweeted about these issues. I get thousands of retweets from students and young people, until they shut them out, in Venezuela who are encouraged by the fact that we are on their side. What they want is what we have, the freedom and the liberty. That's what all people want. And if America and its policy-makers are not going to be firmly on the side of freedom and liberty, who in the world is? Who on this planet will? If this nation is not firmly on the side of human rights and freedom and the dignity of all people, what nation on the Earth will? And if we're prepared to walk away from that, then I submit to you that this century is going to be a dangerous and dark one. But I don't believe that's what the American people want from us. Nor the majority of my colleagues.

[HERE](#) *is a link to another report on my Web Site that includes Marco Rubio's comments on American Exceptionalism. Check it out!*