

Fidel Castro Dies, Trans Pacific Partnership: Trade Talk: Week in Review (21-27 November 2016)

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Cuba – Fidel Castro Passes Away. In the [statement](#) released on 26 November, **President Barack Obama** said of the former Cuban leader:

[W]e extend a hand of friendship to the Cuban people. We know that this moment fills Cubans – in Cuba and in the United States – with powerful emotions, recalling the countless ways in which Fidel Castro altered the course of individual lives, families, and of the Cuban nation. History will record and judge the enormous impact of this singular figure on the people and world around him.”

President-Elect Donald Trump, who is critical of the Castro regime in Cuba and changed his position from supporting rapprochement to sustaining U.S. sanctions during the election campaign, also issued a [statement](#) on Saturday morning, saying:

Today, the world marks the passing of a brutal dictator who oppressed his own people for nearly six decades.” He added: “While Cuba remains a totalitarian island, it is my hope that today marks a move away from the horrors endured for too long, and toward a future in which the wonderful Cuban people finally live in the freedom they so richly deserve.”

Members of the U.S. Congress also responded to the news of Fidel Castro’s death, including those Members who oppose the Obama Administration’s rapprochement efforts. Cuban-born Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (D-Florida) [said](#):

The day that the people, both inside the island and out, have waited for has arrived: A tyrant is dead and a new beginning can dawn on the last remaining communist bastion of the Western hemisphere.” She added: “Those who still rule Cuba with an iron grip may attempt to delay the island’s liberation, but they cannot stop it. Castro’s successors cannot hide and

must not be allowed to hide beneath cosmetic changes that will only lengthen the malaise of the Cuban nation. No regime, no matter who leads it, will have a shred of legitimacy if it has not been chosen by the people of Cuba in free and fair elections.”

Florida Senator Marco Rubio, another Cuban-American, also issued a [statement](#) on Fidel Castro’s death, characterizing the former leader as an “an evil, murderous dictator who inflicted misery and suffering on his own people” and adding:

The future of Cuba ultimately remains in the hands of the Cuban people, and now more than ever Congress and the new administration must stand with them against their brutal rulers and support their struggle for freedom and basic human rights.”

Representative Ed Royce (R-California), Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, [said](#):

For more than half a century, the Cuban people have suffered under the brutal dictatorship of the Castro clan. No one should rule anywhere near as long as Fidel Castro did. His legacy is one of repression at home, and support for terrorism abroad. Sadly, Raul Castro is no better for Cubans who yearn for freedom.”

Senator Bob Corker (R-Tennessee), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, issued a more moderate [statement](#), commenting on possible changes ahead in Cuba:

Under Fidel Castro’s brutal and oppressive dictatorship, the Cuban people have suffered politically and economically for decades, and it is my hope that his passing might turn the page toward a better way of life for the many who have dreamed of a brighter future for their country.”

TPP – Trump Vows To Withdraw. On 21 November, President-Elect Trump said in a video that he would withdraw the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) deal on his first day in office. The President-Elect has instead voiced support for bilateral agreements over mega-regional deals like the TPP agreement.

The day before President-Elect Trump’s announcement, Ambassador Froman was asked what would happen if the United States withdraws from TPP. He acknowledged that new ground is being broken, offering:

It’s possible the other countries will find a way to move on without us with the hope that we would join some time in the future. It’s possible they’ll pursue other trade agreements.”

House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady (R-Texas) responded to President-Elect Trump's TPP announcement, saying:

I respect President-Elect Trump for fulfilling his campaign promise to withdraw from TPP, but I am convinced that we have to reach these customers if we want to get America's economy moving again." He added: "We can't abandon these markets to China and other competitors because American businesses and customers will lose out."

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) also responded, saying:

While it appears that there is no viable path forward for the [TPP] this year, I remain committed to working with my colleagues in Congress and the new administration to advance strong trade policies that will enhance America's global competitiveness, increase access to new, international markets, and ensure we secure the best possible trade deals for American workers and entrepreneurs."

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