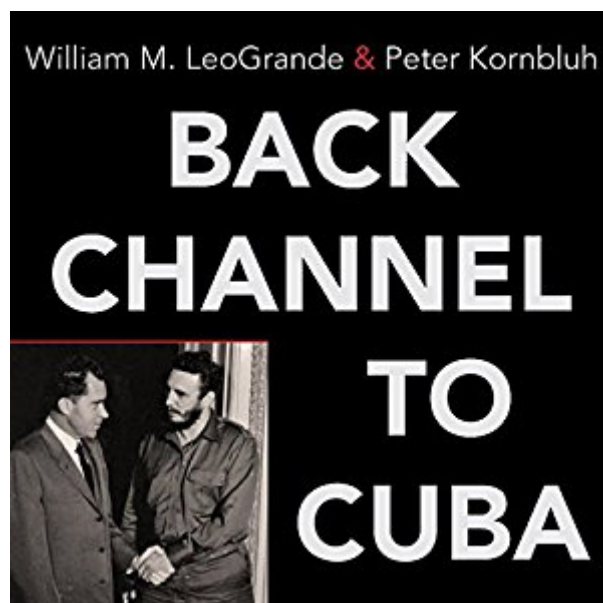


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# Back Channel To Cuba: The Hidden History Of Negotiations Between Washington And Havana



## Synopsis

Since 1959, conflict and aggression have dominated the story of US-Cuban relations. From John F. Kennedy's offering of an olive branch to Fidel Castro after the missile crisis, to Henry Kissinger's top-secret quest for normalization, to Barack Obama's promise of a "new approach", William M. LeoGrande and Peter Kornbluh reveal a 50-year record of dialogue and negotiations, both open and furtive, indicating a path toward better relations in the future. LeoGrande and Kornbluh have uncovered hundreds of formerly secret US documents and conducted interviews with dozens of negotiators, intermediaries, and policy makers. The authors describe how, despite the political clamor surrounding any hint of better relations with Havana, serious negotiations have been conducted by every presidential administration since Eisenhower's through secret, back-channel diplomacy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

With the recent announcement that the U.S. and Cuba would be normalizing relations with each other for the first time since the Revolution of 1959, this book could not come at a more perfect time. Starting with the last years of the Eisenhower administration, the authors show the series of missteps and failed opportunities that have characterized U.S.-Cuba relations. And, to be quite honest, the U.S. doesn't come off looking very good here. Often times the U.S. would make promises and then break them or demand unreasonable preconditions before negotiating. Not only that, but there would be times when the Cubans would say something that, had the U.S. diplomats

thought about what they were saying, they may have acted in a different way. For example, during Cuba's intervention in Africa, Cuba would say again and again that they would not abandon their allies in Angola, but wanted to be a part of bringing about a political solution. However, the U.S. would be so occupied with getting Cuba out of Angola that they wouldn't even consider bringing them into the political process until the very end when it couldn't be avoided. Had they seized on it sooner, they could've killed two birds with one stone. But the Cubans don't always come off all that great here either as they would oftentimes begin the process of negotiating with the U.S., then do something in another realm that would shutdown the negotiations, like intervening in Africa. Thus, both sides have made serious missteps in trying to heal the divide between them. Leogrande and Kornbluh's great gift is bringing us into the midst of these secret negotiations, oftentimes filled with suspicion and doubt, yet always with a tinge of hope for something better.

The authors William M. LeoGrande and Peter Kornbluh have years of experience with this subject. This book chronicles the history of the difficult relations between the US and the revolutionary Cuba in detail. In a heated ideological debate, this book offers a refreshing matter-of-fact perspective. The book is divided into chapters according to the US presidents Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and George Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama. The book is praised by Jimmy Carter. It is based on official papers that had been published by the government after decades as well as interviews with direct participants in the negotiations from both sides. This means the reported facts are likely to be accepted by anybody involved; quite an achievement considering the conflict. Looking at this history of the relations, it becomes clear that the US government has attained the opposite of their stated objective:- the pig bay invasion stabilized the young revolutionary government against a common enemy- as the US negotiators accepted the liberation of jailed dissidents as their main currency against concessions, they encouraged the Cuban government to imprison many opponents- while the blockade harms Cuba severely, even the toughest critics of Castro in Cuba agree in their opposition to it.

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