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THE EVOLUTION OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS CUBA

by

Nicholas Drew Gordon

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree**

of

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Cuba's location has determined the island's political, social, and economic history. No other political entity in the Western Hemisphere has been as contested as Cuba has, and no other society has passed from colonial status, to a republic, to a socialist state in less than 100 years. The largest and most western island of the Antilles archipelago, Cuba is centrally located between North and South America, and guards access to the Caribbean Sea. For hundreds of years, its strategic position and its rich soil, abundant harbors, and mineral reserves have attracted foreign powers—first Spain, then the United States, and then the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

In order to understand the evolution of U.S. foreign policy towards Cuba, we must first understand how it came to be the country it was in the latter half of the 19th century. Later on and throughout the majority of the 20th century, the key to understanding America's changing relationship with Cuba hinges on the role of a sensational revolutionary leader and the island's resulting relationship with foreign powers hostile to the American government. Finally, at the dawn of the 21st century, the future of the Cuban Revolution is uncertain and America's unwavering policy of "taking a tough stand" against Castro and his leftover communism will undoubtedly play a key role in the international world of politics. Certainly, the effects of 9/11 and the War in Iraq have set a changing aggressive precedent in setting American foreign policy towards countries with perceived hostile intentions. The inevitable end of the aging Castro's personal rule will remove the one figure that embodies the revolution and provides the final authority in government policy. What will follow is unknowable, but actors in the contest for control will include the Cuban Communist Party, the Cuban military, the U.S. government, Cuban exiles, international businesses, and as sad as it is—probably not the Cuban people.

Cuba's first inhabitants were indigenous people who arrived by sea, following the trade winds westward from the coast of Venezuela along the islands of the Caribbean. Little evidence remains of the first indigenous people, the Ciboney, who began settling the island about 1000 BC. When explorer Christopher Columbus reached the island on October 27, 1492, Cuba's indigenous population numbered approximately 112,000. Columbus claimed the island for Spain, the nation that had sponsored his voyage. On his first visit, Columbus optimistically assessed the island's natural beauty and the abundance of wildlife, noting the variation of coastal harbors, high mountains, tropical rain forests, and rolling savannas. In 1511 Spanish soldier Pánfilo de Narváez sailed from Jamaica along the southern coast of Cuba. He forced natives to convert to Catholicism and to accept the Spanish monarch as their leader. In 1515 Velázquez and Narváez were joined by an overland army, which marched east across Cuba. The Spaniards massacred both warriors and civilians as a means of breaking their will to resist. These conquerors founded many of Cuba's oldest towns, including Havana (encarta.msn.com).

In the 17th century Cuba began importing African slaves. The slaves replaced the rapidly disappearing indigenous people as laborers in copper mines and on sugar plantations. By 1650 African slaves numbered 5,000, compared to an indigenous population of 2,000. Under Cuban law slaves could buy their freedom, and eventually the Cuban population contained a high number of free blacks and mulattoes. The arrival of slaves resulted in one of the most notable characteristics of Cuba's heritage: a racially mixed population. During the first two centuries of Spanish settlement, few European women settled in Cuba. Spanish men married or had relationships with indigenous and African women. Cuba's classes and races blended, producing a mixture of religions,

music, language, foods, and customs that combined three cultures into a new Cuban culture (López, 1998:40-52).

In the early 18th century, Spain introduced a series of administrative reforms in its colonies designed to modernize colonial institutions. The first reform focused on the tobacco trade, creating a tobacco monopoly in Cuba that set prices, regulated production, and sold products abroad. The monopoly kept most of the profits for itself, and its policies provoked three armed rebellions among Cuban tobacco growers between 1717 and 1723. The last uprising resulted in a compromise, which allowed Cuban growers to sell two-thirds of their crops outside the monopoly. Another attempt at reform centered on sugar production. The royal company established in 1740 made high profits from the sugar trade. However, its wealth created inflation within Cuba, driving small farmers and people not involved in sugar to near ruin. Sugar output expanded, and by 1760 those with influence in the sugar monopoly became Cuba's new elite (encarta.msn.com).

By 1826 most Spanish colonies in Latin America had achieved independence from Spain. These independence movements were led by Creole elites seeking to gain control over their political and economic destinies. In Cuba, however, high-ranking Creoles had been frightened by the slave revolt in Haiti and did not support a revolution against Spanish rule. Throughout the 19th century, slavery was fundamental to sugar production in Cuba, where the largest amount of sugar in the world was grown and refined. At a time when national plantation economies were gradually emancipating slaves, Cuba was importing them from Africa and breeding them in Cuba. To preserve slavery, some Cubans advocated annexing Cuba to the United States, where the institution was still legal in the southern states. In 1848 at the request of annexationists and U.S. planters, U.S. president James K. Polk offered Spain \$100 million for Cuba, an offer that Spain turned down. In

1854 the United States again proposed to buy Cuba, this time for \$130 million, but this offer was also rejected. The annexationists made up a faction of the independence fighters by 1868 (Otero, 2002: 29-55).

Cuba's ties with the United States had been growing throughout the 19th century. Under the light of the cardinal principles, clearly American domination of Cuban agricultural production was in their own self-interest at the time. The United States provided a large market for Cuban sugar and supplied food, machinery, household goods, financing, and technology to the island. Cuba conducted far more trade with the United States than with Spain, which helped convince many Cubans that they had little need for Spanish colonial control. However, not all members of Cuba's elite classes supported annexation. A number of intellectuals objected to joining the United States because of the cultural and historical differences between Cubans and Americans. Some reformers, called autonomists, wanted Cuba to be able to control its internal affairs while remaining a part of the Spanish Empire. Others, the separationists, sought complete independence from Spain and the United States (Ritter, 1998: 63-75).

During these years, pro-Spanish forces began to organize to protect their interests. The independence forces in exile continued to organize as well. Cuban writer José Martí soon emerged as the leader of the renewed independence movement. Martí had traveled throughout the Americas before settling in New York City in 1881. From New York he wrote numerous influential newspaper articles on Latin American culture and became a leading advocate of Cuba's independence. Martí formed the Cuban Revolutionary Party (Spanish acronym PRC) in an attempt to unite the various revolutionary factions and to fuse white and black Cubans into a single army of citizens. By April 1892, all the revolutionary clubs had joined the PRC. Between 1892 and 1895, the PRC solicited

funds, purchased weapons, and trained troops in Cuba and in the United States.

Officially, the United States remained neutral, but sympathy grew for the independence cause. The PRC set February 24, 1895, as the date to begin the final war of independence. PRC leaders arrived in Cuba, and small rebellions broke out in the east and moved into central Cuba. At first it seemed the PRC would lose, especially when on May 19, 1895, José Martí was killed in the Battle of Dos Ríos in Cuba's southeastern mountains. Moreover, the United States honored a previous commitment to Spain and intercepted rebel arms shipments (encarta.msn.com).

The American popular press devoted a great deal of space to covering Spain's alleged atrocities. Yet again, one of the cardinal principles is easily recognized when the role public opinion plays domestically is considered in international politics. By 1896 U.S. popular opinion clamored for intervention, and American investors were increasingly worried about their property. In 1896 U.S. President William McKinley told the Spanish government to win the war, issue reforms, or expect U.S. involvement. In the fall of 1897, Madrid agreed to reforms and appointed a Cuban assembly to govern the island's internal affairs. The insurgents, however, refused to recognize the assembly members, who were Autonomists, and the war continued. The McKinley administration prepared for intervention in the name of peace and uninterrupted trade. In the United States the public demand for intervention increased following an explosion that sank the U.S. battleship *Maine* in Havana harbor on February 15, 1898. Most Americans blamed Spanish sabotage for the explosion. This is a wonderful example of how *perceptions* play an integral role in the political outcome of any delicate situation. (A U.S. Navy study published in 1976 suggested that spontaneous combustion in the ship's coal bunker caused the explosion.) In April 1898, Congress declared war on Spain, but a

congressional resolution limited U.S. action in Cuba to liberating the island and granting sovereignty to the new nation of Cuba (López, 1998:40-52).

The Spanish-American War itself lasted only fourteen weeks. The real battle was in Spain's Asian colony of the Philippines, where the U.S. Navy defeated the Spanish navy at Manila Bay. In Cuba, the war consisted of a naval blockade of Havana's harbor and an attack and siege of Santiago de Cuba in the east. The U.S. naval blockade cut off Spain's supply lines and broke Spanish control of Cuba. United States intervention altered the Cuban war of independence from a popular insurrection by Cubans to a victory by the United States. Prior to the U.S. intervention, Cuban revolutionaries controlled all Cuban territory except the major ports; by the end of 1898 the U.S. Army controlled the entire country (Otero, 2002: 29-55).

United States control denied some of the social changes that the revolutionaries had hoped to put into effect, including efforts to establish racial and social equality. Many American political leaders opposed an independent Cuba with a racially diverse government. This prejudice was reinforced when the U.S. and Cuban armies met in Santiago de Cuba. The U.S. soldiers were appalled by the ragged and impoverished condition of their allies, many of whom were poor blacks. After the war, the United States occupied Cuba, and the U.S. Army disbanded the patriot army and excluded from power many of the Cuban patriots who had fought 30 years for liberation (Ritter, 1998: 63-75).

In 1898 the Treaty of Paris formally ended the Spanish-American War. The United States and Spain negotiated the treaty with no Cuban representative present. The treaty left the United States firmly in control of newly independent Cuba. The United States assumed formal military possession of Cuba on January 1, 1899, and maintained a

military occupation until May 20, 1902. Under U.S. tutelage, public schools were built and staffed throughout the island. Cuban teachers took educational courses at Harvard University and taught in their nation's public elementary and secondary schools. Protestant missionaries flooded the country. Although the United States kept its commitment to give Cuba self-rule, the U.S. government required an "Americanization" of Cuba's leaders before ending the occupation. The U.S. government insisted that Cubans learn democratic principals before they were allowed to rule themselves. United States officials' sense of democracy meant that only Spanish and Cuban elites should form the constitutional assembly that would write Cuba's new constitution, since these elites were more inclined to favor U.S. influence in Cuba (encarta.msn.com).

Despite U.S. attempts to control the direction of Cuba's new government, in 1900 Cuban separatists won a majority of seats in the constitutional assembly. Again, America appears to be acting in its own self-interest on a consistent basis. To ensure that the assembly did not reject U.S. influence, the U.S. government insisted that the new constitution include a number of conditions defining the relationship between the two nations. These conditions—known as the Platt Amendment after its author, U.S. senator Orville Platt—prohibited Cuba from making treaties and alliances with other foreign countries, granted military bases (Guantánamo Bay) on the island to the United States, and allowed U.S. intervention on the island whenever instability threatened. stipulated that Cuba would not transfer Cuban land to any other power other than the U.S., mandated that Cuba would contract no foreign debt without guarantees that the interest could be served from ordinary revenues, insured U.S. intervention in Cuban affairs when the U.S. deemed necessary, prohibited Cuba from negotiating treaties with any country other than the United States, and provided for a formal treaty detailing all the foregoing

provisions. On a system level analysis, America is beginning to assert their authority and prove to the remaining European countries that it is strong and capable of taking care of their own backyard. The United States insisted that the military occupation would not end until Cubans accepted the Platt Amendment as part of their new constitution (López, 1998: 40-52).

This move, supported by imperialist elements in the USA, was passed as a resolution by only a few votes. Among those opposing this was the principal author of the Cuban Constitution Major General Jose Braulio Aleman and many others, who feared what eventually came to pass—political and economic domination by the US. Even before independence, the US dominated Cuban trade, with 90 percent of Cuban exports going to the US and 38 percent of Cuban imports coming from the US in 1894. After U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt withdrew federal troops from the island in 1902, Cuba signed the Cuban-American Treaty (1903), which outlined U.S. power in Cuba and the Caribbean. Tomás Estrada Palma, who had earlier favored outright annexation of Cuba by the United States, became president on May 20, 1902. Although the Platt Amendment was abnegated in 1934, American influence, both economic and political, shaped the history of Cuba up until the Cuban revolution in 1959 and Cuba was more or less an American protectorate during that time. This was seen (and still is viewed) as an affront to national sovereignty by all Cubans (Otero, 2002: 29-55).

Following acceptance of the amendment, the U.S. ratified a tariff pact that gave Cuban sugar preference in the U.S. market and protection to selected U.S. products in the Cuban market. As a result of U.S. action, sugar production came into complete domination of the Cuban economy, while Cuban domestic consumption was integrated into the larger market of the United States. After Estrada Palma made an unabashed

attempt to return to power at the end of his term in 1905, a liberal revolt contesting his government's electoral and administrative procedures followed. Roosevelt sent U.S. troops to Cuba on September 29, 1906 to crush the revolt, thus bringing about the second U.S. occupation of Cuba, which lasted until 1909. Except for U.S. rights to Guantánamo Bay, the Platt Amendment provisions, which Cubans considered an imperialist infringement of their sovereignty, were repealed in 1934, when a new treaty with the U.S. was negotiated as a part of U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor policy" toward Latin America (Ritter, 1998: 63-75).

Most Cubans were strongly opposed to the Platt Amendment. Assembly members spoke out against it and citizens protested. At first the assembly voted down the amendment. However, when a number of nationalist members left the Assembly in protest, the remaining members passed the amendment by a one-vote margin. Most Cubans viewed the Platt Amendment as an intrusion on Cuban sovereignty and as an attempt by the United States to maintain control. Consequently, Cuban national identity developed a strong anti-American feeling (Weinrub, 2001: 22-30).

Following the war, foreigners—largely Americans and Spaniards—bought land cheaply, and economic and political power began to concentrate in their hands. This created economic hardships for most Cubans. Cuban elites lost their lands and the poor lost their jobs as foreign laborers from Haiti and Jamaica, who worked for low wages, took the place of Cuban workers. Estrada Palma sought measures to stimulate the Cuban economy. The most lucrative opportunities lay with guaranteed purchases of Cuban sugar. In 1903 Cuba and the United States signed the Treaty of Reciprocity, which promised Cuban sugar growers 20 percent of the U.S. market without paying U.S. import taxes. In exchange, Cuba dropped taxes designed to protect its industries from U.S.

imports. The Cuban market was opened to well over 400 American products that had previously been so heavily taxed that they were not affordable for most Cubans. As a result, the Cuban economy became dependent on the United States (Ritter, 1998: 63-75). Over the next decade, the United States continued to intervene directly in Cuba's internal affairs. In 1917 the Liberal Party revolted after the Conservative Party candidate, Mario C. Menocal, assumed the presidency through electoral fraud. The United States sent Marines to Cuba's largest ports, and the U.S. ambassador notified the rebels that the United States would not recognize leadership that came to power through unconstitutional means. With that, the rebellion subsided, and it became clear to all that Cubans did not control their political destiny (Roy, 2000: 12-25).

The Liberal and Conservative parties agreed to revise the electoral code in order to deter voting fraud. They invited U.S. supervision of the 1920 elections, and U.S. general Enoch H. Crowder came to Havana. He oversaw the election of Conservative Party candidate Alfredo Zayas, which was relatively free of fraud. Zayas presided over a period of economic boom and bust. Sugar had always been Cuba's major export, but the years between 1909 and 1920 were ones of exaggerated growth. The price of a pound of sugar was 1.93 cents per pound in 1914, just before the outbreak of World War I. By 1920 it was worth 22.5 cents per pound. The rapid rise of sugar prices led Cubans to invest in land and equipment to produce more sugar, mortgaging all they had for future profits. This vigorous investment came to a sudden halt in December 1920 when the sugar market collapsed. Prices plummeted to 3.58 cents per pound (encarta.msn.com).

The sugar bust devastated Cubans of all classes. United States banks and individuals bought sugar estates for a fraction of their original purchase price when their Cuban owners could not keep up mortgage payments. By 1925, U.S. citizens owned half

of all Cuban sugar lands and refineries, many of which were consolidated into even larger estates. The *colonos* (smaller sugar growers) could not compete with these large holdings. Most colonos were forced to sell their land. Some became tenant farmers on property they had once owned. Others moved into cities to seek work there or became day laborers working in the sugar fields. Formerly, peasants had owned or inhabited small parcels of land and sustained themselves with subsistence farming. As the sugar plantations expanded, many peasants lost their land and took jobs working for the sugar companies. Salaries for peasants were minimal and likely to remain that way because Cubans and laborers from other Caribbean islands vied for work in the sugar mills (Azicri, 2000). In January 1934, with the encouragement of the U.S. government, Batista led a coup that ousted former President Grau. Over the next few years, a number of politicians served as president. However, as head of the military, Batista held the real power, governing from behind the scenes from 1934 to 1940. His will to sustain order was tested at first by radicals who ran clandestine operations and organized strikes in an effort to dislodge his government. But within a year, the military had repressed the radicals, arresting and executing many of their leaders. These actions brought peace and stability to the middle and upper classes (Lisio, 1996: 691-711).

Economic conditions in Cuba improved between 1933 and 1940. The United States increased Cuba's sugar quota (the amount of sugar Cuba was allowed to import into the United States each year), and the price of sugar rose from 25 cents per pound in 1933 to 31.4 cents per pound in 1937. Improvements in the sugar industry reinvigorated the Cuban economy. To prevent a repeat of the speculation that had ruined Cuban growers in the past, the government passed the Sugar Coordination Law in 1937. This

law allowed the state to control all lands used for sugar cultivation, apportion acreage to producers, and regulate prices and wages (Otero, 2002: 29-55).

In response to political violence and economic inequities, political reformers, led by Eddy Chibás, a former member of the Auténtico Party, established the Orthodoxo Party in 1947. Chibás brought into the new party students, professionals, workers, and peasants. A passionate speaker, Chibás rekindled ideals of political integrity, democracy, and social reform. In frequent radio broadcasts, he accused the government of corruption and eroded the current administration's authority. On August 5, 1951, Chibás shot himself during a radio broadcast after he was accused of making false statements about a cabinet member. His death ten days later left the Orthodoxos without their center. His style and some of his principles influenced an Orthodoxo Party member, Fidel Castro, a young lawyer and political activist who was at Chibás' bedside as he was dying (Lisio, 1996: 691-711).

In 1952 Batista returned from the United States to run for president. When it became apparent that he did not have strong support among voters, Batista organized a bloodless military takeover and became dictator. Batista, however, found that the situation was very different than it had been at the time of his earlier coup in 1934, when he had considerable popular support and was able to build a successful coalition of political groups. In 1952 he faced Cuban citizens who respected their constitution. Organizations opposed to Batista seemed to appear everywhere. Most of these groups had one goal: the removal of Batista. Only university students, the Communists, and Fidel Castro articulated programs for a post-Batista government (Weintrub, 2001: 22-30).

In 1953 Castro attracted a following of young people who shared his desire to topple Batista and reinstate the constitution. On July 26, Castro and 150 armed followers

entered the Moncada Military Barracks in Santiago de Cuba. Guards set off an alarm and quickly captured the attackers. Castro and several dozen men escaped, but were later arrested. The army brutally tortured and killed 68 insurgents, an act that made heroes and martyrs of Castro's group. Castro defended his action in a court hearing, arguing that the government, not his movement, was in violation of constitutional law because it took power illegally and because it had committed atrocities against defenseless prisoners. In a courtroom speech, he promised to lead a revolution that would oversee land reform, industrialization, housing construction, greater employment opportunities, and expanded health and welfare services. After a brief deliberation, a tribunal sentenced Castro to 15 years in prison (U.S. Department of State, 1978).

In 1954 Batista won the presidential election, running unopposed after other parties refused to participate. The following year he felt confident enough to free all political prisoners, including Castro. Castro soon left for Mexico with a small number of followers to plan a revolutionary movement they would call the 26th of July Movement (M-26) after the date of the Moncada Barracks assault (Lisio, 1996: 691-711).

Unrest continued in Cuba. In mid-1956 Batista faced dissension within the military as several officers conspired to overthrow him and reinstate liberal, democratic politicians. The leaders were court-martialed and jailed. On March 13, 1957, the Revolutionary Directorate attacked the presidential palace, intending to assassinate Batista. The president barely escaped as the rebels shot their way onto the grounds. José Antonio Echeverría, the directorate's leader, was gunned down and the rest of his men were captured, killed, or forced into hiding (Roy, 2000: 12-25).

Meanwhile Castro had been raising funds, acquiring weapons, and training a small band of guerrillas in Mexico. On November 29, 1956, Castro and about 80 men

crammed themselves into a small fishing vessel, the *Granma*, and set out to invade Cuba. All did not go as planned, however. Bad weather delayed their arrival, and the rebels landed 30 miles south of the point where weapons and reinforcements awaited them. As they waded ashore, Batista's army ambushed them, and only a handful of men escaped. They formed a small guerrilla army in the Sierra Maestra, the mountains of southeast Cuba. From his base in the mountains, Castro organized raids on military installations to acquire weapons and worked closely with the rural population to build a base of support. He invited Herbert Matthews, a *New York Times* correspondent, to the Sierra Maestra to report on the 26th of July Movement. Matthews' reports brought international attention to Castro's movement. New recruits joined him, and urban guerrilla groups, such as the Civic Resistance group, founded in 1957, became auxiliaries of the 26th of July Movement (Lisio, 1996: 691-711).

Well into 1958, U.S. State Department officials misread the Cuban population's profound dissatisfaction with Batista, as U.S. diplomatic dispatches from Havana indicated that Batista had the opposition under control. Eventually, as Batista's dictatorial tendencies grew and the extent of opposition to his regime became apparent, the alliance between the United States and Batista weakened. The United States discussed with Batista the possibility of working with the moderate opposition and scheduling free elections. Batista refused. The United States considered an armed intervention, but instead decided to force Batista to resign by withholding arms shipments. Meanwhile, the opposition was unifying around Castro. In March 1958, 45 civic organizations signed an open letter supporting Castro's guerrillas (Otero, 2002: 29-55).

Conditions deteriorated for Batista during the following months. On April 9, 1958, a general strike to protest the Batista government did not paralyze the country, but

it did throw doubt on Batista's ability to govern. In April and May Batista failed to suppress two major rebel offensives. In May Batista began an assault on Castro's stronghold in the Sierra Maestra. In July more than 10,000 government soldiers failed to dislodge Castro's men during the Battle of Jigue. In late August the rebel army moved out of its mountain sanctuary onto the plains. The rebels made steady advances throughout the remainder of the year. In November government troops lost control of the central highway into Santiago. In December rebel forces won a bloody battle for control of Santa Clara, a city in central Cuba. Batista understood that his downfall was imminent. After his annual New Year's Eve party, he and his closest advisers secretly boarded a plane for the Dominican Republic. Castro demanded that all opposition groups lay down their arms and consolidate power under his leadership. These groups complied since their objective had been to remove Batista; they had no plans to govern. Fidel Castro led a jubilant procession from eastern Cuba to Havana, and his bearded, youthful revolutionaries became uncontested national leaders (Weintrub, 2001: 22-30).

When Castro entered Havana on January 9, 1959, he had support from the political left and the majority of the population. Most people agreed with Castro's earlier promises to hold elections in one year, to recognize individual rights as stated in the 1940 constitution, and to guarantee political freedom. At first Castro did not assume a political office. He appointed moderate politicians to serve in the new government. However, Castro continued serving as head of the armed forces, and he remained the major force in determining the policies of the new government. Moderate politicians quickly became disenchanted with Castro's policies and began leaving the government. Following the resignation of Prime Minister Miró Cardona in February 1959, Castro became prime minister (U.S. Department of State, 1978).

His first order of business was purging Batista supporters from the government. The government created special tribunals, which quickly passed judgment on Batista associates. Sentences ranged from death before firing squads to prison terms lasting from 2 to 30 years. Officially the number of people executed was less than 700, though Castro's opponents claim that many times that number died. Castro's second objective was to centralize control of the economy. In March 1959 the cabinet passed the Urban Reform Law, designed to reduce or eliminate the large profits made by wealthy individuals who had amassed extensive real estate holdings in the cities. Wealth was quickly redistributed. In May the Agrarian Reform Law limited private landholdings to 993 acres per family. Limits were set at 3,336 acres in the case of farms producing sugar, rice, and livestock. The government confiscated the largest estates, converting them into state cooperatives upon which individual workers could hold parcels of 65 acres (Azicri, 2000: 19-23).

The United States had a great deal to lose as a result of Castro's reforms. Keeping their own national interest in mind, at the end of 1958, U.S. businesses owned 75 percent of Cuba's fertile land, 90 percent of its public services, and 40 percent of the sugar industry. Castro's policy of seizing businesses and confiscating the property of the wealthy raised concerns in the United States about Communist influence. Castro had no record of Communist affiliation, and he had made a point of emphasizing that his revolution was not based on Communism. Nonetheless, U.S. officials were wary of his programs and decided that Castro had to be removed from power (Kirckpatrick, 1997: 72). Once again, perceptions continue to play a key role in developing American foreign policy towards Cuba.

The U.S. State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), an intelligence-gathering organization under the command of the president of the United States, plotted two approaches to overturning Castro's government: economic pressure and military intervention. The U.S. government tried economic pressure first. On July 3, 1960, the Congress of the United States decreased the Cuban sugar quota. This action reduced the amount of sugar that Cuba could legally import into the United States and caused a serious reduction in Cuba's income from foreign trade. The United States cut the quota after Cuba seized installations belonging to U.S. oil companies that had refused to refine crude oil imported from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the world's leading Communist nation. At the time, the USSR was involved in an ongoing struggle with the United States known as the Cold War. In retaliation, the Cuban government appropriated U.S. sugar property. On October 19 the U.S. Treasury Department declared a trade embargo, which stopped all commerce with Cuba except for food and medicine. On October 24 Castro struck back by nationalizing all U.S. holdings. The attempt to bring Castro to heel through economic pressure only widened the gap between the United States and Cuba. The two countries formally severed diplomatic relations in January 1961 (Cooper, 1994: 38). This was America's only real attempt to use a rational decision-making model, but they did not stay the course long enough to produce any effective results.

Next the United States tried military action. In March 1960 the CIA had begun training Cuban exiles for an invasion. The newly inaugurated U.S. president, John F. Kennedy, approved the invasion plans. Drawing on past-future linkages and their recent success in Guatemala, the plans called for an air strike by anti-Castro Cuban pilots based in the United States. Following this attack, amphibious forces would land at the Bay of

Pigs on the southern coast of Cuba and start a guerrilla campaign. Launched on April 17, 1961, the attack was a complete failure. Castro, who knew about the plan, scattered his air force to save it from destruction, and Cuba's military overwhelmed the invading land forces within 48 hours (Kirckpatrick, 1997: 68). Such past-future linkages played a role as the CIA's overwhelming confidence and their assumption that overtaking Cuba would be as easy as gaining control over Guatemala in 1954, proved to be disastrous on the island.

The Bay of Pigs consolidated Castro's power. Throngs of Cubans rejoiced in defeating the strongest military power in the world. Castro's popularity soared at home and abroad. Those who had disagreed with Castro's government kept silent, as approximately 100,000 people suspected of subversive activities were imprisoned or detained. In May the government canceled promised elections and declared the 1940 constitution outdated. Social and political associations were absorbed into official government organizations. On December 2 Castro announced that he was a Communist and would implement socialist policies in Cuba (Erisman, 2002: 45).

To deter further U.S. plans to invade or destabilize Cuba, Castro sought economic and military assistance from the USSR. Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev agreed to secretly send missiles armed with nuclear weapons that were capable of hitting targets within the United States. In September 1962 U.S. spy planes identified the missile sites. On October 22 Kennedy announced a naval blockade of the island and informed Khrushchev that any Soviet ship crossing the blockade line risked starting a nuclear war. At the last minute, the two leaders resolved the Cuban Missile Crisis before it erupted in hostilities. Khrushchev recalled the ships and agreed to dismantle the missile sites. In return the United States agreed not to invade Cuba and to remove U.S. missiles from sites

in Turkey. Cuban leaders were left out of the negotiations, which infuriated Castro and briefly chilled relations between the USSR and Cuba (Kirckpatrick, 1997: 66).

The political ramifications were just as sobering. The USSR agreed to provide financial assistance to Cuba, but it insisted that Castro create a Soviet-style bureaucracy that limited his personal influence on policy. The Communist Party assumed more authority and pushed for efficient economic practices. In 1972 Cuba became a member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), the trade association of Communist nations. By the mid-1980s, the USSR accounted for 64 percent of Cuba's exports and 62 percent of its imports (Azicri, 2000: 59). Following the rupture of Cuban-U.S. relations in the early 1960s, the United States pressured Latin American countries to break ties with Cuba. At U.S. insistence, the Organization of American States (OAS), an organization that coordinates economic, social, and security issues among the nations of the Western Hemisphere, expelled Cuba. As a result, Cuba sought diplomatic relations with the Communist nations of Eastern Europe and developing countries in Africa (Cooper, 1994: 67).

Cuba also encouraged revolutionary movements in Latin America. In 1967 Che Guevara was captured and executed while trying to start an insurrection in the mountains of Bolivia. Cuba's commitment to exporting revolution caused a serious disagreement with the USSR in the mid-1960s. The Cubans showed little patience with the world's traditional Communist parties, which in the 1950s and early 1960s tried to win power through democratic methods, rather than by armed revolt. However, the rift between Cuba and the USSR narrowed significantly after the USSR showed its displeasure by reducing shipments of oil to Cuba and withdrawing its technical advisors (U.S. Department of State, 1978).

In 1973 relations between the USSR and the United States improved, and Cuba benefited from a reduction in international tensions. The OAS voted to allow its members to determine their own relations with Cuba. Under U.S. president Gerald R. Ford secret meetings with Cuban authorities dealt with diplomatic and economic openings with Cuba. This changed abruptly in 1975 when Cuba sent military forces into the African nation of Angola, which had just won its independence from Portugal. Cuban troops aided leftist forces fighting for control of the newly independent nation. From 1975 to 1989 Cuba committed 250,000 troops to Angola before a peace settlement was eventually reached (Kirckpatrick, 1997: 60).

Under the administration of an idealist U.S. President Jimmy Carter, Cuba and the United States each established a diplomatic office in the other country. In 1977 Americans were allowed to visit Cuba as tourists. But attempts to improve Cuban/U.S. relations foundered on a buildup of Soviet technicians and advisers in Cuba and on Cuba's commitment to their troops not only in Africa but also in the Middle East (Font, 1996: 50). Such was the result of human-behavioral model decision-making on behalf of Jimmy Carter.

Cuba's prestige as an international leader peaked in 1979 when Castro became the head of the Non-Aligned Movement, a group of nations that sought to remain neutral during the Cold War. Although Cuba was an ally of the USSR, members of the movement supported Castro's leadership to demonstrate their disapproval of the 19-year-old U.S. embargo. Cuba also became the host country for international humanitarian meetings, such as the International Youth Conference in 1980 (Erisman, 2002: 43).

Despite increased national debate as a result of the political reforms of 1976, the government did not tolerate criticism of its programs. Officials and experts who could

have predicted policy failures were censored and even punished. With no outlet for frustration and no legally permitted dissent, tensions increased at the end of the late 1970s despite improved economic conditions. In 1980 a small number of Cubans broke into the Peruvian Embassy in Havana asking for asylum. Several thousand more followed until they overflowed the embassy grounds. When U.S. president Jimmy Carter offered to take the people who wanted to leave, Castro opened the doors. Both presidents were shocked when 120,000 people spontaneously left homes and families to seek political asylum in the United States. The exodus demonstrated that Cuba had serious problems centered around the lack of personal freedom and chronic economic austerity. Castro moved quickly to ease the difficulties of daily life. Between 1980 and 1985, the government allowed farmers' markets to provide food to urban areas where rationed products had been inadequate (Carter, 2002: 28).

But in 1986 Castro reversed this process, declaring that farmers were earning unreasonably large sums in the open markets. A new policy known as the Rectification Process gave priority to the production of exportable goods over goods made for consumption within Cuba. The government also tried to replace imported goods with domestically produced goods to prevent cash from flowing out of the country. Increasing efficient production and bureaucracy downsizing became paramount. Finally, the government increased the amount of "voluntary work" that it required from Cuban citizens and preached against the evils of a material world (Azicri, 2000: 75).

In 1989 two events shook the foundations of Cuban society. The first involved a political scandal. The government charged General Arnaldo Ochoa Sánchez, a decorated hero and the architect of Cuban victories in Angola, with drug smuggling. Ochoa had been an advocate for Cuban troops returning from overseas, helping them find

employment. His efforts had made him popular among Cuban troops and the second most important person in Cuba. Many Cubans suspected that Ochoa's crime was his popularity and his potential to challenge Castro for power. After a brief trial, Ochoa was executed. The second event was more far-reaching. It began in the USSR when political and economic reforms were implemented in the late 1980s. These reforms decreased centralized control of the Soviet economy and increased citizens' ability to participate in government. The idea that socialism could exist with a less regulated economy and a more participatory government appealed to younger Cubans. In 1989 the USSR disintegrated into a number of smaller republics. Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev visited Cuba in early 1990 to warn the government that economic reforms were forthcoming and not to count on the \$5.5 billion yearly subsidies that the USSR had previously provided Cuba. The news was devastating in Cuba, since 86 percent of foreign financial and economic relations were with the USSR and its allies (Cooper, 1994: 44).

As another idealist U.S. President (Bill Clinton) took office in 1992, Castro sent word through diplomatic channels that there was a potential to improve relations. Cuba, however, was not a high priority for Clinton, who announced that the United States would not normalize relations with any country that had abandoned democracy. In 1992 U.S. senator Robert Torricelli authored the Cuba Democracy Act, which extended the trade embargo beyond U.S. companies. The act penalized foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies trading with Cuba, as well as other nations that engaged in commerce with the island. His intention was to topple Castro in a matter of months by extending the 30-year-old embargo to cut off all trade with the island (Carter, 2002: 107).

Since 1991 the Cuban government offered compensation for seized property, released political prisoners, permitted U.S. news bureaus in Cuba, and stopped trying to

export the ideals of the revolution. However, the United States has not reestablished relations with Cuba despite these concessions. The Congress of the United States, first through the Torricelli Law of 1991 and then in the Helms-Burton Law of 1996, demanded elections in Cuba similar to those in the United States and the removal of Castro and his associates (Font, 1996: 62).

In 1996 U.S.-Cuban relations once again grew hostile after Cuban fighter planes shot down two civilian aircraft piloted by U.S.-based Cuban exiles, which convinced U.S. president Bill Clinton to sign the Helms-Burton Law. The government instituted economic austerity measures, which Castro characterized as the "special period in a time of peace." In September 1993 the government announced that large state-farms would be broken into workers' cooperatives. A year later the government again allowed free agricultural markets in order to supply food for a malnourished population. The government also invited industrialists from foreign countries, principally Mexico, France, Canada, Britain, and Spain, to establish businesses in partnership with the government in tourism, medicine, and exports of food (Cooper, 1994: 77).

Discontent continued, however, as evidenced by the number of people trying to escape Cuba on the high seas. In 1993 and 1994 record numbers of people left Cuba on rafts and asked for asylum in the United States. On August 5, 1994, a crowd in Havana's old city rioted. Castro made a personal appearance and convinced the crowd to disband. He then publicly announced that anyone wishing to leave Cuba could. Almost immediately the beaches of Havana province were full of people in makeshift boats setting out for Miami. More than 6,000 rafters reached the United States by mid-August and an unknown number perished at sea (Carter, 2002: 123).

The United States found the exodus impossible to control, and on August 18 ended a 28-year-old policy of automatically granting asylum to Cubans. Efforts to negotiate an orderly exodus failed when the United States denied a Cuban request to end the trade embargo. When negotiations failed, the Cuban government closed its borders. Conservative U.S. legislators stepped up efforts to tighten the trade embargo by passing the Helms-Burton law, which penalized any nation or individual that traded with Cuba and leveled sanctions against U.S. citizens who traveled to the island. Under the law, U.S. citizens caught traveling to Cuba without government permission can be fined \$200,000 and sentenced to up to six months in jail. At first Clinton delayed signing the bill. On February 24, 1996, the Cuban air force shot down two airplanes owned by the Miami-based Brothers to the Rescue, an anti-Castro Cuban exile organization. Controversy arose about whether the aircraft were in Cuban airspace when the shooting occurred. Following the incident, Clinton signed the Helms-Burton bill into law (Erisman, 2002: 98).

As 1997 drew to a close, the greatest hope for Cubans seemed to be a spiritual one. Pope John Paul II had planned a visit to Cuba, and the aging Castro permitted him to come. Interest in the visit grew, even though most Cubans did not practice a religion. Of 11 million Cubans, only about 1 million were practicing Catholics, and about 4.5 million participated in *Santería*, a blending of African and Catholic rituals. For the first time in decades, churches filled with worshipers, and people openly wore crucifixes and religious medals. Castro invited the pope to demonstrate that his revolution shared much in common with Christian teachings of charity and community love. He also hoped that the pope's strong condemnation of the U.S. embargo would add weight to world pressure against U.S. policy (Roy, 2000: 12-25).

In 1998, however, President Clinton responded to international condemnation of the U.S. economic blockade by relaxing restrictions on the admittance of food and medicine, and on money sent to Cuban citizens from individuals in the United States. Sports also served as the medium for cultural exchange when an arrangement worked out in 1998 through informal diplomatic channels allowed the Baltimore Orioles, a professional U.S. baseball team, and the Cuban All-Stars baseball team to play games in Baltimore, Maryland, and Havana (Font, 1996: 36).

In 1999 a five-year-old Cuban boy, Elián González, was rescued by American fishermen after surviving a shipwreck while trying to reach the United States with his mother. Backed by some U.S. lawmakers, relatives of the boy in Miami sought to keep Elián in the United States, despite calls from his father to return him to Cuba. Castro called the incident a "kidnapping." The incident energized support for Castro in Cuba, with thousands of people participating in anti-U.S. rallies in Havana. In June 2000 Elián returned to Cuba with his father, after the Supreme Court of the United States refused to hear an appeal from his relatives to keep Elián in the country (Roy, 2000: 12-25).

The INS was right to rule that 6-year-old Elian Gonzalez should be returned to Cuba to live with his father. The fact that jurisdiction over a small boy erupted into crisis reflects the failure of the Clinton administration to craft a logical policy toward Cuba. U.S.-Cuba relations have been an accumulation of crises that reflect an absence of such a policy. A 1961 failed invasion at the Bay of Pigs led to the 1962 missile crisis. The migration crisis of 1980 occurred when some 125,000 Cubans arrived unexpectedly from Mariel, thanks to ambivalent U.S. policies. Now, a child has brought forth the Clinton administration's crisis managers. But quick fixes cannot circumvent incongruous Cuban migration policies. One doesn't need to be a fortuneteller to predict future problems. On

the one hand, under the 1995 Migration Treaty, the U.S. Consular office in Havana issues 20,000 legal visas to Cubans each year. The treaty also obliges the United States to return all Cubans caught at sea. But the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act contravenes this agreement. It says that Cubans, by touching U.S. soil, earn the right to apply for special status and remain here. Cuban Vice President Ricardo Alarcon insists that U.S. officials who signed the 1995 pact had agreed to work hard to repeal the 1966 law. They have not done so. But they have ordered the Coast Guard to catch and send back Cubans caught at sea. That's why smugglers earn big bucks by trying to evade the Coast Guard so their Cuban passengers can swim to shore and, by placing a toe on a Florida beach, qualify for rapid U.S. residency. To complicate matters further, Radio Marti, a transmission operated by the U.S. Information Service, broadcasts such information into Cuba, which implicitly encourages Cubans to come here illegally. Simultaneously, U.S. consular officers assure Cubans that only 20,000 of them can come to the United States through legal processes. The visa process is supposed to allow our government to select desirable Cubans, i.e., white, skilled professionals with affluent families living in the United States (U.S. Department of State, 2004).

In practice, we encourage Cubans we don't want as residents to reach our shores illegally. By having parallel tracks for entry into the United States—the legal visa track and the illegal smuggler track—we undercut the orderly visa process. In the end, the problem is that the United States has no coherent policy toward that country. "Bring down Castro by almost any means necessary" encourages Cubans to escape in the hopes that this will undermine Castro's government. But the United States doesn't want waves of Cubans immigrating, so it routinely signs immigration accords with Castro's government, thereby acknowledging his legitimacy. Instead of having a schizophrenic

policy toward Cuba, the United States should abandon its Cold War stance and normalize its relations. Our Canadian and European allies have had such relations with that country for years. Yes, that would alienate the anti-Castro sector in Florida that has made Elian's case into such a cause. But U.S. policy should remove itself from crisis mode and not be held hostage to this small group any longer (Otero, 2002: 29-55).

For more than four decades, politicians and pundits have offered zany explanations of the US embargo and travel ban on Cuba. On October 10, 2003, President Bush announced yet again new and tougher measures against Fidel Castro's regime in order to "hasten the arrival of a new, free, democratic Cuba." Indeed, during the Spring and Summer of 2004 Bush further restricted travel, reduced legal remittances and heightened already tense relations through a variety of provocative—short of armed conflict—measures. Like the embargo itself and the various bills that tightened it, the Bush measures, which included beaming TV Marti into Cuba from a C-130 military plane, were not designed to change Cuba, bring down Castro, or even make for a healthier climate. Instead, the new actions are rhetorically directed against Fidel Castro, as if he was the lone resident of the island (Font, 1996: 46).

Unlike Castro, whose political imagination has guided Cuba into world status, his rabid enemies in south Florida have focused their tunnel vision away from the notions of the common good; instead they have used politics to increase their immediate wealth and power. Nor do they advance US policy goals: to benefit large corporations, which want to open Cuba and lift the embargo. Rather than trying to instigate change in Cuba, the anti-Castroites try to control US policy for their narrow ends. And they have figured out how to manipulate the American political elite into becoming their allies (Lisio, 1996: 691-711).

In reality, the embargo has hurt Cuba but it has not touched the regime's power. Cuba claims that the embargo policy has caused some \$80 billion of damage to the island's economy. Washington's policy players play a deaf ear to such complaints. The fact that the Cuban people get punished and Fidel has yet to miss a meal does not seem to alter their determination. From the President on down, the charge against Castro is "human rights violations." But in fact, Washington's real grievance with Castro stems from his violation of the "don't touch US property or disobey us on any policy" rule. The 1996 Helms-Burton bill added strength to the 1992 Torricelli Amendment, which had refused foreign ships that entered Cuban ports the right to dock at US ports for six months. Helms-Burton further restricted trade with Cuba by erecting higher barriers for potential investors, banning CEOs and their families of foreign companies invested in Cuba from traveling to the United States and threatening law suits for all who bought into Cuba's production sector. Nevertheless, Cuba's economy rebounded (Font, 1996: 88). George W. Bush, the tenth US president to face off with Fidel Castro since 1959, has declared he will finish the job. Key to the new "strategy" was enforcing the travel ban. On October 10, 2003, he stated the following: "U.S. law forbids Americans to travel to Cuba for pleasure. That law is on the books and it must be enforced. We allow travel for limited reasons, including visit to a family, to bring humanitarian aid, or to conduct research. Those exceptions are too often used as cover for illegal business travel and tourism, or to skirt the restrictions on carrying cash into Cuba. We're cracking down on this deception" (Lisio, 1996: 691-711).

Republican and Democratic Members of both Houses criticized the new actions. Congressman Flake said, "The best way to plant democratic seeds in Cuba is to allow Americans to travel freely to the island." Montana Democratic Senator Max Baucus

labeled Bush's obsession with Cuba as "absurd and increasingly bizarre." Other conservative and middle of the road anti-Castro sources agreed that Bush's tactics retard rather than advance U.S. objectives (Erisman, 2002: 69).

Past presidents have accepted the Pentagon estimates and discounted an invasion of Cuba as too costly. Analysts estimate that the consequences of a U.S. military attack on Cuba would overshadow any successes that an aggressor could hope to achieve. For the second time in the Bush Administration, the White House used its power to overturn the will of Congress, which had voted in 2003 to lift the travel ban to Cuba. In June 2004, Bush ordered the Homeland Security Department to harass travelers to the island and fine those traveling without licenses. Over almost forty-six years Fidel Castro's policies have helped build Cuba from an informal US colony to a proud nation that withstood the loss of its perceived economic life line. It is far from perfect and its economy circles like an airplane in a holding pattern; a long way from running out of fuel. IN that same period, US policy toward Cuba has done nothing but destroy people and property in Cuba, the foundations of law here and abroad and the very fundamentals of honest politics in Florida (Font, 1996: 54).

In the early 21st century the future of the Cuban Revolution is uncertain. Generations of Cubans have had little experience in participatory government. The inevitable end of the aging Castro's personal rule will remove the one figure that embodies the revolution and provides the final authority in government policy (Erisman, 2002). Since the revolution, Cuba has tried to export the ideals of the revolution throughout the world as a means of bringing down capitalism and opposing the U.S. model of constitutional government. United States policy has been to oust Castro and bring Cuba back under U.S. influence. The two nations have clashed in nearly every

continent of the world, and Cuba's survival has often relied heavily on the support of the USSR. Since the USSR collapsed and Cuba's economic crisis began, active support for international revolutionary causes has ceased. Cuba's leadership has turned its attention to redesigning socialism to include some capitalist activity and trade with capitalist nations. To this end, Cuba has formed new alliances with Latin American countries with which it previously had no relations. Trade agreements with capitalist nations, such as Canada, France, Spain, Italy, and the Russian Federation, have more to do with economics than politics. The United States has continued to oppose Cuba, regardless of the changes in Cuba's foreign policy over the past 25 years. In the late 1970s the United States refused to establish diplomatic relations unless Cuba withdrew its military from foreign countries, specifically Angola, released political prisoners, and paid compensation to former owners of nationalized properties. Cuba not only did not leave the foreign countries in which it was involved, but Castro expanded the number of troops he had committed to Africa and the Middle East. This action brought an end to secret peace talks between Cuba and the United States. During the 1980s, U.S. President Ronald Reagan viewed Cuba as the source of Communist influence in the Western Hemisphere (U.S. Department of State, 2004).

In 2003 Cuba again made international news when it cracked down on political dissidents. The Cuban government arrested about 80 journalists, activists, and opposition party leaders for supposedly plotting to undermine the government and threaten national security. During closed trials, the dissidents were sentenced to prison terms of varying lengths up to 28 years. This incident represented Cuba's largest crackdown in many years, and the international community reacted strongly. Many people called on Castro to free

the dissidents, who wanted to foster democracy in Cuba and pressure Cuba to open its society and improve its human rights record (Erisman, 2002: 37).

In sum, the history of American-Cuban relations is plagued by American leaders who acted based on their perceptions instead of the reality of the situation. With time, such perceptions grew into an obsession as nearly every American president has gone head-to-head with Castro's Cuba and in some way or another tried to remove the thorn stuck in the side of American pride. Drawing on past-future linkages from a successful invasion of Guatemala in 1954, America tried to covertly attack Cuba in 1961. The failure at the Bay of Pigs was indeed devastating. National interests have always played the most important role in deciding American policy towards Cuba, as the former trade relationship (sugarcane) and seizure of U.S. property continues to be a sore spot amongst conservative lawmakers and members of Congress. Most of the presidents, acting in a Cold War mentality, have taken actions that have only continued to strain the crumbling relationship that has existed between America and Cuba for so long. Such a Cold War mentality, characterized by the Domino Theory and zero-sum game politics, has produced poor foreign policy regarding Cuba. There has been little or no rational decision-making regarding our stance toward Cuba, and human behavioral decision-making has been the norm throughout the latter half of the 20th century. Although relations between the Cuban and U.S. governments periodically thaw, citizens of both countries have experienced a prohibition against travel, communications, and knowledge about the other country. But despite attempts to ignore or vilify one another, the diplomatic policies of each nation remain focused on the other as both governments battle for international approval.

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