Cuba Policy Trip
Draft Itinerary *
December 6-13, 2015

Sunday, December 6

12:45 pm Depart Miami on American Airlines 9478, arrive Havana at 1:45 pm

3:30 pm Settle in to the Historic Hotel Capri, one of the first hotel casinos built by the Mafia in Cuba. Owned by mobster Santo Trafficante, and run by George Raft, the hotel was at a time one of the largest casinos in Havana. Located blocks from the University of Havana, Coppelia ice cream, and the Havana seawall, the recent remodeling provides first class amenities, while leaving the history and original charm of “The Capri.”

5:30 pm Discussion with Carlos Alzugaray, retired Cuban diplomat and expert on U.S.–Cuba relations, to learn about the bilateral relationship and Cuban foreign policy.

7 pm Welcome dinner at El Cocinero. This private restaurant is housed in a former factory and attracts Havana’s hip crowd. Walk next door for live music, art and photography at La Fabrica de Arte Cubana. Rock star X Alfonso has turned this into meeting spot for an eclectic crowd of Cubans and foreigners.

Monday, December 7

9:30 am Socio-economic discussion with urban planner Miguel Coyula. Coyula spoke at the World Affairs Council on October 3, 2014. His presentation on Havana’s architecture pulls together housing issues, infrastructure, investment and restoration programs. For Coyula architecture reflects the political and economic context of the country.

11:30 am Visit Barbershop Alley. “Papito” Vallares, a local barber, expanded upon his successful barbershop by opening a hairdressing school and several private businesses. He has incorporated entrepreneurship and corporate social responsibility, building a community playground and investing in his community.

12:30 pm Lunch at Doña Eutimia Paladar. This paladar was one of Newsweek’s top 100 restaurants in the world in 2012. The restaurant is located on Havana’s historic Cathedral Square.

2:30 pm Walking tour of the Old City. The tour includes the Plaza Vieja, the oldest plaza in Havana, dating from the 16th century; the Plaza de San Francisco, a cobbled plaza surrounded by buildings dating from the 18th century and dominated by the baroque Iglesia and Convento de San Francisco (1719); the Plaza de la Catedral and the Catedral de San Cristóbal de La Habana; the Plaza de Armas, a scenic tree-lined plaza formerly the center of power in Cuba.

*Final Itinerary will be similar, but actual meeting times will adjust to fit schedule.  Update 8/21/2015
4 pm  **Visit to the Litz Alfonso Academy, a women-led dance company and school for local youth**, specializing in various types of dance. We will watch a private performance by the adolescent dance group, and sit with the dancers afterward to discuss how they came to join the school and the impact it has had on them. The talent and work ethic at this school is impressive.

Evening Free

**Tuesday, December 8**

9 am  **Discussion with the EU Ambassador to Cuba, Herman PORTOCARERO**, about relations between the European Union and Cuba. **Location: EU Mission.**

11 am  **Meeting with Father Yosvany, Archdiocese of Havana.** The Archdiocese has been actively involved in both Church-State issues (visas for foreign priests, opening new churches), educating new clergy, and providing meeting spaces for classes in business administration. **At Centro Felix Varela.**

12:30 pm  **Enjoy a traditional Cuban meal overlooking the Straits of Florida at the Hotel Nacional.** Tasty Cuban food served family style with a great view of the Havana sea wall and the old Spanish fortress. The setting brings many back to the 1950s, when the mafia held its annual meetings at this historic hotel.

2 pm  **Take pedestrian ferry across Havana Bay to the community of Regla, a working-class, Afro-Cuban community with a thriving local culture.** Regla is especially known for its strong ties to Santería and other Afro-Cuban religions. We will have a **discussion with Magia López and Alexey Rodriguez of the hip-hop/jazz duo Obsesión** about their experiences and views on race and gender equality in Cuba.

5:30 pm  Briefing with senior diplomats at the U.S. Embassy in Havana.

Evening Free

**Wednesday, December 9**

9 am  **Discussion with Yaima Doimeadios**, economist from the University of Havana, about the Cuban economy and the economic reform process.

11 am  **Visit to Nostalgic Car Garage**, where Havana’s first private car service refurbishes autos from the 1950s. Discussion with owner and workers.

12:30 pm  **Lunch at Paladar Atelier followed by meeting with independent business owners.** Atelier restaurant is housed in a building that was home to a pre-revolution senator. Discussion about the emerging private sector in Cuba.

3 pm  **Visit to Christopher Colon Cemetery**, one of the oldest and most prestigious cemeteries in Latin America, where we will receive a guided tour.
Private performance and lecture on Cuban Music at Bar Asturias by Prof. Alberto Faya who has been working together as a musician, professor and researcher within the Cuban musical world for over 20 years. He will be joined by a quartet of some of the finest young jazz musicians in Cuba who will take us on a lively musical journey thru the history of Cuba. At Centro Asturiano – light appetizers.

Thursday, December 10

9:00 am Visit to the Museum of Cuban Art. We will be accompanied by Nelson Herrera, an art historian, who will provide an overview of Cuban art and artists over the last 4 centuries.

10:15 am Purchasing Power Tour: Visit to local markets, followed by conversation with local family in their home.

12:00 pm Enjoy pasta pizza and salad at Centro Asturiano’s Italian Restaurant XAEL.

2 pm Visit to the arts and crafts market in Old Havana. The largest handcraft market in Havana, la Feria de San José features hundreds of artisans selling art, crafts, clothes and music.

Free Afternoon

6 pm Spend the evening at Café Madrigal with Frank Delgado, renowned singer and songwriter, for a discussion about the nueva trova movement in Cuba, followed by a musical performance. Café Madrigal, owned and run by film director Rafael Rosales, is housed in a beautiful colonial mansion with the walls lined with captivating artwork. Enjoy tasty tapas and cocktails.

7:30 pm Dinner at Paladar San Cristobal. Located in the heart of Central Havana, this paladar has a reputation of excellence in both atmosphere and local cuisine. Enjoy great food while the local takes you back to the 1940s and 50s.

Friday, December 11

9:30 am Meeting with Professor Hal Klepak, Royal Military College of Canada, an expert on the Cuban Armed Forces and Raúl Castro.

11 am Depart for Varadero, Matanzas, about a 2 hour drive, with stops and lunch along the way.

11:30 am Visit to La Finca Vigía. Formerly the home of Ernest Hemingway, today it still houses his expansive collection of books. It was here where he wrote two of his most celebrated novels: For Whom the Bell Tolls and The Old Man and the Sea. The beautiful grounds and bizarre tails from Hemingway’s many years in Cuba are captivating.

1:30 pm Lunch in in the downtown Matanzas, referred to as “the Athens of Cuba.” Between 1817 and 1827, after the introduction of large sugar mills, the region flourished and attracted a large number of artists, writers, musicians, and intellectuals.
3:30 pm  Enjoy a performance by the local Matanzas Choir in the beautiful seminary.

5 pm  Check-in at all-inclusive resort at Varadero Beach, Cuba’s longest stretch of white, sandy beaches.

Evening Free

Saturday, December 12

9 am  If the embargo were lifted . . . Discussion with Collin Laverty about doing business in Cuba.

10:30 am  Tour of the Varadero Marina. This newly constructed Marina, shopping center and hotel complex is one of the largest in the Caribbean.

12 pm  Visit the Dupont Mansion, a beautiful home overlooking Varadero Beach, followed by a free afternoon exploring either the beaches of Varadero or Matanzas.

7:30 pm  Farewell dinner in Varadero city center, followed by time to enjoy live music and stroll the town.

Sunday, December 13

10 am  Check-out of hotel and depart for airport

2:45 pm  Depart Havana on American Airlines 9411, arriving in Miami at 3:45 pm