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United States-Cuban Relations: Time for Change?

Introduction

The dramatic events in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union associated with the breakdown of communism, and economic and political reform, sometimes overshadow the profound changes that have occurred closer to home. Throughout Latin America, nations plagued by conflict and strife in the past are now transitioning to democracy and implementing various reforms with heartening success.

Amidst these remarkable changes in the international environment, Cuba stands as an exception clinging precariously to Marxist-Leninism and authoritarianism as international communism disintegrates. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the resultant diminished support, Cuba and its revolutionary leader for the past 34 years, Fidel Castro, are struggling for survival.

United States policy toward relations with Cuba has remained essentially unchanged through eight successive administrations. Based on isolation and embargo, these policies could hardly be called "successful" however, for during this period Cuba actively supported revolution throughout the world, consistently opposed United States interests wherever possible, and, although weakened, still remains essentially intact today. Cuba's capability to oppose the United States has been mitigated primarily by the loss of its primary benefactor, the Soviet Union, and *not* from the direct effects of United States policies.

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But the global strategic environment is dramatically different. Cuba (and Castro) are literally and figuratively an island in a sea of change, reform, and economic development.

In light of these events and their effect on the Cuban regime, it is appropriate for the United States to examine carefully its past and present policies with the intent of developing future policy to ensure results consistent with present United States national interests.

The purpose of this paper is to develop United States-Cuban foreign policy within a framework of strategic analysis. First, United States interests and objectives will be examined. Second, after a brief review of Cuban history, the domestic and international context of both Cuba and the United States will be explored to develop the environment for policy options. Third, some of the past policies will be looked at to examine the diplomatic tools available and their possible effects. Finally, a strategy will be proposed to implement policies to meet United States national objectives.

United States Interests and Objectives

Quoting from the 1993 National Security Strategy of the United States, "The vision of the world to which the United States aspires is one of freedom, respect for human rights, free markets, and the rule of law". Essential to this vision, "the United States must ensure its security as a free and independent nation, and the protection of its fundamental values, institutions, and people". The general objectives that support these vital interests are:

- global and regional stability
- open, democratic and representative political systems
- an open international trading and economic system
- an enduring global faith in America¹

¹ National Security Strategy of the United States (Washington: The White House, 1993) 3.

Stated in such broad and general terms, it is difficult to argue against the merits or validity of these national objectives. To discuss the relationship with Cuba strategically requires a closer look at specifically how United States interests might be threatened by that nation.

Is Cuba a military threat to the United States or its citizens? Although located only 90 miles from the United States at its closest point, it is hardly conceivable that Cuba with a population of 10.8 million would threaten the United States with its now unchallenged, largest military in the world. Although previously well equipped with Soviet support, Cuba would be grossly mismatched against United States forces. It is highly unlikely that Cuba possesses a nuclear weapon and even if it did, it would not have many and would face certain destruction by the United States in retaliation if used. Of related and more immediate concern is the construction of nuclear power plants that 1) could produce weapons grade plutonium or 2) could be subject to a Chernobyl-type nuclear accident.² United States officials generally agree that the proposed reactors present a minimum danger because the output of plutonium would be so small that it would take years to produce enough for a weapon. Addressing the safety concerns, United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Harold Denton said that the Cuban reactors are much safer than that at Chernobyl but do not meet United States requirements for protection against fire and earthquakes but exceed United States requirements in other respects.³

Is Cuba a military threat as a base for military action by the former Soviet Union? Hardly likely since practically all of Russia's military forces have been removed. Of greater significance is the electronic intelligence gathering station at Lourdes which is still operational. The threat presented by this station is marginal since the United States knows it's there and it knows what it does.

² Eliana Cardoso and Ann Helwege, Cuba After Communism (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992) 103.

³ Cardoso and Helwege, 103.

Does Cuba present a political threat to the United States? International consensus has decisively shown that the "Cuban Revolution" is not transportable. Although conditions exist in the world that once attracted Marxist-Leninism (poverty, underdevelopment, inequitable distribution of wealth), the desire for freedom, global interrelationships, and free market economics are now the solutions in vogue to solve these problems. Transporting revolution was an element of the Cold War that has vanished with its Soviet support. Additionally, Cuba's own economic and political problems prevent it from undertaking any such initiatives abroad. Cuba represents a minor annoyance in the realm of international relations. As a member of the Security Council of the United Nations, it exerts a voice of influence for its region but its overall political stature has been diminished by world events.

Are there other threats, either social or economic, that Cuba presents to the United States? One concern is its involvement and support of drug transportation. Cuba has actively supported drug suppliers, providing safe haven in territorial waters and refueling opportunities⁴. It would certainly be desirable to break this link of support and would improve our supply side enforcement, but it should not be classified as a vital threat to our national security.

Decaying economic conditions could lead to political and social instability that could result in mass exodus and/or human rights abuses. There has been recent speculation that Castro may allow mass exodus coinciding with Haitian illegal migration to confront the new administration with a politically embarrassing situation enforcing what many consider to be discriminating policy.⁵ Mass exodus would strain United States communities, especially in Florida, to integrate large numbers of Cubans. Human rights abuses on a large scale could fuel public reaction to press the administration to take commensurate action.

⁴ Alfonso Chardy, "Reagan Officials Link Cubans, Sandanistas to Drug Trade," Miami Herald, August 3, 1984.

⁵ "Does Castro Have a Surprise for Clinton?", Washington Post Parade Magazine, 21 February 1993: 25.

These concerns have been presented to provide perspective and illustrate the significance of the threats to United States national security posed by the Cuban government. The immediate question is not what specific actions should be considered but, whether *any* actions are called for based on the present United States national security strategy. Granted, the concerns just presented are legitimate, but do any of them genuinely pose a serious threat to United States national security? If not, then is the next logical step to do nothing, ignore Cuba, and let chance determined the future for Cuba? Sir Michael Howard posed an interesting ethical argument at a recent conference on Ethics and National Security where he questioned "by what authority does one nation impose its will upon another?"⁶ In this argument he cautioned that imposing primarily western concepts and values on others might result in "explosive nationalistic reaction". This is certainly a consideration in the case of Cuba where nationalism is strong. Although United States national security might not be seriously jeopardized if Cuba were to remain isolated and generally antagonistic toward the United States, it could be greatly improved if favorable changes were to occur. Not only could the previously cited "threats" be eliminated, but the United States and other countries would benefit economically from the open market and investment opportunities. A Cuban government in harmony with the rest of the region would be a benefit to all. By emphasizing policies that promote change from within by Cubans inside Cuba, Sir Michael Howard's concerns could be mitigated and an ethical balance achieved.

What then should be the United States objectives with regard to Cuba? The United States should take steps that promote political reform, economic growth, and protection of human rights. These must be accomplished within a framework of "stability" for radical change or gross economic depravation could ignite unrest and lead to violence

⁶ Sir Michael Howard, National Defense University Conference on Ethics, National Security and the New World Order, 11 February 1993.

and civil war. In this extreme case the United States may be faced with mass immigration or worst, and be compelled to intervene militarily which could be extremely costly.

Philip Brenner summarizes this framework nicely when he says that "...policy must be rooted in a clear picture of Cuba and must be responsive to real United States interests. A stark, undifferentiated image of a Cuban threat distorts reality and leads the United States to take actions against its own interests".⁷ To develop this "clear picture" requires a brief review of United States-Cuban history.

United States-Cuban History

"The United States never remembers and Latin America never forgets". This often quoted remark describes the intensity of Cuban distrust of the United States. For the better part of 100 years, the United States has undermined, exploited and ignored Cuban sovereignty. The United States controlled Cuban politics and dominated its economy. The Platt Amendment formally turned Cuba from an independent nation into a protectorate of the United States.⁸ It stipulated that the United States could intervene in all Cuban affairs, domestic and foreign, solely at the United States discretion.⁹ In this context, it is not surprising that from the outset, Castro and his Cuban government feared United States intervention. Alliance with the Soviet Union answered several of the new regime's security needs (oil, arms, trade, and defense) and forged a relationship that lasted until recently. As it is today, it would have been difficult then to argue that Cuba alone was a threat to United States security. But with a Cuba that had turned to the Soviet Union, China, and other socialist states, when the United States cut off trade, the threat of "international communism" spreading was a paramount concern. Thus, the policy of the 1960's was 1) promote the overthrow of the Cuban government, 2) isolate and contain Cuba, and 3)

⁷ Philip Brenner, From Confrontation to Negotiation: U.S. Relations with Cuba, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988) 2.

⁸ Michael J. Kryzanek, U.S.-Latin American Relations, (New York: Praeger, 1990) 37.

⁹ Brenner, 7.

reduce Soviet presence and influence.¹⁰ To demonstrate the intensity of the United States resolve toward Cuba, the United States Congress passed a joint resolution in 1962 stating, "The United States is determined to prevent by whatever means necessary, including the use of arms, the Marxist-Leninist regime in Cuba from extending, by force or threat of force, its aggressive or subversive activities to any part of this hemisphere".¹¹ In the early 1970's under the Nixon and Ford administrations characterized by "détente", and a Cuba that had for the time being curtailed its support of armed revolutions in the hemisphere, a movement to relax hostility toward Cuba was initiated. Administration and Congressional contacts led to an Anti Hijacking Treaty in 1973 and there was consideration given to normalization of relations. Under pressure from the OAS, in 1975, the United States finally supported lifting the OAS embargo opening trade with other members while the United States maintains its own embargo. Cuban active support for the war in Angola quickly altered any movement toward reconciliation. This cyclical pattern of relations has been common over the past three decades. Changing international conditions and new United States administrations would periodically create movements to ease relations only to be countered with "hard line" policies resulting from Cuban actions, primarily its support for external revolutions. The context for the most recent state of affairs was solidified by the Reagan Administration. Wayne S. Smith, former Head of the United States Interests Section in Havana observed in 1982, "The [Reagan] Administration began by excluding normalization of relations even as a distant objective...Its initial position was that the United States would not even talk to the Cubans until they ceased all interventionist activities in Latin America and withdrew their troops from Africa. If they refused to do so, Washington would exclude no option, including a United States blockade or invasion of Cuba".¹² A private group of conservative policy analysts, known as the Committee of

¹⁰ Brenner, 14.

¹¹ Brenner, 14.

¹² Brenner, 31.

Santa Fe, developed in 1980, a policy for Latin America that influenced the Reagan Administration's policy toward Cuba:

"Havana must be held to account for its policies of aggression against its sister states in the Americas. Among those steps will be the establishment of Radio Free Cuba...If propaganda fails, a war of national liberation against Castro must be launched. The second alternative will be to encourage the Cubans to make a radical shift in their foreign policy.... We should make it clear that if the Cuban-Soviet alliance is ended, the United States will be generous...Thus Havana must be presented with two clear options. It is free to choose either, but the United States must carry out the threat or the promise with equal vigor."¹³

It is largely within this context that the relationship between Cuba and the United States exists today, but the conditions today are indeed different than in 1980. What has happened and how has it effected Cuba?

Cuba Domestic and International Context

Although the Cuban economy has been in decline since 1986, the present situation and conditions in Cuba are largely the result of changes in the international context and Cuba's relationships with key countries most notably the former Soviet Union. Cuba was the number one recipient of Soviet aid by the late 1980's. In return the Soviet Union got a strategic political and military ally only 90 miles from the United States. Cuba also advanced Soviet interests by training and arming Marxist guerrillas and helping to support friendly governments.¹⁴ By 1989, Cuba was as dependent on the Soviet Union as it had been on the United States 30 years before.¹⁵ But this dependence made Cuba vulnerable to economic and political changes which have now occurred. Until 1990, Soviet aid came in direct balance of payments and project aid, as well as price subsidies. During the last 10

¹³ Lewis Tambs, ed., "A New Inter-American Policy for the Eighties: Report of the Committee of Santa Fe", (Washington, DC.: Council for Inter-American Security, 1981) 46-47.

¹⁴ Susan K. Purcell, "Collapsing Cuba", Foreign Affairs No. 1 1992: 131.

¹⁵ Cardoso and Helwege, 31.

years this exceeded 25% of the Cuban GDP.¹⁶ Estimates of Soviet aid depends on how one converts rubles to dollars, the comparable world prices assigned to barter deals, and how one counts services such as transportation. The CIA estimates that in 1989 Cuba received \$4.5 billion in export subsidies and \$1.4 billion in other developmental aid from the Soviet Union. In 1990, the Soviets cut their aid to \$2.2 billion in subsidies and \$1.3 billion in developmental aid.¹⁷ Moscow's refusal in 1990 to sign a new five year trade agreement marked the beginning of the end of these two nations' "special relationship".¹⁸ Additionally, beginning in 1991, the value of trade was to be calculated in dollars, not rubles, effectively cutting Cuba's capability to import food and oil in half. To make a bad situation worst, Gorbachev announced late in 1991 that new trade agreements would reflect Soviet commercial interests and require trading partners to pay in hard currency, thus eliminating all trade subsidies to Cuba in 1992. Further compounding Cuba's economic problems were the effects of the radical changes in Eastern Europe and the resultant loss of trade with that region as well. Professor Jorge Dominguez of Harvard University noted that "East Germany was, next to the USSR, really the second most important trading partner, and East Germany went 'poof'."¹⁹

On the positive side, Cuba's trade with its hemispheric neighbors in Latin America has increased significantly in the last decade. Currently Cuba has commercial arrangements with 21 countries in the region.²⁰ Additionally, Cuba has agreements for scientific and technical collaboration with 10 other hemispheric nations and regularly participates in meetings of Latin American ministers of culture and information, deepening its links to the Caribbean. Latin American nations generally agree that Cuba should be

¹⁶ United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs, "Cuba in a Changing World: The United States-Soviet-Cuba Triangle", Hearings (Washington: GPO, 1991) 31.

¹⁷ Cardoso and Helwege, 31.

¹⁸ Purcell, 131.

¹⁹ Dominguez, Hearings, 62.

²⁰ Luis Suarez Salazar, "Cuba's International Relations with Latin America and The Caribbean: Toward a New Stage?" Cuban Foreign Policy Confronts a New International Order, ed. H. Michael Erisman and John M. Kirk, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1991) 111.

encouraged to rejoin the OAS. Cuba has long played a positive role in other Latin America organizations where the United States does not have the veto power it has in the OAS. Its neighbors feelings were demonstrated in 1989 when it received unanimous support from the Latin America/Caribbean bloc for its bid to occupy one of the two regional seats on the United Nations Security Council despite United States opposition.²¹ This further emphasizes the increasingly similar position held by the countries in the region concerning hemispheric problems, specifically non-intervention and right to self-determination. There is a growing conviction for equitable and symmetric relations with the United States

Faced with the effects of isolation and the economic challenges it presents, the Cuban government is attempting to create economic structures that can integrate the Cuban economy into the capitalist world market while salvaging socialism.²² With a variation of the Chinese model, the government is encouraging the creation of economic enclaves in which capitalist principles predominate. These enclaves are being constructed through joint ventures with foreign investors.²³ This demonstrates Castro's adaptability while he continues to end his speeches with "Socialism or Death!"

Cuba, recognizing its need for foreign trade and investment capital, has aggressively pursued economic relations. Cuba has already established bilateral trade agreements with five of the former Soviet Union republics and has recently agreed on new trade arrangements with Russia.²⁴ Cuban officials are offering extremely favorable terms to foreign investors. While authorities would prefer to keep the foreign equity portion of joint ventures below 50%, holdings up to 100% are permitted if the venture is sufficiently attractive. Return on capital so far has been excellent with tourism reporting 20-25% per year. Cuba has signed approximately 50 joint venture agreements and another 200 are in

²¹ Salazar, 112.

²² Gillian Gunn, "Cuba's Search for Alternatives", Current History, February 1992: 60.

²³ Gunn, 60.

²⁴ "Cuba and Russia Agree on New Trade Links", New York Times, November 4, 1992: A17.

the works. Tourism, the most active sector, has increased from 300,000 in 1990 to 500,000 in 1992.²⁵ Other critical joint ventures involve oil and nickel. The French firm Total is exploring for oil in Cuban waters and efforts are ongoing to improve Cuba's nickel processing industry. Additionally, management and technical skills gained by observing joint venture enterprises are being applied by Cuban state enterprises in areas where joint ventures do not exist such as in agriculture. These steps are expected to continue beyond the current economic crisis but aren't expected to produce significant effects until the mid-1990's. Cuban authorities are taking short-term measures to forestall economic collapse.

The Food Program is the most significant short term step. Cuban workers are being mobilized for two week periods of voluntary labor in the countryside for agriculture. Due to fuel shortages, field animals replace farm machinery. Even when fully implemented, the program is expected to produce only 30-40% of the food previously imported.²⁶

One short term initiative that generated considerable controversy was "free farmers markets" which allowed private farmers to sell to the general population in urban areas. Tried in the early 1980's and stopped in 1985, the plan was reconsidered as food shortages became critical in 1991. Castro emphatically rejected the concept at the Communist Party Fourth Congress in October 1991²⁷ proving that there are limits to economic reform initiatives.

It is a common perception that Cuba has always been ruled by just one man which was really not the case from the early 1970's to about 1985. Politically, Cuba has moved from collective to personal rule.²⁸ In the 1970's and early 1980's, Cuba was governed by a team. Since that time, the team has slowly been dismissed. In 1989, General Arnaldo Ochoa was shot by a firing squad for corruption²⁹ but it is generally agreed that he

²⁵ Gunn, 61.

²⁶ Gunn, 61.

²⁷ Gunn, 62.

²⁸ Dominguez, Hearings, 20.

²⁹ Dominguez, Hearings, 20.

represented an opposition threat to Castro regime. Just recently, Cuba's third most influential leader, Carlos Aldana, who had been known as the only person besides Fidel's brother Raul to be able to speak his mind, was removed from his position.³⁰ Castro has lost control of the team of people with whom he had governed and they have not been replaced. Additionally, he has lost touch with the Cuban people and has occasionally further isolated himself from the international community. His policy of "rectification" that turned away from market mechanisms and emphasized political factors to motivate and organize economic activity was a failure and pushed the economy into further decline long before the changes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union had their impact. By rejecting glasnost and peristroyka, he alienated Gorbachev. Additionally, he insulted the King of Spain and the President of the Spanish government; Spain being the only European country with good relations with Cuba. This represents a somewhat confusing signal from a leader looking for economic investment and closer ties with trading partners.

The Cuban government's political strategy involves an effort to implement the modest market changes without undermining socialist ideals or threaten existing authority. Castro reflected on these issues in a November 1991 interview with Gillian Gunn:

"What will be the consequences [of these economic developments] for the political and social life of our country? That remains to be seen; at this moment one cannot do more than speculate and make bets...[But] we count on the party as a political and ideological vanguard force. We count on our youth. We count on our powerful mass organizations, politically educated in the principles of socialism, who understand that we are doing what must be done in the existing circumstances, and that it is done to save the country, the revolution, and socialism...That there will be capitalist ideological influence? This nobody denies.. It is a battle we have to face from which we must emerge victorious."³¹

The October 1991 Party Congress took steps to broaden participation in the two institutions that control Cuba's political life: the Communist Party and the legislative

³⁰ Howard W. French, "Cuban's Exit Hints at Trouble at Top," New York Times, September 27, 1992: 7.

³¹ Gunn, 62.

"Peoples' Power" system.³² Reforms included a declaration that religious believers were eligible for Party membership and an emphasis that in party discussions members with contrary views should be allowed to express themselves. Despite these reforms, short term strategy to counter the tension generated by economic deterioration continues to emphasize nationalism and repression. Castro effectively promotes Cuban nationalism, reminding the people of previous United States intervention, and argues that any break in unity will provide opportunities for the United States to intervene again in Cuban affairs. He exhorts that many Cuban problems are caused by the United States embargo. Repression has been demonstrated by the recent treatment of Cuba's increasingly energetic human rights activists. Castro stated in his interview:

"We do not see these people as defenders of human rights, but as groups that act with the United States and that have one purpose- to destroy the revolution....Nonetheless, when they limit themselves solely to publicity activities, when they talk with journalists and foreign visitors...we do not molest them. But when they violate the law, when they carry out activities against the revolution, then we simply cannot and will not tolerate them."³³

In late 1991, leading activist Maria Elana Cruz Varela was arrested and sentenced to two years in prison after distributing political pamphlets. Other activists were warned that "the people" were becoming increasingly angry and that authorities might not be able to provide protection. "The people" referenced were probably what is known as the "Rapid Response Brigade" which consists of pro-government citizens who take it upon themselves to harass activists that get out of line with the establishment.

Even under these conditions of increasing economic problems and with a desire for more political responsiveness, most Cubans find no alternatives offered by leaders inside or outside of Cuba that are sufficiently attractive to confront the present regime. Many people that criticize Castro's policies still admire him as an historical figure. He remains

³² Gunn, 62.

³³ Gunn, 62.

extremely popular across a broad range of the population. There is also apprehension about the potential for a political regime lead by his most probable successor, Raul. In what appears to be a symbolic gesture, Cuba recently held its first direct general elections in 30 years of Communist rule.³⁴ The election offered no opposition or alternative choices to the Communist Party and the official candidate lists.

Professor Dominguez cites several what he calls "legacies" that must be considered concerning Cuba "no matter who is Cuba's ruler and no matter what is the form of its political and economic regime".³⁵ They are summarized below:

- *Long term dependence on sugar exports-* Cuba has been a single product (sugar) economy. Seventy-five percent of Cuba's export earnings have come from sugar. Natural and chemical sugar substitutes threaten the sugar cane industry. Diversification in the Cuban economy has been for domestic consumption and therefore Cuban economy will remain vulnerable to price fluctuations in an industry in decline.
- *Aging of Cuba's population-* Cuba has succeeded in providing health care, nutrition, and longer life expectancy and is faced with a rapidly aging population. A comprehensive social security system will be strained especially considering the forecast economic decline. Regardless of leadership, Cuba faces the all too familiar, unattractive option of reducing entitlements or raising revenues.
- *Impact of military veterans-* Cuba has hundreds of thousands of veterans from its years of support to revolutions throughout the world. It faces the economic impact of assistance programs for these veterans and their families. Additionally, the associations of these ex-soldiers may seek to influence the shape of any future regime.
- *Bad economic investments-* Much of the industrial plant built in the last 30 years is economically inefficient and technologically backward, producing poor quality products

³⁴ "Cuba Holds Single-Slate Elections", Washington Post 25 February 1993: A12.

³⁵ Dominguez, Hearings, 23.

with limited exportability at high cost. Modernization is difficult in a weak economy with limited export earnings and foreign investment.

- *Cuban consumer demand*- Cuban consumers have serious complaints about the quality of certain products and services, including food and transportation. They also have high expectations and are generally satisfied with their health care and educational programs. The combination of complaints about the bad and continued high expectations for the good create a challenge for any future government.
- *Strength of mass participatory beliefs and behavior*- "One aspect of Cuban history that Castro could not erase is that Cubans like to talk".³⁶ Cuban are accustomed to discussing politics, the economy, and issues. The government accepts that people will meet, talk, argue and even complain. The results of the March 1990 public opinion poll conducted by the Communist Party which recorded Cuban feelings about goods and services are reasonably accurate. Authoritarian political control is derived from preventing freedom of association and prohibiting publication and dissemination of ideas in print and media. Mass participatory assemblies at the local level has left a legacy of democratic practice.
- *Hatred and intolerance*- Based on highly emotional issues such as moral values, religious beliefs, political ideology, and material interests, the divisions between Cubans are characterized by hatred and intolerance both inside and outside of Cuba, specifically in the Cuban-American community in the United States. The extreme polarization of beliefs inhibits democratic process and exchange of political opinion by characterizing political opponents as "traitors".

United States Domestic and International Context

The cyclical trends of United States policy within the "Cold War" context have been mentioned, but the focus has been on the Cuban context, both internal and external.

³⁶ Dominguez, Hearings, 28.

What United States domestic and international factors influence United States policy toward Cuba? Graham T. Allison's model of bureaucratic politics can be useful with this analysis. The decisions and actions are a political resultant of "compromise, conflict, and confusion of officials with diverse interests and unequal influence".³⁷ Constructing this paradigm involves identifying the players, their stand, and their power, and then studying how they are combined to result in action or policy. In this case the "players" that influence the Administration's policies are the interest groups, the Congress, and the public.

Interest groups strictly opposed to normalization of relations with Cuba have been by far the most vocal, and of those, the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) is the most predominate. Organized in 1981, the CANF has advocated a hard line against any relations with Cuba. Journalist Carla Ann Robbins says that "the Foundation and its Chairman, Jorge Mas Canosa, vehemently oppose any change in American policy that does not punish and isolate Cuba more".³⁸ She adds, "Dialog with Castro they believe is tantamount to sleeping with the enemy; and anyone who suggests it, including human rights leaders on the island, must be either a communist dupe or a traitor".³⁹

Prior to the CANF, there was no organized Cuban-American voice in Washington. One million Cuban-Americans, over half living in South Florida, and most having a strong hatred for Castro and communists, represented a sizable political entity. Mas Canosa and his wealthy Miami colleagues were "out of the loop" during the Ford and Carter years⁴⁰ and saw in Reagan's political ideology an opportunity to promote their cause. The idea was to create a lobbying group similar to the powerful American-Israel Public Affairs Committee. Twelve years later, Jorge Mas Canosa is one of the most effective power brokers in Washington, lobbying for the fall of Castro.⁴¹ The power of Mas Canosa and

³⁷ Graham T. Allison, Essence of Decision (Harper Collins, 1971) 162.

³⁸ Carla A. Robbins, "Dateline Washington: Cuban-American Clout", Foreign Policy Fall 1992: 163.

³⁹ Robbins, 163.

⁴⁰ Robbins, 171.

⁴¹ Larry Rohter, "A rising Cuban-American Leader: Statesman to Some, Bully to Others," New York Times 29 October 1992: A18.

the CANF is evident by their ability to set the United States policy agenda including (1) the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, (2) Radio and TV Marti, (3) United States elections, and (4) United States political appointments.

The Cuban Democracy Act, passed at the close of the 102nd Congress, tightens the United States embargo against Cuba while providing greater communication capability by improved mail and telephone service. The legislation's author is Rep. Robert Torricelli (D-NJ) who has received large political contributions from the CANF and its supporters.⁴² Radio Marti and its less successful mate, TV Marti, were CANF conceived programs to broadcast news and entertainment to Cuba. Mas Canosa is the Head of the Presidential Advisory Board on Cuba Broadcasting that oversees Radio/TV Marti.⁴³ Concerning the recent election and CANF's influence on Washington, in what was considered to be an extremely shrewd political move, candidate Bill Clinton endorsed the Cuban Democracy Act six weeks before President Bush threw his support behind the bill.⁴⁴ The week after he declared his support, Clinton raised \$125,000 at a Miami fund-raiser put on by the CANF. On the other side, it is well known that Bush's son, Jeb Bush, a Miami businessman, was the voice of the CANF in Washington. Now those ties are possibly being replaced by Hillary Clinton's personal relationship to the same exile community-her sister-in-law, Maria Victoria Arias, who lives in Miami and helped gather support for Clinton during the campaign.⁴⁵ Finally, Mario Baeza, a black Cuban-American lawyer, was recently nominated to become Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. His name was sent to Congress but suddenly withdrawn when the CANF lobbied hard because it was believed he was "soft" on Castro. Baeza made a trip to Cuba in 1992 with a group of European investors.⁴⁶

⁴² Robbins, 166.

⁴³ Rohrer, A18.

⁴⁴ Pamela S. Falk, "Exiles Set Policy Agenda on Cuba for Next Administration," Wall Street Journal 16 October, 1992: A15.

⁴⁵ Falk, A15.

⁴⁶ Roger E. Hernandez, "Spurious Charge of Racism", Washington Post 6 February, 1993: A23.

Not everyone in the Cuba-American community shares the CANF's hard line position. At Congressional hearings in 1991, several interest groups including the Center for Cuban Democracy and the Coordinated Human Rights Organizations of Cuba were advocating more moderate positions. Gutierrez Menoyo, leader of a new group, the "Cambia Cuban" (Cuban Change), recently spoke at the National Press Club and denounced recent administration policy changes (Cuban Democracy Act) as "completely unnecessary and negative" and dismissed Clinton's support for the act as a position "taken during the campaign".⁴⁷ He went on to say, "We advocate a future without revenge and without hatred that achieves the freedom of Cuba by peaceful means". An additional concern complicating the influence of these interest groups is that many Cuban-Americans are intimidated by the power of the CANF. "Any person that questions this man and his organization risks his career and his standing in the community", says Xiomara Almaguer, the Cuban-American co-founder of a new group called the Cuban-American Defense League.⁴⁸ CANF has taken legal action against the Miami Herald and PBS for stories unfavorable to their cause.

In Congress there is a base of Representatives and Senators that are in favor of a new dialog with Cuba. A few have traveled to Cuba and have advocated normalization. On the other side, there is a majority that generally support to varying degrees the administration's efforts to tighten the embargo or to isolate Cuba diplomatically. Again, the influence of the CANF cannot be overlooked. Since its founding, their political action committee, Free Cuba PAC, has donated more than \$1 million to Presidential, Senate and House candidates and has raised even more through fund raising events.⁴⁹ With the recent passage of the Cuban Democracy Act and the influence of the CANF, it is unlikely that Congress will take the lead toward normalizing relations unless external events result in a threat to United States interests that forces United States involvement.

⁴⁷ Guy Gugliotta, "Exiles Urge Moderation Toward Cuba", Washington Post 19 January 1993: A18.

⁴⁸ Rohter, A18.

⁴⁹ Rohter, A18.

Finally, where does the public stand on the Cuban question? Public opinion has been remarkably stable over the question of whether the United States should enter into negotiations with Cuba.⁵⁰ Since the mid 1970's, the margin in polls has always been in favor of normalization. Therefore, it appears that there are opportunities for leaders who desire change to question and challenge United States policies with the support of their constituents.

Tools of Diplomacy

In the last 30 years, various policies have been implemented to exert influence on the Castro regime.

Embargo- Probably the most visible and strongest action taken by the United States was the trade embargo imposed on Cuba shortly after Castro came to power. The intent was to cause extreme economic hardship to the Cuban people to foster dissent to lead to the downfall of the new regime.⁵¹ Secondly, it would make the Soviet-Cuban relationship more costly to both parties. Third, the embargo would have a "demonstration effect" showing retaliation for nationalizing United States properties and deterring other countries from having similar intentions. Finally, it would deprive the Cuban government from hard currency necessary for normal economic development.

The embargo did not succeed. Castro is still in power. It is argued that the embargo was actually counterproductive by allowing Cubans to blame their hardship on the United States and by giving Castro something on which to focus nationalist propaganda. Although the embargo did initially cause extreme hardship, Cuba adapted by integrating its economy with the socialist countries. Additionally, it left Cuba little alternative but to solidify its relationship to the Soviet Union. The embargo had little deterrent effect on the

⁵⁰ Brenner, 78.

⁵¹ Lilia Ferro-Clerico and Wayne S. Smith, "The U.S. Trade Embargo," Subject to Solution: Problems in Cuban-U.S. Relations, ed. Wayne S. Smith and Esteban Morales Dominguez (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1988) 80.

Cuban capability to export its revolution, in fact, the isolation could have even promoted this tendency. Concerning United States property and claims against Cuba, it is unlikely any settlement could be reached without lifting the embargo.

Recently, the Cuban Democracy Act strengthened the embargo by preventing foreign subsidiaries of United States companies from trading with Cuba. The argument for tightening controls is that the embargo failed because of Soviet support and should work now that most of that support has vanished.⁵² Representative Torricelli stated in 1991 "It is unlikely that with the tightening of the embargo Castro can be maintained for long". This was contradicted by several foreign policy experts at the same 1991 hearings including Dr. Wayne S. Smith who said "It would limit Castro's options to a very small extent".⁵³ Additionally, Mr. Bernard Aronson, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs for the Bush Administration, stated that even with the expected cutbacks in Soviet support, the Cuban government could survive economically.⁵⁴ In a very recent analysis, the economic picture in Cuba is probably not as bleak as in early 1992, because of Cuba's successes in increasing its trade with other countries.⁵⁵ The United States is one of the few countries in the international community that does *not* trade with Cuba.⁵⁶ Certainly one of the difficulties that the Bush Administration had with tightening the embargo was the effects it would present to United States allies and United States industry. Canada, in response, has gone so far as issuing an order prohibiting subsidiaries of United States companies in Canada from complying with the Cuban Democracy Act because it represents an intrusion of United States law into Canada.⁵⁷ Based on past trade by subsidiaries, the cost to United States industry could be at least \$500-600 million a year.⁵⁸

⁵² Marcus Mabry, "Putting the Squeeze on Fidel", Newsweek September 14, 1992: 48.

⁵³ Smith, Hearings, 70.

⁵⁴ Aronson, Hearings, 113.

⁵⁵ Antoni Kapcia, The Cuban Revolution in Crisis (London: Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism: Nov/Dec 1992) 19.

⁵⁶ Ferro-Clerico and Smith, 83.

⁵⁷ "Canada Seeks to Block Curbs on Trade With Cuba", Wall Street Journal October 12, 1992: B6B.

⁵⁸ "Mr. Castro Goes to Market", Business Week April 20, 1992: 47.

Besides the argument that the embargo damages relations with allies, hurts United States industry, and is by-in-large ineffective, proponents for easing sanction cite the unnecessary human suffering that they cause. Shortages of basic consumer goods are acute and public utilities are subject to routine blackouts. The embargo is seen as a policy to literally starve the Cuban's into submission.⁵⁹

Immigration- United States immigration policy toward Cuba presents another dilemma. On one hand, the United States would like to appear open to immigration and pursuit of individual freedoms, but on the other hand, by increasing the number of Cubans allowed to legally immigrate, Castro has the opportunity to export his economic problems and political dissidents. He did this quite successfully in 1980 when he allowed 120,000 Cubans to depart the island at Mariel during a "boatlift" and the United States responded by accepting them. Complicating the issue, many were fleeing for economic reasons, the very class of refugees from Haiti that the United States excludes. By increasing the number of immigrant and tourist visas, is U.S policy in effect creating a safety valve for Castro's problems?

United States/Former Soviet Union/Cuba Relationship- An interesting "triangular" relationship exists between the United States, former Soviet Union, and Cuba. Why would the former Soviet Union want to maintain a relationship with Cuba? Granted, the present political uncertainty in Russia vastly overshadows the significance of its relations with Cuba. But, beyond this current crisis there are some underlying interests to consider. First, it would like to maintain its international credibility derived from its long standing commitment to Cuba. Second, although relations with the United States, have dramatically changed, the military and strategic advantage, including the Lourdes facility, could be a diplomatic bargaining chip in future negotiations. Finally, even under different trading terms, Cuba can be a valuable trading partner. As long as the United States maintains a "hard line" policy toward Cuba, one would expect the former Soviet Union to maintain its

⁵⁹ Ian Williams, "Starving Cuba Into Submission", The Nation, October 26, 1992: 464.

military and strategic ties. If the United States were to normalize its relations, they would be in a better position to withdraw completely.⁶⁰ Economically, with the former Soviet Union looking for stronger ties and support from the United States, its support to Cuba could be viewed as against United States interests creating a possible policy linkage in any future negotiations.

Guantanamo Bay- The United States Naval base on the southeast coast of Cuba is the only United States military base in communist territory and is the oldest installation outside the United States⁶¹ An indefinite lease negotiated in 1903 allows the land to revert to Cuba only if abandoned or by mutual consent. Cuba argues that the lease is invalid since it was obtained by "coercion" and doesn't cash the \$4085 annual rent checks.⁶² The principle United States argument for maintaining the facility was to keep it away from the Soviets and most military analysts agree it has little strategic importance. Guantanamo Bay has great tourist potential if it were to revert to the Cubans and should certainly be another chip on the bargaining table.

Radio/TV Marti- Mentioned earlier, Radio Marti was first proposed by the Commission of Santa Fe and began operation as part of Voice of America in 1985. It was a means that was used by the Reagan Administration to exacerbate tensions within Cuba through propaganda.⁶³ The Cuban government looked at Radio Marti as they did the embargo as just another example of United States treat and aggression toward Cuba. The Reagan administration claimed the broadcast intended to create internal pressure to improve conditions within Cuba yet it is easy to understand how it could be interpreted as an attempt to undermine the government⁶⁴ since much of the programming has a predominate anti-Castro, anti-regime content. Radio Marti is jammed by the Cubans but at a low level allowing reception. TV Marti on the other hand, is jammed quite effectively.

⁶⁰ Wayne S. Smith, *Hearings*, 8.

⁶¹ Cardoso and Helwege, 103.

⁶² Cardoso and Helwege, 104.

⁶³ Brenner, 34.

⁶⁴ Brenner, 34.

This raises another contentious issue that could be open for negotiation concerning radio interference from both countries. Additionally, should relations improve, the strategic value of both Radio and TV Marti would be questionable.

Unsettled claims- Cuba nationalized United States industry and expropriated property of United States citizens after the revolution. In 1972, the United States Foreign Claims Settlement Commission certified claims against Cuba of \$1.85 billion, which has grown with accrued interest to approximately \$8 billion.⁶⁵ Cuba has counterclaims against the United States for losses incurred during the "covert war" and the embargo. Cuba has repaid claims from other countries and has indicated it might be willing to negotiate these claims should relations improve.

Strategy Toward Solution

For far too long the focus of United States policy has been on the removal of Fidel Castro without sufficient emphasis placed on creating conditions for reform within Cuba and without considering the "legacies" of Cuba enunciated by Dr. Dominguez. By targeting the regime and its leader, policies have failed to bring about their long term objectives for change. Aggressive policies, such as the embargo, have only added to the image of an outside threat, increased Castro's control, contributed to human suffering, and promoted anti-American nationalism within Cuba. Considering that Cuba presents no viable threat to United States interests, it is time for a new approach to this relationship and the United States should lead the way. Without compromising its security, the United States can demonstrate support for the rights of the Cuban people for self-determination within a framework of stability and reform by *initiating* steps toward normalization. This new strategy should be founded on the realization that, sooner or later, Fidel Castro will be gone and what follows will largely be determined by the people *within* Cuba and not necessarily by the United States. Therefore policies must attempt to create conditions

⁶⁵ Brenner, 48.

favorable for political dissent, as well as economic reform and development. This should be a cautious process of gradual engagement to resolve differences and encourage change from within, yet guided by a clearly transmitted resolve toward normalization. All this must be in the context of what can be controlled and influenced and what must be allowed to evolve on its own. Relaxing provisions of the embargo should be used to negotiate conditions for improved cooperation. A "three-prong" strategy that would advocate policies to create an environment for reform is based on 1) *communications*, 2) *cooperation*, and 3) *mutual respect*.

Communications- The best approach to influencing internal reform is not isolation but involvement. The United States must use every opportunity to *initiate* dialog with Cuba and remove restrictions on the flow of ideas between the two countries. Cuba's relationship to Canada, Mexico, and even its link to Russia, should be used to open and improve contacts with Cuba. Bilaterally, successful negotiation of "smaller issues" of common interests, such as mutual radio interference, fishing rights, telephone and mail service, and even immigration, could lead to discussions on more significant differences. Encouraging and accepting Cuban participation in regional organizations and the international community would create additional opportunity for dialog not only with the United States, but would increase Cuban exposure and integration into a rapidly reforming world. Promoting increased travel by both United States and Cuban citizens will add to the free flow of ideas that will promote gradual change. The long term goal of increased contact should be restoration of full diplomatic relations with Cuba, even a Cuba still led by Castro.

Cooperation- The United States should actively seek opportunities for cooperation and interaction with Cuba. Encouraging economic development within Cuba, by facilitating Cuban membership to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, anti-American nationalism and its associated hostility toward the United States could be diffused. Claims settlement, increased opportunity for United States investment, and

tourism could be linked to the embargo. Ultimately, the embargo must be lifted to facilitate the development of trade relations and to remove the most significant barrier to cooperation. One exciting possibility for a cooperative effort would be the removal of United States forces from Guantanamo Bay and the mutual development of that area for tourism. This might even be negotiated within a context of a mutual "non-aggression" or security arrangement pact. Care must be exercised not to rekindle Cuban animosity toward the United States for its past "economic colonization" of Cuba. Cooperation must be clearly an advantage for the Cuban people. Direct economic aid linked to political and economic reform should not be ruled out.

Mutual Respect- The United States should recognize Cuba's sovereignty and, in doing so, further recognize that it controls its destiny. The United States must overcome its prejudice toward Fidel Castro and his government, and demonstrate by its own actions, mutual respect and tolerance in order to advocate those same traits within Cuba. Encouraging the Cuban regime for tolerance of opposition is critical for political reform and can be linked to negotiations as relations become more open. The influence of Cuban-Americans, specifically Jorge Mas Canosa and the CANF, inhibits the United States ability for responsible action. The Administration must distance itself from their influence. According to Elliot Abrams, former Assistant Secretary of State under Reagan, it should be made clear that "nobody will have a privileged position after Castro".⁶⁶ Radio/TV Marti would be a good place to start. Both programs should be examined to eliminate the anti-Castro, anti-regime rhetoric and present better balance including divergent positions on the issues.

Finally, now appears to be an excellent time to chart a new course for United States policy toward Cuba. There appears to be few, if any, preconditions on negotiations and a new Administration has come to power on a mandate for change. In a recent interview with television journalist, Diane Sawyer, that aired on *ABC Primetime Live* on 4 March

⁶⁶ Robbins, 180.

1993, Fidel Castro appeared extremely relaxed and open when questioned concerning the possibility of improved relations with the United States. When asked if he would step down if the United States would lift the embargo, he responded that he would not completely rule out that possibility and would let the people decide his fate. He made it clear however that sovereignty and socialism were not open for negotiation. Fidel Castro appeared as a tired revolutionary clinging to his ideals and dignity while trying to adapt to a changing world that has left him behind. Even if weakened by this current crisis, the strength of Castro's coercive organization and his appeal to the masses should not be underestimated. The United States must be willing to negotiate with Fidel Castro.

Professor Bard O'Neill of the National War College, remarked during a discussion on insurgencies on March 2, 1993, that "*intelligence and integrity* must be rigidly applied in developing foreign policies targeted at countering insurgencies". His emphasis on integrity was especially profound and should be equally applied to all foreign policy formulation. In one word, integrity encompasses the elements of this strategy: *communication, cooperation, and mutual respect*. Placing integrity above politics builds long standing credibility that yields results consistent with genuine national interests. If there is any one enduring value that the United States should adhere to in its foreign relations with Cuba, and every other country, it is most assuredly is *integrity*.