STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY REVIEW – REPUBLIC OF CUBA

BY

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ABSTRACT

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THESIS: The United States should reassess current relations with the Republic of Cuba, and adopt a new security strategy that is consistent with the post - Cold War era.

RATIONALE: Current United States policy towards Cuba was developed in the early 1960's in the midst of the Cold War. Subsequent administrations have stubbornly stayed the containment course, based on what appears to be nothing more than emotional conviction focused against Fidel Castro. The end of the Cold War provides an opportunity to rationally adjust our national policy in order to make it more realistic, given the level of threat that Cuba poses to United States security today.

APPROACH: After an introduction that briefly reviews the events that brought United States/Cuban relations to date, this Strategy Research Project analyzes and evaluates the performance of the current U.S. strategy. Next, it offers alternative strategies (that focus on political, military, economic, and societal factors), and addresses the risk involved with each. Finally, a new strategy is recommended and summarized in the conclusion.

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NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY REVIEW – REPUBLIC OF CUBA

> [T]here is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new order…
>
> —Niccolo Machiavelli

February 3, 1962 – on this date, President John F. Kennedy formally initiated a United States trade embargo directed at the Republic of Cuba.[1] Fast forward 40 years – essentially the same national security strategy is still in effect, and its efficacy serves as the focal point for heated debate between politicians, special interest groups, the international community, and strategic planners. Developing and choosing the proper strategy that truly serves the national interest, and achieves our stated objectives in a free society is difficult under any circumstances, but the supercharged domestic and international atmosphere surrounding this issue has prevented the last three administrations from rationally reassessing the current policy. "The security imperatives that originally justified sanctions, based on the proposition that Cuba was an instrument of Soviet designs, to be contained on every occasion and countered at every opportunity, are no longer plausible."[2] The not-so-recent demise of the Soviet Union provides a unique opportunity to adjust our national policy in order to make it more realistic, given the level of threat that Cuba poses today. The United States should reassess current relations with the Republic of Cuba, and adopt a new security strategy that is consistent with the post - Cold War era.

This paper will briefly summarize events that brought U.S. - Cuban relations to date, then analyze and evaluate the performance of the current United States strategy. Next, I will offer alternative strategies, addressing the risk associated with each, and recommend the adoption of a new course of action. Richmond Lloyd's Strategy and Force Planning Framework[3] will serve as the tool to assist in the treatment of the key variables that should be considered in developing strategic choices and evaluating alternatives. Use of this model supports the development of a clear, focused national security strategy regarding Cuba that allows the U.S. to control/shape events in a way that benefits our interests.

HISTORY – HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The U.S. policy actually began to evolve nearly three years before President Kennedy signed the proclamation banning trade with Cuba. After his revolutionary forces took over the

government in May 1959, Fidel Castro pursued an Agrarian Reform Law, which essentially nationalized a third of Cuba's arable land as well as a number of U.S. - owned companies located there. Nearly a year later, Castro turned to the Soviet Union and signed a trade and military assistance agreement with them. President Eisenhower then authorized planning for what became the Bay of Pigs invasion.[4]

The two nations continued to exchange barbs through the summer and fall. First, Cuba nationalized U.S. oil companies' Cuban refineries when those companies refused to process Soviet crude oil. The U.S. responded by ceasing to import Cuban sugar, forcing the Soviet Union to buy up the excess. Then on October 14, 1960, Castro nationalized over a billion dollars worth of U.S. property. A week later Eisenhower banned all exports except for medicine and food.[5] The U.S. finally broke diplomatic relations on January 3, 1961 and three and a half months later executed the ill-fated invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs.

President Kennedy ultimately ordered the February 1962 trade embargo, based on evidence that Castro and Che Guevara were gathering and distributing arms to Venezuela – essentially spreading the Communist revolution in the western hemisphere. The embargo was designed with the intent to isolate Castro, economically choke him, and prevent further export of Communism on behalf of the Soviet Union.[6]

That October, the world edged toward nuclear holocaust over the Soviet placement of nuclear weapons in Cuba. The Organization of American States (OAS) voted to expel Cuba, and the crisis was averted when the Soviets agreed to remove the missiles in exchange for the U.S. promise not to invade Cuba. Aside from a vote by the OAS in 1964 to require members to cut diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba (which Mexico refused), the Cold War reigned unabated throughout the remainder of the 1960's. In 1975, the OAS voted to remove the Cuban sanctions. The U.S. voted in the affirmative, but elected to continue a unilateral trade embargo. The same year also saw the use of Cuban combat troops in Angola, derailing secret negotiations between Castro and the Ford Administration.[7]

A similar situation occurred in 1977 when President Carter lifted travel restrictions, allowing U.S. tourists to visit Cuba. Diplomatic negotiations were again set back when Castro sent troops to Ethiopia. Cuba continued to spread its Communist influence in the Caribbean and Central America during 1979. First, they reestablished close ties with Grenada, and then supported the revolutionary Nicaraguan government politically and militarily against the U.S. supported Contras. The next year, Castro opened the emigration floodgates and announced that anyone who wanted to leave Cuba could be picked up at the port of Mariel. During the

ensuing five-month boatlift, roughly 120,000 Cubans (a significant number of whom were criminals and mental patients) were brought to the United States.[8]

In 1982, President Reagan reinstated the ban on travel to Cuba. U.S. troops came face-to-face with Cubans during the October 1983 invasion of Grenada. The following year, an immigration agreement was negotiated that would allow 20,000 Cubans per year to come to the U.S., while Cuba would accept the repatriation of "2,746 excludables who arrived during the Mariel exodus."[9] In response to the U.S. broadcasting of Radio Marti into Cuba during 1985, Castro suspended execution of the immigration accords, and President Reagan moved to prohibit travel to the U.S. for Cuban diplomats. During 1987, a significant effort to readmit Cuba into the OAS was staged by Latin American countries. Additionally, the immigration agreement was revived, sparking riots in U.S. prisons housing Mariel excludables who did not want to return to Cuba. The next two years saw the removal of Cuban troops from Angola as part of the Southern Africa peace settlement, an act that effectively ended Cuban expeditionary interference abroad. Castro became more vocal through 1989 and 1990 by vehemently opposing the Soviet policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. The Soviet-Cuban rift widened, as the former gradually cut subsidies and trade trickled to a fraction of its previous levels. The Soviets finally decided to remove all of their troops from Cuba in 1991, and end the remaining subsidies.[10]

Up to this point, the defining element of United States policy toward Cuba for 30 years had been Kennedy's trade embargo. The end of the Cold War brought with it the expectation of the imminent demise of the Castro regime, along with U.S. legislation designed to hasten it along.

POST-COLD WAR POLICY

Relations with Cuba ebbed and flowed through the years (more precisely with Castro's mood), but the basic policy did not significantly adjust. This changed on October 23, 1992 when President George H. Bush expanded and strengthened the embargo with the signing of the Cuban Democracy Act (CDA). This legislation was designed to give the U.S. leverage in the settlement of future claims against the Cuban government. Given the collapse of the Soviet Union, the prevalent belief among analysts held that without its Communist benefactor to keep Cuba alive economically, Castro and his government would soon be deposed. The CDA dictated that the embargo would only be lifted if Cuba: 1) conducted democratic elections, 2) demonstrated respect for human rights, and 3) moved toward a market economy. Given the anticipated collapse of the Castro regime, the now strengthened embargo was supposed to assist the leaders of the reform movement in arguing for a more liberal society.

Castro's reaction to the CDA resulted in tighter civilian restrictions, economic hardship, and more human rights abuses that were the catalyst for a new mass exodus of rafters in 1994 and 1995. Up to 60,000 migrants were rescued at sea by the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard, then housed at U.S. Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Eventually, most of these Cubans were allowed to migrate to the U.S. by the Clinton Administration.

The international reaction to the CDA was strong, further isolating the U.S. "On November 24, 1992, the UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to support a non-binding Cuban resolution urging Washington to lift the embargo. The vote was 59 to 3...Seventy-one delegations abstained."[11] The vote was less an endorsement for Castro's regime than an indictment of the U.S. interference with another sovereign nation's internal affairs. "The United States...[came] away from the affair looking like an arrogant bully."[12]

The powerful Cuban-American exile lobby from south Florida, emboldened by its successes during the most recent refugee crisis, joined with influential Republicans in an effort to ensure that the pressure against Castro was not relaxed. This coalition was largely responsible for the second major modification to the Cuban trade embargo. Representative Burton introduced the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act to the House of Representatives on February 14, 1995. The bill languished in Congress until March 12, 1996 when President "Clinton set aside previous reservations and signed the act into law after Cuban MiG fighters shot down two small private U.S. planes off Cuba, killing the four Cuban-Americans aboard, on February 24, 1996."[13]

The Helms-Burton Law, as it is popularly known, seeks to toughen the embargo even further. The stated purposes of the law are:

> 1) to assist the Cuban people in regaining their freedom and prosperity, as well as in joining the community of democratic countries that are flourishing in the Western Hemisphere; 2) to strengthen international sanctions against the Castro government; 3) to provide for the continued national security of the United States in the face of continuing threats from the Castro government of terrorism, theft of property from United States nationals by the Castro government, and the political manipulation by the Castro government of the desire of Cubans to escape that results in mass migration to the United States; 4) to encourage the holding of free and fair democratic elections in Cuba, conducted under the supervision of internationally recognized observers; 5) to provide a policy framework for United States support to the Cuban people in response to the formation of a transition government or a democratically elected government in Cuba; and 6) to protect United States nationals against confiscatory takings and the wrongful trafficking in property confiscated by the Castro regime.[14]

In addition to demanding that Cuba abandon one party socialism, the Helms-Burton Law requires the removal of Fidel Castro as prerequisites for normalized relations with the U.S.

Further, it includes provisions that would punish and clear the way for U.S. citizens to sue foreign companies that "traffic" in U.S. property that was expropriated by Castro. Senior executives of these same foreign firms may also be denied entry to the United States. Additionally, foreign subsidiaries for U.S. companies are not allowed to trade with Cuba. The most significant aspect of the Helms-Burton Law is the fact that it codifies the now 40-year-old trade embargo. The net effect is that now the President cannot lift the embargo without Congressional approval.[15] The international community expressed its outrage in the UN General Assembly during November 1997, when "143 countries voted to condemn U.S. policy, 3 voted against the motion, and only 17 abstained."[16]

Armed with this background information, we now turn to the Strategy and Force Planning Framework in order to identify the national interests and objectives, relative to the current security environment in Cuba. This offers an evaluation of the current national security strategy and two possible alternative strategies.

STRATEGIC CHOICES

The administration and a majority of Americans probably agree on where we want to go with Cuba (national objectives). The difficult task is to develop an appropriate methodology (national security strategy) that will most effectively bring the political, economic, informational, and military elements (means) of national power to bear on the problem, in order to achieve our desired end-state. As the Lloyd Model implies, a balance must be achieved between the national objectives (ends) and the limited means available, or the country will have to accept some degree of risk.[17] The key to this process is the routine reassessment of policy decisions. The last three administrations have failed to rationally reevaluate the existing security environment, resulting in a strategy-policy mismatch that has failed to achieve our national objectives, thereby isolating the U.S. from historical allies and much of the international community.

NATIONAL INTERESTS

Donald Nuechterlein's four basic categories of national interests (defense of homeland, economic well-being, favorable world order, and promotion of values) apply in varying degrees to Cuba (see Table 1).[18] Cuba's physical proximity to the U.S., coupled with the reality that it represents the only remaining Communist nation in the western hemisphere, has blinded American strategists and policy makers as to the level of interest Cuba represents to our nation.

Intensity of Interest

Basic National Interest	Survival	Vital	Major	Peripheral
Defense of Homeland			**X**	
Economic Well-being			**X**	
Favorable World Order				**X**
Promotion of Values			**X**	

TABLE 1. NATIONAL INTEREST MATRIX FOR CUBA

Defining defense of homeland as a major interest recognizes the fact that Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) are the largest and most potent threat of any Caribbean nation, but the "Pentagon's unequivocal conclusion in May [1998 was] that Cuba does not pose a significant military threat to the United States or to other countries in the region."[19] U.S. Naval Base Guantanamo Bay is somewhat vulnerable, but the FAR cannot project power to any significant degree beyond its shores. Its "military capacity is residual and defensive."[20] The only real threat that Cuba represents to the territorial integrity of the U.S. is another mass exodus of refugees attempting to make their way to Florida.

Cuba represents only a peripheral interest in terms of American economic well being due to restricted trade over the past 40 years.[21] However, the potential negative consequences of the current embargo, in terms of international trade, could have a major impact on the future health of the American economy as allies and world trading partners become increasingly frustrated with sanctions resulting from the Helms-Burton Law. These facts, combined with the economic impact of billions of dollars worth of expropriated American assets in Cuba, make it a major interest.

The end of the Cold War and the decreasing emphasis on favorable world order interests is reflected in relation to Cuba. No longer an active threat to the region, Cuba is in fact attempting to reintegrate itself into the international community from an economic standpoint. Cuba no longer exports Communism or militarily interferes in the sovereign affairs of other nations and therefore represents only a peripheral world order interest.[22]

Finally, Cuba is a major interest in terms of promotion of values. The large Cuban-American population, years of human rights violations by the Castro regime, and the United States' desire to stamp out Communism from our region, represent a large stake in terms of

national interests. Of significance is the fact that Cuba does not at all pose an "immediate" survival, or a "potential" vital interest threat to the United States.[23]

NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Unlike the relatively stable, long-term national interests, national objectives "are the specific goals that a nation seeks in order to advance, support or defend its national interests."[24] In the case of Cuba, the specific U.S. political, economic, informational, and military objectives have changed repeatedly since the early 1960's. The national security strategy chosen to accomplish these objectives, however, remains relatively unchanged to date.

Given the current security environment, the following national objective, which will support the national interests discussed above, is proposed: the peaceful transition to a democratic Cuban government that is committed to a market economy. Achievement of this goal would eradicate dictatorships in the western hemisphere, while maintaining regional security in the Caribbean basin. The subsequent discussion evaluates the current Cuba security strategy in light of this national goal.

CURRENT NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

President Clinton's 1996 National Security Strategy states, "[t]he Cuban Democracy Act [now strengthened by the Helms-Burton Law] remains the framework for our policy toward Cuba...."[25] Kennedy's original economic embargo has in effect been subsumed by these two pieces of legislation. Clinton's 2000 National Security Strategy was even more vague about the methodology, simply reaffirming that the

> United States remains committed to promoting a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba and forestalling a mass exodus that would endanger the lives of migrants and the security of our borders. While maintaining pressure on the regime to make political and economic reforms, we continue to encourage the emergence of a civil society to assist the transition to democracy when the change comes....[26]

President George W. Bush recently published his first National Security Strategy, referring to Cuba only in a historical context when discussing the missile crisis relative to weapons of mass destruction.[27] However, in discussing human dignity, he asserts that the U.S. will "make freedom and the development of democratic institutions key themes in our bilateral relations...while we press governments that deny human rights to move toward a better future."[28] This theme clearly applies to Cuba, and was reinforced during a speech the President made on May 20, 2002. Referring to Castro as a "dictator...[and] a tyrant who uses brutal methods to enforce a bankrupt vision," President Bush offered that among other stipulations, the

best road to better relations with the U.S. was to allow neutral, outside observers to monitor the 2003 Cuban National Assembly elections.[29] Stressing that the U.S. "has no designs on Cuban sovereignty," he promised that if there were fair, free elections and tangible evidence of a move to market-based reforms, then he would work with the "Congress to ease the ban on trade and travel between our two countries."[30] On the other hand, "[f]ull normalization of relations with Cuba...will only be possible when Cuba has a new government that is fully democratic, when the rule of law is respected, and when the human rights of all Cubans are fully protected."[31]

So aside from some token offerings of humanitarian aid, scholarships to U.S. colleges, and upgrading of Radio and TV Marti, the policy of economic sanctions and the ban on travel has not changed. President Bush says that the "choice rests with Mr. Castro," yet there is no effort to offer an incentive to bring him to the negotiating table – just name-calling and the implied pre-condition of regime change.[32]

The common body of wisdom regarding trade embargoes has maintained that the longer they exist, the less effective they become.[33] The fact that the modified Cuba embargo remains, demonstrates a lack of intellectual agility on the part of post-Cold War administrations. The original embargo has outlived the reasons for its existence – the Soviet Union is gone, and Castro has stopped interfering with the sovereignty of South American nations.[34] There is no question that the embargo has contained the Castro regime and hurt Cuba economically, but the expectation that it will result in a democratic Cuba is unrealistic and futile.

The Castro regime continues to demonstrate remarkable resiliency. Castro has managed to survive each escalation of U.S. pressure as well as the economic disaster that accompanied the demise of the Soviet Union. Castro's efforts to broaden tourism and foreign investment supported an economic upswing in 1995. This along with Cuba's insular position, strong internal security force, weak society and Castro's political legitimacy has allowed him to further consolidate his leadership. In spite of this apparent strength, there are some cracks developing. Economically, the lack of a market driven economy and events like the poor sugarcane harvest in 1995 has hurt, forcing the Cubans "into desperate capitalistic measures, trying the economic equivalent of becoming half-pregnant."[35] Pressure from opposition fronts and international non-governmental organizations is increasing. Castro's willingness to allow the church to exert influence is more a manifestation of his weakness than a move toward a liberal society. He remains dedicated to tightly controlling internal change while Cuban society appears "resigned to the status quo."[36]

It is this side effect of the current strategy that is so counterproductive. The application of socioeconomic hardship alone cannot cause the kind of revolutionary change necessary to

overthrow the Communists. The Cuban people have been paralyzed by a combination of poverty, the lack of a popular opposition leader, the threat of losing housing, food rations or employment, and the fear of state repression. The "[p]eople are isolated, suspicious, and fearful. Rather than openly resist authority, they adapt, remain passive, or seek refuge in escapism. Most would rather hide or run than fight...."[37] Since the George H. Bush Administration, U.S. expectations of how Castro would be unseated were based on the Eastern European paradigm of failing Communist states. The mentality that existed was akin to "now we have Fidel on the ropes." The CDA and subsequently Helms-Burton were supposed to be the knockout blow, but the anticipated peaceful wave of democracy borne on the shoulders of Cuban society has not emerged.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Economically, the impact of the CDA has been to deny American dollars from being commercially introduced to the Cuban marketplace. The resulting problems have forced Castro to make limited movement toward market reform, thereby strengthening the Cuban moderates and liberals. Helms-Burton had an immediate negative impact on Cuba because of international concern regarding the threat of U.S. sanctions versus nations that trade or invest in Cuba.

However, as early as a year after being signed into law, Helms-Burton backfired on the U.S. by damaging relations with traditional allies. Notably, Canada, Mexico, England, and Spain each publicly denounced the legislation. The stance of foreign governments is that Helms-Burton violates their sovereignty as well as international law. Therefore, on the economic front, current strategy appears to enjoy short-term success, but offers little hope for long-term success in achieving our national objective since nations throughout the world openly moved to capture a portion of the Cuban market.[38]

POLITICAL IMPACT

Politically, U.S. policy actually strengthens the hand of Cuban hard-liners and moderates in terms of maintaining Communist control.[39] Our strategy provides an excuse for Castro to stay in power. By being able to blame the embargo for his nation's economic problems, Castro has effectively focused nationalistic passion against "the imperialist giant to the north." The failure of the Communist system is overshadowed by this "threat" and essentially legitimizes Castro's maintenance of a strong security mechanism, which is used to further repress any opposition movements.

Helms-Burton, in particular, allows Castro to emphasize the aspects of the legislation that play to the fears of the average Cuban citizen -- being dispossessed of what little property and

assets they own. The increasingly vocal and powerful Cuban-American lobby represented by the Miami-based Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) terrifies Cuban islanders of all social classes. Jorge Mas Canosa, the former leader of the CANF, publicly stated his desire to become the next Cuban president, conjuring up "image[s] of the neocolonial Miamian, bent on reconquering Cuba and returning it to the status of a U.S. protectorate."[40] Castro reinforces this image with rhetoric that warns of the Miami "exiles" invading and recouping property and assets that they had previously abandoned.[41]

Helms-Burton naively sends mixed signals to Cuba's political elite. On one hand, the law reassures these individuals that they have nothing to fear from a post-Castro Cuba, while in the same breath, it presses hard for economic pressure to isolate Cuba and expedite Castro's downfall. This is the critical point; the removal of Castro directly impacts on the welfare of the elite regardless of their particular reform-mindedness, and therefore further entrenches them around the regime.[42]

RISK ASSESSMENT

"One way or the other, Castro has defied repeated predictions of his imminent demise in the past. His appreciable legitimacy, only bolstered by the U.S. hard line, and his tight political control make his survival more likely than his removal. The apparent absence of any significant oppositional group in Cuba reinforces the perception of Castro's durability."[43]

Maintaining the status quo, in terms of our national security strategy invites a large degree of uncertainty, not to mention risk. Supporters of this policy claim that the strategy is working, and point to the fact that Castro has made defeating the embargo his number one foreign policy objective. As discussed above, the strategy does not substantially modify Cuban economic or political reform. The gains that have been made in the economic arena are offset by the "threat" offered to the Castro regime and the resulting entrenchment.

Castro will survive in the short term, but "[t]o the extent that U.S. rigidity legitimates Cuban rigidity, American policy indirectly heightens the likelihood that Cuba's eventual transition will be bloody...."[44] The potential consequences are significant: Cuban-American involvement in violent change, possible U.S. military action, another mass exodus of refugees and the resulting social impact on Florida and the Caribbean. "The splatter effect could be costly in lives, money, and political resources."[45] At the very least, a standoff will continue until Castro dies. Once this occurs, the U.S. will not be positioned to effectively deal with the scramble that is likely to ensue for control of the government and investment opportunities.

Finally, U.S. policy toward Cuba reflects the influence of the CANF in domestic politics.[46] Legislative interference in Cuban foreign policy is dangerous in that there is no political constituency to represent a softer line approach to counter the CANF. It should be noted, however, that second and third generation Cuban-Americans appear to be less rigid where Castro is concerned. They are becoming more politically active and taking a common sense vice emotional approach in dealing with the situation.[47]

The potential negative impact on relationships with traditional U.S. allies could be the real foreign policy disaster. Experts frequently note the hypocrisy of U.S. policy toward Cuba when compared to the favorable economic arrangements that other repressive countries (e.g. China and Vietnam) enjoy.[48] A countless number of permutations to the Cuba security strategy have been offered over the years. In order to choose the proper course of action for the nation, I will offer two alternative strategies to compare against the status quo—lift the embargo, and partial engagement.

LIFT THE EMBARGO

Any attempt to remove the embargo requires a fundamental shift in mindset on the part of this nation's leadership. "There is a personal quality to this...[four] decade conflict that has rarely been noted, but that nevertheless remains very much at the heart of the relationship."[49] Rather than formulating a rational strategy to serve the U.S. national objective regarding Cuba, our leadership has personalized the conflict to the degree that the policy that has evolved is one of unfinished Cold War business and anti-Castro sentiment. Senator Jesse Helms recently expressed the sentiment of much of the political elite saying, "I don't care how Mr. Castro leaves so long as he leaves."[50] The CDA and Helms-Burton laws prevent the embargo from being lifted until specific criteria have been met, but the alternative should be critically considered for a full appreciation of the range of options.

Arguments for lifting the embargo center on the fact that the current policy has failed to topple Castro, and hurt the Cuban people by creating the conditions necessary for Castro's "siege mentality" to continue. Lifting the embargo and moving toward normalized relations would in effect remove the "threat," thus depriving Castro of his excuse for economic disaster and his reason for a strong security mechanism. The economic and societal change resulting from allowing foreign investment/trade, and the influence of liberal ideas like democracy, capitalism, and respect for human rights would eventually force Cuba's government to adapt or lose legitimacy. The net result would be a democratic Cuba committed to market economics.

In the short-term, this course of action greatly strengthens Castro in terms of personal power and stature. He would undoubtedly claim triumph, at the expense of U.S. world prestige. The real danger emerges in the way Castro could use the influx of foreign/U.S. tourist and investment capital to solve his economic problems. Success could encourage him to only meet the most pressing financial obligations without moving toward democratic or institutionalized market reforms. Reinforcing the hard-liners belief that they do not need to institute real liberal change might temporarily undercut the Cuban reform movement. The short-term effect would be "a market-Leninist state—in effect, a Caribbean version of Vietnam."[51]

The long-term effect may be the gradual destruction of the Castro regime as a result of the net impact of societal change generated over time by greater contact with the outside world, thereby helping the internal reform movement. On the other hand, there is no guarantee that events will play out the same way that they did in the former Soviet Union. Cuba's strong, legitimate government versus its weak society does not necessarily equal the final act in Eastern Europe. As discussed earlier, the indicator that this course of action may not result in the eventual ouster of Castro is found in his desire to remove the embargo. Castro may believe that he has the "staying power" to remain in spite of any Western influence.[52] Another significant risk resulting from lifting the embargo is the loss of leverage it provides for the recovery of expropriated American property claims that now amount to nearly $5.8 billion.[53] Finally, normalization of relations does not address domestic Cuban-American issues, or factor in the undermining effect on U.S. policy in other countries where we are still trying to influence fragile emerging democracies. The decades old embargo stands as a symbol of our government's dedication to the spread of democratic values and principles.

PARTIAL ENGAGEMENT

This alternative strategy acknowledges the position of strength that Castro enjoys, and walks a middle road between completely removing the embargo and the current policy. Rather than pit our national strength in the form of threats, punishment, and isolation directly against Castro, the U.S. plan is to discreetly attack his vulnerabilities. "There is nothing more potentially subversive to such regimes than the exposure to democratic ideas and materialistic temptations."[54]

The engagement strategy lifts all aspects of the current embargo except for the portion dealing with the restriction on U.S. investments. Utilizing this strategy as the vehicle for change would be announced with an offer to begin negotiations for normalization of relations. If accepted, engagement in the diplomatic, economic, and military arenas would begin to shape

events for the future. By following this course of action it may be possible to avoid future bloodshed by facilitating a partial transition toward democracy while Castro is alive. A flood of U.S. tourists and businessmen would have a profound impact on Cubans who could form the nucleus of a post-Castro coalition government made up of church/intellectual leaders, students, small businessmen, opposition groups, as well as reform-minded civilian and military leaders.

This influence should serve to educate and empower Cuban society in preparation for the right moment to demand/effect the collapse of the Communist government. Politically, actions at the highest level of our government that demonstrate good faith, and respect for the territorial sovereignty of Cuba will remove the specter of the U.S. threat. These actions coupled with military confidence building security measures (CBSMs), such as military-to-military contacts with the FAR, serves to plant the seeds of change within Castro's security mechanism.

This alternative is not without risk. First, there is still no guarantee that the national objective will be met by following this strategy. Castro will initially claim victory, thereby strengthening his regime in the short term, but these actions will remove his claims to legitimacy and gradually result in heightened calls for reform. This should preferably lead to a peaceful transition to democracy, but one of two extremes might occur. On one hand, the Cuban government may perceive the liberal influence as a threat and tighten control contributing to further destabilization on the island—possibly leading to another mass exodus refugee situation. On the other hand, the potential does exist for bloody escalation as the government begins to lose control and the Cuban people feel more empowered. Domestically, the Cuban-American lobby is likely to criticize the administration in spite of the fact that the "symbol," the U.S. investment embargo, is left in place.

Thinking in terms of the long run, this alternative recognizes that removing Castro from power is significantly "less important than preserving Cuba's stability."[55] The possibility exists that Castro may be so entrenched that he is unwilling to work with us in spite of U.S. conciliatory gestures.[56] In this case, it will be obvious to the international community that Castro, not the U.S., is the obstacle to moving forward.

RECOMMENDED CUBA SECURITY STRATEGY

There are no clear-cut, easy answers where Cuba is concerned. None of the three policy options discussed above provide the perfect solution. Therefore, the dilemma is to pick the option that maximizes U.S. interests and is the least damaging. The decision as to which strategy to pursue is inextricably linked to the following two questions. Does Cuba present a security threat to the U.S.? Do we really have to get rid of Castro in order to normalize relations

with Cuba? Given the U.S. national objective and the current security environment, the answer to both questions is "no."

The current strategy, especially in light of Helms-Burton, is ineffective and counterproductive in the sense that it could do more to harm U.S. relations with the world than winning a victory against Castro is worth. Lifting the embargo unconditionally appears to be more in line with eventually achieving U.S. goals, but it completely removes any leverage that we possess over Castro, while ignoring the domestic Cuban-American lobby. Pursuing a policy of partial engagement with respect to Cuba promises the best opportunity of attaining the national objective by exploiting all of the elements of national power in order to position this country to be able to influence Cuban democratization. In implementing this security strategy, I propose the following specific actions:

- Repeal the Helms-Burton Law. This action would send a signal that the U.S. respects sovereignty, international law, and prevent relations with allies and trading partners from being disrupted.
- Retract the portion of the CDA that requires internationally supervised democratic elections and a transition to a market economy as precursors to lifting the embargo.
- Remove the embargo on trade, but continue to prohibit investment in Cuba, thus protecting against Cuban attempts to nationalize U.S. property again.
- Lower the hostility/tension levels by curtailing the anti-Castro rhetoric. Public announcements from the highest level of the executive branch should assure the world community that the U.S. has no intention of invading Cuba.
- Presidential administrations must distance themselves and U.S. policy from Cuban-American exile groups like the CANF. They are too threatening to Cubans, and their wishes do not serve the greater good of American objectives.
- The U.S. government must distance itself from any exile paramilitary operations that would violate the Neutrality Act.
- The U.S. government should expand government-to-government talks with the intent to normalize relations. These contacts could address mutually beneficial issues (e.g. counter drug/terrorism, hurricane tracking/warning, etc.).
- Increase humanitarian aid to Cuba in order to exemplify what Americans stand for.
- Initiate military CBSMs. Examples could include: advance notice of exercises, invitations for Cuban military officials to observe exercises, and regional awareness to be careful not to appear to practice invasions of Cuba.

- Stop infringing on the sovereignty of other nations regarding trade with Cuba, and draw the international community into plan to support transition to democracy and market reform.
- Depoliticize Radio Marti. In the eyes of the Cubans, it espouses the CANF agenda and becomes U.S. policy by default.
- Shut down TV Marti. Castro easily jams its signal and it violates an international convention of which the U.S. is a signatory.
- Encourage open information and tourist flow to Cuba in order to facilitate communication of democratic principles, and attack the insular nature of the country. Upgrade telecommunications per the provisions of the CDA.
- As a long-term inducement, offer the return of U.S. Naval Base Guantanamo Bay in recognition for liberal reform.

CONCLUSION

Contrary to expectations at the end of the Cold War, it is interesting to note the apparent inconsistency in U.S. - Cuban relations today. U.S. rhetoric and sanctions against the Castro regime have continued to escalate, in spite of historical evidence (Panama, Haiti, and Iraq) that such actions typically hurt the indigenous populations more than the target dictatorships. Fidel Castro's ability to continuously frustrate U.S. policy designed to topple his regime further perpetuates the traditional U.S. approach of raising the stakes by applying more pressure. This "external opposition made up of U.S. political and exile leaders is pushing hard to bring down the wall of Castroism. The opposition, however, has failed to notice that the wall, which is indeed falling, is leaning in its direction. Thus, by pushing instead of pulling, the opposition abroad is actually propping up the regime."[57] U.S. policy, based on emotional anti-Castro sentiment and the Cuban-American lobby which represents only a fraction of the Florida electorate, plays into Castro's hands by reacting automatically to each affront.[58]

"For more than forty years the United States has pursued a policy designed to remove Fidel Castro from power."[59] The U.S. cannot afford to focus on the fact that Castro is still in power as a measure of the success or failure of Cuban foreign policy. Communism has failed there every bit as much as it has throughout the rest of the world. The real opportunity exists in the possibility of implementing a Cuba security strategy that shapes events and relationships in a way that ultimately leads to a peaceful transition to democracy and a market economy. In formulating/implementing this strategy, the following maxims should be considered: 1) Cuba no longer represents a major regional threat to the U.S. or Caribbean as a result of the dissolution

of the Soviet Union; 2) Castro will not change his political ideology as long as he remains in power; 3) Castro is so entrenched, that he will likely remain in power as long as he lives; and 4) the uncertainty and potential problems of a post-Castro Cuba could be worse than the current situation. Adoption of a partial engagement security strategy recognizes the reality of the Cuba situation, and if followed, represents the best opportunity for the U.S. to influence peaceful change in Cuba and position itself for normalized relations in the future. The seemingly peaceful lull in current U.S.–Cuban relations may simply be the calm before the storm. The executive and legislative leadership of this Nation must resist the inertia caused by forty years of flawed policy, and demonstrate the foresight to avert a bloody end to this challenge.

WORD COUNT = 6459

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[27] George W. Bush, The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2002), 15.

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[29] George W. Bush, "An Initiative for a New Cuba: The Chance Rests with Mr. Castro," Vital Speeches of the Day 68, no. 16 (Jun 1, 2002): 482-484 [database on-line]; available from ProQuest; accessed 30 August 2002.

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