The Cuba Question
Cuba and Colonialism

• Cuba used for plantation style agriculture as part of Spanish Empire
  – Primarily sugar and tobacco
    • Famous for cigars
  – Used slave labor from Africa
• Natives mostly wiped out
  – Some Taino allowed to remain untouched
    • Have linguistically influenced Cuban culture
The Spanish American War

• United States attacks Spanish in Puerto Rico and Cuba
  – Spanish Influence almost completely gone

• United States grants independence to Cuba, Puerto Rico taken as a territory
Cuba and the Cold War

• Under leadership of Fidel Castro Cuba establishes a communist government in 1959
  – Geographically important due to proximity to the United States
A Land Frozen in Time

- United States cut off diplomatic ties from Cuba in 1961
  - Placed Trade Embargo against Cuba in 1962
    - Encouraged allies to do the same
- Cuba technologically cut off from MDCs
A Commodity Economy

- Technically a planned economy
  - Heavily agricultural – cash crops, needs to import food
  - Gaining importance in pharmaceutical companies
Cuban Tourism

• Cuba has long been a popular tourist destination
  – Popular as a beach vacation
• United States Citizens finally formally allowed to visit Cuba in 2015
  – Starting to open up cultural relations with Cuba
• Tourism accounts for more than $2 Billion a year
Cuban Refugees

• Since 1959 many have fled Cuba to United States
• Wet Feet/Dry Feet Policy
  – United States has a policy of returning refugees unless they actually make it to dry land
• Elian Gonzalez
  – Famous battle in late 90’s that opened debate of refugee system
Guantanamo Bay

- Guantanamo Naval Base has been under United States jurisdiction since 1898
  - Used as a detention center for foreign fighters
  - Became infamous during War on Terror for use of torture
Re-Opening Relations

• In 2014 president Barack Obama ordered the normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba
  – Re-open embassy
  – Re-establish trade
• Slowly allowed more tourism and cultural/economic exchange