

THE STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS OF THE SINO-CUBAN RELATIONSHIP  
AS THE UNITED STATES RENEWS RELATIONS WITH CUBA

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General Studies

by

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WHINSEC  
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

THE STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS OF THE SINO-CUBAN RELATIONSHIP AS THE UNITED STATES RENEWS RELATIONS WITH CUBA, by Major Edward 'Dan' Patterson, 135 pages.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is the largest power competitor of the United States today. China has rapidly risen to power, re-establishing its dominance in Asia while projecting great influence across the globe. China is driven to access global resources and broaden its global influence for the stability and prosperity 1.35 billion citizens. Over the last 15 years, China has rapidly increased trade relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, while the United States has focused foreign policy efforts in the Middle East. China is now second to the U.S. alone in trade relations in the region. Beyond economic influence, the PRC also exhibits diplomatic influence, information infrastructure dominance and military cooperation throughout the Western Hemisphere. According to the theories of international relations, China's rise to power could present a significant threat to the National Security of the United States.

Cuba, the PRC's oldest ally in the Western Hemisphere, possesses a shared ideology, strategic location, an emerging market, a deep water commercial port, regional influence, and natural resources which make Cuba an key Chinese partner in the region. Using a threat assessment methodology, this thesis examines the strategic considerations of the Sino-Cuban relationship in the reestablishment of Cuban-American relations.

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## ACRONYMS

ALBA	<i>Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América</i> (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America). ALBA is an intergovernmental organization based on the idea of social, political and economic integration of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Founded in 2004 by Venezuela and Cuba. The eleven members are Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Grenada, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Venezuela.
CELAC	<i>Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños</i> , (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States). CELAC includes 33 states of Latin America and the Caribbean and excludes the United States and Canada. CELAC is an alternative to the Organization of American States (OAS) that is dominated by the U.S.
FAR	<i>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias</i> (Revolutionary Armed Forces). The Cuban FAR consist of the Army, Air and Air Defense Force, Navy, Civil Defense and National Reserves and several paramilitary forces such as the territorial troops Militia Youth Labor Army and the Defense and Production Brigades.
GAESA	<i>Grupo de Administración Empresarial Sociedad Anónima</i> . (Enterprise Administration Group Corporation or Business Administration Group Corporation). The holding company for the Cuban Defense Ministry. Currently led by Luis Alberto Rodriguez Lopez Callejas, the son-in-law of Raul Castro.
OAS	Organization of American States. Established in 1948 and headquartered in Washington D.C. All 35 states of the Western Hemisphere are represented in the organization that has largely been established and run by the United States. Cuba's participation was suspended in 1962 and later readmitted in 2009. However Cuba has chosen not to resume their participation.
PLA	The People's Liberation Army
PLAN	The People's Liberation Army Navy
PRC	The People's Republic of China



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Problem Statement

The Peoples Republic of China (PRC) is the largest power competitor of the United States today. China has a rich history as a global power and in comparison to its history, only recently fell from prominence. China has been in a state of extended weakness and transition from the 19th Century when European powers rose to prominence. After the “century of humiliation” as referred to by Chinese nationalists, China has endeavored to regain great power status. The post-Cold War PRC has risen to power very quickly and with the century of humiliation fresh in its mind, is re-establishing itself as the dominant power in Asia and projecting its influence across the globe. In November 2012, Xi Jinping, the PRC’s president, provided his vision for the nation referred to as the Chinese Dream. “The Chinese Dream integrates national and personal aspirations, with the twin goals of reclaiming national pride and achieving a comfortable lifestyle for individual Chinese. It requires sustained economic growth, expanded equality and an infusion of cultural values to balance materialism.”<sup>1</sup> In order to provide for its 1.35 billion citizens, China is driven to seek access to regional resources and to influence regional economic and political matters. However, regional dominance will not secure the Chinese Dream in itself. Securing access to global resources and broadening its global influence in conjunction with regional dominance is the answer the PRC has chosen to secure the Chinese Dream. Since the turn of the century, China has

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<sup>1</sup> China Daily USA, “Potential of the Chinese Dream,” March 26, 2014, accessed October 5, 2015, [http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2014-03/26/content\\_17389146.htm](http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2014-03/26/content_17389146.htm).

increased trade relations in Latin America and the Caribbean, becoming second in the region to the US alone in trade relations. China needs natural resources and commodities such as oil and soybeans and many Latin American governments and businessmen, seeking economic opportunities, have warmly welcomed expanded engagement with China. More than economic influence, the PRC has grown in political influence in the Western Hemisphere as well. Latin America and the Caribbean have suffered from a lack of resources in the last decade as U.S. foreign policy focused resources in the Middle East, Afghanistan and most recently the Asian “pivot” in 2012.

The PRC’s oldest ally in the Western Hemisphere is Cuba. Cuba’s attributes of strategic location, its status as an emerging market and potential regional commerce hub, regional influence, ideological bond with China and to a degree, its natural resources make it an important partner for China in the region. As the US re-engages with Cuba and the Cuban market opens, Sino-Cuban relations are likely to continue to expand as China seeks partnership with the reemerging regional player. China’s influence in Cuba presents strategic, economic and political considerations to the United States.

#### Primary Research Question

What are the strategic considerations for the U.S. regarding China’s engagement with Cuba as the U.S. and Cuba rebuild their relationship?

This question is important to policymakers and the national security of the United States. Our nation’s limited resources are currently required to focus on the Middle East, Afghanistan, Russia’s aggression in Ukraine, Asia, trans-national terrorism, the migration crisis and pandemics such as Ebola. Few resources are prioritized to support relations with Latin America and the Caribbean. As a result, a growing threat to national security

in the Western Hemisphere could rise undetected or unchallenged. The PRC could fit into this category of threat in the Western Hemisphere. Cuba, due to the interest that China perceives in it could be an area of conflict for the United States in the region as the U.S. and Cuba re-establish diplomatic relations.

### Secondary Research Questions

1. Is China's engagement with the Western Hemisphere a threat to US national security?
2. Is there a zero-sum relationship between the China-Cuba and US-Cuba relationship?
3. How might the PRC's military engagement and security cooperation expand in the Cuba?
4. How does the shared ideology between the PRC and Cuba play a role in the Sino-Cuban relationship?
5. How will the evolving Cuba-U.S. relations impact the U.S.-China relationship?

These five secondary questions require a response in order to answer the primary thesis question. Through their resolution, the U.S. strategic considerations regarding China's engagement with Cuba as the U.S.-Cuban relations resume will be evident. The instruments of national power, or the tools a country uses to influence other countries, or international organizations will be the framework used to analyze the questions.

### Assumptions

1. The People's Republic of China seeks to become the global superpower.

2. States place survival as their most important self-interest. Survival can indicate maintaining a state's territorial integrity, preserving the state's method of governance and/or protecting the state from an internal or external perceived threat.
3. China uses the instruments of power to engage with countries in Asia and across the globe. This use of the instruments of power, at times, poses a direct challenge to U.S. foreign policy. This work assumes that a direct challenge of this nature is a by-product of the nation to nation engagement and not intended by the PRC to be adversarial in nature.
4. Under some circumstances, China may consider using its military as a tool in protecting and or advancing the interests of its commercial operations or population.
5. China does not seek to enter into a conflict with the US in the near term future.
6. US Congress is likely to remove a significant portion of the trade restrictions currently on Cuba within the next decade.

#### Definitions

Instruments of national power—“The ability of the United States to achieve its national strategic objectives is dependent on the effectiveness of the US Government (USG) in employing the instruments of national power. The appropriate governmental officials, often with National Security Council (NSC) direction, normally coordinate these instruments of national power (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic [DIME]). They are the tools the United States uses to apply its sources of power,

including its culture, human potential, industry, science and technology, academic institutions, geography, and national will.”<sup>2</sup>

Offensive Realism—A theory of international politics that maintains that “the international system forces states that are concerned about their security to compete for power. The ultimate goal of every great power is to maximize its share of world power and eventually dominate the system. In practical terms, this means that the most powerful states seek to establish hegemony in their region of the world while also ensuring that no rival great power dominates another area.”<sup>3</sup>

Soft power—a concept developed by Joseph Nye of Harvard University to describe the ability to attract and co-opt rather than coerce, use force or give money as a means of persuasion.<sup>4</sup>

### Scope

This thesis will examine the rise of China’s influence in Latin America and the Caribbean, specifically focused on the PRC’s oldest ally in the Western Hemisphere, Cuba. It will analyze the strategic considerations facing the U.S. as diplomatic ties with Cuba are reestablished. The geographic scope for research is China, the Western

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<sup>2</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, March 2009), I-1.

<sup>3</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, “Can China Rise Peacefully?” April 8, 2014, accessed September 15, 2015, <http://www.nationalinterest.org/print/commentary/can-china-rise-peacefully-10204>.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Nye, “China’s Soft Power Deficit; To Catch Up, Its Politics Must Unleash the Many Talents of Its Civil Society,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 8, 2012, accessed September 9, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304451104577389923098678842>.

Hemisphere, Cuba and the United States. The instruments of national power (DIME) are the framework used to analyze the topic.

### Limitations

Specific information on the direct state-to-state engagement of China and Cuba is limited. As such, research must be qualitative in nature and will depend on public sources for examination. Classified information is not considered for inclusion in this thesis.

The future of international politics is unknown because of the endless variables that influence the subject. Therefore, this thesis is based on political theory. The theories of realism and liberalism are the theories most applicable to the research. However, all theories, by definition are not fact, causing the use of theory to be a limitation.

### Delimitations

The rise of China is a global phenomenon. This research does not address the full scope of the rise of China, but rather centers on the rise of China through its relationship with Cuba. Analysis of the topic requires historical context, but the majority of the research is based on the events that have transpired in the last decade

### Significance of the Study

This study is significant because of the changes in the strategic environment of the Western Hemisphere. The PRC has risen rapidly in the last 60 years to regain its position as a great power, which is reintroducing great power politics to the world stage. As part of its rise, China has increased engagement with Latin American and the Caribbean countries and changed the strategic environment of the Americas. Cuba's reincorporation into the dynamics of the hemisphere is another significant strategic

change. The relation between the rising PRC and antagonistic Cuba has the potential for significant strategic challenges and opportunities for the United States. The strategic proximity of Cuba to the U.S. and the importance of the Sino-Cuban relationship are significant factors that this study will bring to light. These factors are relevant to policymakers on a topic that has, to date, received relatively limited consideration.



## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The rapid rise of the PRC's regional power and influence across the globe has gained China the position of largest power competitor to the United States. In the last ten years, China has gained economic and political influence in every region of the world while dedicating a significant portion of its continually growing national defense budget to expand and modernize its military capability. China's economy is projected to become the world's largest economy in the next few years.<sup>5</sup> This phenomenon has attracted the attention of journalists, academics, economists, political scientist, and conspiracy theorists across the world. Countless books, articles, blogs, conferences, and research are dedicated to reporting, assessing and analyzing Chinas growth.

In the last two years, news regarding the reestablishment of relations between the United States and Cuba have constantly found headlines. One of the goals of standing President Barack Obama in the closing years of his second term has been to initiate the renewal of relations with Cuba. During the period of this thesis research, U.S. and Cuban Embassies have been reopened, travel restrictions have become less restrictive, business opportunities are re-opening, and President Obama has even traveled to the Island of Cuba for state-to-state talks with Raul Castro. All of this is captured in the news media with many different points of view.

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<sup>5</sup> Joseph E. Stiglitz, "The Chinese Century," *Vanity Fair*, January 2015, accessed November 16, 2015, <http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2015/01/china-worlds-largest-economy>.

Cuba, the longest standing ally of the PRC in the Western Hemisphere, is a mere 90 miles from the U.S. border, making it a very attractive location strategically for China in the event of hostilities between the two great competitors. As the U.S. renews relations with Cuba, and with a high probability that the economic embargo on Cuba will eventually be lifted, China will gain the further opportunity to employ the instruments of power (DIME) and gain greater influence in Cuba. As Cuba emerges into the light of normalized relations with the world, U.S. policymakers will face strategic considerations regarding Cuba, but perhaps more importantly regarding China. Indeed, the development of Sino-Cuban and American-Cuban relationships could greatly impact the U.S.-Chinese relations across the globe and determine the future of great power politics as China rises.

This thesis looks to bridge the gaps in the literature between the rise of China and China's influence in Cuba while addressing the strategic considerations that face the United States in its dynamic relations with both Cuba and China.

This literature review is divided into sections by topic. The first section explores the literature discussing the history of the Sino-Cuban relations. The second section establishes the literature on the threat-assessment methodology used in this research. The third section investigates the different works of literature that discuss the theories of international relations (IR) applicable to the rise of China. The fourth section examines literature regarding the relations of China, Cuba, and the United States, according to the instruments of national power. The final section encompasses the national level documents that have been published by the United States and China, providing statements that support the military action in the relationship. Each of these sections is important for this research to build the historical context, set the stage for the method of

analysis of this thesis, understand international relations theory and provide a broad base of literature that analyzes the Sino-Cuban-American relationships and the strategic implications of that relationship on U.S.

### History of the Sino-Cuban Relationship

From the arrival of Chinese laborers to Cuba in the mid-1800s to the Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s, and the ‘Special Period’ after the fall of the U.S.S.R a variety of works have been written discussing the Sino-Cuban historical relations. This section of literature review will encompass all works of literature that include the historical and cultural ties in the Sino-Cuban relationship.

From the historical perspective, some of the most important works are “The Unique History of Chinese in Cuba,” a presentation by Mary-Alice Waters, “Sino-Cuban Relations During the Early Years of the Castro Regime” by Ynighong Cheng, “A Survey of the Relationship Between Cuba and China: A Chinese Perspective” by Pin Zuo, and “China and Cuba: Past Present and Future” by Mao Xianglin, Carlos Alzugaray Treto, Liu Weiguang, and Adrian H. Hearn of *China engages in Latin America, Tracing the Trajectory*.

Mary-Alice Waters details the early Chinese immigrants to the Caribbean island. Her works explain the unique relationship that Cuba and China shared in the mid-1800s. Waters helps to uncover the human dimension of the Sino-Cuban relationship. This relationship, which is an important human dimension in the Sino-Cuban relations, demonstrates how both nations use it in the spectrum of diplomatic, informational, military and economic means for mutual gain between the communist nations. Indeed,

the mix of Chinese blood in Cuba's population has enabled success in the diplomatic and information efforts of Sino-Cuban relations.

Carrie Stetler writes on the dwindling influence of the Chinese culture in Cuba today. In her article showcasing Kathleen Lopez, a professor at Rutgers University, and author of "As Chinese-Cuban Population Dwindles, Traditions Die" discusses the change in the Chinese culture in Cuba due to the limited immigration of Chinese during the revolution in Cuba. She also establishes the important contributions of Chinese Cubans during the struggle for independence and the revolution. Stetler and Lopez emphasize the importance of the Chinese diaspora in Cuba to strengthen cultural ties between nations.

Kathleen Lopez, the author of *Chinese Cubans*, says there is an effort by those of Chinese blood in Cuba to seek out their heritage today. "It's the Chinese of mixed descent who are at the forefront of these revitalization efforts and who have also embarked on journeys to explore their ancestry."<sup>6</sup> China is currently increasing efforts to court their overseas-Chinese populations. This relatively new effort by the Chinese is having a large impact on the PRC and the Chinese diaspora across the globe. Efforts to increase pride in Chinese nationalism is helping Chinese companies enter the economies of the globe through pre-established relations between the diaspora and the local government. Beijing is also seeking to profit from the highly skilled Chinese diaspora across the globe. Lopez's work lends great value to the understanding of the mainland Chinese towards their Diaspora, specifically in Cuba.

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<sup>6</sup> Carrie Stetler, "As Chinese-Cuban Population Dwindles, Traditions Die," *Rutgers Today*, October 18, 2013, accessed October 17, 2015, <http://news.rutgers.edu/feature/chinese-cuban-population-dwindles-traditions-die/20131020#.Viasyn6rQdW>.

Paul Nash's work "How the Chinese are Helping to transform Cuba, Again." describes the decline in Sino-Cuban relations after the Sino-Soviet split on a human level, to include the major exodus of Chinese Cubans from the island once Castro took control. Nash's work is important to identify the problem and also to describe how high-level leaders from both nations are working to bridge the gap to promote greater intercourse between the two nations.

Eliza Jiaping Kingsley-Ma, the author of "'El Morro y la Muralla': Mapping Representations of Chinese Cuban Identity" writes on the perspective of the undertones of the sentiment of the Chinese diaspora in Cuba during the fight for independence and through the revolution into the "Special Period." She clearly establishes that the Chinese immigrant was not included in the future of Cuba by independence leaders such as José Martí, but rather an appreciated asset and resource to the cause. This work demonstrates that the ethnic and cultural integration into Cuban society by Chinese was tough to achieve and despite loyal efforts during the fight for independence, Chinese immigrants were not seen as equals.

Dr. Adrian H. Hearn writes on the state level relationship between the PRC and Cuba after the Castro Revolution. Dr. Hearn's articles "Cuba and China: Lessons and Opportunities for the United States," "China and Cuba: Past, Present, and Future," "The US-Cuba-China Triangle" and "China and the Future of Cuba" provide an expert viewpoint on the Sino-Cuban relationship over the last 60 years. His works provide information that spans the spectrum of DIME and what it means in Cuba, Latin America, and the Western Hemisphere.

These Authors demonstrate that the relationship between China and Cuba has increasingly strengthened in the last 25 years since the fall of the U.S.S.R. However, the primarily focus is given to the economic relationship and much less to the other elements of DIME. This gap is identified by the authors and explained that due to the difficulty to assess the closed networks of China and Cuba, we are reliant on news media, third party commercial relations that span the two nations and the few official statements that are made by both nations regarding their relationship. Despite the level of access to information, all information indicates that Sino-Cuban relationship will continue to grow regarding engagement across all the DIME spectrum, with the economic relationship in the forefront.

In summary, the literature in this section describes the historical state of the Sino-Cuban relations from prerevolutionary Cuba to Castro's Revolution till today. The historical backdrop of Sino-Cuban relations is necessary to understand the strategic considerations facing the U.S. as ties with Cuba are reestablished.

### Threat Assessment Methodology

The literature on Threat Assessment Methodology is not common. Unclassified publications from the U.S. Department of Defense such as Joint Publication 2-01, *Joint and National Intelligence Support to Military Operations*, discuss the Dynamic Threat Assessment (DTA) and Theater Intelligence Assessment (TIA). These methodologies of assessing a threat, however, are only mentioned in these publications, and the methods themselves are not public documents. Open source documentation of the methodology for threat assessment is limited and not necessarily on the subject of interest. For example, Randy Borum, Robert Fein, Bryan Vossekuil, and John Berglund, the authors of "Threat

Assessment: Defining an Approach to Assessing Risk for Targeted Violence,” use a threat assessment methodology to law enforcement activities as they relate to mental health. Jeffrey M. Bale and Gary Ackerman, the authors of “Recommendations on the Development Methodologies and Attributes for Assessing Terrorist Threats of WMD Terrorism,” use the threat assessment methodology to analyze the threat of terrorists and the use of weapons of mass destruction. Other publications use the threat assessment methodology in the field of computer networking and cyber threats. Of all the publications on the methodology of assessing a threat, Bale and Ackerman define the methodology in greatest detail.

#### Theories of International Relations and the Rise of China

There are several schools of thought in the international relations (IR) theory. This literature review discusses the schools of thought of the realists, liberals, power transition theorists as they are the most applicable to this research. International relations theory literature is split into three theories as applicable to this research. The competing theories are realism, liberalism and power transition theory. The literature reviewed in this section were written in the context of international relations and the rise of China. Other writings that do not address the rise of China are not included in this literature review.

John Mearsheimer is one key author for the IR theory of realism. In his article “Can China Rise Peacefully?” which was excerpted from *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Mearsheimer argues that the rise of China could change the current system of power and cause great-power politics to return to the global stage. Mearsheimer applies

his theory directly to the rise of China. Therefore his writing is particularly useful in this research.

Aaron L. Friedberg, author of “The Future Relations of U.S.-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?” writes regarding the different theories that are possible in the Chinese rise. Friedberg discusses realism and liberalism in their different perspectives from optimistic to pessimistic and how they could apply to the U.S.-China relations. He does not take a definitive stance, but rather explores how the different perspectives of the two theories could apply.

Another theory of international relations applicable to this research is power transition theory. This theory has root in Thucydides, the historian of the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides states that “ambitious new challengers unnerve established powers. When a rising power starts overtaking the reigning hegemon by economic and military measures, and thence converting physical into political power, the hegemon is tempted to answer the challenge by force—restoring its paramount status. Such forebodings bring on bloody, oftentimes protracted strife as each contender takes up arms in its cause.”<sup>7</sup> James R. Holmes, author of an article in *The Diplomat*, discusses this theory arguing that it is not applicable anymore today due to the vast differences in today’s society and that of ancient Greece.

A. F. K. Organski in his 1958 book *World Politics* was the first to use the term of power transition theory. Power transition theory predicts conflict between the two great

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<sup>7</sup> James R. Holmes, “The Anatomy of Peaceful Power Transitions,” *The Diplomat*, April 10, 2014, accessed November 18, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/04/the-anatomy-of-peaceful-power-transitions/>.



powers in transition, and the use of a third country, such as Cuba, could play the role of an instrument of the conflict. David Lai is the author of *The United States and China in Power Transition*. Lai identifies the historical events that have put the U.S. and China at odds and identified issues that could draw the two into conflict during the transition. Lai acknowledges that neither the United States nor the PRC want war, but that both sides also recognize that there are issues between them that could become incendiary during the transition. Lai's work only discusses the U.S. and Chinese relation and does not mention Cuba in his book.

#### Relations of China and Cuba and the United States

This section discusses the literature is addressing the Chinese, Cuban, American diplomatic relations. Volumes of literature are written on the Sino-American relationship and the Cuban-American relationship. To a lesser extent, literature touches on the Sino-Latin American relationship. Within these works of literature information on the Sino-Cuban relationship is encountered, usually, contained in the chapters of larger books. There are few works of literature that specifically focus on the subject, requiring research to be conducted in all mediums of information.

Multiple authors discuss the diplomatic relations of the U.S., China, and Cuba. The Cuban portion is usually less prominent and tucked away in a few paragraphs or maybe a chapter dedicated to Cuban interaction with China. Writings cover many perspectives ranging from a threat of Red China in the American backyard to a peaceful and prosperous rise of China. Xi Jinping stated: "It [The PRC] is ready to carry out

friendly cooperation with all countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and build a harmonious world of durable peace and common prosperity.”<sup>8</sup>

David Shambaugh is one of the prominent authors in the field of U.S. Chinese diplomatic relations. His works *China Goes Global: The Partial Power* he examines subjects such as understanding China’s Global impact and China’s global diplomatic presence. In *Tangled Titans: The United States and China*, which he edited, the chapters span the spectrum of the instruments of national power and attempt to provide the U.S and Chinese perspectives on the different subjects. Dan Blumenthal and Philip Swagel, writers of *An Awkward Embrace: the United States and China in the 21st Century* present findings that China is acting as a rival, and discuss why they are behaving in that manner. They also give scenarios of how the future relationship could unfold ranging from optimistic to very pessimistic. All of the above mentioned provide expert analysis of the rise of China and the implications for the United States. However, none of them write regarding the Sino-Cuban relationship in detail.

The Sino-Cuban diplomatic relationship is examined in the writings of R. Evan Ellis, Enrique Dussell Peters, Julia Sweig, Riordan Roett and Guadalupe Paz. Each author has written or edited literature that expands on the growing engagement of China in Latin America. Although they primarily focus on the Sino-Latin American relations, most have a portion of their writings that address Sino-Cuban relations. Each author presents a unique perspective in their work, namely historical, strategic, economic, diplomatic, etc.

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<sup>8</sup> University of Southern California US-China Institute, “China’s Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean,” April 20, 2009, accessed October 16, 2015, <http://china.usc.edu /chinas-policy-paper-latin-america-and-caribbean>.

However, all agree that China's current focus in Latin America is in economic engagement and the areas of diplomacy, military engagement, and information all swing on the hinges of the economic engagement that the rising China has to offer.

Ellis writes that China's interest in Latin America can be divided into four areas. The first is as Diaz and Lee identified "acquiring primary products, [the second] obtaining markets for Chinese exports." These reasons again address the economic aspect of DIME. The third and fourth interest of the Chinese in Latin America are diplomatic and informational in nature. The third is "gaining international isolation of Taiwan and the fourth is securing strategic alliances as part of China's global positioning as it emerges as a superpower."<sup>9</sup>

Enrique Dussell Peters, in his book *China and Latin America; Economic relations in the twenty-first century* provides a very detailed economic focus on China's influence in Latin America. Peters' writings will be a benchmark in understanding the spectrum of economic engagement in Sino-Latin American relations.

Several authors discuss the threat of China to the United States in terms that although not impossible, are unlikely at the moment. Timperlake and Trippett's *Red Dragon Rising: Communist China's Military Threat to America*, Brett Decker and William C. Triplett's "*Bowing to Beijing*," and Bill Gertz's "*The China Threat: How the People's Republic Targets America*" offer a biased, yet not unrealistic perspective on the potential threat that the PRC poses to the U.S. by engaging in the Western Hemisphere. Although the focus of their work is on the U.S.- China relationship, they identify many of

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<sup>9</sup> R. Evan Ellis, *China in Latin America; the Whats and Wherefores* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), 9.

the strategic aspects of the Sino-Latin American relationship, such as the Chinese firm that fulfills the contract for the Panama Canal.

The military relationship between China and Cuba is the hardest subject to find published literature. The nature of military information ensures that China and Cuba safeguard the information with great caution. Without hard data, many authors are not comfortable making assessments and analysis of the subject. There are a few bloggers that have written widely on the subject, however. Chris Simmons, one of the principle bloggers of the website cubaconfidential.com has written extensively on the intelligence collection and trade that is part of the Sino-Cuban relationship. As a former counterintelligence agent, one assumes that his works are professional in nature and actuate in content, but there is a lack of anyone in the greater community to verify his comments. Therefore they should be read with scrutiny.

#### National Documents U.S. and China

The PRC's rise in power is heavily suggested in 2015 National Security Strategy (NSS). "We will deter and defeat any adversary that threatens our national security and that of our allies. We confidently welcome the peaceful rise of other countries as partners to share the burdens for maintaining a more peaceful and prosperous world. We will continue to collaborate with established and emerging powers to promote our shared security and defend our common humanity, even as we compete with them in economic and other realms."<sup>10</sup> The U.S. will closely monitor their actions in Asia and across the

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<sup>10</sup> The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2015), 29, accessed October 25, 2015, [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015\\_national\\_security\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf).

globe as China projects its influence abroad, especially in the Western Hemisphere. National official publications such as the NSS, the National Military Strategy (NMS), the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), the 2016 Posture Statement of the USSOUTHCOM Commander, the 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) and the Western Hemisphere Defense Policy Statement are among the U.S. strategic documents used in this work. In all of these documents, National Security and the effort to secure and maintain the most meaningful relationship in the Western Hemisphere are at the forefront.

As the U.S. is only one of the three nations of interest in this work, National Documents of China and Cuba would be ideal to compare and analyze. In China's case, there are some official government released documents that declare economic and military strategy. In the case of Cuba, there are no official governmental documents that note Cuban strategy.

On May 26, 2015, the Chinese Ministry of Defense publicly released, for the first time, its Chinese Military Strategy, outlining a new policy of "active defense."<sup>11</sup> China could be replicating the U.S. system of regular strategic document releases to gain international recognition as they ascend in regional power and global influence. Most probably, China is sending a message to the U.S. that it will defend its interests across the globe and not be intimidated by U.S. power politics.

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<sup>11</sup> USNI News, "Document: China's Military Strategy," May 26, 2015, accessed November 10, 2015, <http://news.usni.org/2015/05/26/document-chinas-military-strategy>.

The PRC recently released China's 13th Five-Year Plan. "China's five-year plans are blueprints containing the country's social, economic, and political goals."<sup>12</sup> China has employed five-year plans since the rise of communism in China. Historically, the PRC has closely followed their five-year plans and realized the goals that they have set in each plan. This five-year-plan is primarily focused on economic development.

Other documents of interest for this research include the 2008 China Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean, works from Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) and the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS) which detail objectives and goals of the PRC in the international community, specifically in the Western Hemisphere.

In conclusion to this literature review, volumes of books, journals, articles, whitepapers, presentations, and blogs have been written regarding the history of the Sino-Cuban relationship, IR theory, and the rise of China, the implications of the Chinese rise to the United States, the Cuban-American relationship and the Sino-Cuban relationship. Due to the dynamic state of affairs in the last two years between the three nations, there will be increased literature published on this topic in the future. There are dimensions of this research topic that have limited literature, such as the threat assessment methodology and state-to-state interaction between China and Cuba, especially in the aspect of their military relationship. This research seeks to bridge some of those gaps in efforts to

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<sup>12</sup> APCO Worldwide, "The 13th Five-Year Plan: Xi Jinping Reiterates his Vision for China," accessed April 12, 2016, <http://www.apcoworldwide.com/docs/default-source/default-document-library/Thought-Leadership/13-five-year-plan-think-piece.pdf?sfvrsn=2>.

identify the strategic considerations of the Sino-Cuban relationship facing the United States in the restoration of relations with Cuba.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The methodology used in this thesis is adapted from the threat assessment approach used by security based organizations from both governmental and private sectors to determine threats and vulnerabilities to a system. For this work, the components of the threat assessment methodology are based on the U.S. Department of Defense Intelligence Community methods (ATP 2-33.4 Intelligence Analysis), research done by the University of South Florida Scholar Commons<sup>13</sup> and the Center for Nonproliferation Studies. A threat assessment evaluates what drives an actor to act, the exchanges between two or more actors and the current situation that the actor must negotiate. Because the methodology has been developed to assess threats such as terrorism, the present work modifies the approach to make it appropriate for evaluating threats not focused exclusively on the prospect of a physical attack. This work will focus the threat assessment methodology on the interaction between the nations of China and Cuba and the threat assessment that their relationship poses the United States.

As explained by Jeffrey Bale and Gary Ackerman in the book *Recommendations on the Development of Methodologies and Attributes for Assessing Terrorist Threats of WMD Terrorism*, “A basic threat assessment includes establishing the value and

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<sup>13</sup> Randy Borum, Robert Fein, Bryan Vossekuil, and John Berglund, “Threat Assessment: Defining an Approach to Assessing Risk for Targeted Violence” (Mental Health Law and Policy Faculty Publications, University of South Florida, Scholar Commons, paper 146, Tampa, FL, 1999), accessed February 6, 2016, [http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1145&context=mhlp\\_facpub](http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1145&context=mhlp_facpub).



vulnerability of the asset under threat, as well as the capability and motivation of the potential attacker.”<sup>14</sup> By definition, the methodology applied in this paper is qualitative in character, although quantitative assessments are selectively introduced throughout the work where appropriate.

According to Bale and Ackerman, assessing whether an actor or phenomenon is a threat requires the consideration of four factors: value, vulnerability, capability, and motivation. Value is the relative worth, utility or importance<sup>15</sup> of the objective. For the purpose of the present analysis, the value of Cuba to China will be assessed through the lens of the DIME construct for understanding national power. The vulnerability is the openness to attack or damage.<sup>16</sup> The vulnerability of the United States in this study is determined by the national capacity to anticipate a threat, react to the anticipated threat and resist or remove the threat. The capability is aptitude or ability needed to do something.<sup>17</sup> This study will examine the PRC’s capability, through the means of Cuba, to exploit a vulnerability in the United States. Lastly, motivation is possessing a reason

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<sup>14</sup> Jeffrey M. Bale and Gary Ackerman, “Recommendations on the Development Methodologies and Attributes for Assessing Terrorist Threats of WMD Terrorism” (Research, Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, Monterey, CA, 2005), 19, accessed January 30, 2016, [http://courses.cs.washington.edu/courses/csep590/05au/readings/Bale\\_Ackerman\\_FinalReport.pdf](http://courses.cs.washington.edu/courses/csep590/05au/readings/Bale_Ackerman_FinalReport.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Merriam Webster Dictionary, s.v. “value,” accessed January 30, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/value>.

<sup>16</sup> Merriam Webster Dictionary, s.v. “vulnerability,” accessed January 30, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vulnerability>.

<sup>17</sup> Merriam Webster Dictionary, s.v. “capability,” accessed January 30, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/capability>.

for doing something.<sup>18</sup> Does the PRC have the motivation to use a capability to exploit a vulnerability in the United States through the means of Cuba, and if so does that action achieve the desired end value anticipated by the People's Republic of China?

The likelihood of the threat is a critical factor to this methodology. Within the overall threat assessment, the likelihood is the degree to which the actor presents a threat is the product of his motivations and capabilities. Through Cuba, the PRC has the capability to stage an invasion of the United States, but if the motivation to work within the current system of world powers is greater than that of the overthrow of great powers, then the likelihood of conflict is very low. This paper assesses motivations regarding three interrelated elements 1) ideological agenda, 2) overall and specific operational objectives and 3) the actor's psychological propensities. When examining the threat presented by a group or state actor, this is assessed regarding the individual and collective psychological characteristics of its members, above all its leaders, influence and are in turn influenced by its organizational dynamics.<sup>19</sup> The likelihood of the threat China presents to the United States through the means of Cuba will be addressed in Chapter 5 (conclusion and recommendations) of this work.

### Research Design

The design for researching this topic will have five phases. (1) A review of the historical context of the Sino-Cuban relationship will establish the base for the research

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<sup>18</sup> Merriam Webster Dictionary, s.v. "motivation," accessed January 30, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/motivation>.

<sup>19</sup> Bale and Ackerman," 14.

to move forward. The next four phases focus on the relationship of the PRC and Cuba through the DIME construct. (2) Assessment of the diplomatic dimension of Sino-Cuban relations. (3) Evaluation of the information relations between Cuban and China. (4) The magnitude of the military connections between the PRC and Cuba. (5) Appraisal of the economic engagement between China and Cuba.

The review of the contextual Sino-Cuban relations, which will address both historical factors and ideological bonds between the two nations is the first phase of research focus. This phase will establish the problem set and frame situation in both China and Cuba based off of historical data.

The second phase examines the political and diplomatic dynamics between China and Cuba in the context of the relationship of each with the United States to examine how changes in the Sino-Cuban diplomatic and political relationship might play out and impact the US.

The third phase is an evaluation of the information relationship. The technical aspect of communications, as well as the messaging and themes that are distinctive to this relationship, will be studied. In the technical part, how does Chinese investment (non-monetary) in upgrading the telecommunications and fiber network of Cuba benefit Cuba as well as China? Will China, having access to these means of communication, be able to manage good relations with Cuba and the multitude of Latin American countries that depend on Chinese communications firms in the instance of corruption or misuse of communications for the purpose of gain for China? On the part of messaging and informational themes, will Cuba and China be able to maintain solidarity in messaging amidst controlled populations who have similar, yet diverging ideological views?

The fourth phase is the military aspect. This phase will investigate the military capabilities of the Cubans and China alike, but more importantly how the Sino-Cuban relationship affects the strategic environment in the region in military terms. Specifically, this work will consider the increase of opportunities for Chinese SIGINT collection facilities on Cuba as well as resupply bases for signals ships and submarines close to major commercial seaports in the U.S. Additionally, opportunities for increased PLA engagement in the Western Hemisphere via professional military exchanges, combined training, foreign military sales through the medium of Cuba will be explored. Chinese engagement in the hemisphere has been primarily commercial in nature, but would the nature of Chinese commerce in Cuba create greater espionage opportunities by China into the U.S. and Latin America? The Latin American Area of Responsibility is the scope of the area for this work.

Last, and certainly not least, is the analysis of economic impacts of Sino-Cuban engagement. In the last ten years, Chinese interaction with the Western Hemisphere has primarily been economic in nature. Despite the lower economic interaction with Cuba relative to other Latin American countries, the Chinese economic potential through Cuba is immense. Of the four categories of DIME, the Sino-Cuban economic relationship is most intertwined with U.S. relations and further progress in the other categories will hinge on the future of economic interactions. Several aspects of the Sino-Cuban economic relationship researched in this phase are addressed in the following questions: Will Sino-Cuban trade prosper without Cuban access to U.S. ports? How will Sino-Cuban reconciliation impact the Cuban economy and its subsequent interest in cooperating with the United States? Could strong Sino-Cuban economic ties make the US

more reluctant to drop sanctions for fear of giving China greater access to the US market through Mariel Free Trade Zone? Could China's state capitalism advance Cuba's transition to a healthy market economy, or reciprocally, help it to sustain an authoritarian government while making that transition? Would a strong China-backed Cuban economy dominate the Caribbean to the disadvantage of US policy objectives? Would a China-fueled Cuban tourist negatively impact the tourist economies of the Caribbean, resulting in an increased risk of illicit activity through the region?

In general, these five phases of research, analysis will illuminate responses to the secondary questions of the research, namely: Is China's engagement with Cuba a threat to US national security? Is there a zero-sum relationship between the China-Cuba and US-Cuba relationship? How might the PRC's military engagement and security cooperation expand in the Cuba? How does the shared ideology between the PRC and Cuba play a role in the Sino-Cuban relationship? How will the evolving Cuba-U.S. relations impact the U.S.-China relationship?

#### Collection Plan

The collection of data and analysis used in support of phases one through five are based on material obtained through the Donovan Research Library, the Fort Benning Libraries online resources, and internet searches. These phases are amplified through correspondence with authorities on China-Latin America issues such as Evan Ellis, Frank Mora, and Adrian Hearn

Phase 3 is augmented by Internet sites and internet based videos. China Central Television (CCTV), Xinhua.com, Prensa Latina and Cuban News Agency are all major contributors to the information portion of the research. These state-controlled news

agencies provide unique insight to the informational themes and messaging relayed to the world regarding the Sino-Cuban relationship.

Phase 4 is augmented by visits to U.S. Southern Command, U.S. Navy South, JIATF South, U.S. Special Operations Command - South and U.S. Coast Guard Base Miami Beach and several phone conferences with Dr. R. Evan Ellis and Dr. Frank O. Mora. At meetings with each of the above organizations, experts provided perspectives and analysis of the current situation in Cuba and the influence of China in the Caribbean. These visits enriched this investigation with a distinct military point of view focused directly on the research topic.

Phase 5 is augmented with the numerous economic research entities accessible on the internet. Of specific importance to this topic is the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC) which touts itself as the world's leading visualization engine for international trade data. This source is extremely useful in graphically displaying the Sino-Cuban trade relationship since the Cuban "Special Period" till now.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

This chapter is structured into six sections corresponding to the factors traditionally used by the U.S. military in threat assessments: historical context, value vulnerability, capability, motivation and likelihood. These sections are specifically tailored to the Sino-Cuban relationship in light of restoring U.S.-Cuban relations. Following the historical context, each section is subdivided into four sub-sections that analyze the Sino-Cuban relationship according to the instruments of national power (DIME).

In the first section, the historical context of the relationship between China and Cuba is examined. Divided into two parts, this section investigates the historical significance of the Chinese diaspora in Cuba as well as the ideological dimension of the state to state relationship. The DIME construct is applied to the historical context where applicable. The time frame of the historical context is from the mid-1800s to the early 1990s. With this historical context, the reader will understand the growing influence of the PRC in Cuba since the early 1990s until now.

The value of today's Sino-Cuban relationship is the topic of the second section and is categorized according to the DIME model. The theories of international relations will assist in establishing the value of the relationship in the diplomatic category. By the end of this section, the reader will clearly see that the PRC has substantially risen in influence in Cuba over the last 25 years.

The vulnerabilities of the United States, in light of the Sino-Cuban relationship, will be discussed in the third section. This section is essential to the threat assessment methodology and will be addressed at the national strategic level by the instruments of national power. Due to the relative strength of position that the U.S. holds over both the PRC and Cuba in the world and the western hemisphere, the vulnerabilities of the United States are minimal at this point, however, they are increasing. Cyber threats, intelligence collection, and preferential trade agreements are a few of the areas of concern mentioned by national security policy papers such as the National Security Strategy, the National Military Strategy, the SOUTHCOM Commander's congressional testimony.

The fourth section of this chapter address the capabilities of The People's Republic of China according to the DIME construct through the medium of Cuba. At merely 90 miles south of the continental United States, Cuba provides the PRC advantageous position for its growing capabilities in a potential military conflict between the U.S and China.

Section five discusses motivation. Of all of the factors in a threat assessment, motivation is the most important. According to Bale and Ackerman, the value, vulnerability, and capability of an actor does not necessarily constitute a threat. Motivation is the principal factor in determining the threat by an actor. This section will examine the motivations publicly stated and demonstrated by the PRC regarding their engagement in the Western Hemisphere and specifically with Cuba.

The sixth section examines the likelihood of the PRC having sufficient motivation to use their capabilities to exploit a vulnerability presented by the United States via Cuba.



This section will examine the likelihood of China's threat through the evaluation of the likelihood in each of the categories of the instruments of national power (DIME).

Historical Context of Sino-Cuban Relations;  
The Chinese Diaspora

This section demonstrates the historical long-term roots established by the Chinese in Cuba, and how the Chinese diaspora is leveraged today in Cuba as an amplifier in Sino-Cuban relations. After the fall of the Qing dynasty in the mid-1800s to the British, a massive migration took place where hundreds of thousands of Chinese citizens left China and filled the need for laborers across the globe. Mary-Alice Waters, the author of "The Unique History of Chinese in Cuba" described the early Chinese immigrants: "Pushed by intolerable living conditions on the land and in the cities in China, and pulled by capitalism's unquenchable and ever-expanding need for labor power, many hundreds of thousands of Chinese peasants and workers left their native villages or large cities for the "new world.""<sup>20</sup> Cuba was one of the main destinations of migrating Chinese laborers. Waters continues "...in proportion to the size of the population, mid-nineteenth century Chinese immigration to Cuba was greater than anywhere else in the Americas, including the United States. While virtually the same total numbers went to each country, the population of Cuba was 1.4 million while the U.S. population was 38 million. Not surprisingly, on the streets of Havana and elsewhere,

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<sup>20</sup> Mary-Alice Waters, "The Unique History of Chinese in Cuba" (lecture presented at the New Zealand 'Rising Dragons, Soaring Bananas' International Conference on Chinese diaspora July 17-19, 2009), 1, accessed October 17, 2015, <http://www.goingbananas.org.nz/2009Papers/0718MAW.pdf>.

you will often hear it said that the Cuban people are one-third African, one-third Chinese, and one-third Spanish.”<sup>21</sup>

Chinese indentured servants and the African slaves were esteemed at the same social level and treated as such. Mixing and intermarrying of the two races were very common in this era. The Chinese diaspora maintained much of their Chinese culture due to stronger linkages to mainland China and a deep sense of cultural importance. Despite the many different cultures mixing on the island, they were all united in the desire for freedom from their bondage to the Spanish.

War broke out in 1868 on the island in efforts to gain independence from Spain. Many thousands of Chinese joined the ranks against the Spanish. The honor and courage of the Chinese freedom fighters are still revered today in Cuba and China alike. “The famous words of independence leader General Gonzalo de Quesada are carved on the monument erected in 1946 that stands in the center of Havana today honoring these Chinese mambí forces: “There was not one Chinese-Cuban traitor, there was not one Chinese-Cuban deserter.””<sup>22</sup> The struggle for freedom brought to bear a greater level of equality among all of the inhabitants of the island.

No other movement for independence in the Western Hemisphere featured Chinese descendants in a prominent role during an independence movement. Despite the

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>22</sup> Mary-Alice Waters, “The Unique History of Chinese in Cuba: From Independence Wars to Socialist Revolution,” *The Militant* 75, no. 30 (August 2011) (lecture presented conference in Guangzhou, China, June 27, 2011), accessed October 17, 2015, <http://www.themilitant.com/2011/7530/753050.html>.

revolutionary efforts, and small reforms, Cuba stayed under Spanish rule until the United States assisted in securing independence in 1898 after 30 years of struggle for freedom.

Despite the independence of the nation, the Chinese and African laborers were very limited in their upward social mobility. Jim Crow laws and new anti-Chinese fervor in the U.S. were imported to the island along with U.S. government. The Chinese were seen as competition to the labor and services market, threatening jobs of Americans and power of its elected officials. As an example of such sentiments, Leonard Wood, the governor of Cuba, the government signed Military Order 155 in 1902, which effectively banned all Chinese labor immigration. By the conclusion of the World War I, the Chinese diaspora dropped down to approximately 30,000.

The next few decades Cuba saw an industrious Chinese diaspora make “a place for themselves in Cuban life” reports Duvan C. Corbitt in 1944. “Today the growing and distribution of green vegetables is largely in Chinese hands; they compete successfully with the Spanish immigrants in the operation of groceries and general stores; they enjoy a monopoly of commercialized laundering. So widely distributed is their business that there is scarcely a town or important village in Cuba without some enterprise owned by Orientals. . . . Some have become important in local politics, and a few descendants of Chinese have reached high positions in the national government.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Duvan C. Corbitt, “Chinese Immigrants in Cuba,” *Far Eastern Survey*, July 12, 1944, accessed October 17, 2015, <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/cuba/Cuba-Chinese.pdf>.

Many of the Chinese-Cubans who had risen to the middle-class by the end of the 1950s saw the coming turmoil in the country and fled along with many other Cubans. The majority of the Chinese-Cubans that stayed in Cuba became part of the revolution.

Due to the socialist revolution in 1959, the integration of Cubans of Chinese descent turned out very differently from the integration of the Chinese diaspora in any of the other countries of the Western Hemisphere. The Chinese diaspora in most countries has been the recipients of discrimination along with the other immigrant minorities. The same discrimination occurred in Cuba before the revolution, but since the revolution deprived the population of individualism and enforced socialism, the effects of racism were lessened for all who embraced the revolution. Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Sío Wong are examples of Chinese-Cubans who embraced the revolution and were selected by Castro to serve as general officers in the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias*, (FAR), demonstrating the integration of Chinese Cubans into the Revolution.

Cubans who failed to integrate into the revolution were persecuted until they left Cuba or reformed. Paul Nash writes “Conditions in Cuba, especially for those of Chinese descent, improved little under Fidel Castro . . . in 1968 they became one of the targets of Castro’s Revolutionary Offensive, a socialist campaign launched in March to jump-start economic growth and curb individualism—the Cuban counterpart of Mao’s Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution combined, and equally disastrous. Chinese Cubans saw their businesses confiscated and fell under renewed racial and political discrimination. Many finally left Cuba. By the 1990s, only some 20,000 second-generation Chinese Cubans remained, most poor and no longer identifying with their Chinese cultural

roots.”<sup>24</sup> The Chinese diaspora brought no value to Castro’s revolution in this era unless it was to support the revolution in an equal manner to all other Cubans.

However, with the fall of the USSR in the 1990s, policy in Cuba towards the Chinese diaspora has required change as well. Relations with foreign nations became necessary for survival. China’s rise reinvigorated the Castro’s sense of the utilization of the Chinese diaspora for the benefit of the revolution.

Although there are now less than 300 first-generation Chinese-Cubans alive in Cuba today and the Chinatown or “Barrio Chino” is inhabited by Cubans of all heritages, the blood of the Chinese runs wide and deep in the population. Kathleen Lopez, the author of *Chinese Cubans*, says there is an effort by those of Chinese blood in Cuba to seek out their heritage today. “It’s the Chinese of mixed descent who are at the forefront of these revitalization efforts and who have also embarked on journeys to explore their ancestry.”<sup>25</sup> There are two driving factors behind the revitalization efforts: individuals desiring to seek their roots and the economic impact of a stronger relationship between China and Cuba.

Many Cubans look to China as the land of their ancestors and seek to understand their roots. As travel restrictions on Cubans are lifted, Cubans of Chinese decent have the opportunity to visit mainland China. This individual level appeal to the Chinese Diaspora could present a great opportunity for both China and Cuba. “All heritage is political. In

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<sup>24</sup> Paul Nash, “How the Chinese are Helping to Transform Cuba, Again,” *The Diplomatic Courier*, May 24, 2013, accessed October 22, 2015, <http://www.diplomaticcourier.com/how-the-chinese-are-helping-to-transform-cuba-again/>.

<sup>25</sup> Stetler, “As Chinese-Cuban Population Dwindles, Traditions Die.”

China, preservation is intrinsically linked to economic growth, nation building and development, and since the mid-1980s, a large number of rural cultural tourism destinations have emerged.”<sup>26</sup> The Chinese Diaspora in Cuba is a resource for both China and Cuba to increase engagement on the state level.

Today, the Chinese Embassy and the Havana Chinatown Promotion Group are working to revitalize the Barrio Chino. In an explanation of its creation, *El Grupo Promotor* states “The creation of the Group guarantees the authenticity of the project, that with only the representation of Chinese and descendants is it possible to conserve this valuable patrimonial legacy, integrating social, cultural and commercial objectives. El barrio chino should convert itself into a new and important product, to be added as one of strongest sites to supply tourism to Cuba.”<sup>27</sup> The Group provides cultural and economic support to the Chinese Diaspora across the island in the form of Chinese art, language, cuisine, newspaper, restaurant supplies and traditional Chinese furniture. This symbolic turn by Cuba to the Chinese is without a doubt economically motivated, but the economic motivation could not exist without the roots of Chinese heritage. The Chinese diaspora in Cuba play on the diplomatic, informational and military and economic stages of the Sino-

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<sup>26</sup> Hiu Ling Chan and Christopher Cheng, “Building Homeland Heritage: Multiple Homes Among the Chinese Diaspora and the Politics on Heritage Management in China,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 22: 1-13, accessed March 19, 2016, [https://www.academia.edu/15053452/Building\\_homeland\\_heritage\\_multiple\\_homes\\_among\\_the\\_Chinese\\_diaspora\\_and\\_the\\_politics\\_on\\_heritage\\_management\\_in\\_China](https://www.academia.edu/15053452/Building_homeland_heritage_multiple_homes_among_the_Chinese_diaspora_and_the_politics_on_heritage_management_in_China).

<sup>27</sup> Yrmina Eng. Menéndez, “Havana's Chinatown Comprehensive Project,” quoted in Eliza Jiaping Kingsley-Ma, “El Morro y la Muralla’: Mapping Representations of Chinese Cuban Identity” (Bachelor’s thesis, Wesleyan University, 2015), 55, accessed January 16, 2016, [http://wescholar.wesleyan.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2521&context=etd\\_hon\\_theses](http://wescholar.wesleyan.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2521&context=etd_hon_theses).

Cuban relationship today and indeed mark a unique aspect of fraternity between the two nations in the 21st-century.

In conclusion, the history of the Chinese diaspora in Cuba creates bridges through today's Chinese Cubans. These bridges of legacy strengthen the interest of both the Chinese and the Cubans in state level relations today. Although it is a minor part of the bilateral relations, its promotion lends credibility and authenticity to the relationship. In 1993, in the early stages of the re-establishment of Sino-Cuban relations, PRC President Jiang Zemin visited Havana's Chinatown. "The significance of President Jiang Zemin's visit varied for different segments of the population: for Cubans, it held the promise of improved diplomatic relations and material goods in a time of scarcity; for Chinese in Cuba, it re-established a connection with a homeland that had been severed for nearly half a century; and for descendants of Chinese, it may have been a "cultural thread" linking their past with the present."<sup>28</sup> Although this connection is rarely used today by the heads of state, it was an instrumental connection for the reestablishment of relations in the 1990s.

#### Historical Context of Sino-Cuban Relations; State to State Relations

Cuba, the only communist nation located outside of Asia and merely 90 miles south of the United States is an obvious ally of the PRC. The historical Sino-Cuban state

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<sup>28</sup> Kathleen Lopez, "Remaking Havana's Barrio Chino," in *Cuba Today; Continuity and Change since the Periodo Expecial*, ed. Mauricio A. Font (New York: The City University of New York), 155-169, accessed January 16, 2016, [https://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY\\_GC/media/CUNY-GraduateCenter/PDF/Centers/Bildner%20Center%20for%20Western%20Hemisphere%20Studies/Publications/KLopez12.pdf](https://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY_GC/media/CUNY-GraduateCenter/PDF/Centers/Bildner%20Center%20for%20Western%20Hemisphere%20Studies/Publications/KLopez12.pdf).

relations are important to investigate for this work. The ideological similarities between China and Cuba were the basis of their historical state level relations. Today, ideological similarities strengthen the relationship, but in a much different manner than in the early years of the Cuban revolution. This section will compare the historic Sino-Cuban state level relations and the current Sino-Cuban relations. The shared ideology of the communist governments is investigated, answering the secondary research question: *How does the shared ideology between the PRC and Cuba play a role in the Sino-Cuban relationship?*

These communist governments were born of a revolutionary overthrow of the existing government. Cuba, a fledgling communist state in the shadow of the capitalist U.S.A., looked to the U.S.S.R. and the PRC as paternal figures in the early stages of the communist revolution. Chinese and Soviet support was given to Cuba using all of the instruments of national power (DIME). The instrument of information has an ideological component and an intelligence component that are interrelated with the other aspects of DIME. Since the ideological leanings of the Cuban revolution were not yet canonized when the revolution initiated, there was a sincere interest in the ideological development of the new government by both the Soviets and the Chinese.

In 1959, the Cuban Revolution won control of Cuba. Diplomatically, the PRC was keen to support the Cuban revolution. “China influenced the Cuban revolution first through the relationship between the Chinese Communist Party and the Cuban People’s



Socialist Party from early 1959 to late 1960 and then directly via state-to-state relations after diplomatic ties were formally established.”<sup>29</sup>

The leaders of the Cuban revolution saw the need to establish themselves into the global communist movement, thus receiving greater legitimacy to the revolution during a very tenuous stage of the revolution. The PRC saw an opportunity to expand the communist movement into the Latin American “market” and garner diplomatic recognition with Latin American nations instead of Taiwan. The diplomatic relations in this period were mutually beneficial for both revolutions. Mao sought global recognition of Beijing as the true government of China through supporting Cuba. Cuba was the first country in the Western Hemisphere to officially recognize the PRC over the ROC, thus further legitimizing the PRC internationally. Mao was also very interested in using Cuba’s location to springboard the global communist movement into the Western Hemisphere.

Castro sought legitimacy for his revolution through the diplomatic support of the greater communist movement that could check his capitalist neighbor. Although the Sino-Cuban relationship was mutually beneficial at the time, neither country was dependent on the other to achieve national diplomatic goals. Cuba was able to garner greater benefit in the Sino-Soviet split by siding with the Soviets, therefore cutting relations with China was a relatively easy action for the Castro brothers. The PRC, although interested in continuing the expansion of communism in the Western Hemisphere, was focused on

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<sup>29</sup> Yinghong Cheng, “Sino-Cuban Relations during the Early Years of the Castro Regime, 1959–1966,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 80-81.

their influence in Asia. The termination of diplomatic relations with Cuba did not significantly impact China.

The informational aspect of Chinese national power was employed quickly in revolutionary Cuba. “In the beginning, the Chinese were anxious to learn about the political nature of the Cuban revolution (democratic, nationalist or socialist). Even before Castro publicly declared his party’s commitment to Marxism, the Chinese began to promote their own model of transformation.”<sup>30</sup> Ideological information, in the form of Chinese communist propaganda, was easily accessible and embraced by Revolutionary Cuba during this period. The instrument of national power most played by the Chinese in this era was ideological information. The parts in the relationship were not equal, however. Castro had little to offer the Chinese regarding trade or goods, and this may be when Castro discovered the niche market he could provide China and the Soviets.

A new oil refinery had been constructed in Cuba using the most advanced American technology in 1958, just before the revolution. China, desiring to become self-sufficient in the energy sector, requested the blueprints for the facility and before long had established Chinese refining capability, which became an important theme in the Maoist self-reliance doctrine, remarkably similar to the latest U.S. technology. Cuba discovered how to use information as a mechanism to increase its value in the relationship with China. This lesson in information trade became a very lucrative lesson for future Cuban relationship with China and other nations.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

In 1966, Cuba cut ties with Beijing in favor of the Soviets, who were dedicated to the economic, military information and diplomatic support of Cuba. Chinese ideological materials were banned, destroyed and counter propagandized as an “apple of discord” by Castro. The information aspect of the Sino-Cuban relationship fell apart.

The military aspect of the Sino-Cuban relationship grew quickly in the shadow of the imposing threat of an invasion by the United States. Although Russia was the primary supplier of arms to Castro, “China also provided Cuba with military support. . . China supplied its most advanced anti-aircraft weapon—multibarrel ground-to-air machineguns—to Cuba to strengthen the country’s air defenses. Cuba’s first hundred pilots were also trained in China.”<sup>31</sup> The PRC was willing to equip and train Cubans in defense of Cuba. This was graciously accepted by Castro, but Chinese efforts paled in comparison to what the Soviet military was willing and capable of support to its Western Hemispheric neighbor.

Cuba, as the lesser partner, found a way to contribute to the military relationship in a distinct way. When “an unexploded American missile landed on Cuba in late 1960, Cuba permitted Chinese missile experts come to Cuba and take parts of the missile back to China.”<sup>32</sup> The exchange of military intelligence became a valued commodity for the PRC. China has rarely been able to compete in the emerging technology sector with the West, but they dominate the market of mass producing reverse engineered military products for sale at reduced cost across the globe. Thus, the military intelligence

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<sup>31</sup> Yinghong Cheng, 97.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 98.

exchange became treasured for China. Chinese military aid/trade and Cuban intelligence trade ended at the Sino-Soviet split.

The economic relationship between Cuba and China in the early years was quickly established once diplomatic ties were firm. The PRC was suffering from the devastating consequences of Mao's Great Leap Forward but still managed to provide humanitarian assistance to the island when tornadoes struck in October of 1963.<sup>33</sup> Chinese efforts to support Cuba with disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, despite the lack of resources in China, is a clear demonstration of the economic commitment to the Sino-Cuban relationship on the part of the Chinese to back up the rhetoric of their shared communist ideology.<sup>34</sup>

“According to the official history of Chinese foreign policy, the cash value of trade between China and Cuba averaged \$150 million annually in the first half of the 1960s and reached a peak in 1965 of \$224 million. By that point, China was Cuba's second trading partner (after the Soviet Union), and Sino-Cuban trade accounted for 14 percent of the island's total foreign trade.”<sup>35</sup> The level of economic interaction is the most telling indicator of the strength of the bond between states. In 1965, the Sino-Cuban relationship reached its height. Not only in the form of aid, but also in trade. However, due to the Sino-Soviet split, Sino-Cuban trade quickly diminished and did not experience this level of economic interaction for another 45 years. This split from the Chinese

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

“produced tensions—though never a rupture—in Sino-Cuban relations from the middle of the 1960s to the early 1980s.”<sup>36</sup>

Once significant Sino-Cuban engagement began to strengthen again in the 1980s “there were reciprocal visits by the Chinese and Cuban foreign ministers.”<sup>37</sup> Without the overarching support from the Soviets following the fall of the U.S.S.R., Castro was forced to interact with the world in a new manner. The superficial ideological tie to the PRC gave Cuba a motivation to appeal to the PRC. Cuba’s role as the father of Latin American and Caribbean communism meant that Cuba’s friendship with China would help to legitimize China with leftist movements in Latin America at a time that its communist credentials were in question. By the second half of the 1990s, Sino-Cuban relations entered a new phase. “In 1995, President Castro visited China. The exchange of visits by the heads of state ushered in a new period of profound and extensive development of bilateral relations.”<sup>38</sup>

The renewed Chinese relationship was at a time of extreme necessity. Cubans now realized their over-dependence on the U.S.S.R. “From 1990 to 1994 Cuba endured an economic melt-down, resulting mainly from the 75% to 80% decline in foreign exchange receipts accompanying the ending of the subsidies from the former Soviet

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<sup>36</sup> Mao Xianglin, Carlos Alzugaray Treto, Liu Weiguang, and Adrian H. Hearn, “China and Cuba: Past, Present, and Future,” in *China Engages Latin America: Tracing the Trajectory*, ed. Adrian H. Hearn and José Luis León-Manríquez (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2011), 187-201.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> China Daily, “Sino-Cuban Relations,” updated November 11, 2004, accessed March 29, 2016, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/focus/2004-11/11/content\\_390573.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/focus/2004-11/11/content_390573.htm).

Union.”<sup>39</sup> For over 25 years Cuba had been reliant on the U.S.S.R. for nearly all economic support, however, after the fall of the Soviet Union, support dropped almost instantaneously, and the Cuban Economy practically failed. *Cubahistory.org* states that “The country lost approximately 80% of its imports, 80% of its exports and its Gross Domestic Product dropped by 34 percent. Food and medicine imports stopped or severely slowed. Perhaps most immediately impactful, however, was the loss of nearly all of the oil imports by the USSR; Cuba's oil imports dropped to 10% of pre-1990 amounts.”<sup>40</sup> Perhaps this quote is better said in terms of shipments of oil, rather than imports as the Soviets gave oil more in the form of aid rather than in trade. In these destitute conditions, Cuba was forced to seek support from other countries through trade. China, on the verge of expanding its economic vision to the globe, was eager to renew the Sino-Cuban relations, not only for ideological reasons but primarily for economic reasons.

In conclusion to the state-to-state historical relations, the early Sino-Cuban relationship was dominated by ideology. Ideology was most plainly seen through the information aspect of DIME. The diplomatic, military and economic engagement of state-to-state relations all hinged upon the ideological views of the PRC and the leadership of revolutionary Cuba. Aid in the form of arms, military training, food, and trade were given by the Chinese in trade for ideological and diplomatic and intelligence

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<sup>39</sup> Archibald R. M. Ritter, “Cuba’s Economy during the Special Period, 1990-2010,” October 12, 2010, 2, accessed March 17, 2016, <http://thecubaneconomy.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Cubas-Economy-during-the-Special-Period-1990-2010.-Cuba-Encyclopedia-Essay-October12.docx>.

<sup>40</sup> Cubahistory.org, “Special Period and Recovery,” accessed October 15, 2015, <http://www.cubahistory.org/en/special-period-a-recovery.html>.

support. When Cuba sided with the Soviets in the Sino-Soviet split, ideological importance of the relationship ended and military aid and economic trade stopped. Diplomatic support was maintained to the extent necessary to defy the West and promote the spread of communism, but nothing more than that.

The key element of that explains the change in Sino-Cuban relationship from the past till present is the leadership of the two nations. Fidel and Raul Castro personally instituted Sino-Cuban relations at the commencement of the revolution. 55 years later and despite their ages, they maintain centralized control of Cuba today. James Reynolds elaborates on this key point. “These are men who work under a US embargo, who have not dramatically changed their ideology in half a century.”<sup>41</sup> The leadership of the PRC, on the other hand, “is run by its fourth generation - men who are several steps removed from the original revolution. These are men who do business with the entire world, who have inherited a system which traded socialism for capitalism a generation ago.”<sup>42</sup> The shared ideology of the two nations used to be the key element in their relationship; now ideology is a minor role focused on promoting the legitimacy of the governments of a rising China and a transitioning Cuba to the international community instead of driving bilateral relations.

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<sup>41</sup> James Reynolds, “Comparing China and Cuba,” *BBC News*, November 3, 2008, accessed February 20, 2016, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/jamesreynolds/2008/11/comparing\\_china\\_and\\_cuba.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/jamesreynolds/2008/11/comparing_china_and_cuba.html).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

## Value

Value is the relative worth, utility or importance<sup>43</sup> of the objective as defined by Webster. This research explores the value of two potential objectives of the PRC. The first objective is the principle objective and the second is an objective to shape the environment and set conditions to achieve the principle objective. The first objective relates to the rise of China to become the leading global superpower. The second objective is the means of Cuba by which China could shape the global environment and set conditions to rise to the position of leading global superpower.

‘Superpower’ is a term that describes a nation with a dominant position in international relations and which is characterized by unmatched ability to apply its influence or project power globally. Superpowers use a combination of the instruments of national power (DIME) to achieve their objectives. Currently, the United States is the global superpower and China, in its rapid rise, is seen as a potential threat to the United States. There are many other ways that China could pose a threat to the United States, such as nuclear threat, a threat to U.S. assets in Asia or cyber threat to name a few, but these threats are not addressed in this work except where they pertain to Cuba. This section examines the value of superpower status to the PRC as well as the value of the Sino-Cuban relationship in relation to shaping the environment and setting conditions for China to achieve superpower status. The value of superpower status is addressed through the theories of international relations (IR) applicable to the case. The value of the Sino-Cuban relationship as a mechanism to shape the environment and set the conditions for

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<sup>43</sup> Merriam Webster Dictionary, s.v. “value,” accessed January 30, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/value>.



China's rise to a superpower is examined through the lens of the DIME construct from both the Chinese and Cuban perspectives.

China is a rising great power. China has already surpassed all other countries in the size of its economy in terms of gross domestic product, except for the United States, with whom they are in close contention. Although China is currently experiencing an economic recession regarding how fast their economy is growing, they are still projected to overtake the United States as the world's largest economy (in terms of nominal GDP) within the next fifteen years.<sup>44</sup> Historically, the economic rise of a nation has been a common factor in the conflict between great powers. While the rise of China has not yet led to conflict between the U.S. and China, it certainly has led to a great level of competition. The different theories of international relations (IR) discuss the possibility of conflict between competing states.

The theory of realism and the theory of liberalism are the leading theories of international relations applicable to the rise of China. This work fully acknowledges that in the complexity of international relations, one theory cannot accurately predict future outcomes, but rather an outcome will likely be a combination of the theories due to the particular circumstances acting upon the situation.

The theory of liberalism indicates that China's rise will not lead to conflict due to three factors: economic interdependence, international institutions, and democratization.

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<sup>44</sup> Andrew Soergel, "America's Days Are Numbered as the World's Top Economy," *U.S. News and World Report*, December 28, 2015, accessed March 3, 2016, <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015-12-28/americas-days-are-numbered-as-the-worlds-top-economy>.

Liberal theorists believe that economic exchange between countries will grow peaceful relations between countries.

The higher the level of economic exchange between countries, the greater the probability of groups on both sides to have strong interests to avoid conflict and maintain prosperous conditions. “Economic interdependence has already helped to create a strong mutual interest in peace between the two Pacific powers. Barring some major disruption, economic forces will probably continue to draw them together, constraining and damping any tendencies toward conflict.”<sup>45</sup>

International institutions, such as APEC (the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum), ARF (the ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] Regional Forum); ASEAN + 3, the East Asia Summit, the WTO (World Trade Organization) and the Security Council of the United Nations are examples of how China and the U.S. are growing more and more intertwined with each other on the international stage. This growing engagement will likely cause the two sides to uphold and continue the stability of the existing global order.

Democratization is the third point of liberalism. According to liberals, China is well on its way to democratization as evidenced by its change in economic development. However, economic development will encounter limits if the democratization of the political environment does not happen. Therefore, China will naturally gravitate towards democracy to maintain its economic growth. As China becomes democratic in nature, the

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<sup>45</sup> Aaron L. Friedberg, “The Future Relations of U.S.-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?” *International Security* 30, no. 2 (Autumn 2005): 13, accessed October 15, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4137594>.

U.S.-China relations will stabilize, and the potential threat from China will diminish. In 1999, Governor George W. Bush stated “Economic freedom creates habits of liberty. And habits of liberty create expectations of democracy. . . Trade freely with China, and time is on our side.”<sup>46</sup> Governor Bush, although not recognized as a liberal, recognized the truths of the liberal theory and how economic engagement works better to enact change than external force to enact change.

Mearsheimer explains his theory of offensive realism in basic terms: “my theory maintains that the basic structure of the international system forces states concerned about their security to compete with each other for power. The ultimate goal of every great power is to maximize its share of world power and eventually dominate the system. In practical terms, this means that the most powerful states seek to establish hegemony in their region of the world while also ensuring that no rival great power dominates another area.”<sup>47</sup> Mearsheimer predicts that “the result will be an intense security competition with considerable potential for war. In short, China’s rise is unlikely to be tranquil.”<sup>48</sup> An issue such as competition for relations with a third country like Cuba could bring that conflict to a boil. The theory of realism does not address the power of cultural values in a system. China’s peaceful rise has been the party line from the PRC and cannot be

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<sup>46</sup> Governor George W. Bush, “A Distinctly American Internationalism” (lecture, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, CA, November 19, 1999), accessed February 5, 2016, <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/bush/wspeech.htm>.

<sup>47</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, “Can China Rise Peacefully?” April 8, 2014, accessed September 15, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/can-china-rise-peacefully-10204>.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

ignored. The emphasis on power and the maximization of security cause the argument to seem extreme, despite how realistically it lines up with the current world events.

Realists base their theory of international relations on the historical precedence of the laws of nature. The laws of nature compel nations to struggle for survival and power. According to realists, the governing element (the superpower) that is causing order in a system is always under threat by sub-elements that seek to control the system for themselves. This continuous struggle of elements, with the elements competing for power and position is evident in history as we witness civilizations rise to greatness, achieve their goal of power and then after a season in power, fall to the next the rising civilization or power. Today, the U.S. is the global superpower trying to influence and stabilize the system to maintain supremacy as long as possible. It is natural, therefore, for China, like all rising powers before it, to assert itself in the act of dislodging the U.S. as the superpower and assuming the position for itself.

Aaron Friedberg, author of “The Future Relations of U.S.-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?” clarifies what the struggle to achieve the highest position looks like in reality. “As a state's capabilities grow, its leaders tend to define their interests more expansively and to seek a greater degree of influence over what is going on around them. Rising powers seek not only to secure their frontiers but to reach out beyond them, taking steps to ensure access to markets, materials, and transportation routes; to protect their citizens far from home, defend their foreign friends and allies, and promulgate their values; and, in general, to have what they consider to be their legitimate say in the affairs

of their region and of the wider world.”<sup>49</sup> The PRC indeed shows many of these signs. Its economy is growing. With this greater economic capacity, China is growing its military capability. It is asserting itself in border disputes with its neighbors (Spratley Islands). China is seeking access to every market in the world, resources from the far reaches of the globe, and to secure the shipping routes (Panama Canal and plans for another canal in Nicaragua). Additionally, China seeks to care for its diaspora across the world in the meanwhile. These few examples demonstrate that those in the camp of realism have ample evidence to claim that the rise of China will bring conflict and that the U.S. should prepare to counter the imminent threat.

The two differing perspectives of IR theory in the current case of rising China each present valid arguments and only time will tell how the story will unfold. It is certain, however, that the choices of China, the United States and other great powers across the globe will determine which theory will have the most influence. Will the world see two great nations, so deeply entrenched in trade with each other that they both continue to rise to greater economic heights, bringing the world along with them, or will we see a dramatic conflict and eventual overthrow of the current superpower? Cuba will be an important nation to observe during the rise of China.

Cuba is strategically positioned in the Western Hemisphere. Its positioning has implications that could favor the United States or China over the other but also has aspects that could mutually benefit both nations. The nation with the greatest influence with Cuba could command the advantage over the other in categories such as trade,

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<sup>49</sup> Friedberg, 19.

telecommunications, intelligence, international relations with the rest of the Latin American countries, regional security and military relations. If China were able to dominate in these and other areas, China's influence in Cuba could gain a strategic advantage over the U.S. in a potential conflict. If the U.S. were to gain this level of influence with Cuba, then any threat from China in the hemisphere would be greatly negated.

The rest of this section will discuss the value of the Sino-Cuban relationship in terms of the DIME construct. For the best understanding of the strategic implications that the U.S. must consider regarding the Sino-Cuban relationship, this relationship must be looked at from both the Chinese perspective as well as the Cuban perspective.

Understanding the Chinese perspective will help the United States to deter a potential threat, but understanding the Cuban perspective will give the U.S. a better understanding of how to employ the instruments of national power (DIME) in a favorable way to the U.S. and gain greater stability in the region.

#### Value - Diplomacy

Diplomatically, the Sino-Cuban relationship has great value to both nations. China and Cuba share a diplomatic relationship that is unique in the world because of their shared communist ideology and the resulting historical struggle against the United States. Due to this unique diplomatic relationship, the other instruments of national power (information, military and economy) are enabled.

As stated in the historical context earlier in this chapter, the diplomatic relationship of China and Cuba was founded upon an ideological basis. They continue to show solidarity today in their shared Communist and Socialist ideology and frequently

speak on the evils of American imperialism and hegemony. During the ‘Special Period’ of the 1990s in Cuba, Castro sought out economic assistance to replace the void left in the Cuban economy by the fallen U.S.S.R. China was an ideal partner for the Cubans due to their shared historical and ideological relations. China, however, changed by three decades of reform, came to Cuba’s assistance in a much-evolved manner.

“In 1993, the president of China Jiang Zemin went to Cuba. He did not vow to take up the economic burdens or ask Cuba to reform to the standards of China, he merely demonstrated his solidarity to Cuba by providing them with rice and bicycles.”<sup>50</sup> This was far different from the 60 million dollars, long-term, interest-free loan with a due date that could repeatedly be postponed that was offered to Castro in the 1960s.<sup>51</sup> China had evolved, becoming opportunist in nature in the last three decades. Despite evolutions in market reform, the PRC and Cuba maintain ideological solidarity, which is necessary for the legitimacy of their national governments, particularly in light of Western pressures for humanitarian reform.

Perpetuating the diplomatic relationship, Zemin again visited Cuba in 2001. “His successor, Hu Jintao, visited in 2004. Fidel Castro...visited China in 1995 and 2003... Raul, [after becoming the Cuban president], made his own trip to China in 2012. Current Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Cuba in July 2014, part of a broader tour of Latin

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<sup>50</sup> Terri R. Dabney, “Cuba and China: Labor Links,” in *Cuba Today: Continuity and Change since the ‘Periodo Expecial’*, ed. Mauricio A. Font, Scott Larson and Danielle Xuereb (New York: Bildner Center for Western Hemisphere Studies, 2004), 181, accessed February 3, 2016, [https://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY\\_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/Centers/Bildner%20Center%20for%20Western%20Hemisphere%20Studies/cubatodaybookcomplete.pdf](https://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/Centers/Bildner%20Center%20for%20Western%20Hemisphere%20Studies/cubatodaybookcomplete.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> Yinghong Cheng, 94-95.

America” and Chinese Vice Premier Wang Yang visited Cuba for the 55th anniversary of diplomatic ties between China and Cuba in June 2015.<sup>52</sup> Each visit has been marked by declarations of historical relations and the solidarity of the two nations while reaffirming future partnership in trade, development, and international support. Most visits also include the signing of trade deals which mark the increase of economic relations that are the action of the diplomatic relations.

Cuba finds current diplomatic relations with the PRC essential. China’s example of a communist-led country that engages across the globe and is rising in diplomatic, information, military and economic power provides a roadmap for Cuba to escape from the U.S. embargo while maintaining domestic control of the nation. From China’s example, and through their advising, Raul Castro is moving forward to demonstrate that the Government of Cuba can exist in the world with a communist ideology, like China’s, and increase interaction with the world in a progressive and non-threatening manner as has been done by China. These efforts to emulate China bring legitimacy to the Cuban government from the international community, who are increasingly opposed to the U.S. embargo against the island. Seeking further international legitimization, Cuba put itself on the international stage, acting as a moderator of historical conflicts, such as the peace talks between the 50 year old conflict between the government of Colombia and the FARC, The historic meeting in February 2016 of the Catholic Pope and the Russian Orthodox Patriarch in Havana after centuries of division, all the while initiating

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<sup>52</sup> Shannon Tiezzi, “China, Cuba Seek Economic and Defense Cooperation,” *The Diplomat*, June 27, 2015, accessed March 8, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/06/china-cuba-seek-economic-and-defense-cooperation/>.



normalization of relations after 55 years of hostilities with the U.S. These actions, coupled with the support of the PRC, provide a diplomatically legitimizing appeal for the communist island nation.

The value of current diplomatic relations from the perspective of the Chinese is also of great worth. Cuba is China's the oldest diplomatic partner in the region, and maintains significant influence in the hemisphere's leftist governments, due to its David-sized resistance against the American Goliath. China has used this Cuban influence to establish and grow relations in the Americas as seen in CELAC and ALBA. The growth of Chinese influence in the region further legitimizes the Beijing government over Taiwan, although this facet of controversy is downplayed in recent years. Diplomatic legitimization of China across the globe pressures some regions to accept or tolerate the repressive actions of the PRC towards its people, thus setting a precedence of intolerance for other nations, namely Cuba.

In conclusion, the value of the diplomatic relationship between the PRC and Cuba is focused on the legitimization of each government on the international stage. The diplomatic relationship is established on their shared ideology, and each country uses the other to gain further legitimization. The PRC legitimizes Cuba by demonstrating that a Communist government can freely interact with the world while Cuba legitimizes China with the regional governments with whom it maintains influence. Through the diplomatic relationship, all other instruments of national power are established.

#### Value - Information

The aspect of informational value is very interesting in the Sino-Cuban relationship. Technologically speaking, Cubans are still living in the 1960s. Old cars, old

appliances, and nearly all daily business is conducted in an analog fashion. The outside world is thriving in the age of information and under the constant pressure of changing technology. In the past decade, Cuba has begun opening up to informational technology. China, one of the major exporters of information technology, is supplying the need to Cuba. Information, as an instrument of national power, is actively employed in Cuba as a mutually beneficial aspect of Sino-Cuban relations. This section discusses the breakthroughs that China has had in the Cuban information sector as well as the implications of their influence.

In the past several years, the technical side of the information aspect in Cuba has changed rapidly. “In 2008 the Cuban government allowed citizens to own mobile phones for the first time. Five years later, the internet reached the island through a submarine cable with Jamaica.”<sup>53</sup> This change has been advanced by the Huawei Technologies Co. In early 2016 the Cuban government stated that “it is launching its first broadband home Internet service . . . State Telecommunications Company ETECSA announced. . . it would allow Cubans to order home service through fiber optic connections operated with Chinese telecom operator Huawei.”<sup>54</sup> Although the average Cuban will not be able to afford this luxury, China has been leaning forward on the establishment of the telecom

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<sup>53</sup> Patricia Rey, “Huawei seeking to move into Cuba,” May 11, 2015, accessed March 10, 2016, <http://www.bnamericas.com/en/news/telecommunications/huawei-seeking-to-move-into-cuba>.

<sup>54</sup> CBS News, “Cuba Announces Launch of Broadband Home Internet,” January 31, 2016, accessed March 8, 2016, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/cuba-announces-launch-of-broadband-home-internet/>.

infrastructure in Latin America and the Caribbean for several years with the intent of dominating the market. As the first to establish services in Cuba, China will naturally maintain an advantage over any other service provider seeking to enter the market.

Dr. Larry Press, an expert on the study of global diffusion of the internet, determines that “Cuba has turned to China, not the U.S. for internet connectivity and equipment and is committed to doing so in the short term future.”<sup>55</sup> China was the major financier in the submarine cable that brought internet to the island in 2011, although it only went active in 2013. Press also points out that the contract to build a national fiber-optic network was awarded to Huawei in 2000, which indicates the dedication of the Chinese to the investment as well as the lengthy and trouble-prone process of infrastructure improvement in Cuba.<sup>56</sup>

Huawei is not the only Chinese technology company interested in Cuba. ZTE and TP Link are providing DSL modems and likely integrating themselves into the backbone network.<sup>57</sup> The advantages of investing in the information infrastructure for the Chinese are economic and strategic in nature. Dr. R. Evan Ellis writes “On one hand, the expansion and accumulation of technological prowess by Chinese companies in these sectors benefits the modernization and diversification of the Chinese economy . . . In addition, however, capability by Chinese companies in these sectors, particularly in Latin

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<sup>55</sup> Larry Press, “Cuban Infrastructure Investment - China Won the First Round,” *The Internet in Cuba*, September 28, 2015, accessed March 10, 2016, <http://laredcubana.blogspot.com/2015/09/cuban-infrastructure-investment-china.html>.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

America, also has strategic significance from the perspective of how such capabilities could be used by the Chinese state were the current friendly competition between the PRC and the United States to devolve into something more confrontational.”<sup>58</sup>

The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence initiated and investigation on the Huawei and ZTE telecommunication companies regarding their business in the United States. Although the investigation does not relate directly to Cuba, analysis of Huawei and ZTE telecommunications companies sheds light on their connection to the PRC and thus applicable to this investigation. The conclusion of the investigation highlighted that “to the extent these companies are influenced by the state, or provide Chinese intelligence services access to telecommunication networks, the opportunity exists for further economic and foreign espionage by a foreign nation-state already known to be a major perpetrator of cyber espionage.”<sup>59</sup>The sections of this chapter regarding vulnerability, capability and motivation will discuss this situation at greater length. This section, regarding the value of the Sino-Cuban informational aspect of their relationship, indicates both economic and strategic purposes in the value of the relationship.

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<sup>58</sup> R. Evan Ellis, *The Strategic Dimension of Chinese Engagement with Latin America*, Perry Paper Series, no. 1 (Washington, DC: 2013), 51.

<sup>59</sup> Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, *Investigative Report on the U.S. National Security Issues Posed by Chinese Telecommunications Companies Huawei and ZTE*, 112th Congress, October 8, 2012, HR iv.

## Value - Military

Research on the informational aspect of the Sino-Cuban relationship leads directly into the military aspect of their relationship, having established that strategic value is of worth to the PRC as they implement the instruments of national power. The military aspect of the Sino-Cuban relationship is obviously far less documented, but this does not mean that the value of this aspect of the relationship is any less prized. In the last year, China has released, for the first time, a national military strategy. It was released by the Chinese Ministry of Defense and dated May 26, 2015, outlining a new policy of “active defense.”<sup>60</sup> “China will unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development, pursue an independent foreign policy of peace and a national defense policy that is defensive in nature, oppose hegemonism and power politics in all forms, and will never seek hegemony or expansion. China’s armed forces will remain a staunch force in maintaining world peace.”<sup>61</sup> China could be replicating the U.S. system of regular strategic document releases to gain international recognition as they ascend in regional power and global influence. Most probably, China is sending a message to the U.S. that it will defend its interests across the globe and not be intimidated by U.S. power politics.

As a geopolitical competitor of the United States, the People’s Republic of China is viewed as a potential national security threat to the U.S. by those charged with the duty to defend the nation. Aspects such as strategic proximity to the U.S., intelligence collection capabilities of both the Chinese and the Cubans, arms sales, military exchanges

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<sup>60</sup> USNI News, “Document: China’s Military Strategy,” May 26, 2015, accessed November 10, 2015, <http://news.usni.org/2015/05/26/document-chinas-military-strategy>.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

and China's contribution to the multinational UN peacekeeping in Haiti are considerations in the value of the military aspect of DIME.

The proximity of Cuba to the United States is a strategic key in the value of the Sino-Cuban relationship. "Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean and separates the Gulf of Mexico from the Caribbean Sea. Forming the choke point for shipping routes out of the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, Cuba is a strategically significant territory in the Western Hemisphere. . . Cuba's major geographic challenge is its proximity and importance to the United States. Its location has repeatedly made the island a battleground in global affairs. The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 was the pinnacle of conflict over Cuba, and since that time, U.S. policy has revolved around denying foreign powers military access to the island."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> STRATFOR, "Cuba's Geographic Challenge," December 19, 2012, accessed March 11, 2016, <https://www.stratfor.com/video/cubas-geographic-challenge>.



Figure 1. Cuba’s Geographic importance to the Western Hemisphere

Source: STRATFOR, “Cuba’s Geographic Challenge” (image from video), December 19, 2012, accessed March 11, 2016, <https://www.stratfor.com/video/cubas-geographic-challenge>.

Based off of the testimony of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) to the Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing on February 9, 2016, China has one of the top two most sophisticated cyber programs and continues cyber espionage against the United States. “China understand[s] how our military fights and how heavily we rely on space. [China is] pursuing destructive and disruptive anti-satellite systems. China continues to make progress on its anti-satellite missile program.”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> James R. Clapper, “IC’s Worldwide Threat Assessment” (Opening Statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing, February 9, 2016, Dirksen Senate Office Building–Washington DC), 3.

Beyond the imposing cyber threat and potential space threat, China also poses the highest threat in counter intelligence to the U.S. according to the DNI. Beyond these intrinsic intelligence based threats, China has been active at Cuban SIGINT (signals intelligence) facilities. Bill Gertz, the defense and national security reporter for *The Washington Times*, writes “U.S. intelligence agencies also picked up information that China had begun cooperation with Cuba on electronic signals intelligence gathering . . . at Lourdes, Cuba.”<sup>64</sup> Cuba’s strategic proximity to the United States and the pathway of U.S. satellites can assist China with cyber intelligence, counterintelligence, signals intelligence as well as anti-satellite operations. The value for the Chinese regarding military relations with Cuba is high. For China’s part, its investment, and thus its signature, is minimal as it can depend on the existing infrastructure, position and access of Cuba. This important aspect is key in the relationship as “the current regime’s main concern is the Western Hemisphere is to avoid any geopolitical consequences resulting from its expansion into Latin America.”<sup>65</sup>

On the part of Cuba, the DNI identified Cuba as one of the top four threats from foreign intelligence to the United States.<sup>66</sup> Since the 1959 revolution, and over the last 55 years, “Havana built one of the world’s most active intelligence services—one that dispatched spies and agents to penetrate the highest levels of the American government

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<sup>64</sup> Bill Gertz, *The China Threat: How the People’s Republic Targets America* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2000), 96.

<sup>65</sup> Riordan Roett and Guadalupe Paz, eds., *China’s Expansion into the Western Hemisphere: implications for Latin America and the United States* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008), 252.

<sup>66</sup> Clapper, 3.



and some of the leading Cuban exile organizations.”<sup>67</sup> To heighten the impact of the collection by Cuban intelligence, Representative Lleana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) argues that “the regime’s role as “intelligence trafficker to the world” ensures it will continue seeking opportunities to undermine U.S. national security.”<sup>68</sup> Chris Simmons, a veteran of Cuban related counterintelligence, records that due to the fall of the U.S.S.R. and the associated collapse of the Cuban economy, “Cuba’s auctioning of US classified information skyrocketed. Defectors and émigrés report the island’s leadership sees America’s secrets as a commodity to be sold or traded to the highest bidder. These sources say Cuba’s intelligence brokering is now a key revenue stream, earning hundreds of millions of dollars annually in cash, goods, and services for the regime.”<sup>69</sup> Cuban foreign intelligence networks are complimented by their SIGINT capability.

Chris Simmons describes the Cuban SIGINT facilities and the attraction it has to the Chinese. “A crown jewel in Havana’s intelligence arsenal is its network of communications intercept sites headquartered at Bejucal. This facility—Cuba’s equivalent to NSA—is the only “signals intelligence” site in the downlink of almost every US satellite. Havana’s unique competitive advantage [that] the intelligence services

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<sup>67</sup> Alfonso Chardy, “Will Spy Wars Between Cuba and the U.S. End With Restored Relations?” *Miami Herald*, March 5, 2016, accessed March 11, 2016, <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/cuba/article64238792.html>.

<sup>68</sup> Lleana Ros-Lehtinen, “The Forgotten Spy: Ana Belen Montes,” *The Hill*, December 17, 2015, accessed March 12, 2016, <http://thehill.com/opinion/op-ed/263476-the-forgotten-spy-ana-belen-montes>.

<sup>69</sup> Chris Simmons, “Havana’s Spies Seen as Big Winner in New U.S.-Cuban Relations,” *Cuba Confidential*, January 24, 2015, accessed March 14, 2016, <https://cubaconfidential.wordpress.com/tag/signals-intelligence-sigint/>.

of China, Russia, and Iran can only dream about. Several well-placed defectors said the volume of Pentagon, White House, NASA, and other US communications collected by Bejucal is so vast Cuba only had staffing to process the crème de la crème of stolen secrets. When the Castro brother's pair this daily flood of material with the information and insights contributed by hundreds of human spies serving covertly throughout the US, the result is a terrifyingly real danger to the United States."<sup>70</sup> Multiple fonts encountered during this investigation indicate that the Cubans have a partnership with China in their SIGINT collection.

"U.S. officials will not talk seriously about Sino-Cuban strategic issues, though they do say China is involved in developing capabilities in intelligence, cyber warfare and communications that may affect the region. Sometimes citing unevenly reliable press reports as evidence, the specific areas of concern seem to be Lourdes and Bejucal, both near Havana,"<sup>71</sup> although a facility in Santiago de Cuba, on the eastern end of the island, is also under suspicion. If reports of SIGINT collection are true, one must also assume that the Cubans and Chinese would be interested in disruption of U.S. communications capabilities and have placed the necessary equipment at these facilities to be used in a scenario of conflict between the U.S., Cuba and China. If true, this is the point of greatest military to military cooperation between China and Cuba, and certainly a valuable asset for the Chinese as they continue to grow in capacity and influence across the globe.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> William Ratliff, "Fidel Castro and his Chinese Friends," Independent Institute, December 21, 2005, accessed March 16, 2016, <http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=1640>.

Arms sales from China to Cuba is another example of the value of the military relationship. As expected, there is little in public records to be able to quantify the value of this aspect of their military to military engagement. Once in a while, there will be some light shed on the engagement, such as the Chinese container ship that was searched by Colombian authorities in March of 2015. The discovery of an illegal arms cache hidden under legal cargo unveiled the covert method of arms trade between the two nations. Miles Yu reported, in a *Washington Times* article, about the incident that “In Beijing, Chinese government spokeswoman Hua Chunying said Wednesday that the cache discovered by the Colombian authorities was part of a legal arms export deal with Cuba. “It does not violate any Chinese laws, nor does it violate any of China’s promised international obligations,” Ms. Hua insisted. “The shipping was an entirely normal cooperative project of arms trade” with Cuba.”<sup>72</sup> This example of covert trade between clearly identifies the sensitive nature of the interaction between China and Cuba in regards to their relation with the United States.

The value of the arms trade relations between China and Cuba is much more significant to the antiquated Cuban forces than it is to the Chinese. However, this is not without its challenges. For one, Cuba’s economy is not able to purchase new and reliable Chinese military equipment. Another reason is the reports of Cuban military officials dissatisfied with the quality of the limited equipment they have received. Most importantly, neither Cuba nor China is willing to risk the current progress being made

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<sup>72</sup> Miles Yu, “Colombians Catch Illegal Arms on Chinese Ship Bound for Cuba,” *Washington Times*, March 5, 2015, accessed March 16, 2016, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/mar/5/inside-china-cuba-arms-caught-by-colombia-as-illeg/?page=all>.

both with the rise of China's influence in the hemisphere as well as the progress of U.S. Cuban relations. The PRC and Castro understand the rapid response that Washington would bring upon Cuba and China if there were a perceived threat to the U.S. from the Sino-Cuban arms trade. China has much more to gain from stable relations with Cuba and the United States and is not willing to do more than covert shipping of relatively benign small arms trade to support Cuba.<sup>73</sup>

Military exchanges between China and Cuba occur between the highest levels of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR) on a regular basis. The lower level exchange is also happening but at a far less frequent rate. China sees itself as the senior partner in the relationship, so naturally Cuban military officers go to study at military institutes in China in greater numbers than PLA officers coming to Cuba for training. Several factors that play into this dynamic, such as language, culture, funding that make this exchange challenging, but the value of having Cuban military officers trained in China ensures long-lasting relations between the PLA and the FAR. These relations are important to China as the FAR has great control and influence over all business transactions in the country. This will be further discussed in the economic value section. In the last five years, there have been several new military engagements between the PLA and the FAR.

In 2011, the Type 920 Hospital Ship commonly referred to as the "Peace Ark," commenced an operation called Harmonious Mission 2011, marking the first voyage of a

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<sup>73</sup> Loro Horta, "In Uncle Sam's Backyard: China's Military Influence in Latin America," *Military Review* (September-October 2008): 53-54, accessed March 16, 2016, [http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview\\_20081031\\_art011.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20081031_art011.pdf).

PLA naval vessel to the Caribbean. The Peace Ark arrived in Havana and executed its mission of providing free health care to the civilian population, but also “to promote fraternal ties with Caribbean countries and improve the capacity of the Chinese naval forces in the performance of multiple tasks.”<sup>74</sup> Exchange between Cuban and Chinese medical personnel also took place during the visit, emphasizing the interchange of eastern and western medicine.

In celebration of 55 years of diplomatic relations (November 1960-2015) between China and Cuba, another first for the PLA Navy also occurred in Cuba. The three-ship fleet was the first of its kind to visit the island. “Both nations heralded the visit as a natural activity for allies to undertake. The visit, said fleet commander Wang Jianxun, is “a chance to strengthen ties between the navies and armed forces of both countries,” as the two nations “share ideals and a shared independent development path aimed at building socialism.”<sup>75</sup> This was the “coming out” event for the PLA Navy onto the global stage and was “indicative of China’s establishment of a world-class navy that can patrol international waters on international missions and contribute to the global commons and international law.”<sup>76</sup> These Recent PLA Navy exchanges in the Western Hemisphere and specifically in Cuba are of great worth to China. Cuba stands as a friendly port in the

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<sup>74</sup> Luis Manuel Mazarra, “Chinese Hospital Ship Arrives in Havana, Cuba,” *Cuban Headlines*, October 21, 2011, accessed March 17, 2016, [http://www.cubaheadlines.com/2011/10/21/34220/chinese\\_hospital\\_ship\\_arrives\\_in\\_havana\\_cuba.html](http://www.cubaheadlines.com/2011/10/21/34220/chinese_hospital_ship_arrives_in_havana_cuba.html).

<sup>75</sup> Frances Martel, “Chinese Navy Ships Dock in Cuba for the First Time,” *Breitbart*, November 11, 2015, accessed March 17, 2016, <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2015/11/11/chinese-navy-ships-dock-cuba-first-time/>.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

West, and China gains much greater diplomatic weight in the hemisphere by showing its goodwill with the Peace Ark as well as parading new capabilities for the world to see.

In conclusion, the PLA is truly acting as an extension of foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere. China values the military relations as long as they do not cause alarm in Washington. A threat to the United States at this point in time would slow down the progress of the diplomatic, information and economic conditions that have been set by China in the Western Hemisphere. However, one cannot ignore the value of the Sino-Cuban military relationship as it relates to intelligence collection and sharing. This value will continue to grow as Cuba gets more freedom of movement within the United States for intelligence collection as well as technological advances sponsored by the PRC in the SIGINT facilities in Cuba. If China and the U.S. entered into conflict, Cuba's value in terms of military relations would be paramount.

#### Value - Economy

The value of the economic aspect of the Sino-Cuban relationship constitutes the greatest value of the four aspects of DIME. However, the Cuban economy is intimately intertwined with all aspects of DIME. The Castro brothers have maintained centralized control of the island for more than 55 years. There has never been an economic decision that was not approved by the brothers. The Fuerzas Armadas Revolutionaries (FAR) has always been the strong arm to enforce domestic decision-making, but in 1986 during the Third Party Congress, "the decision was made that the military should try to improve its efficiency and productivity, through what became known as the sistema de

perfeccionamiento empresarial (SPE), or business improvement system.”<sup>77</sup> The SPE had three main objectives; (1) Promote self-sufficiency in the FAR, (2) increase efficacy and productivity in military factories and (3) provide a model that could be used throughout the Cuban Economy.<sup>78</sup> Today the FAR is the primary administrator of business in Cuba and known under the name GAESA, (Enterprise Management Group Inc.). GAESA controls the hotels, domestic tourist airlines, retail chain stores, defense industries, electronics and IT hardware/ services, cigars, sugar and civil aviation at a minimum.<sup>79</sup> So the bottom line is that all economic interaction is processed through the military aspect of the relationship.

Dr. Hearn describes the current situation in Cuba: “In 2014 Sino-Cuban trade amounted to \$US1.4 billion, making China the island’s second-largest trade partner after Venezuela, and bringing a Chinese flavour to the daily lives of ordinary Cubans. Shops and stores throughout the island sell affordable Chinese electric fans, televisions, stoves and refrigerators, and practically every Cuban family owns a Chinese-brand appliance. Chinese state enterprises have been investing in Cuban logistics and infrastructure, and

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<sup>77</sup> Frank O. Mora and Quintan Wiktorowicz, “Economic Reform and the Military: China, Cuba, and Syria in Comparative Perspective,” *International Journal of Cuban Studies* 44, no. 2: 87-116, accessed March 16, 2016, [http://www.cubastudygroup.org/indexcfm/files/serve?File\\_id=e2fbdfa9-7b3e-4c11-8265-7c2b86fb3db5](http://www.cubastudygroup.org/indexcfm/files/serve?File_id=e2fbdfa9-7b3e-4c11-8265-7c2b86fb3db5).

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Staff Report, “The Cuban Military in the Economy,” *Focus on Cuba* 46, (August 11, 2003), accessed March 17, 2016, [http://ctp.iccas.miami.edu/FOCUS\\_Web/Issue46.htm](http://ctp.iccas.miami.edu/FOCUS_Web/Issue46.htm).

are mulling new opportunities in oil exploration, tourism, and the new Mariel Special Economic Zone (SEZ).”<sup>80</sup>

The Sino-Cuban trade relationship is of greatest value to the Cubans. Figure 2 represents data depicting the percentage (in dollars) of exported goods from Cuba to the world. This figure clearly indicates that China is Cuba’s largest export destination for goods in 2013, with 20 percent of Cuban exports going to China worth \$474 million. Since 2006, China has dominated the goods export market for Cuba. However, this is just goods. Cuba has a large part of its economy that is based in services. Figure 3, a Pew Research Center study, identifies that 70 percent of Cuba’s Foreign Trade in 2013 was in services, such as teachers and doctors who work overseas, principally in Venezuela.



Figure 2. Cuban export partners by percentage in U.S. Dollars for 2013. 2013 is the most recent year provided in the study. Graduation Photo

Source: “Cuba,” The Observatory of Economic Complexity, accessed March 17, 2016, <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/cub/#Destinations>.

<sup>80</sup> Adrian H. Hearn, “The US-Cuba-China Triangle,” *Australian Institute of International Affairs*, September 3, 2015, accessed November 3, 2015, [http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australian\\_outlook/the-us-cuba-china-triangle/](http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australian_outlook/the-us-cuba-china-triangle/).



## Cuba's Foreign Trade, 2013

*Share of Cuba's exports and imports*

	Goods	Services
Exports	30%	70%
Imports	95	5

*Cuba's major trading partners*

Exports		Imports	
Canada	16%	Venezuela	37%
China	15	China	12
Venezuela	14	Spain	9
Spain	8	Brazil	5
Netherlands	6	Canada	4

Source: Oficina Nacional de Estadística e Información (goods and services), CIA World Factbook (trading partners)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 3. Cuba's Foreign Trade, Including the Service Industry.

Source: Drew Desilver, "What We Know About Cuba's Economy," Pew Research Center, May 28, 2015, accessed March 18, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/28/what-we-know-about-cubas-economy/>.

The percentage of trade with China is decreasing at this point in time of the data shown, but, from all indications, this is from the economic downturn and not from any falling out between the nations. In general, there are three natural resources on Cuba that are traded to China: sugar, nickel matte, and oil. Figure 4 and 5, below, indicate the level of export trade from Cuba to China. Sugar has been a major trade interest for China for the last 55 years. Nickel matte, an important element for the production of stainless steel, rapidly rose in demand for Chinese manufacturing ten years ago, providing Cuba significant growth in comparison with its typical trade exportation. However, "nickel

prices are down about 50% since May 2014, forcing cuts in production and leaving Cuba's industry barely profitable."<sup>81</sup> Meanwhile, oil exportation from Cuba is directly tied to Venezuela, who provides Cuba oil at a steeply discounted price, and is then resold as an export commodity. China purchases some of this oil, but the global crash of oil prices has also greatly affected the Cuban economy.

The Cuban economy cannot be fully understood without the understanding of the Venezuelan-Cuban relationship. In 2010, China entered into a \$6 billion deal to expand and update the Cuban Cienfuegos Oil Refinery. Financing for the expansion was backed with Chinese shares in Venezuelan oil, which has fallen. The Cienfuegos Refinery expansion is currently paused, and probably will remain that way till oil prices return to historical levels. China importation of Cuban resources is critical to Cuba, but the limited depth and breadth of Cuban exports will prevent China from investing further in Cuba until a greater return on investment is forecasted.

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<sup>81</sup> The Guardian, "There is no Money': Cash Strapped Cuba is Forced to Cut Vital Imports," October 16, 2015, accessed March 18, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/16/cuba-cash-shortage-imports-oil-commodities>.

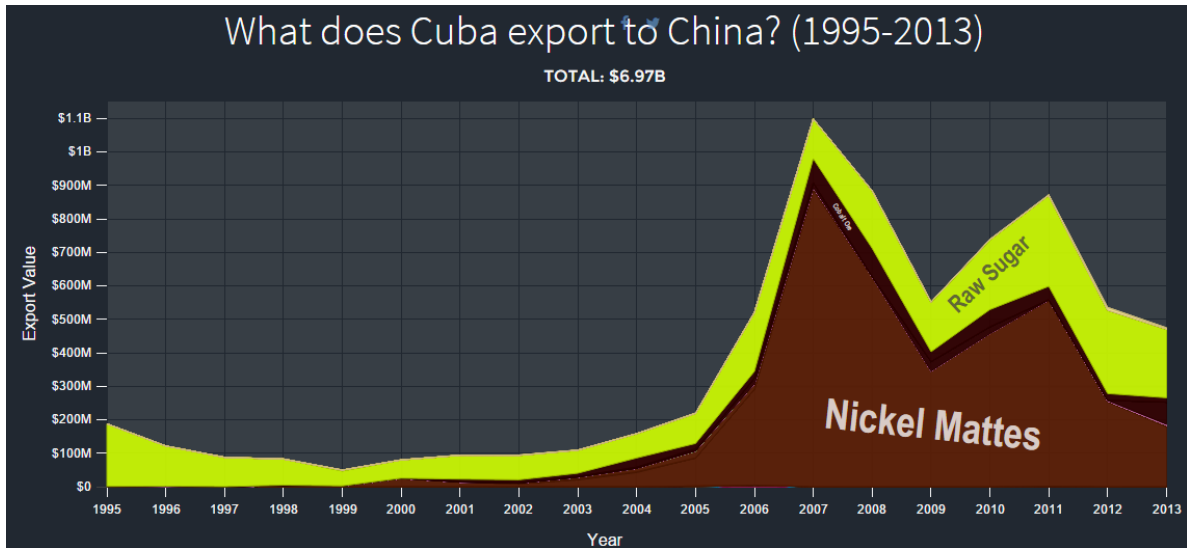


Figure 4. What does Cuba Export to China; volume in dollars 1995-2013.

Source: “Cuba,” The Observatory of Economic Complexity, accessed March 17, 2016, <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/cub/#Destinations>.

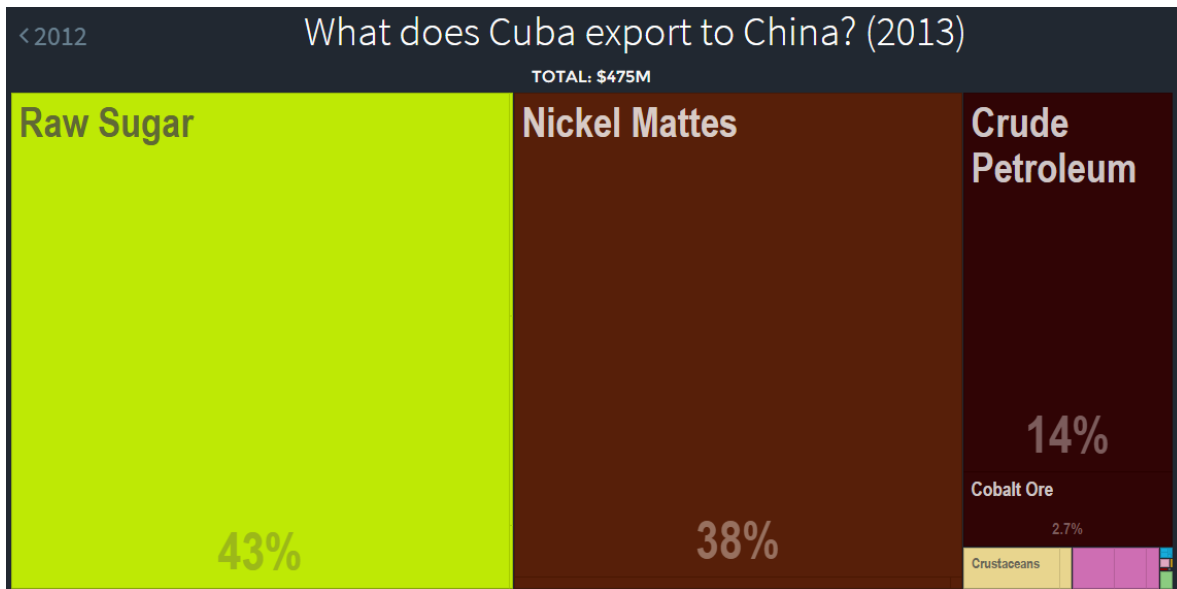


Figure 5. What does Cuba export to China? (2013).

Source: “Cuba,” The Observatory of Economic Complexity, accessed March 17, 2016, <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/cub/#Destinations>.

When examining Chinese export partners, displayed in figure 5 and 6, Cuba does not even rank high enough to be listed. Figure 5 displays China’s top global export partners. Figure 6 displays China’s top export partners in Latin America, and Cuba is still absent. This clearly identifies the low value of Cuba to China in regards to being a trade partner. China seeks the resources that Cuba provides, but the economic value of Cuba is not in its resources, rather in its economically strategic location regarding location and time.

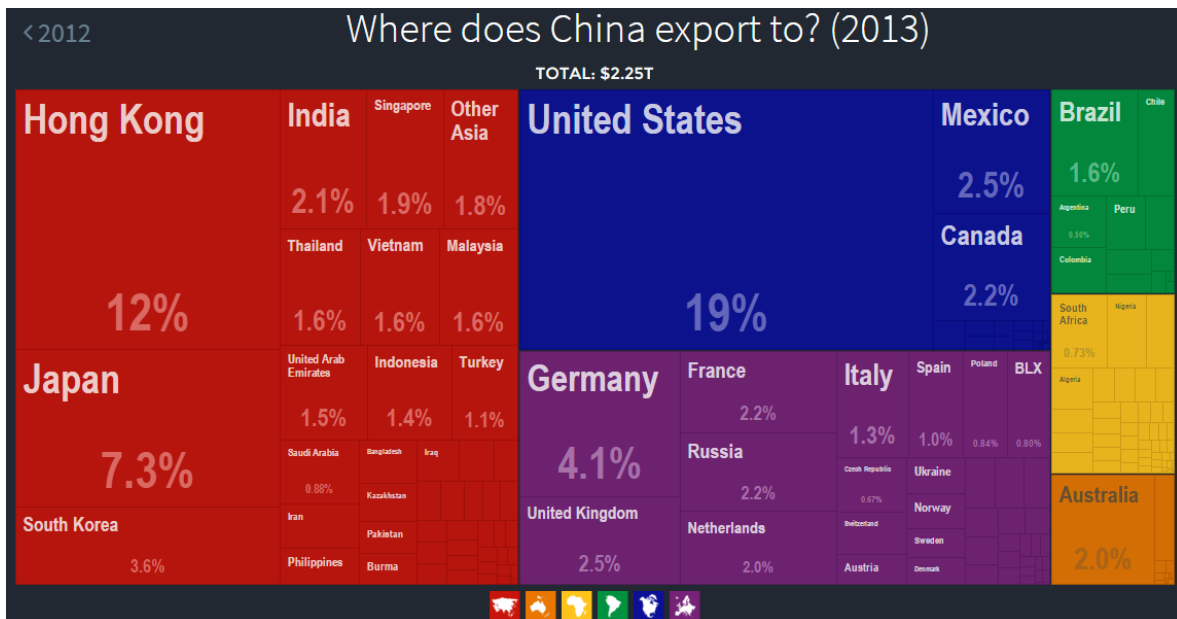


Figure 6. Where does China export to? (2013).

Source: “Cuba,” The Observatory of Economic Complexity, accessed March 17, 2016, <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/cub/#Destinations>.

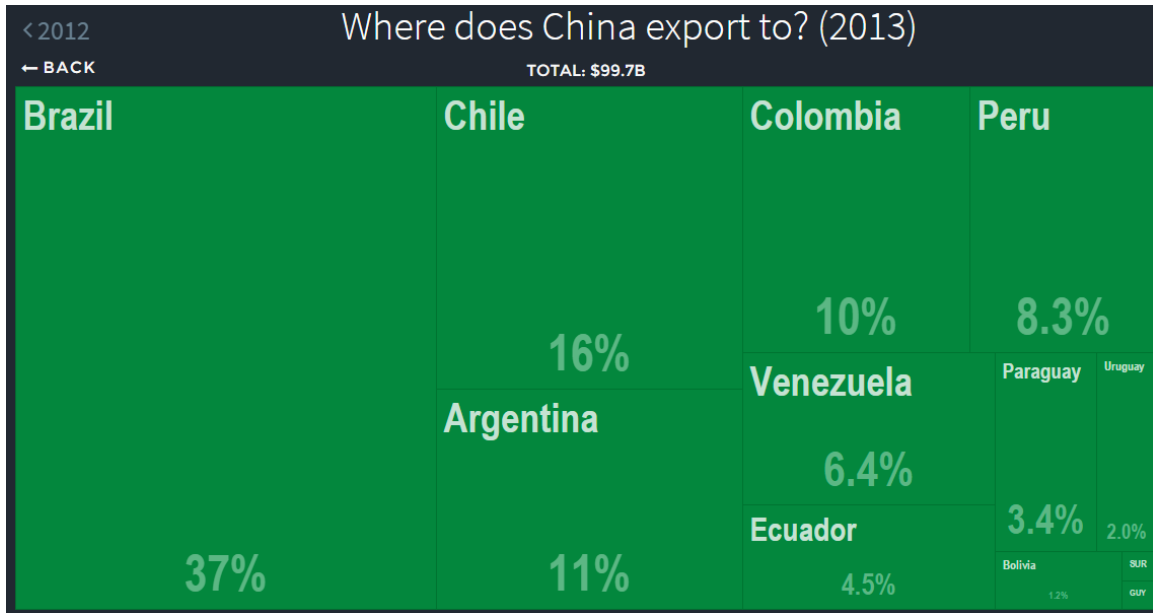


Figure 7. Where does China Export to? 2013 Latin America Focus

Source: “Cuba,” The Observatory of Economic Complexity, accessed March 17, 2016, <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/cub/#Destinations>.

The location of Cuba is economically strategic for China. The new deep port facilities of Mariel, Cuba in combination with the attached Free Trade Zone bring unique value to the island in economic terms. The port of Mariel can accommodate the larger container ships (called New-Panamax ships)<sup>82</sup> that have started passing through the Panama Canal’s recently expanded locks. Mariel will be the closest New-Panamax accommodating port to the U.S. ports on the Gulf of Mexico, providing a distinct advantage of access to the U.S. market for goods. Additionally, “Mariel is at the heart of

<sup>82</sup> Jean-Pau Rodrigue, “The Geography of Transport Systems,” Hofstra University, accessed March 18, 2016, <https://people.hofstra.edu/geotrans/eng/ch4en/conc4en/uswaterwaysystem.html>.

a planned 180-square-mile free trade and development zone that will offer competitive customs and tax incentives.”<sup>83</sup>

Time is the other factor that adds great value to China’s economic relationship with Cuba. “The terminal is ideally situated to handle U.S. cargo if the American trade embargo is eventually lifted. . . For the moment, though, the big market boost remains a big “if.” U.S. sanctions right now represent a large potential brake on the terminal’s future success. Washington bans ships entering the U.S. for six months after docking in Cuba unless they carry licensed U.S. agricultural goods. . .

“Nevertheless, many shipping experts believe the terminal and free trade zone, at its current modest size, could still turn a profit with the help of Cuba’s Asian and Latin American friends.”<sup>84</sup> With the warming of ties between Cuba and the U.S., China’s economic relationship with Cuba promises great value and the time to invest in Cuba couldn’t be any better.

Tourism is another facet of the growing Sino-Cuban economic relationship. With an estimated 109 million Chinese in China’s middle class,<sup>85</sup> the market for tourists from China is rapidly growing. The 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations brought the first direct flight between the two countries, intending to take

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<sup>83</sup> Marc Frank, “Cuba: Port Upgrades and Free-Trade Zones,” *Americas Quarterly* (Winter 2014), accessed March 18, 2016, <http://www.americasquarterly.org/content/cuba-port-upgrades-and-free-trade-zones>.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Sophia Yan, “The Chinese Dream is Coming True for Millions,” *CNN Money*, October 14, 2015, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://money.cnn.com/2015/10/14/news/economy/china-middle-class-growing/>.

advantage of the potential for tourism. Alfred Cordero, the president of Cuba's Civil Aviation Institute, announced: "The thrice-weekly flight (Tuesday, Friday, Sunday) has a capacity to seat at least 300 passengers a time, meaning some 3,500 Chinese citizens could potentially travel to Cuba each month."<sup>86</sup> In the last year, there has been a reported 16.5 percent increase of Chinese tourists visiting Cuba. Cuba has great potential for tourism, but will need significant reform in its tourism industry to update hotels, infrastructure, and attractions to truly compete with the other Caribbean and Latin American tourist markets. This deficiency on the part of Cuba could produce yet another opportunity for the Sino-Cuban relationship through construction contracts being awarded to Chinese firms.

In conclusion, in comparison to the other instruments of national power (DIME), the economic value of the Sino-Cuban relationship is the greatest. The diplomatic, information and military relationships hinge on the level of engagement of the economic relationship. However, for China to realize the full potential of economic capacity that Cuba represents, Cuba will have to reform its economy. China is fully invested in supporting Cuba in this transition and feels an ideological duty in the task as it has with Vietnam in its market transition. Additionally, the transition advances the legitimacy of communist countries, justifying an economic reform without a humanitarian reform. This research does not focus directly on the intricacies of that process; rather it acknowledges that this process is happening and that China is invested in the process for the prospect of

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<sup>86</sup> China Daily.com, "Beijing-Havana direct flight helps boost tourism: Chinese Ambassador to Cuba," December 29, 2015, accessed January 16, 2016, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2015-12/29/content\\_22851701.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2015-12/29/content_22851701.htm).

economic advantage that it may gain in the Western Hemisphere as a result. China is taking the role of mentor in this transitional process from an ideological as well as exemplary position. Cuba will develop its own path in this transition, but we can be sure that China's influence will be strong in the process.

### Vulnerability Chinese threat through the means of Cuba

The vulnerability of the United States in this study is determined by the national capacity to anticipate a threat, react to the anticipated threat and resist or remove the threat. The threat comes from China through the means of Cuba. In other words, what can a rising and potentially combative China do, through its influence in Cuba, to weaken the position of the United States in the world and promote itself to rise above the United States? This portion of the chapter is divided into sub-sections that analyze the vulnerability of the United States to China, through Cuba, according to the instruments of national power or DIME.

### Diplomatic Vulnerability

Diplomatically, the United States and Cuba are turning a new leaf in state-to-state level relations. President Obama has made the restoration of U.S. Cuban relations a top priority of his administration in the final years of his presidency. His actions on this front have gone strictly contrary to previous administrations and prominent leaders in the U.S. Congress. In March of 2016, President Obama became the first U.S. President to visit Cuba since 1928 and hold presidential level talks with Cuban national leadership. If China is looking to identify vulnerabilities of a diplomatic nature in the United States,



they may find some in regional political relations, based off changing relations between the U.S. and Cuba, and further legitimize the Chinese political stance.

China's influence has been growing in Latin America over the last 15 years in rapid fashion. China's influence is displayed through its soft power of aid and trade. This is seen on the bilateral level but also on the regional level. China acts as a participant or observer in several of the regional organizations. One such organization is the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). CELAC, a 33 member organization from South and Central America, including the Caribbean and excluding the U.S. In January 2015, Beijing hosted the CELAC members "where Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged \$500 billion in investments in the region over the next decade. At a CELAC summit in Costa Rica later that month, heads of state issued a declaration denouncing Cuba's designation by the United States as a state sponsor of terrorism and calling on the United States to end the embargo against Cuba."<sup>87</sup> The next month The U.S. removed Cuba from the State-Sponsored Terrorism List.

The linkage of relations in this sequence of events could point to the influence of China in getting Cuba removed from the U.S. State-Sponsored Terrorism List. The details of this sequence are obviously much more profound than noted here but show that the Chinese soft power in the Western Hemisphere could be influential in pressuring the U.S. to make decisions that support and legitimize the governments of Cuba and China.

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<sup>87</sup> Brianna Lee and Danielle Renwick, "The Organization of American States," *Council on Foreign Relations*, April 9, 2015, accessed March 23, 2016, <http://www.cfr.org/americas/organization-american-states/p27945>.

Could China be an external pressure on the Organization of American States (OAS) to restore Cuba to full membership status? Or to further weaken the U.S. sponsored OAS in favor of Chinese-sponsored organizations like CELAC? So doing would constitute dramatic changes in the organization with many ripple effects throughout the region. If Cuba was restored to full status in the OAS, while still a communist government, it would legitimize both the Cuban and Chinese Government, especially in the areas of human rights and democratic rule. From the diplomatic perspective, the issue of human rights has been a sticking point for China. Cuba's acceptance into the OAS could provide China opportunities to negate the need to address concerns such as human rights issues during its rise. If Cuba continues to be denied full acceptance into the OAS, this could further delegitimize the OAS in the perspective of Latin American countries, thus weakening the U.S. and strengthen China as OAS countries would most likely turn towards other organizations sponsored by China.

In conclusion, the diplomatic vulnerabilities for the U.S. from the threat of China through Cuba are real as seen by China's influence with CELAC and could prove to strengthen further China's influence in the Western Hemisphere and global rise. These actions could be seen as a threat to the United States' influence in the Americas.

### Vulnerability of Information

In the age of information, the protection of information is vital. Information spans the diplomatic, military and economic aspects of national engagement and is vital to the effective management of government, military, and business. The loss of information to a non-intended party could result in catastrophic consequences. If China is a rising threat to the United States, information must be protected to prevent China from exploiting

vulnerabilities. If China is a rising threat to the United States, it must be assumed that they seek to obtain as much information as possible about the U.S.. This is already a hot topic between China and the United States as addressed by Penny Pritzker, the current U.S. Secretary of Commerce to the PRC's President Xi Jinping during his visit to the United States in September 2015. "You can't keep stealing things."<sup>88</sup> The advantages of intellectual property theft outweigh the risks due to the lack of enforcement of international law. When Cuba re-opens to U.S businesses, there will be lots of innovative ideas used by U.S. businesses employed on the island to make an investment in the island profitable. We can be certain that China will be poised to take advantage of the unsecured information.

One of the major obstacles in repairing the U.S.-Cuban relations is the embargo that has been imposed on the island for more than 50 years. Based on the state-to-state relations in the last two years, the lifting of the embargo is now in the not-to-distant future. As United States businesses prepare to enter the Cuban market, there will be vulnerabilities in technical information falling into the hands of the Chinese. Cuban technology on the island is primitive compared to the United States. Computer and technology companies will require significant upgrades to Cuban infrastructure to provide their services on the island, and this upgrading will likely require large amounts of information being transferred from the U.S. to Cuba. Chinese companies Huawei and ZTE have already initiated infrastructure upgrades to the island. This advantage of

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<sup>88</sup> Christina Austin, "U.S. Secretary of Commerce to China: You Can't Keep Stealing our Intellectual Property," *Fortune*, October 13, 2015, accessed March 23, 2016, <http://fortune.com/2015/10/13/secretary-of-commerce-penny-pritzker-mpw/>.

Huawei and ZTE could indicate a vulnerability to businesses operating in Cuba. U.S. businesses will be reliant on the Huawei and ZTE systems to communicate and transfer data. Chinese companies will have access to this data and could intercept this data, thus propagating the current plague of theft of intellectual property by the Chinese.

The above example identifies a vulnerability for information in the economic aspect. If China intends to threaten the United States during its rise, diplomatic and military information will be sought out as well. If influencing Cuba becomes a contested practice between the U.S. and the PRC, the PRC will certainly fund great value in any information that provides them a plan on how to counter U.S. engagement for the benefit of China.

#### Vulnerability to Military Threat

The military threat from the PRC using Cuba is not kinetic at this point in time, nor does it appear likely in the foreseeable future. This does not, however, indicate a lack of vulnerability by the United States to military action on the part of the PRC. Evan Ellis, frames the Chinese perspective to its engagement in the Western Hemisphere: "Chinese strategic thinking, from the writings of Sun Tzu to classic games such as 'go' emphasize the value of setting the stage, as much as the battle itself. The idea is to position oneself at an advantage in all possible realms -politically, militarily or physically- so that if a tangible confrontation must occur, the adversary simply cannot prevail."<sup>89</sup> Although the

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<sup>89</sup> Washington Times, "China's 'Peaceful' Invasion," November 20, 2005, accessed March 17, 2016, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2005/nov/20/20051120-124045-3471r/?page=1>.

threat is not imminent, strategic planners cannot discount the vulnerabilities posed at this time from non-kinetic means.

Intelligence collection prior to a military operation is basic to every military. Cuba has excelled at collecting and exporting human intelligence since the early days of the Revolution. Cuban intelligence has penetrated into some of the highest levels of the United States Department of Defense. The vulnerability of China receiving this intelligence is high, considering the economic needs of Cuba and the capability of China to fulfill those needs in exchange for intelligence. The normalization of diplomatic relationships between the U.S. and Cuba is not likely to terminate the threat of Cuban human intelligence; rather it will likely perpetuate the problem with easier travel access for Cubans and Cuban-Americans between the two countries.

Signals intelligence is another vulnerability of the U.S. military. Cuba, situated in the Western Hemisphere, is geographically located to intercept the satellite downlinks of the United States military. China is reportedly assisting in the technical upgrades of the three signals intelligence collection sites on Cuba. If this is true, then the access to the intelligence is assumed to be in the hands of the Chinese as well. The greatest military vulnerability of the United States currently and in the foreseeable future is due to the intelligence collection from Cuba that is shared with China.

The island of Cuba forms two major choke-points for the Gulf of Mexico. One between the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico and the western-most end of Cuba, and the other between the northernmost part of Cuba and Florida. In the case of a conflict between the United States and China, the Gulf of Mexico, which is a major logistical waterway for military and economic movement, could be vulnerable to attack from the

island. Disruption of military lines of logistics in the Gulf of Mexico would significantly impact the readiness levels of deployed forces. This type of threat would also require naval assets to patrol the Gulf of Mexico to ensure safe passage, thus preventing the full extent of U.S. Naval projection of force in other areas of the conflict.

In conclusion, assessing a military conflict between the United States and the PRC identifies the vulnerabilities of the United States to a Chinese threat from Cuba could be extremely high. Beyond the current vulnerabilities to Chinese and Cuban intelligence collection methods, there could be a threat of a direct strike from the Chinese by way of Cuba. The United States could be vulnerable to a repeat of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962; there could be a threat of a Chinese army invasion (perhaps raised from the large Chinese diaspora in the region) or Chinese sponsored air and naval bases staged on the island. This is far from the case at present, but these are threats to which the U.S. could be vulnerable in the event of an open military conflict with China through the Cuban Island.

#### Economic Vulnerability

The economic vulnerability of the United States to a Chinese threat through the means of Cuba is the most practical of vulnerabilities. Due to the Cuban embargo, U.S. businesses have not been able to operate on the island for over 50 years. Sino-Cuban relations, although suffering during the Cold War, have existed through the last 55 years, and expanded dramatically in the last 15 years. Chinese firms are well established in the telecommunications, mining, oil refining, shipping and tourism industries in Cuba. Through economic engagement with Cuba, the United States aims to help the island nation eventually transition into a democratically governed nation. If China remains the

preferred trading partner over the United States, this transformation will likely not be realized.

“The 51-year-old U.S. trade embargo still restricts Cuba's ability to trade freely with its international partners. Any ship that docks in Cuba cannot enter the United States for six months. If the embargo was ever lifted, however, the FTZ would be favorably located to serve as a low-cost site for companies looking to manufacture and ship their products into the U.S. market.”<sup>90</sup>. Chinese businesses will be able to use the Cuban Port of Mariel to their extreme advantage. Post-Panamax container ships will be able to utilize the Port of Mariel to forward stage and move massive amounts of trade goods. Chinese companies could use the free trade zone for manufacturing sites, reducing the cost of shipping materials to China for manufacturing and assembly of goods to be sold in U.S. markets at lower costs than American business can compete with. This use of Cuba could threaten the current trade agreements between the United States and Latin American nations that may find more affordable Chinese products preferable to products from the United States.

The United States is vulnerable to all of the many types of economic threats listed above to which China could take advantage. None of the vulnerabilities are catastrophic and many could, with good judgment be used to the advantage of both the U.S and China, further binding the nations through trade, which would likely lessen the probability of future military conflict.

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<sup>90</sup> Eoghan Macguire, “Cuba Libre: Could Port Herald New Economic Age for Communist Island?” *CNN*, November 20, 2013, accessed March 24, 2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/11/20/business/cuba-libre-could-new-port-communist/>.

In conclusion, The U.S. is vulnerable to Chinese threats which come through the means of Cuba across the aspects of DIME. The economic vulnerabilities are already being seen in other regions of Latin America as trade agreements with the Chinese are seen in better light than U.S. trade agreements. As the Cuban market opens, the same vulnerabilities are expected since the Chinese have gained the advantage by their continued presence on the Island. The vulnerability of U.S. information being threatened by Chinese is already realized in other regions of the world. Therefore one must expect that intellectual property will continue to be at risk with the opening of U.S.–Cuban relations. Diplomatically, the Chinese have been slowly increasing their diplomatic influence with the nations of the region. Much of their successful diplomacy stems from their soft power (aid and trade) used in the region. Cuba has been instrumental in implementing diplomatic ties between Latin American nations and China. Finally, the vulnerabilities of a military threat and present in the form of intelligence operations stemming from Cuban human and signals intelligence that is likely shared with the PRC. Greater vulnerabilities could exist in the future, but are not likely in the near future.

#### Capability of China through the medium of Cuba

Capability is the aptitude or ability needed to do something.<sup>91</sup> This section examines the PRC's capability, through the means of Cuba, to exploit a vulnerability in the United States. Based off of the vulnerabilities identified in the previous section, does China have the aptitude or ability to exploit vulnerabilities in the aspects of diplomacy, information, military, and economy? China's rise is not accidental. It has been a

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid



deliberately planned process and executed with great success. Chinese aptitude and ability are growing very quickly with a large and innovative middle class of well-educated citizens.

### Diplomatic Capabilities

The capabilities of Chinese diplomacy through the means of Cuba to exploit U.S. vulnerabilities are historical as well as growing. For diplomatic interaction with other Latin American countries, China primarily resorts to the use of soft power. Cuba, however, is the only state in the Western Hemisphere in which China has another approach besides soft power—shared ideology. Since the special period in Cuba, China has mainly influenced diplomatic relations through the use of soft power, however their shared ideological background is a unique aspect to their relationship that the U.S. must consider as well.

Chinese soft power has been less utilized on the island than in other regions of Latin America. This is primarily due to the poor economy of Cuba. However, with the nearing of the end of the embargo, China is expected to increase the use of soft power on the island to gain and maintain a favorable advantage over competitors for the new market.

Shared ideology is a capability that China will continue to use with Cuba to gain greater legitimacy across the globe. One recent evidence of ideological solidarity is from a news conference during President Obama's visit to Cuba. During the press conference, President Raul Castro was asked about human rights violations to which he responded "Human rights should not be politicized," . . . directly echoing Chinese diplomats who

have used the same phrase to fend off the same concerns earlier this month in Geneva.”<sup>92</sup> China’s economic rise has turned much of the focus from human rights issues that impact the diplomatic capability of the nation. Through ideological solidarity with Cuba, at this time of Cuban transition, where the international pressure is building against the United States to end the embargo, China seeks to gain further diplomatic legitimacy by supporting the economic transition in Cuba and avoiding international pressure to change governmental policies used by both China and Cuba.

### Information Capabilities

China is one of the most technologically advanced nations in the world and a major exporter of technology and telecommunications across the globe. China is known for the repeated theft of intellectual property of U.S. companies. China possesses the capability and the desire to detect vulnerabilities, determine how to exploit them, exploit them and reverse engineer the intellectual property for the production of that technology for the benefit of the Chinese economy.

Through the Chinese telecommunication companies Huawei and ZTE, which have contracted with Cuba’s military-led GAESA (administrative business group) to install the telecommunications infrastructure throughout Cuba. China and Cuba will have access to all information that passes through their telecommunications. As U.S. companies are permitted to enter Cuba and establish businesses, China and Cuba will

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<sup>92</sup> Eric Schulzke, “Cuban Leader Raul Castro Says Human Rights Should Not Be Politicized,” *Deseret News*, March 24, 2016, accessed March 24, 2016, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865650646/Cuban-leader-Raul-Castro-says-human-rights-should-not-be-politicized.html>.

have access to their information and intellectual property that is transmitted through telecommunications mediums. Due to the archaic systems of Cuba, U.S. companies will be required to bring large amounts of intellectual property to the island to create viable systems from which to manage and administer their businesses, which increases the risk of compromise of information to Sino-Cuban capabilities.

### Military Capability

Over the last quarter century, China has significantly modified the affairs of its military. Based off of what Chinese leaders saw during Operation Desert Storm, the PLA determined that it needed to increase its technological capability to maintain a force capable of confronting the technologically advanced armies of the world. Chinese defense budget in 1991 was approximately 18.9 billion dollars. In 2016, the budget for defense spending was announced to be approximately 147 billion dollars. That is nearly eight times the budget allocated 25 years earlier. Although the current recession in the Chinese economy is slowing the rate of growth of Chinese defense spending, the Chinese military is modernizing faster than any other military in the world.

With modernization obviously comes an increase of capability. Three major points regarding Chinese capability as it pertains to Cuba are signals intelligence (SIGINT) collection capabilities, naval capabilities, and military-to-military engagement capabilities.

Chris Simmons, a veteran of counter-intelligence operations with Cuba explains the SIGINT capabilities that the Chinese have developed through Cuba's location. "the signal coming towards earth spreads out into a huge cone covering hundreds, if not thousands of miles . . . the sheer volume of U.S. communications requires a vast number

of satellite dishes and antennae arrays, making such a SIGINT effort impossible to hide. As a result, China proved unable to collect against most U.S. communications until the late 1990s, when Havana provided it access to the regime's major SIGINT sites.

“Cuba's location places it in the downlink of dozens of U.S. government and commercial signals. From an espionage standpoint, nowhere else in the Western Hemisphere provides a better site to conduct unrestricted SIGINT operations. . .

“According to think tanks, Cuban émigrés, and the media, Chinese military SIGINT personnel have served at Bejucal and a sister site at Santiago de Cuba since at least 1999. There, U.S. military communications as well as financial and political information is collected and analyzed by an elite Cuban-Chinese military team. In exchange for U.S. secrets, China appears to provide Havana with weaponry, updated SIGINT equipment, intelligence training, and money.”<sup>93</sup>

If these statements are correct, which this research assumes, China possesses a comprehensive signals intelligence (SIGINT) capability located on the island of Cuba that it continues to mature and update in accordance with technological advances. The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is another capability of the Chinese military that is maturing. “As China has grown economically, it has become increasingly reliant upon the world's oceans to sustain that growth. Consequently, it has needed to develop its maritime capabilities to defend both the Chinese homeland and its sea lanes of communications. This intensifying focus is exacerbating tensions with neighbors and

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<sup>93</sup> Chris Simmons, “Dirty Little Secret: Why China Needs Cuba,” *Cuba Confidential*, June 11, 2012, accessed March 24, 2016, <https://cubaconfidential.wordpress.com/2012/06/11/dirty-little-secret-why-china-needs-cuba/>.

increasingly challenging the United States.”<sup>94</sup> Initiating its first Western Hemisphere mission, the PLAN sent the Peace Arc on a medical humanitarian aid mission in 2011. The Peace Arc has maintained a busy schedule visiting several parts of the globe projecting Chinese naval power under the banner of humanitarian aid.<sup>95</sup> In November 2015, the first ever Chinese navy fleet arrived in Cuba. The three-ship fleet commander, Wang Jianxun commented ““A chance to strengthen ties between the navies and armed forces of both countries,” as the two nations “share ideals and a shared independent development path aimed at building socialism.””<sup>96</sup> This visit shows the increasing capability that the PLAN has and is willing to take to project force and capability to the world.

Chinese-Cuban military to military exchange is nothing new. In the early days of the Cuban Revolution, the Chinese instructed Cuban pilots in China as a military exchange to support the defense of Cuba. Today the exchanges are frequent between senior leaders of both the FAR and the PLA. One added incentive for the Chinese is that the FAR is the body in control of the different business sectors of Cuba, so military to military engagements also have an aspect of economic importance.

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<sup>94</sup> Dean Cheng, “China’s Pivot to the Sea: The Modernizing PLA Navy,” The Heritage Foundation, December 17, 2015, accessed March 24, 2016, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2015/12/chinas-pivot-to-the-sea-the-modernizing-pla-navy>.

<sup>95</sup> Conference at U.S. Navy South, “Chinese Peach Arc Hospital Ship” (Presented in a meeting hosted by U.S. Navy South for CGSOC Students, Jacksonville, FL, February 1, 2016).

<sup>96</sup> Frances Martel, “Chinese Navy Ships Dock in Cuba for the First Time,” *Breitbart*, November 11, 2015, accessed March 24, 2016, <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2015/11/11/chinese-navy-ships-dock-cuba-first-time/>.

The capability of military to military exchange, particularly in the regular attendance of Cuban officers to attend military schools in China is an important capability, as it ensures a lasting bond between militaries, protects the socialist ideology shared by the nations, promotes economic interaction between the nations and prepares the two nations to work in a common manner and with similar doctrine. Based on this capability, China will maintain great influence in the government of Cuba for years. This influence could one day show a greater exchange between the militaries to include combined naval exercises in the Gulf of Mexico, which move could be as provocative as the U.S. Navy sailing in the South China Sea.

#### Economic Capability

Carol Lee and Felicia Schwartz authored an article in the *Wall Street Journal* discussing the economic capability that China has with Cuba. The competing economic giants (U.S. and PRC) are seeking to win over Cuba's future market. The PRC has the advantage in capabilities at this time due to the long-time relationship. "Since the White House embarked on restoring relations with Cuba . . . the U.S. has run up against China's efforts in recent years to build an economic relationship with the country."<sup>97</sup> China is currently leading the competition for the Cuban market and is showing the high capability to maintain the advantage in the foreseeable future.

Since President Obama's announcement of his desire to restore relations with Cuba in late 2014, China has increased trade with Cuba. In 2015, China increased trade

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<sup>97</sup> Carol Lee and Felicia Schwartz, "U.S. Competes with China for Influence in Cuba," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 18, 2016, accessed March 24, 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-competes-with-china-for-influence-in-cuba-1458293405>.

with Cuba by 57 percent.<sup>98</sup> China is increasing tourism with weekly direct flights to Cuba, leading efforts to build the internet and telecommunications infrastructure, building luxury hotels and continuing to support ongoing projects like the refinery at Cienfuegos. Despite the Cuban people's attraction to the U.S., the Cuban Government is still very apprehensive of the intentions of the U.S. and would rather do strategic level (telecommunications for example) business with a partner with whom they share ideology and who will support and assist the Cuban government in implementing restrictions within the state as they see fit.

In conclusion, economically, Cubans see the Chinese as the partner of choice due to the list of Chinese economic capabilities that they have demonstrated. China's long history of economic support to Cuba, the shared ideology, the understanding of customer needs, Chinese advanced technology and the willingness of Chinese investment in the nation are a few of the advantageous capabilities possessed by the Chinese. China has demonstrated the aptitude for seizing the initiative economically in Cuba and will seek to maintain the advantage over the United States for years to come.

In conclusion of this section, the capabilities of the Chinese extend across each of the four instruments of national power regarding their interaction with Cuba. Through these capabilities, China could exploit the vulnerabilities of the United States. In some instances they already are employing their capabilities to exploit vulnerabilities, such as intelligence collection, gaining preferred trade partner status in the telecommunications industry, and diplomatic jockeying for the mutual benefit of the Sino-Cuban ideology.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

Regarding military capabilities, China has engineered the fastest growing defense budget in the world, and will eventually have a formidable force that can globally project power.

#### Motivation of China to exploit U.S. Vulnerabilities

Motivation is possessing a reason for doing something.<sup>99</sup> Does the PRC have the motivation to use a capability to exploit a vulnerability in the United States through the means of Cuba? End states drive motivations. What is the desired end state of the PRC? Can the U.S. accurately determine the motivations of China? The step in the threat assessment methodology that is the most difficult for an analysts is to determine the motivations of a threat. A true threat will not reveal its intentions until the moment it has used its capabilities to exploit one or more vulnerabilities. Meanwhile a non-threat could be construed as a threat. To avoid error in determining the motivation of a potential threat, there are three steps to take. First is to determine the agenda of the potential threat. The agenda will help illuminate the end state or goals of the threat. If a country does not have an end state to rule the world, the probability of that occurring are zero. Second is to determine the objectives that will lead to the fulfillment of the goal or end state. Last is to determine the psychological propensities of the threat to determine if it is prepared to take the action necessary to achieve its goals. Through the agenda, objectives and psychological propensity of an adversary, the motivation of a threat can be determined

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid



## Agenda of the People's Republic of China

The People's Republic of China is a nation that is guided by a purpose. China is guided by a series of five-year plans. These five-year plans focus on social and economic development initiatives and is guided by the Communist Party of China who establishes the principles of socialism, economic development, necessary reforms and growth targets. The PRC has recently released its 13<sup>th</sup> five-year plan. There are 32 highlights for this five-year plan that detail the immediate goals between now and 2020. In 2012 General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, Xi Jinping outlined the China Dream. The China Dream identifies goals and milestones of the nation to reach the Chinese end state. "Xi's Chinese Dream is described as achieving the "Two 100s": the material goal of China becoming a "moderately well-off society" by about 2020, the 100th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party, and the modernization goal of China becoming a fully developed nation by about 2049, the 100th anniversary of the People's Republic."<sup>100</sup> China's agenda is established, and its five-year plans continuously support the achievement of the goals of the 'Two 100s.' The Chinese system of setting national goals every five years has been instrumental in China's rapid rise. China is a purpose-driven nation. What does this mean for the United States? What does this mean for China's ally Cuba? How does Cuba fit into China's Agenda?

In the 13th five-year plan, the PRC is focused on five different areas. Innovation is the first and indicates the desired evolution from an industrial based economy to a

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<sup>100</sup> Robert Lawrence Kuhn, "Xi Jinping's Chinese Dream," *New York Times*, June 4, 2013, accessed March 26, 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/05/opinion/global/xi-jinpings-chinese-dream.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/05/opinion/global/xi-jinpings-chinese-dream.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1).

service based economy. Second is balancing or bridging the gap between the countryside and the cities with better-managed resources. Third is greening consisting of development of environmental technology industry and an ecological culture. The fourth is opening up with deeper participation in international cooperation. Last is sharing or the encouragement of the people of China to share the fruits of economic growth with the nation. The people of China certainly include the Chinese diaspora across the globe.

In 2012, Xi Jinping stated “A prosperous and stable China will not be a threat to any country. It will only be a positive force for world peace.”<sup>101</sup> This statement is certainly true. However, it assumes that China’s plan will achieve prosperity and that China’s plan will provide stability. This statement is a very peaceful soundbite, but it does not indicate what China will do if its plan does not achieve prosperity or stability. Plans cannot account for external forces that impact progress towards end states 100 percent of the time. One must, therefore, assume that China also has the plan to be a threat to another country that threatens its prosperity and stability.

China is indeed facing many external forces that could be perceived as threats to prosperity and stability. Territorial disputes are an example. China claims approximately 20 territorial disputes with its neighbors.<sup>102</sup> These disputes are usually heightened by the resources of the disputed regions that could promote Chinese posterity. In some cases,

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<sup>101</sup> Xi Jinping, “Remarks at the China-U.S. Economic and Trade Forum,” USC US-China Institute, February 17, 2012, accessed March 25, 2016, <http://china.usc.edu/xi-jinping-remarks-china-us-economic-and-trade-forum-february-17-2012>.

<sup>102</sup> Llona Raskolinkova, “China has Territorial Claims in Nearly 20 Countries,” Pravda Report, July 17, 2012, accessed March 25, 2016, [http://www.pravdareport.com/world/asia/17-07-2012/121658-china\\_territorial\\_claims-0/](http://www.pravdareport.com/world/asia/17-07-2012/121658-china_territorial_claims-0/).

such as disputes over islands in the South and East China Seas, are with key regional allies of the United States. The dispute in the Spratly Islands of the South China Sea has escalated to the point where China sees the necessity to militarize the islands to protect them. This is one example of how stability of China could be affected. China has certainly shown a threat to other nations in the matter of territorial disputes.

The Chinese agenda applies to its relationship with Latin America and the Caribbean, and specifically with Cuba. For the purpose of prosperity and stability, Latin America is an important partner in the trade of resources and as an export market. China has a population of 1.35 billion and Latin American resources are important for the PRC to maintain economic prosperity as well as stability in China. Cuba, although a lesser trade partner in comparison with Latin American countries, is also an important ally to China and the only ally in the Western Hemisphere. An external threat to China's social structure (such as sanctions by the United Nations because of international human rights violations) could impact the prosperity and stability of the China. An external threat to the social structure of Cuba, China's ideological partner and ally, could weaken the legitimacy of the Chinese Social structure, and thus its prosperity and stability.

China is on a deliberate course to achieve its national goals. China seeks a peaceful rise that promotes prosperity and stability for the People's Republic of China. Prosperity and stability have been threatened by external forces acting on China. China, therefore, will escalate its projection of power to preserve prosperity and stability where necessary. However, leaders of the PRC clearly perceive that a sustained conflict, especially with a great power such as the United States or India, would detour the nation from the path leading to their goals. Latin America, and specifically Cuba are certainly

part of China's geopolitical calculus, and China has objectives specific to the region and Cuba to achieve its goals.

### Objectives of PRC in Cuba

The Chinese objectives in Cuba can be further categorized into the instruments of national power or the DIME construct. Although the role of the Latin American region is less critical to China's end state, it can certainly hasten its progress if the conditions are right to support Chinese prosperity. If the conditions are not right, then China simply waits till the conditions are favorable again. This has been the case with the Sino-Cuban relation.

China's diplomatic objective in Cuba is the legitimization of their shared ideology in governing their states before the world. China's diplomatic support to Cuba will be more pronounced now that the U.S. and Cuba have initiated restoration of normal relations. The United States has demanded a change to the Cuban government for the last 50 years. As the United States eases the restrictions it has placed on Cuba, to normalize relations, it has repressed the requirement of regime change. Due to the overwhelming international support to end the embargo, Cuba has benefitted from the eased restrictions while maintaining the centralized control of the regime. In light of these circumstances, China is increasing their diplomatic support of Cuba.

Human rights violations have been an impediment to the progress of both China and Cuba. China, through market reforms and economic progress, has been able to subdue the demands of the international community to reform its policies towards human rights. China has observed that other communist states, like North Korea, have approached the demands of the international community in a much more direct and

combative manner to a devastating effect on the prosperity and stability of the state. Cuba, who once subscribed to the combative methods, is now transforming its methods in the light of Chinese success. If Cuba can make the transition without losing its communist governmental control and maintaining its repressive policies, China will be further legitimized in the international community and have reason to progress towards prosperity and stability unimpeded.

The information objectives of China in Cuba are simple: Control the market and infrastructure of the telecommunications and internet sector. This will help China to further their goal of innovation in progressing to a service based economy, as well as perpetuate the dependence of the region of compatible telecommunications infrastructure. Additionally the added benefit of access to the data transmitted over Chinese telecommunications infrastructure for innovation in the sense of procuring intellectual property to be duplicated and produced for the benefit of the PRC.

The military objectives are threefold. First, is the military to military exchange. The improvement and sustainment of relationships with the FAR will provide greater opportunity for economic prosperity as the FAR leadership are also the leaders of business management (GAESA), as well as legitimize the use of Chinese military doctrine in the Western Hemisphere. Second is the intelligence collection cooperation. A strengthened relationship with Cuban FAR will ensure the sustained human intelligence collection in the form of intelligence for trade with Cuba. Sustained technical support will also support both militaries with their combined signals intelligence collection cooperation. Third, and most important in the event of a military conflict with the United States is the ability to stage, attack from and logistically sustain Chinese combat forces

from the geographically strategic Island. Finally, all military relations must be executed in a manner not to draw the attention of the United States to question the relationship.

There are seven principle economic objectives of China in Cuba. First, maintain access to natural resources (sugar, nickel, petroleum). Second, increase the exchange of trade for medical services (like the Cuban-Venezuelan model) to support the Chinese five-year plan goal of balancing the needs of rural and urban areas of China. Third, maintain access to the Mariel Free Trade Zone to have a strategic economic advantage to the U.S. market. Fourth, take advantage of high trade preference in the region for Chinese economic benefit. Fifth, Assist Cuba in economic transition so as to maintain government control during economic reform. Sixth dominate the contracts of Cuban markets as they open (hotels, tourism, telecommunications, etc.). Seven, maintain and perpetuate the support of the Chinese diaspora on Cuba to expand the economic growth of the PRC.

The Chinese objectives in Cuba support the end state of the PRC and the ‘Chinese Dream.’ They align with the 13<sup>th</sup> five-year plan and will be critical at this time of Cuban transition. China’s objectives in Cuba will be a large obstacle for U.S. interests on the Island.

The last step in the evaluation of motivation is the analysis of the psychological propensities of the PRC. According to the Psychological Dictionary, the psychological propensity is defined as a tendency toward a particular behavior or action.<sup>103</sup> The psychological propensities are primarily based upon Chinese cultural ideas and theories

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<sup>103</sup> Psychological Dictionary, “Definition of psychological propensity,” accessed March 25, 2016, <http://psychologydictionary.org/propensity/>.

(primarily Confucianism) as well as the nationalist, communist and socialist ideology they espouse.

Chinese culture is engrossed in strategy and patience. This is evidenced by five-year plans and long-term national strategies that are executed by leaders that will never fully reap the rewards of their efforts. The strategically focused PRC produced a strategy for foreign policy at the time of the fall of the Soviet Union. The strategy has six central recommendations: (1) Observe world events with a calm mind. (2) Stand firmly. (3) Confront difficulties with confidence, (4) Keep a low profile, (5) Never assume a leadership role, (6) Take action.<sup>104</sup> Unlike western nations, China is much more calculated and less reactionary, keeping their eye on the end state. These six recommendations are seen in action in Sino-Cuban relations today.

Nationalism is an interesting aspect of psychological propensity as well. Chinese nationalism is different from others. “It has at its core a sense of grievance against the United States and some of its allies. . . . The century of humiliation . . . is still a powerful collective memory in China that conditions both elite and public attitudes toward China’s external relations.”<sup>105</sup> This does not, however, necessitate conflict. China was essentially freed of British influence in Hong Kong through political pressure and patience. They are applying the same pressure and patience with Taiwan and are fully confident that one day *One China* will exist again.

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<sup>104</sup> Riordan Roett and Guadalupe Paz, eds., *China’s Expansion into the Western Hemisphere* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute, 2008), 31.

<sup>105</sup> Dan Blumenthal and Phillip Swagel, *An Awkward Embrace: the United States and China in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 2012), 18-19.

In conclusion, the psychological propensity of China is to plan and prepare for the strategy to eventually play out. Be patient. Execute the plan but in a discrete manner. Regarding the Chinese psychological propensity when engaging with Cuba, China is acting very deliberately. China is observing the Cuban situation in a calm and collected manner, looking for opportunities, but not risking any noticeable advances that would alarm the United States, an action that could disrupt their goals in the region. The PRC is standing firmly in support and solidarity with Cuba's transition of relations with the U.S. pushing for an end to the embargo without Cuban regime change. China is very confident with their actions in Cuba and the region. Their confidence and soft power have won over the support of many Latin American countries. China has maintained a low profile in all of its engagements with Cuba. Cuba has not overtly engaged with advanced military arms sales or created a large physical footprint in the SIGINT facilities on Cuba to maintain deniability. The PRC has not tried to assume a leadership role in Cuba by replacing the U.S.S.R. as patron or protector, nor has China assumed any leadership roles in Western Hemisphere organizations, although it has assumed very influential roles. Finally, China has taken action in Cuba and the region. While the U.S. has focused on the Middle East for the last quarter century, China has casually walked into Latin America and become one of the top trade partners with the region.

#### Likelihood of a Chinese Threat, via Cuba, to the United States

According to Bale and Ackerman, the likelihood of attack is the combination of the capabilities of an adversary and the motivation of an adversary. In other words: Likelihood = Capabilities x Motivation. This equation, as noted by Bale and Ackerman, is overly schematic and far too simplistic to reflect the complexities of reality, yet it does



point squarely to the essential factors that must be considered. There is a difference between a potential threat and an actual threat, and this formula helps to identify the potential threat of the PRC, by means of Cuba and an actual threat of the PRC, by means of Cuba. This section will examine the likelihood of a Chinese threat through Cuba to the United States according to the instruments of national power (DIME).

Diplomatically, the likelihood of a Chinese threat to the United States is high. The PRC has the capability to influence the United States diplomatically and the motivation to act diplomatically, through the current Cuban transformation.

Through China's capabilities as a rising superpower, Chinese diplomacy holds greater influence with the international community, especially in the Western Hemisphere than it did a quarter century ago. This growing diplomatic influence is effective against the United States in speaking against the U.S. embargo while resolutely standing with the Cuban government's policies.

China's rapid rise to power and employment of soft power across the globe have gained greater favor in the international system to the extent that China senses that the pressure of the international community on the United States to end the Cuban embargo is at the tipping point. Therefore, China is motivated to use its capability to push for the end of the embargo, while demanding that the imperialist United States maintain itself out of the domestic affairs of Cuba. This action provides greater legitimacy to the PRC in their own domestic issues of human rights, a major issue for the U.S. in maintaining a strong international order. Additionally, it provides an advantageous market for the Chinese to employ the other instruments of national power.

The likelihood of a threat through the information instrument of national power is also high. China has the capability to take information that flows through the information infrastructure that it has developed in Cuba. As U.S. businesses seek to establish themselves in Cuba, including the establishment of extensive infrastructure on the island to facilitate business, China is poised to take this information for themselves. China is motivated to continue intellectual property theft, as the international community and the United States has proven weak on the prosecution of such actions. This weakness again stems from the growing influence of China across the globe and the employment of soft power with the international community to act in a manner that is most advantageous to the PRC.

The likelihood of a military threat to U.S. National Security is divided into two parts. The first part is the intelligence threat while the second part is the physical threat of an attack from Chinese military by way of Cuba on the United States.

The likelihood of an intelligence threat from China, by means of Cuba to the United States, is high. Based off of Cuba's human intelligence capabilities and their established exchange of intelligence for trade, China certainly has the access to all intelligence that the Cuban human intelligence can procure. Based off of the presumed capabilities of signals intelligence cooperation between the PRC and Cuba at Cuban SIGINT facilities and the presumed ongoing intelligence collection operations occurring currently, the capability and the motivation of the PRC on this front make the likelihood of a threat high. The motivation of the PRC is as high due to the plausible deniability of this ongoing cooperation and the ability to point fingers back at the United States for the execution of the stage of the international community.

The likelihood of a physical threat from the PRC by means of Cuba to the United States is low at the current time. The capabilities of the PLA, although growing at an unprecedented rate, is not capable of initiating a successful military campaign in a region of the world outside of Asia. It is not estimated that China will possess this capability for at least a decade, probably longer due to the military reforms that it needs to enact in the PLA as well as the technology advancements it must make in weapons and military systems. The motivation of the PRC to even present a threat towards the United States is very low. The PRC, based off of its regional military relations in Latin America and Cuba, displays great efforts to avoid any military action in the region that would bring their actions to the attention of the United States. The PRC is very focused on the fulfillment of national goals. A conflict with the Global leading super power would be contrary to the accomplishments of goals at this point.

This does not say that, one day, China could pose a great threat through Cuba to the United States, or that they do not intend to threaten the United States from Cuba at some future date. This cannot be established at the current time, nor is it the focus of this research. China's actions with the collection of intelligence and the theft of military intellectual property indicate a threat to U.S. national security, as intelligence collection always proceed military operations. China must be continuously monitored for indication and warnings of an escalation in a threat to the United States.

The likelihood of an economic threat by China to the United States through Cuba is low. Although China has gone to great lengths to take an advantageous position over the United States in nearly every economic market of Cuba, this does not pose an economic threat to the United States. It does indicate that the United States will need to

focus more attention and resources to compete with China for business in Cuba (and Latin American). The potential advantage that China gains in the U.S. market by having a staging area for shipping of goods and manufacturing / assembling of merchandise that is intended for U.S. markets at the Mariel Free Trade Zone could serve as a great benefit to the United States as well. The greatest potential economic threat of China to the U.S. in the region is the threat of losing trade deals or the lessening of trade rates with the Latin American region. This topic is, again outside the scope of this research.

In conclusion of chapter four, the analysis of the primary and secondary thesis questions, the historical context, value, vulnerability, capability, and the likelihood of the threat to the United States from the PRC by means of Cuba has been conducted. Through the modified threat assessment methodology, understanding of the Sino-Cuban relationship has been established in terms of the threat that this relationship could pose to the United States as the U.S. and Cuba renew relations. The culminating section of this chapter has addressed the likelihood of the threat of the PRC to the United States through means of Cuba. The likelihood of a physical threat to the United States by the PRC via Cuba is low. The likelihood of a non-physical threat (intelligence collection, diplomatic pressure, information operations) of the PRC to the United States via Cuba is high. These types of threats always proceed but do not necessarily lead to a physical threat. The economic aspect of the Sino-Cuban relationship, in regards to the United States, consists of great competition and challenges, but also opportunities for the strengthening of international relations for all three nations through increased economic engagement, which could present the best alternative to a future conflict between the U.S. and China.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

China is a rising superpower. China's influence in the Western Hemisphere has dramatically increased in the last quarter century. Cuba is the longest standing ally to the PRC in the Western Hemisphere. The United States and Cuba have very recently initiated a course to restore relations, to include the removal of the 51-year-old Cuban trade embargo. China is very interested in the transition that is taking place in U.S.-Cuban relations and is setting itself in the most advantageous position possible in Sino-Cuban relations in order to further its national agenda. This thesis identifies the strategic considerations of the Sino-Cuban relationship in regards to the renewal of U.S.-Cuban relations. This chapter is divided into two sections: Conclusions and Recommendations.

#### Conclusions

This thesis investigates the research topic through a modified threat assessment methodology. After establishing the historical context of the Sino-Cuban relationship, The methodology examined value, vulnerability, capability, motivation and likelihood of a Chinese threat by means of Cuba. Each of portion of the methodology constituted a section of chapter 4.

The value was examined regarding the value of the Sino-Cuban relationship from both the Chinese and the Cuban perspective and was further evaluated by the instruments of national power, namely diplomacy, information, military and economy (DIME). From both Chinese and Cuban perspectives, there is a great value, for different and sometimes mutual reasons, in the Sino-Cuban relationship.

The vulnerability was examined from the perspective of the vulnerability of the United States to China, by means of Cuba. The vulnerabilities were also examined according to the instruments of national power (DIME). Due to China's rising status of diplomatic power, The United States is vulnerable to international pressure created by China regarding the status of Cuba's Government during the renewal of relations between the U.S. and Cuba. The United States continues to display great vulnerabilities in its ability to protect information from China, who has developed extensive capabilities to acquire intellectual property from U.S. businesses, reverse engineer, manufacture, market and distribute the intellectual property to the great advantage of the PRC, without any legal repercussions. The United States does not currently demonstrate vulnerabilities to a physical military attack from the PRC via Cuba, but there are significant vulnerabilities to the United States through Chinese and Cuban cooperation in intelligence collection operations against the United States. These operations have been ongoing for the last 25 years and are estimated to escalate in size and scope with the renewal of U.S.-Cuban relations. The economic vulnerability of the United States to China via Cuba is seen in the strategic positioning of Chinese companies in every business market on the Cuban Island. The United States will be at a disadvantage to Chinese companies in establishing businesses in Cuba. However, China and Cuba know that through greater economic engagement with the United States, the vulnerabilities of the other aspects of DIME could grow larger. Regarding the economy, Cuba will be a contended location, but competition will provide great benefits to all three nations as well.

The capability was investigated looking at China's capabilities in the aspects of the national instruments of power (DIME). China's diplomatic capability is formidable

and growing. Much of China's diplomatic capability is due to its vast employment of soft power across the globe, which has resulted in the legitimization of diplomatic relations with many nations. Through this legitimization, China has been able to enter and influence many regional organizations across the world. An example of this capability is CELAC, of which the United States is excluded. China's information capability is demonstrated through its state-sponsored telecommunications companies Huawei and ZTE. These state-sponsored companies have nearly monopolized the Caribbean and parts of Latin America. They have the contracts to install the telecommunications infrastructure on Cuba and due to the previous issues with the U.S. undermining the Cuban government in the telecommunications aspect, will most likely remain the trade partner of choice for Cuba.

Chinese military capability is on the rise. China has been increasing its defense spending significantly each year over the last decade. China seeks greater military engagement with Cuba but is doing so with great prudence as well. Chinese capability in Cuba is demonstrated by cooperation in intelligence collection, military training exchanges, increased naval partnership, and developing individual relations with FAR leaders. Cuba does not see the full potential (technologically advanced arms sales for example) of Chinese military capability, as do other Chinese strategic partners in the region. This is due to great concerns of alerting the United States to undesired attention.

Chinese economic capability is the primary instrument of national power displayed by the PRC. This capability influences the effectiveness of each of the other instruments of national power employed in Cuba. This capability has not been utilized to its full potential in Cuba either. The reason is that the Cuban economy requires

significant reforms to create incentives to increase economic engagement, as well as the U.S. imposed embargo on Cuba. The transitioning relationship between the U.S. and Cuba is creating opportunities for China to use greater economic capability on the island. Chinese capability will continue to grow in Cuba for the foreseeable future.

Motivation is the next step in the threat assessment methodology. The motivation of China was dissected into sections relating to the agenda or desired end state of China, the objectives of China in Cuba (according to the instruments of national power (DIME)). And the psychological propensities that drive China to action The Chinese are motivated by strategy and by adhering to the nationally established plan called the 'Chinese Dream' by President Xi Jinping. The Chinese do not want to deviate from the plan and go to great lengths to maintain their course. In light of Sino-Cuban relations, the Chinese are motivated to engage where and when it is to the advantage of their strategic plan. Diplomatically, they are motivated to engage with the international community on behalf of Cuba to further legitimize their strategic course. Information is power. Therefore China is motivated to establish means to enable information as well as collect it. The military aspect lacks motivation. Any action that may be perceived as hostile between China and the United States will disrupt the progress of the PRC to achieve their national end state. Economically, China is very motivated to engage with Cuba as long as there is a prospect of a future return on investment. With the progress of the U.S.-Cuban transition in relations, China is extremely motivated to act and gain advantages over its greatest competitor.

The last step in the modified threat assessment is to assess the likelihood of an adversary to be motivated to use their capability to exploit a vulnerability and the value



that they would gain from that action. This was also analyzed according to the instruments of national power. The likelihood for China to be a threat is in the aspects of diplomacy, information and economy. The military aspect is not likely to materialize a physical threat due to the lack of capability and motivation, while the military aspect of intelligence collection is very likely to continue to be a threat and increase as much as possible, without alerting the U.S.

### Recommendations

The threats presented in this thesis demonstrate the strategic considerations that face the U.S. concerning the Sino-Cuban relationship during the renewal of U.S. relations with Cuba. These threats can be mitigated by the following recommendations, using the instruments of national power (DIME):

1. Overarching Recommendation: Strengthen engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean countries using the full spectrum of the instruments of national power. By engaging on a greater level through diplomacy, information, military and economy, across the region, China's unchecked engagement in the region will be narrowed to focus on the objectives most important to the PRC. These objectives are economic in nature, the majority of which are beneficial to the region and support U.S. foreign policy objectives in the Western Hemisphere by fostering greater stability in the region.

2. Diplomatic Recommendation: Continue to pressure China and Cuba on issues of human rights in order to ensure that both the Chinese and Cuban reformations are not just economic reforms, but also societal reforms that will bring stability across the globe and prevent the international legitimization of Chinese and Cuban government practices towards their populations and supports a strong international order.

3. Information Recommendation: Provide telecommunications options for U.S. businesses and personnel that seek to invest in Cuba. These options need to have the capability of high-speed data transfer that is secure without compromising their communication and data transfers on Chinese telecommunications infrastructure. This recommendation aims to protect the intellectual property of U.S. businesses that seek to invest in Cuba.

4. Military Recommendation 1: Continue to monitor the military to military engagement between China and Cuba. Organizations like GAESA and Chinese firms that closely work with the PLA could cause this to be a resource intensive endeavor that will span diplomatic interaction, information engagement, and economic transactions. However, scrutiny of the military to military engagement between the two states will provide indications and warnings of a threat to U.S. national security long before the threat could be realized.

5. Military Recommendation 2: Increase efforts to confirm or deny the intelligence cooperation between China and Cuba at the SIGINT sites of Lourdes, Bejucal, and Santiago de Cuba. Identify and assess the actual capability of SIGINT collection from these sites. Based off of the threat assessment of these SIGINT facilities, recommend changes to current communications procedures to mitigate the SIGINT collection threat.

6. Military Recommendation 3: As U.S.-Cuban relations develop, initiate a military to military relationship to establish security cooperation. Security cooperation, especially in the maritime domain, could be a force multiplier in the Caribbean,

increasing the current capacity of the region to prevent illicit trafficking through the Caribbean into U.S. and European markets.

7. Economic Recommendation: Establish trade agreements between China, Cuba and the U.S. that will bring economic predictability for the three nations when the embargo is lifted, thus ensuring an accelerated economic reform in Cuba, greater economic interdependence between nations and reducing the historical tensions between the U.S., Cuba, and China.

In conclusion, this thesis has investigated the strategic considerations of the Sino-Cuban relationship that face the United States as U.S.-Cuban relations renew. A modified threat assessment methodology was employed to investigate these strategic considerations. The process of this methodology incorporated the instruments of national power, namely diplomatic, information, military and economic (DIME) to examine the potential threats to the United States from China through Cuba. Research has examined the value of the Sino-Cuban relationship, the vulnerability of the United States to threats from China through Cuba, the capability of China to exploit these vulnerabilities, the motivation of China to use their capability to exploit vulnerabilities and finally the likelihood of China to act on these motivations and capabilities to exploit a vulnerability.

This research indicates that the likelihood of a Chinese military threat at this time is very low due to the lack of motivation to enter conflict and the limited military capability that China has against the United States and its allies. However, China poses a threat to U.S. diplomatic efforts with Cuba and in the international community, a threat to information because of the Chinese telecommunications companies that control the market and infrastructure on Cuba. Economically, China is a great competitor of the

United States and will continue to compete with the United States in the region, especially with Cuba once the embargo is lifted and the benefit for China grows in favor of Chinese investment. Chinese economic engagement in Cuba helps the United States accomplish foreign policy goals in the region by increasing trade and fostering a stable environment in the region.

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