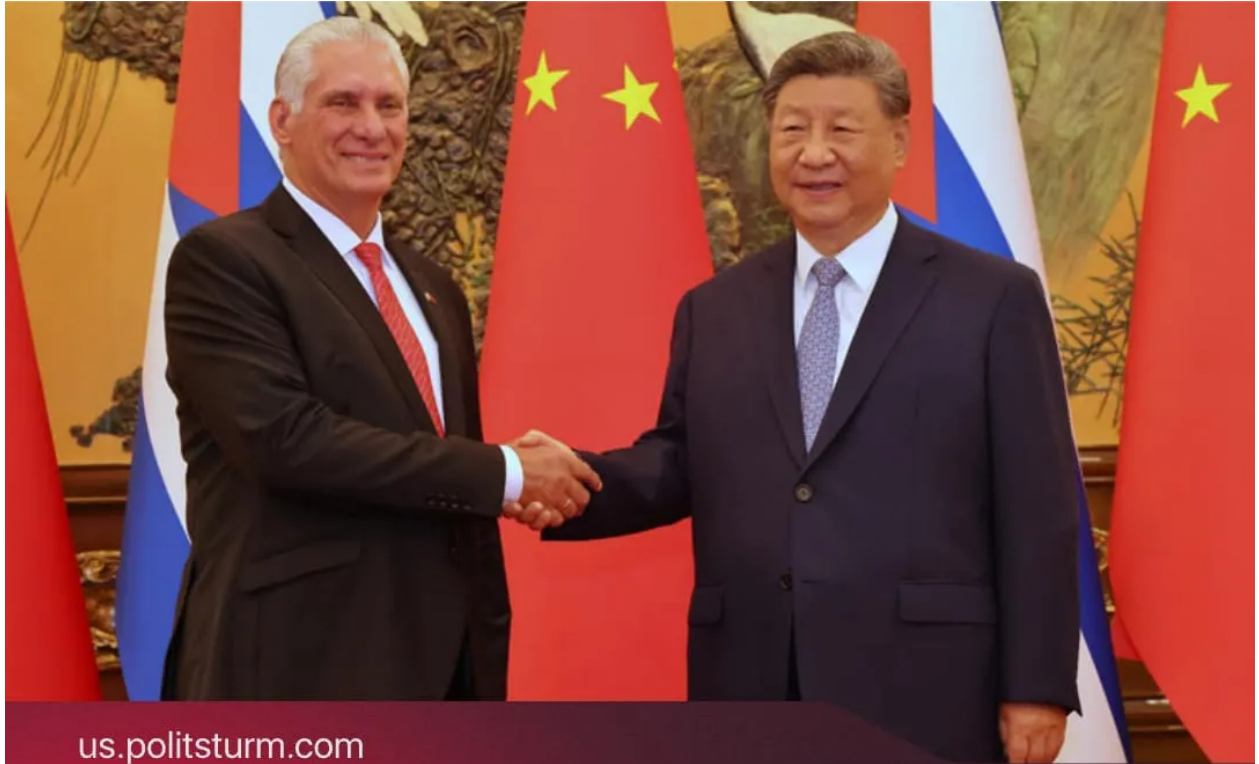


# Cuban Officials Echo Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping



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Cuba's government explains the restoration of capitalism by the "need not to settle for half measures" and the construction of "socialism with Cuban characteristics". This echoes the rhetoric of Deng Xiaoping in China and the Gorbachev era in the USSR. Meanwhile, bourgeois economists warn of a repeat of "1990s Russia" on the island.

Details. The legalization of capitalism in Cuba is presented positively by the government and the leadership of the "Communist Party of Cuba". The Cuban CP's [stated](#) goal is to "unleash the productive forces", for which Prime Minister Marrero [endorsed](#) the market as "an instrument for the efficient allocation of resources".

► Former President Raúl Castro was [already](#) "recognizing that socialist planning does not exclude, but rather must incorporate and regulate, market rules". A National Assembly deputy [went further](#), warning against "settling for half measures".

► Cuba's President Diaz-Canel [claims](#) the reforms "do not signify a renunciation of socialism, but rather a search for how to continue building it under the specific conditions of Cuba", with the island's ruling party explicitly adopting a special "Cuban socialism".

► In an [interview](#), he argued that "China and Vietnam are countries who are building socialism, like Cuba is", and stated that Cuban officials have "studied China's reform quite a lot, and we've used that as a benchmark for Cuba". He explained that Cuba's CP has a "deep relationship" with the Chinese CP and the two parties are in "permanent exchange".

How were similar measures explained in the Perestroika USSR and Dengist China? Historically, similar measures were pushed by revisionists through reforms in the USSR's "Glasnost and Perestroika" (Openness and Restructuring), the PRC's "Gaige Kaifang" (Reform and Opening Up) and Vietnam's "Doi Moi" (Innovation).

► Other revisionists have also used exceptionalism to justify the restoration of capitalism. CCP Chairman Deng Xiaoping coined the term "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics". Whilst implementing liberalisation in 1982, Deng [claimed](#) that "we shall adhere to Marxism and keep to the socialist road. But [...] by socialism we mean a socialism that is tailored to Chinese conditions". In reality, they meant capitalism.

► Cuban officials' excuse of "productive forces" comes from Deng, who [stated](#) in 1980 that revolution "does not merely mean" class struggle, claiming that "the most fundamental" goal is economic development. The CCP relegated the end of capitalism to the distant future: "in order to build socialism we must first of all develop the productive forces, which is our main task". Nowadays, under Xi Jinping, the CCP's "[five-year plans](#)" are merely indicative guidelines to coordinate Chinese capitalists, rather than socialist development directives.

► Like Cuba's government, Deng [argued](#) that "developing a market economy does not mean practising capitalism". Chinese revisionists use bourgeois [slogans](#), such as "to get rich is glorious", and the metaphor that "it doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice", to justify liberal policies. They explicitly advocate "taking advantage of the useful aspects of capitalist countries [...] in order

to develop the productive forces.”

► Similarly to Cuban “decentralizing”, Mikhail Gorbachev [argued](#) in 1988 for “democratizing planning” and “economic autonomy” in his Perestroika reforms. He dictated that “plan-making [...] will begin within enterprises”, which were granted “self-regulation” to make their own decisions based on market signals – whereas “the State Planning Committee will have to give up detailed regimentation and day-to-day monitoring” of the economy. This permitted formerly socialist enterprises – coordinated across the central plan – to become independent, free to maximise profit and accumulate capital. Three years later, the Soviet Union was dissolved.

► Bourgeois economists have also noted the [similarities](#) between the Cuban “reforms” and the historical restoration of capitalism during the fall of the USSR. Liberal “shock therapy” in post-Soviet Russia caused life expectancy to fall by 6 years. After the USSR fell, the average income of the poorer half of Russians [plummeted](#). It took until 2012 to recover to the levels already enjoyed under socialism four decades earlier, in 1972.

Context. The Cuban government recently [adopted](#) a package of 176 “reforms”, legalising the capitalist economy that had already operated in practice for more than a [decade](#). In previous years, Cuban authorities already [cleared](#) the groundwork for full capitalist restoration and tolerated the private sector taking over the [majority](#) of commerce.

► [Social-chauvinists](#) have lauded Cuba for following the PRC’s path, predicting the island’s capitalism will “succeed like Chinese capitalism”. The PRC now has the 2nd most [dollar millionaires](#) in the world, whilst having a [worse](#) Gini inequality coefficient than the USA.

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