

THE U.S. EMBARGO ON CUBA:  
A TIME FOR CHANGE?

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MARIO A. ARZENO, MAJOR, USA  
M.B.A., University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, 2000

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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: Major Mario A. Arzeno

Thesis Title: The U.S. Embargo on Cuba: A Time for Change?

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Thesis Committee Chairman  
Lieutenant Colonel Michael A. Newcomb, B.S.

\_\_\_\_\_, Member  
Geoffrey B. Demarest, Ph.D.

\_\_\_\_\_, Member  
Lieutenant Colonel José Luis Núñez Rosa, B.A.

Accepted this 6th day of June 2003 by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Director, Graduate Degree Programs  
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D.

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## ABSTRACT

THE U.S. EMBARGO ON CUBA: A TIME FOR CHANGE? by Major Mario Arzeno, 53 pages.

The United States imposed an embargo on Cuba in 1959. Has the time come for the United States to lift the 44-year-old embargo? The embargo on Cuba was part of America's cold war strategy against the Soviet Union; imposed on the basis that Cuba was a threat to U.S. national security because of their alliance with the Soviet Union, Fidel Castro's support of revolutionary forces in Latin America and the expropriation of U.S. property. The cold war ended 12 years ago. Democracy and political stability in Latin America are at an all time high, with Cuba being the only non-democratic nation in Latin America. In 1998, the Defense Intelligence Agency concluded that Cuba no longer poses a significant threat to U.S. national security or other countries in the region. The expropriation of U.S. property will not be solved by an embargo and lastly, for the eleventh year in a row, the United Nations has called for the end to the embargo. The most recent vote of the General Assembly on 12 November 2002, overwhelmingly voted 173 in favor to 3 opposed. Yet America continues to endorse a policy of isolation with no intentions of removing the embargo now or any time in the near future.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis will explore the question, “when should the U.S. Embargo on Cuba be lifted?” In answering this question, the thesis will explore five secondary questions central to the primary question. They are: Why was the embargo imposed? Why after forty-four years is the embargo still in place? What has been the effect of the embargo and has it worked? If the embargo is lifted, what might a post-embargo Cuba look like? I will analyze these issues in five chapters. First, I will address Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution as the precursor to the events leading to the sanctions imposed by the United States, ending with where we are today and the importance of researching this topic. Chapter one will also cite the numerous studies conducted on the topic.

Chapter two will define embargoes in general and as it relates to Cuba. The third chapter will discuss the effectiveness of the embargo and the fourth chapter will look at what a post-embargo Cuba might look like. The fifth chapter will end with a recommendation for the best time to lift the embargo.

Should the U.S. lift sanctions against Cuba? Present day, the overwhelming consensus of the international community is to lift the embargo. Within the United States, polls indicate there is a shift in public opinion questioning the effectiveness of the embargo. Why then, does the United States maintain the sanctions? Before answering these questions, it is important to first study Fidel Castro and the events leading to the embargo.

In January 1959, Fidel Castro took control of Havana by overthrowing the dictator Fulgencio Batista. Fidel Castro was a young idealist who inspired his people to overthrow a government filled with corruption and an elitist society divided between the haves and have-nots. He promised reform and opportunity for all Cuban citizens without government repression. Castro's Cuba would evolve into a forty four year old, and still counting, socialist republic led by a dictator who is self-serving, and not a leader who truly fought for his people and reform. After more than forty years in power, he maintains a hard-line policy towards the U.S. with no desire to stabilize relations, even for the sake of his people, consistently blaming the U.S. Embargo for the economic and social problems associated with his country today.

Castro ended economic relations with the United States only to replace it with the Soviet Union, not because he believed in communism, but because of his disdain for the United States and its "capitalistic ways" and his own self-interest towards remaining in power and molding Cuba into his idea of a utopian state. In 1958, before overthrowing the Batista government he wrote a letter to a close friend, saying "when this war against Batista is over, a much wider and bigger war will commence for me: the war I am going to wage against the United States. I am aware that this is my true destiny (Ratliff and Fontaine 2000, 5-6)."

Within a year following the coup, Castro severed ties with the United States then established diplomatic relations and a commercial treaty with the Soviet Union. He nationalized all private property on the island, including numerous U.S. properties owned by private U.S. enterprises. The expropriation of U.S. property caused the U.S to respond by imposing a trade embargo that has lasted to this day.

By 1961, the U.S. ceased negotiations with Castro and sponsored the failed CIA Bay of Pigs invasion to overthrow Castro. Following the failed invasion, Cuba was expelled from the Organization of American States; a regional organization devoted to promoting democracy, economic growth and social justice throughout the Western Hemisphere. Castro responded by calling for revolution throughout Latin America.

In 1962, the next crisis within a three-year period was the famed “Cuban Missile Crisis” when Castro allowed the Soviets to pre-position Medium-Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBMs) and uncompleted sites for Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMs) on the island as a staging base for first strike capabilities against the United States. These actions bring our country to the brink of nuclear war and could have been the beginning of World War III and the closes we came to nuclear war with the Soviets during the Cold War. After a very tense week in our history and considerable negotiations between President Kennedy and the Soviet Premier, Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviets agreed to remove their weapons from the island located only ninety miles away from U.S. soil.

Within an eight-year period, Castro nationalized 55,000 private businesses, completely alienated the democratic world, nearly caused WWII, and overtly endorsed and supported revolution throughout Latin America. Fidel Castro, rightfully so, is considered public enemy number one. The lavish and very popular city of Havana with its tourism, hotels, and renowned nightclubs becomes a thing of a not so distant past.

The next ten years bring the Cuban people oppressions in the form of murder and imprisonment for disagreeing with Castro’s policies; government regulated family,

marriage and divorce; a socialistic system that places everyone at the same economic level, with no free markets, commercialism or freedom to grow as a society. Cuban refugees begin to flee the island for American shores. They take the perilous ninety-mile journey from Cuba to Florida aboard boats, rafts and anything that will float. They leave everything behind and jeopardize their lives for “libertad”--freedom.

In 1966, the United States enacts the “Cuban Refugees-Status” law. The law grants Cuban refugees preferential treatment if they touch U.S. soil, by granting them automatic political asylum and later, if requested, permanent residence in the United States. No other country has enjoyed this “preferential treatment” in our history.

By 1975, Cuban troops are fighting throughout the world supporting leftist guerrillas in conflicts in Ethiopia and the Angolan Civil War against the Portuguese. 1980 sees the "Mariel Boatlift" a mass exodus of 125,000 Cubans from the island to American shores in Miami. The Cuban exile community grows in Miami and Jorge Mas Canosa creates the now very politically influential Cuban American National Foundation (CANF). The 1980's see Fidel Castro committing troops on the Caribbean Island of Grenada and he continues to promote revolution throughout Latin America in El Salvador and Nicaragua. In 1987, the United States agrees to accept 20,000 new Cuban immigrants annually. The late eighties begin to see a decline in Soviet economic assistance; however, they remain Cuba's only source of foreign import/export support.

By 1990, Cuba's trade relations with the Soviet Union are conducted on a hard currency basis. The Soviet Union collapses in 1991, the cold war is over, and Cuba sees



the worst economic crisis in their history. Practically overnight, they lose \$8 billion per year (or seventy percent of its import capacity) in economic aid from the Soviets. This sends Cuba's economy into a tailspin beyond recession. They have no trade partners, no convertible currency, and no foreign exchange to buy from other countries or domestic products to sell abroad. America tightens the embargo by passing the 1992 Torricelli Bill, which prohibits U.S. subsidiaries in third countries from trading with Cuba. The goal of the Torricelli Bill is to further isolate Castro and force him to resign.

By 1994, the Cuban refugee problem continues to rise. Refugees are arriving in Miami by the hundreds; U.S. officials estimate as many as three million of the eleven million Cuban citizens will flee the island if granted safe passage. America or more accurately Florida does not want another mass exodus like the 1980 Mariel Boatlift. The Clinton Administration revokes the preferential treatment status Cubans have had for the past twenty eight years and will no longer grant automatic asylum for those who touch U.S. soil, instead refugees will be detained and undergo the political asylum process at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba or in detention in Miami. Refugees captured at sea will be immediately repatriated back to Cuba.

Fidel Castro has a major economic crisis on his hands. He decides to cut back spending to cope with the loss of Soviet economic support, he travels to China and Vietnam to study their free market reforms. He institutes legalized dollar transactions and creates dollar stores, where the only currency allowed to purchase products are dollars. He allows limited self-employment and allows the opening of family run restaurants and small businesses. He makes a \$30 million agreement with the Caribbean Economic Community (CARICOM) for tourism, agriculture and biotechnology. Additionally, the

Cuban exile community begins to send dollars to their family members on the island to help them survive the economic crisis. This direct economic assistance to family members becomes known as “remittances,” and provides an estimated \$800 million annual boost to the economy. Remittances become one of the primary sources of income for the average Cuban living on the island. To this day, remittances continue to provide economic assistance to the average Cuban citizen and is one of the most controversial issues involving the embargo.

Within a five-year period, Castro rebuilds Cuba’s Soviet dependent economy into one that is surviving. By all indications, Castro should have fallen immediately following the fall of the Soviet Union, but he did not.

By the mid-nineties America’s economy is booming. The stock market is at historic highs. American society has become rapid and focused on globalization. Castro and Cuba have become a low priority on the American political agenda. In 1995, Congress reviews the embargo and considers loosening sanctions against Cuba. Castro responds by shooting down two civilian unarmed Cessna airplanes flying from Miami allegedly into Cuban airspace. The result is U.S. public outrage for the shooting down of these aircraft and Congress tightens sanctions on the embargo and passes the 1996 Helms-Burton Act, the toughest act to date on the embargo. Analysts believe Castro intentionally shot down the two airplanes only to provoke the response the U.S. Congress provided by tightening trade and economic sanctions against the island. Analysts argue Castro secretly wants the embargo because he recognizes the embargo is the source of his power.

#### Cuba: Present Day

This brings us to where we are today and the importance of researching this issue. The situation in Cuba has continuously been debated in the United States since Castro's revolution and government take over in 1959. Incredibly, Fidel Castro has outlasted nine U.S. presidents and working on his tenth. He has been a controversial object of fascination, hatred and in many instances admiration by people all over the world. People all over the world admire Castro because they see him as the defiant leader against the American super power, which is resented and perceived by many countries as imperialistic and intrusive following the Cold War. The U.S. fuels this perception by maintaining an embargo that empowers Castro to first defy the U.S. and secondly to use as a scapegoat for the failures of his socialist regime.

For the many things Castro may or may not be; charismatic, influential and intelligent are among the leadership attributes he possesses without question. It is amazing that he has lasted as long as he has. Castro is one of the longest lasting heads of states in world history with forty-four years in power. He pulled his country out of an economic disaster that even the brightest minds in the world would never have predicted.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the world stood back and waited for Castro to fall. His ability and intellect to overcome crisis has made him stronger and more intriguing to the world at large. In the last ten years, because of the embargo he has been able to change his persona from revolutionary, to the leader of the poor, hungry, and oppressed by the capitalist regime to his north.

Fidel Castro has effectively adopted a new international posture where he no longer supports regional-insurgencies. Primarily, because he lacks the resources and support of a super power like the former Soviet Union and it no longer suits him for the

survival of his regime; and because he knows if he were to continue supporting regional insurgencies, he would lose the support of the international community and the influx of revenues that support brings along with it.

Castro has successfully charmed the United Nations and the world into believing the root of his economic and social failures are the sanctions imposed by the United States. He has manipulated public opinion, the media and his people into convincing them the root of all evil is the United States. He has transformed the embargo into the evil instrument of the bully America, on the poor and defenseless island who poses no threat to the free world. It appears the sanctions are helping Castro personally maintain power by rallying support against the embargo from the international community and his country. Has the time come to lift the embargo on Cuba? If not for the sake of the Cuban people, then for the sake of no longer being Castro's scapegoat.

Cuba is located only ninety miles from our shores and is of strategic importance not only to our nation but to our enemies as well. In 1783, John Adams declared Cuba a natural extension of the United States for its proximity alone. America has considered Cuba of vital interest to our peace and stability since Spain's occupation in the 1700's. Proven by the Cuban Missile Crisis our enemies consider the island of strategic importance for their goal of attaining first strike capabilities against the U.S.

Present day menaces include transnational threats like terrorist cells operating and planning attacks from Cuba against the United States, relatively unnoticed by U.S. intelligence agencies because of our inability to enter the island. Another ever-present threat is the possibility of the drug cartels using the island as a staging base or drug transit zone between South America and the U.S. Illegal migration is another major

transnational threat affecting our nation and the Western Hemisphere in general. With the increasing number of Cuban Americans among our society, it is only natural that these Americans have the well-being of their families left in Cuba on their minds. If conditions do not improve on the island, Cuban Americans may feel that their only recourse for the well-being of their families is to continue bringing them to the U.S. by any means possible to include illegal means.

A 1998 Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Threat Assessment refers to Cuba's possibility of developing Weapons of Mass Destruction, at least in the research and development phase. Cuba possesses the scientific facilities and expertise to develop Weapons of Mass Destruction and if misguided or supported by outside terrorist resources it could result in grave consequences to U.S. national security.

These are very real issues Americans have ignored for over ten years that deserve our attention before we wake up one day and the media is reporting Fidel Castro's death, and we find ourselves unprepared to handle the situation in Cuba. A post-Castro regime may result in Cuba becoming a rogue state vulnerable to terrorist cells, drug cartels, and an economic crisis like the 1991 crisis, another mass exodus of Cuban refugees to the United States and worst of all another Cuban Missile Crisis. The U.S. government is aware of these issues and the consequences of the embargo, but because of political reasons and a small percentage of Cuban Americans influencing our politicians and the lack of interest in general by our nation, our leadership has chosen not to act on the embargo and develop a strategy for improving conditions in Cuba.

Our goal for Cuba should be to develop a sincere strategy for a peaceful transition to ensure Cuba does not become a rogue state or the source of illegal migration to the

United States by helping improve conditions on the island through economic growth and prosperity.

Many studies, publications and articles are available concerning the question “When and should the U.S. Embargo on Cuba be lifted?” For example, the CATO Institute and RAND Corporation have published articles and held numerous debates regarding the issue for several years. The Center for Defense Information (CDI) is another public policy foundation that sent a non-U.S. Government sponsored delegation to Cuba in 2000 to meet with Castro and his cabinet. These organizations are well known and respected nonprofit organizations, also known as “think tanks,” located in Washington, D.C. These organizations offer insight and recommendations to improve U.S. policy, on a nonpartisan basis. Government sponsored organizations that study the Cuban issue includes the Foreign Military Studies Office at the Combined Arms Center (CAC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; whose charter is to study foreign military and security issues of concern to the U.S. Army.

Publications on the subject include “*Castro and the Cuban Revolution*” by Thomas M. Leonard; “*Cuba, Confronting the U.S. Embargo*” by Peter Schwab; “*Cuba after Communism*” by Eliana Cardoso and Ann Helwege; and “*Latin America: U.S. Policy after the Cold War*” by Douglas W. Payne, Mark Falcoff and Susan Kaufman Purcell.

Other sources include the *Encyclopedia of U.S. Foreign Relations*, prepared by the Oxford University Press with the auspices of the Council on Foreign Relations. Various Universities have published essays on the subject matter such as the Hoover

Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University and the Research Institute for Cuban Studies at the University of Miami.

These are the primary sources and publications I relied on to conduct my research. I also used numerous magazine articles and commentaries from media sources like the *New York Times*, *Miami Herald*, and *U.S. New & World Report*, *Crisis*, *Asiaweek*, the *American Legion* and Cuba's *Digital Granma International*, an Internet site sponsored by the Cuban government that provides the Cuban perspective on current events affecting the island. As well as the Internet site for the Cuban American National Foundation, the primary non-profit organization dedicated to advancing freedom and democracy in Cuba.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE EMBARGO

Chapter two will define embargoes in general, and then analyze how the Cuban embargo has evolved to understand why the United States has used this method of foreign policy against Cuba for the past forty-four years. The U.S. has used economic sanctions since colonial times prior to America's independence from the British. The first instances recorded of economic sanctions date to the British government's attempt to impose new taxes on the colonies. The colonies collectively responded by agreeing not to purchase British products creating the first embargo--or ending of trade with another nation in our history.

Present day, economic sanctions are categorized into two areas: first, is the withdrawal of special government granted privileges called Most Favored Nation (MFN) status. MFN status grants the target nation monetary loan guaranties or foreign aid. The second category is punitive in nature and it is defined as the freezing of assets, denial of the right to purchase goods, and the denial to capital markets or ending of commercial trade--otherwise known as an "embargo." A blockade is the expansion of an embargo imposed by the actor nation on the target nation. A blockade is defined as the physical blocking of goods and services from entering a harbor or port by naval vessels of the actor nation. A blockade is considered an act of war and it is used as the precursor to conflict with a target nation (*Encyclopedia of U.S. Foreign Relations*, 1997).

During the twentieth century, the United States has used economic sanctions as a form of foreign policy on numerous occasions in order to attempt to change a target country's political or military behavior. The idea of imposing sanctions is to prevent



military action on behalf of the “actor nation” against the “target nation.” Examples of economic sanctions were used during World War II against the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini and the Japanese prior to their invasion of Pearl Harbor. Examples that are more recent include the sanctions imposed against North Korea, China, Iraq, and the Former Republic of Yugoslavia and Haiti.

In all of the examples illustrated above economic sanctions alone have not worked. The idea of changing the target country’s political or military behavior solely by economic sanctions has been ineffective. In each example, the United States has been involved in some type of conflict from full-scale war to military operations other than war (for the exception of China where we have loosened sanctions--but not because of a change in behavior). Analysts believe the United States favors this method of foreign policy only to quiet critics of military action that all options short of military intervention have been exhausted (Kunz 1997, 60).

If this analysis is correct, that sanctions alone do not work in changing political or military behavior without eventually leading to conflict or military action. Why after forty-four years do we continue the embargo against Cuba? Neither result of an embargo has happened in Cuba. Fidel Castro has not changed his political or military behavior and we have not been militarily involved in Cuba since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Nor is there a reason to get militarily involved in Cuba, as the intelligence community has stated Cuba no longer poses a threat to U.S. national security after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Since 1991, the only thing the embargo has been successful in is keeping Cuba stuck in a 1950's time warp without economic growth or free markets. Has the time come for a change in policy?

### The Cuban Embargo

The Cuban Embargo was imposed on the basis that Cuba was a threat to U.S. national security because of their alliance with the Soviets, Fidel Castro's support of armed revolutionary forces in Latin America and the expropriation of U.S. property on the island. Although the embargo has not changed Castro's political or military behavior, the embargo did make sense for the first thirty years because of his alliance with the Soviet Union and his radical support for revolution throughout the globe, contrary to U.S. interests. The embargo complicated Castro's infrastructure, created a massive drain on the Soviet economy for \$120 billion over thirty years, and limited his involvement in regional-insurgencies.

The end of the cold war should have also ended the Cuban embargo, since the primary reasons for the embargo were gone, for the exception of the expropriation of U.S. property that will not be solved by the embargo. Why then, after forty-four years is the embargo still in place? Alternatively, at the very least, why after the collapse of the Soviet Union is the embargo still in place? The answer to this question lies in the ultra-right wing organization founded in 1981 named the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF).

### The Cuban American National Foundation (CANF)

When the cold war ended the very influential Cuban American community, led by the CANF created new reasons for maintaining and tightening the restrictions against Cuba. The CANF successfully lobbied Washington into creating unrealistic and contradicting goals for lifting the sanctions. The CANF, with an estimated \$10 million annual budget, and an estimated \$300 million in U.S. government subsidies (Wilson 2000, p A03), is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing freedom and democracy in Cuba (CANF, Website). It has an estimated membership of 50,000 people across the United States and other countries, representing a cross section of the Cuban exile community, with offices in Miami, Washington, D.C., and New Jersey, with chapters in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Florida, Puerto Rico, New Orleans, and Texas.

The CANF has donated millions of dollars to congressional and presidential candidates from both the Democratic and Republican parties and exercises unprecedented influence over the U.S. stance on Cuba. They also have powerful support from leading Cuban Americans elected to congress in Washington D.C. The CANF has been successful in driving U.S. foreign policy in Cuba for the past twenty years and it continues to demand tighter restrictions on Castro in hopes of ousting him from power.

At its height of influence, prior to the death of their leader in 1997, Jorge Mas Canosa, the CANF was treated as a Cuban government in exile (Schwab 1999, 138), with enough power and influence to bestow medals on visiting heads of state, capable of warning foreign governments against trading with Cuba and threatening punishment for those who do. The CANF even wrote a new Cuban constitution. Jorge Mas Canosa was treated as the person to succeed Castro as president. Politicians of both U.S. political parties courted Jorge Mas Canosa because his support was considered to be worth at least

one million Florida votes, a key state in the Electoral College, worth twenty-five electoral votes and ranked fourth of the fifty states in importance of votes (Federal Election Commission (FEC)).

Fundamentally, the CANF's intentions are good. They have provided the exile community with invaluable assistance and support in integrating them into the American culture, but have become somewhat misguided because they have lost sight of helping the Cuban people in Cuba and are obsessed with removing Castro at any cost. The CANF was instrumental in influencing Congress to enact the 1992 Torricelli Bill that prohibited U.S. owned business located outside of the U.S. from doing business with Cuba and imposed a prohibition on any vessels engaged in trade with Cuba from entering a U.S. port within 180 days after departing Cuba. The Torricelli Bill, also known as the Cuban Democracy Act (CDA) was the beginning of a change in U.S. policy from containment to isolation.

The original embargo contained Cuba from promoting revolution throughout Latin America, and created a huge burden on the Soviet Union. Once both of these conditions were eliminated, U.S. policy changed and imposed the following new demands for lifting the embargo: Free and fair elections to determine Cuba's political future with the caveat that Fidel Castro and his brother, Raúl Castro, could not be part of the election process. The new demands were proclaimed in the name of promoting a peaceful transition to democracy and the resumption of economic growth in Cuba. However, by the act of tightening sanctions we took away the necessary resources to promote change. Market reform and economic trade are the necessary ingredients to

promote the change we say is required for lifting the embargo and the way to ensure we maintain stability on the island once Castro is gone.

### The Helms-Burton Act

The CANF was not satisfied with the Torricelli Bill, and lobbied Congress four years later to pass the 1996 Helms-Burton Law, the toughest law to date, which strictly outlines the conditions for lifting the embargo and effectively removed all policy authority from the President. Following the 1995 shoot down of the two unarmed Cessna airplanes, the CANF was able to capitalize on American outrage for the attack and convinced Congress and the Clinton Administration to swiftly pass the Helms-Burton Act into law. The CANF argues the intent of the embargo today is to isolate Cuba and Castro from finding substitute markets and financial assistance from other nations now that the Soviet base has collapsed. This will force Castro to resign and Cuba to reform. None of this has happened. Castro will not resign or reform proven by his forty-four years in power.

The flaw with this idea and the Helms-Burton Act is that the United States has lost international credibility, by passing a law criticized as imperialistic in nature by the U.S. imposing its power, authority and influence over a sovereign nation, with unconditional and inflexible terms for change before it will entertain the idea of lifting the embargo. This is not the intent of an embargo. An embargo is not designed to mandate how a country should run its internal affairs.

In addition, Congress stipulated a requirement that only Congress may amend the act, removing any policy authority from the President and his ability to modify the embargo in response to reforms that may take place in Cuba. Prior to Helms-Burton, the

embargo had to be renewed annually and its authority rested with the President, but under Helms-Burton, the authority over the sanctions was transferred to Congress, investing only the legislature with the power to permanently reduce or eliminate the embargo altogether (Schwab 1999, 184).

Below is a critic of the six stated purposes of the Helms-Burton Act (Helms Burton Law, 104th Congress, Section 3. Purposes) to outline why the law is inconsistent with the intent of promoting the transition to a democratically elected government we say we want.

Purpose 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.” By completely isolating Cuba from free trade and market reform, it is unlikely for the Cuban people to enjoy the benefits of prosperity and international trade shared by the Western Hemisphere. The act makes it simply impossible for this to happen when under Purpose 2 it demands the United Nations to impose an international trade embargo against Cuba.

Purpose 2. “To strength international sanctions against the Castro government.” Purpose 2 states the United Nations is to impose an international trade embargo against Cuba. This does not compliment Purpose 1. How can the U.S. assist the Cuban people in gaining prosperity when the next stated purpose says the international community should not trade with Cuba? Conversely, the international community does not support this purpose and for the eleventh year in a row has overwhelmingly voted against the embargo, with the most recent vote resulting in 173 in favor to 3 opposed. The moment the Helms-Burton Act was passed, we lost United Nations support because of the

imperialistic nature the act propagates over what Cuba should look like and do before we lift the embargo.

Ironically, Castro has been wise to change his behavior to conform with the international code of conduct in order to gain international support. He no longer supports regional-insurgencies, nor could he due to his lack of resources. He instituted social reform in the areas of; religious freedom, the loosening of restrictions for Cubans seeking private enterprise, and the release of political prisoners that were estimated at 20,000 at its peak in the 1960s and now stands at an estimated 350 prisoners (Schwab 1999, 168). It could be argued that Castro in some aspects has changed his political behavior to conform to the rest of the international community and the stability of his nation.

Purpose 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.” This purpose has some validity to it. Nevertheless, because it is mixed in with the expropriation of property issue and because it dwells on Castro’s past behavior it loses weight. Should Purpose 3 focus on the potential of future threats once Castro is gone and separate or delete the expropriation issue, it would be more powerful.

Focus on *future* threats because the DIA study in cooperation with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research, the National Security Agency (NSA) and the United States Southern Command’s Joint Intelligence Center (USSOUTHCOM-JIC), clearly states Cuba no longer poses a significant threat to U.S. national security or other Latin American countries in the

region. Castro was forced to cut the size and budget of his military by over eighty percent. In 1989, Cuba had the largest military in Latin American on a per capita basis equal to a force of 300,000. Today, the military's strength is approximately 50,000 to 65,000 regular troops, equivalent in size to forces in Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador and El Salvador, with virtually a nonexistent Air Force and Navy. More importantly, the Cuban military has suffered major reductions in resources and training, and no longer participates in off shore operations. Their primary mission today is to protect its borders.

Purpose 3 punishes Castro for his past sins, but does not consider that Castro has stabilized Cuba. That is not to say that once Castro is gone, Cuba will not risk becoming a rogue state. At the time the DIA study was released, the then Secretary of Defense, Honorable William Cohen endorsed the study by saying there is the potential for future threats such as terrorist activities, Weapons of Mass Destruction and drug trafficking. All very real threats if the U.S. does not take active measures to support the peaceful transition of the Cuban government.

As for the "desire of Cubans to escape, that results in mass migration to the United States" section of the law; sanctions do not help in preventing migration, it encourages it by Cubans seeking a better way of life outside of Cuba.

Purpose 4. "To encourage the holding of free and fair democratic elections in Cuba, conducted under the supervision of internationally recognized observers." The problem with this purpose is that the law defines what a transitional government should look like. Specifically, a government that has Fidel Castro or his brother Raúl will not be recognized by the United States, in accordance with Section 205 of the act, even if the changes the embargo seeks are implemented.



Our nation is fixated on individuals; examples include Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein and Manual Noriega. In each example, Manual Noriega is the only success story because we struck quickly and decisively. In the other two examples, we had time and opportunity and failed to capitalize on it and now find ourselves trying to fix things that should have been fixed when the time was right. Fidel Castro should be inconsequential to the U.S. goal of establishing a strategy for a peaceful transition and economic growth in Cuba. Fidel Castro will eventually go. He is 76 years old and cannot live forever, twenty years from now he will be just another chapter in world history.

Because we lift the embargo now, does not mean we have to like Fidel Castro or agree with his politics. The idea is to get involved while things are relatively stable and influence the situation under peaceful conditions rather than the alternative of crisis action and possible military intervention.

Purpose 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.” Purpose 5 is tied to Purpose 4 in that if 4 happens, then 5 will follow with a U.S. framework to support a new government. Purpose 5 contradicts itself by providing a definition in Section 201 that states (1) to support the self-determination of the Cuban people and (2) to recognize that the self-determination of the Cuban people is a sovereign and national right of the citizens of Cuba which must be exercised free of interference by the government of any other country. Yet “interference” is exactly what the U.S. is exercising when it states that it will not recognize Castro or any branch of the Castro government as a legitimate government even if elected by the people under internationally supervised conditions.

Purpose 6. “To protect U.S. nationals against confiscatory takings and the wrongful trafficking in property confiscated by the Castro regime.” Purpose 6 is the nucleus of the Helms-Burton Act, which primarily seeks compensation for approximately 5,911 American citizens whose property was confiscated following Castro’s take over. This purpose is valid for American citizens to claim wrongfully seized property. However, critics argue the law is questionable because it includes approximately 400,000 Cuban Americans who were not American citizens at the time of the confiscation, resulting in a foreign court exercising jurisdiction over what is a domestic dispute between Cuban nationals and their government.

Secondly, Purpose 6 pressures third countries from investing in wrongfully confiscated properties by denying them entry into the United States and the threat of litigation in a U.S. federal court. Among the numerous difficulties in this purpose, is identifying after forty years what is wrongfully confiscated property. Moreover, this purpose directly affects our relationship with close trade partners like Canada and England. According to this purpose, we should not allow Canadian businesses entry into the United States as punishment for trading with Cuba. The British royal family has interests in the Barings Bank of England, who reportedly benefited from joint ventures in Cuba. Does this mean Queen Elizabeth will not be granted a visa to visit the United States (Center for International Policy)?

Purpose 6 has been successful in mostly deterring U.S. businesses from investing in Cuba and some foreign investors but not the majority. In the end, is it really a success? American businesses are the ones suffering because they will not risk investing in Cuba,

while foreign businesses are investing where they can. At this rate, nothing will be left for American businesses to invest in once Castro is gone.

The 1996 Helms-Burton Act is contradictory in nature, criticized as imperialistic, and in many instances overlooked and ignored by both U.S. and foreign governments when it benefits them; demonstrated by the estimated \$5.5 billion in foreign investments reported by Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation (Pages 2000) as of January, 2002. The primary foreign investors in Cuba are Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, England, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, China and Vietnam.

The Helms-Burton Act carries on because the CANF will not allow it to be modified. In the end, this hard-line stance makes it more difficult to help the Cuban people, while the Cuban government remains unaffected. Analysts (Ratliff and Fontaine 2000, 30) believe if the three leading Cuban American members of Congress; Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Rep. Bob Menendez, and Rep. Diaz-Lincoln Balart would support less restrictive criteria the rest of Congress would follow suit.

In 1999, the three Cuban American representatives lobbied against Castro's participation in the Seattle World Trade Organization summit by proclaiming the three fundamental measures for lifting the embargo are: (1) freedom for all political prisoners, (2) legalization of political parties, labor unions and a free press and (3) free elections under international supervision. The three measures overlook numerous conditions of the Helms-Burton Act, which the representatives were instrumental in creating, and outline less restrictive standards for lifting the embargo. If the representatives and the CANF supported these measures, it might open more opportunities for helping the Cuban people. However, the reality is the representatives do not support less restrictive

measures. In fact, once again they influenced tighter restrictions during the fall 2000 Congressional session when they successfully codified the travel ban and the remittance cap into law, in exchange for the restricted sale of food and medicine to Cuba (Sun Sentinel of Fort Lauderdale, 2000).

The original goal of the proposed amendment sought the unrestricted sale of food and medicine to North Korea, Sudan, Iran, Libya and Cuba. The amendment passed without controversy for the other countries but not for Cuba. The Cuban American Representatives would not allow the amendment to pass without adding the travel ban and remittance cap to the legislation, and the restriction on Cuba to purchase food and medicine from the United States on a hard currency basis without obtaining credit from private enterprises or international credit organizations.

#### The Moral Issue

It has become very popular to argue the effectiveness of the embargo as a moral issue on both sides of the debate. Pro-embargo supporters argue Americans are acting on behalf of the Cuban people by imposing the embargo. To lift the embargo would be supporting Castro's repression and human rights violations of the Cuban people. Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen criticized a U.S. Chamber of Commerce delegation visiting Cuba in hopes of promoting change and initiating trade, "as people who would have done business with Mussolini; they don't care if there's red Cuban blood on their hands, as long as there are green bucks in their pockets (Miami Herald, 1999)."

The counter argument is that it is not about the economics, it is about the advancement of the Cuban society and the proliferation of humanitarian resources for the Cuban people. Over the past decade, Cuba has suffered from food shortages and a

deterioration of the health care system. The embargo itself is a form of repression of the Cuban people by isolating them from the basic human needs of food and medicine and the benefits of economic prosperity.

Anti-embargo supporters argue trade is essential for the spread of democracy and human rights. Advocates argue the embargo is a human rights violation in itself. Anti-embargo supporters use the Helms-Burton Act as an example to demonstrate yet another inconsistency with the Cuban American lobby argument, by pointing out that the act they so passionately fight for is about overthrowing Castro, secondly economics, and a distant third the advancement of the Cuban people. The act primarily focuses on the unconditional removal of Castro and the compensation for the expropriation of property and not the influx of resources to the island.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE 9-POINT PLAN

Chapter three addresses the effectiveness of the embargo by analyzing if the embargo has worked and ends with a 9-Point Plan for reform. Interestingly, both the pro-embargo and the anti-embargo supporters use the same measures of success in arguing for the effectiveness of the embargo. Ambassador Dennis K. Hays, the Executive Vice-President of the CANF, and a retired Senior U.S. Foreign Service Officer and the former Ambassador to Suriname and the former Charge d' Affaires to Guyana is an expert in the region and advocate for maintaining the sanctions against Cuba. In a testimony before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation (Hearing on U.S. Trade Policy with Cuba, May 2002) he stated the embargo is a success in achieving its original goals of: (1) to demonstrate that communism has no place in the Western Hemisphere, (2) to increase the cost to the Soviet Union in maintaining a communist outpost in the Western Hemisphere, (3) to reduce Castro's will and ability to support insurgencies throughout Latin America, and lastly (4) to induce pressure for democratic and economic reform. Then he sums it up by saying, but the ultimate goal of regime change has not been achieved. That is the exact argument anti-embargo supporters use for lifting the embargo.

Ambassador Hays goes on to say the embargo has unrealistic expectations for creating change and that in fact the embargo is really a defensive measure that now requires an offensive measure to remove Castro from power. Again, anti-embargo

supporters agree that the embargo is lacking a full spectrum approach; therefore, it has failed in achieving its purpose.

The common denominator in the debate is that the embargo is not working. The deviation between the two groups lies in the offensive plan that should be implemented for change. Pro-embargo supporters want only one thing--regime change. But have not offered an offensive plan to accomplish that goal. Pro-embargo supporters maintain their hard-line stance, saying the embargo must not be lifted, and at the same time say, it is not successful. If the embargo has not succeeded then it is time to review our policy in Cuba.

In many regards, the embargo has had a substantial impact in accomplishing the original goals, but it has culminated and the time for a new strategy to improve the quality of life for the Cuban people is here. Fidel Castro rules over a Cuba that is a shadow of its vast potential (Schwab 1999, 167). Cuba is frozen in time with 1960's technology, services, infrastructure, with a shortage of food, clothing, shelter and health care services. Survival is Castro's only priority and not revolutionary expansion.

Fidel Castro should be inconsequential to an offensive plan to promote reform in Cuba. In fact, anti-embargo supporters argue reform will make Castro irrelevant and ultimately the regime change objective will happen. It will likely not be a quick process, but it is a plan, instead of maintaining a policy that has not achieved its goal in forty-four years and isolates the Cuban people from the benefits of a modern world.

Recent years have seen an increasing change in public opinion among the American people mostly as a direct result of the 1999 Elian Gonzalez case that brought the Cuban issue to the forefront of national interest. In November 1999, a six-year-old Cuban boy was rescued at sea following a failed attempt by his mother to reach American

shores. Tragically, the mother did not survive the ninety-mile journey and the boy was left with family members in Miami who passionately opposed his return to Cuba to be with his father.

Overwhelming, this case appeared to be an easy issue for Americans at large. If the boy's father wanted him back, he should be returned--it was the morally right thing to do. However, the Cuban exile community in Miami did not see it that way and fought for Elian to remain in the United States for seven bitter and public months in the U.S. court system. The saga finally ended with a dramatic, televised early morning raid by U.S. Immigration Agents on the home of Elian's Miami family, where he was taken by force and returned to his father.

The Elian case struck a cord in the nation because the American people could not understand why a family would deprive a father and son from being together. It also had a profound effect on the psyche of the South Florida community as they saw, on television, a child taken at gunpoint by agents in paramilitary gear in the early morning hours. The case caused Americans to re-look at the situation in Cuba and was a major setback for the Cuban American National Foundation and their cause, who in the end came off as arrogant and inflexible for interfering in family matters. In many ways the CANF was blamed for causing the forced entry of government agents into the home of Elian's Miami family because of their threats and rhetoric that vowed a confrontation to the death if U.S. government officials attempted to take Elian away.

In the last three years, Congressional bipartisan support has grown in response to the growing national interest. Congress is in the process of introducing new legislation to review the policy on Cuba. Among the better known anti-embargo supporters is



Congressman Jeff Flake, from Arizona, and Congressman Charles Rangel, from New York. Both congressmen are part of a newly formed Cuba Working Group, a bipartisan working group of forty congressional representatives, charged with reviewing the U.S. policy towards Cuba.

The working group has a unanimous criticism of the Cuban government's refusal to allow free elections or the creation of opposition political parties and its failure to respect freedom of the press or civil and political liberties; and it is their desire to see the Cuban people enjoy greater political and economic freedom (Cuba Working Group).

Congressman Flake is best known for introducing legislation to lift the travel ban to Cuba and Congressman Rangel is best known for introducing legislation to lift the embargo in its entirety. Together with the Cuba Working Group, they have developed a 9-Point Plan for reform in Cuba, released in May 2002, which is outlined below.

Point 1. "Repeal the Travel Ban." The travel ban is a result of the embargo and was codified into law in 2000, effectively removing the President's authority to remove the ban without congressional approval. The travel ban is highly criticized because no other travel ban exists for Americans in the world. Americans are allowed to travel to other and more repressive countries like Iraq and North Korea if they choose to.

Freedom to travel is a basic right of Americans. Allowing Americans to freely travel to Cuba will expose the Cuban people to our ideas, values, and culture, resulting in a major source of American influence. The federal travel licensing process should be lifted to allow this free flow of ideas, as well as ending all penalties associated with Americans traveling to Cuba without a license.

Repealing the travel ban will remove barriers to increased agricultural, educational, professional and medical benefits associated to free markets. It will generate revenues that will go directly to private restaurants, taxis, artisans and home rentals that are owned and operated by the average Cuban citizen. It will increase U.S. exports by creating an increased demand of U.S. products introduced into the island as a secondary effect to lifting the ban. It will end the restrictions that limits Cuban exiles from traveling to the island only once a year and most importantly create opportunity for us to detect terrorist or drug cartel activities that may influence our borders.

Point 2. “Allow normal, unsubsidized exports of agricultural and medical products.” To include private financing of agricultural and medical exports. U.S. law allows the sale of food and medicine to Cuba on a cash basis and under complicated restrictions and procedures that discourage American companies from engaging in the sale of food and medicine to Cuba. Allowing a normal exchange permits private American companies to decide, according to their own criteria, whether to assume the risk of financing products to Cuba. Point 2 also recommends ending the requirement for charity organizations and private companies to monitor the use of donated products to Cuba. Lastly, point 2 recommends ending the provisions of the Torricelli Bill that bans any ships visiting Cuba from entering a U.S. port with 180 days after departing Cuba.

Point 3. “End restrictions on remittances.” Cuban Americans are only allowed to send \$100 per month per household. The restriction is criticized as a U.S. government intrusion for imposing a monetary limit to Cuban exiles sending money to their family members. Remittances make a significant impact on the quality of life and economy of Cuba and have the additional benefit of freeing Cubans from government support.

Ironically, this is another example of a failed policy in that this is the least observed and enforced law of the embargo. Remittances bring in an estimated \$800 million into the Cuban economy, all coming from Cuban exiles in Miami who demanded the restriction in order to prevent Castro from using the dollars to fuel the economy.

Point 4. “Sunset the Helms-Burton Act.” The Helms-Burton Act is controversial for the many reasons outlined in chapter two. The fundamental purpose of the Helms-Burton Act is the unconditional and instantaneous removal of Castro and the compensation of property. Helms-Burton should be reviewed and modified before we can hope to achieve freedom and prosperity for the Cuban people. The Cuba Working Group encourages the review of the act as one of the first steps towards change.

Point 5. “Repeal Section 211.” Section 211 of the Fiscal 1999 Omnibus Appropriations Act prevents the U.S. from accepting payment for trademark licenses that were used in connection with a business or asset in Cuba that was confiscated by the Castro regime, unless the original owner of the trademark consents.

Section 211 was introduced for the benefit of the Bahamas based Bacardi Corporation. Its controversy lies in that the U.S. is failing to recognize the Cuban “Havana Club” rum brand name in the United States, in violation of U.S. and international trademark laws. Havana Club is internationally recognized as a Cuban rum, produced in Cuba as part of a joint venture with a French liquor company with a U.S. registered trademark since 1976. However, based on Section 211, the original 1976 U.S. trademark is not being honored due to the newly introduced confiscated property definition of the law. Instead, the U.S. would recognize the Bahamas based Bacardi

Corporation if they acquired the Havana Club brand name from its original owners and sold it in the United States as a Bacardi brand of rum.

The original owners of the Havana Club brand name abandoned the product following Castro's coup and it remained unused years after the takeover. Therefore, legal experts argue, the original trademark owners do not have a claim and the Cuban-French joint venture have the right to claim the trademark on a first claim basis. As opposed to the Bacardi family who continued to make their rum in the Bahamas and Puerto Rico, keeping their brand recognition and property rights for Bacardi Rum intact.

Nevertheless, recognizing Havana Club as a Bacardi product and not as a Cuban product is a violation of international trademark laws, as the rest of the world recognizes Havana Club as a Cuban product. The Inter-American Convention on Trademarks ruled the U.S. is breaching obligations to honor Cuban trademarks and the World Trade Organization (WTO) judged it to be in violation of America's obligation to protect intellectual property rights. This is tantamount to Cuba producing an American product like Coke or Pepsi and selling it as a Cuban product.

Repealing Section 211 is important because it secures some 5,000 U.S. trademarks already registered in Cuba to protect their brand names or positioned for the day the embargo is lifted. Legal experts argue as long as Section 211 is in effect, Cuba has the legal right not to recognize U.S. trademarks registered in Cuba as a result of the legal impropriety the U.S. is exercising by invoking Section 211 in not honoring Cuban trademarks.

Point 6. "Redirect Funding for TV/Radio Marti." TV and Radio Marti are part of an aggressive information campaign strategy targeted with providing Cubans with news

and information they would not otherwise get through the controlled media of the Cuban government. At an estimated cost of \$12 million per year and a total of \$400 million since its inception in 1985, it is another example of a failed strategy. The TV broadcast does not reach its intended audience. Primarily because the Cuban Government jams the signal and secondly because it is transmitted between the hours of 0330 and 0800 when it is unlikely that anyone will be up watching. The early morning broadcast is due to international law that prevents the U.S. from interfering with Cuban broadcast transmissions during prime time hours.

Radio Marti's listening audience has declined to an estimated five percent of the population because of the radio station's recent shift from news and information to Fidel Castro bashing. The Cuban people already know first hand that Castro is a tyrant and are not interested in tuning in to hear that on the radio. When the radio station was focused on independent news, its listening audience was estimated at seventy five percent of the population.

Allegations of mismanagement are also hurting the TV/Radio station, which is causing it to lose credibility and effectiveness in achieving its information campaign goals. The Cuba Working Group recommends a comprehensive review of the TV/Radio station, including audits and independent assessments of audience reaction and program quality. The TV broadcast appears to be ineffective due to the jamming, but the radio station maybe salvageable with the right programming. If the radio station cannot be saved, the funding should go towards other programs to help the Cuban people achieve reform.

Point 7. “Scholarships.” In place of TV/Radio Marti, the funding could be used towards educational programs like Fulbright scholarships that promote communication and exchange. Fulbright scholarship programs proved to be effective in Vietnam, but require commitment and scrutiny to ensure the Cuban Government has no role in selecting the participants.

Point 8. “Expand Security Cooperation.” The Cuba Working Group is proposing to expand the “M” of the DIME (Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic) in the instruments of power, through engagement and cooperation with the Cuban military. Cuba and the United States already have limited cooperation in the areas of migration and drug trafficking, but it is not centralized and sporadic at best. Incorporating Cuba into one of the Unified Commands expands this idea, whether it is incorporated into SOUTHCOM, JFCOM or NORTHCOM’s Area of Responsibility (AOR) does not matter for achieving this objective.

Including Cuba in one of the Unified Commands will ensure it gets unbiased attention and focused peacetime engagement with resources and oversight. The focus of the peacetime engagement should be migration, drug interdiction, terrorism, and contingency planning for humanitarian relief efforts in the wake of natural disasters like hurricanes and tropical storms. Security cooperation has an invaluable benefit in establishing and strengthening strategic partnerships in order to prepare us to meet future crises.

Point 9. “Certified Property Claims.” One of the most controversial issues of the embargo and one of the primary reasons the embargo was imposed in 1959--the expropriation of property. Political and economic relations will get better in Cuba some

day. It is inevitable. The world demands it. Yet there is no plan to handle the settlement of claims for an estimated \$1.2 billion in expropriated property. The U.S. has reached settlements with Vietnam, China, and the Eastern European countries. However, it has no plan for our biggest expropriation issue in our own hemisphere in Cuba. An independent bipartisan commission should be established to study the issue in order to develop feasible courses of action to negotiate with Cuba.

### Congressional Support

The Cuba Working Group has proposed a proactive approach towards reviewing our policy in Cuba with the goal of settling our differences and promoting free markets, human rights and democracy for the purpose of regional stability. This is the furthest our government has gone in the direction of positive reform in the forty-four years of the embargo's existence and demonstrates the nation is beginning to realize the embargo is a failed policy. However, despite the national polls and the growing bipartisan support over the past three years in Congress it is unlikely that the Cuba policy will be modified in the near term.

In 2002, The House of Representatives voted on a measure to cut funding for the enforcement of the embargo, a move that sends a strong signal to the Administration that Congress wants the embargo to end. With a vote of 204 opposed to the embargo, to 226 in favor of the embargo, the House fell short of the majority needed to pass an amendment introduced by Congressmen Charles Rangel to lift the embargo for the third consecutive year. The vote has gained support each of the three years it has been introduced, getting 186 votes in 2000 and 201 in 2001 (Washington Office on Latin America).

It appears the travel ban and agricultural credits are the only two issues getting real attention and may have success in the near future. The House of Representatives in July 2002 passed the Flake Amendment to lift the travel ban with 262 votes in favor to 167 opposed. The Senate was expected to pass the amendment as well, but was unable to review the legislation before recessing in November 2002. It is expected that the Senate will not include the Flake Amendment for review during their next session in January 2003 because it is a controversial bill.

Congress failed to pass eleven of the thirteen yearly appropriations bills before their October 2002 deadline, resulting in a Continuing Resolution through January 2003. When Congress reconvenes, they will likely consolidate the remaining eleven bills into an Omnibus Appropriations Bill so the President may quickly approve the outstanding legislation from 2002. However, the disadvantage to an Omnibus Appropriations Bill is that controversial legislation (the President stated he would veto any proposal to repeal the travel ban) will be removed from the Omnibus for the purpose of expediency (Latin America Working Group).



## CHAPTER 4

### CUBA'S FUTURE

The President of the United States in his 2002 National Security Strategy states “Free trade and free markets have proven their ability to lift whole societies out of poverty” “The events of September 11, 2001, taught us that weak states, like Afghanistan, can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states.” Cuba should not be allowed to become a weak state. Encouraging market reform and economic trade with Cuba will eventually promote the change both anti-embargo and pro-embargo supporters want in Cuba.

Since the 1999 Elian Gonzalez case, the American public is increasingly questioning the purpose of the embargo. The sentiment has carried over to congressional and business leaders who want to include Cuba in the world trade market. The American business sector is prepared to engage in trade with Cuba. It is a matter of the basic economic principle of supply and demand. The United States has the supply Cuba demands. Cuba is in dire need of corn, rice, poultry and wheat products as a result of the devastating effects of Hurricane Michelle in 2001.

In 2002, Castro paid \$140 million in cash to purchase food and agricultural products from the U.S. The cash purchases ignited a U.S. Food and Agribusiness Exhibition held in Havana in September 2002. Over 750 U.S. civic leaders, farmers and executives from leading farming states from Kansas, Georgia, Arkansas and California traveled to Cuba under the 2002 legislation that approved the sale of food and medicine to Cuba on a cash basis. Major companies who participated in the expo included Tyson

Foods and Archer Daniels Midland, which signed sales contracts for \$90 million during the five-day expo.

The expo did not receive too much attention from the American media. Nevertheless, it is significant in that it shows the growing willingness on behalf of the American business sector to open negotiations with Cuba because they no longer see the value in maintaining an embargo that closes potential investment options to U.S. industries.

Cuba's future lies in free trade and market reform. Free trade will benefit both Americans and Cubans alike. To say the American business sector is only interested in the financial factor is over simplifying the issue. Our own National Security Strategy encourages free trade and free markets in a global economy.

Globalization is credited with inducing the significant decline of totalitarian and communist governments throughout the globe. The process of accelerating economic, technological, cultural and political integration is bringing the Western Hemisphere and the world closer together (U.S. Security Strategy for the Americas) resulting in free markets and global trade. In the Western Hemisphere alone, the last ten years has seen a significant change in government regimes from authoritarian to democratic, with Cuba being the only non-democratically elected government left in the hemisphere. However, Globalization is also creating a security environment in the hemisphere vulnerable to transnational threats like terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal migration and international crime. We should assist Cuba's integration into the world market in order to shape the security environment and promote regional stability.

Every sector of American society is challenging the Cuban American lobby that so vehemently fights to maintain the embargo. The International Trade Commission estimates that the U.S. loses over \$4 billion per year in lost trade with Cuba. The U.S. agriculture sector, led by the American Farm bureau, is becoming one of the loudest voices lobbying against the embargo, because it is one of the sectors most likely to benefit from trade with Cuba. Estimated annual losses to the farming community total \$1 billion. Cuba currently imports between \$700 million and \$1 billion in food products primarily from Argentina, France and Vietnam (Miami Herald, 2001) at a greater cost and distance, for lesser quality products.

The United States is Cuba's most logical trading partner for its proximity alone. The restrictions on selling food and medicine to Cuba should be lifted as a first step towards normalizing relations with the island. Selling food and medicine to Cuba should go beyond humanitarian purposes and expand into a solid business relationship. Cuba has the potential for a multibillion-dollar market that will strength our own struggling economy, primarily in the agricultural sector.

Critics argue Cuba's recent interest in opening trade relations with the U.S. stems from their \$11 billion debt to other countries from which it imports goods. However, this deficit may be attributed to the sanctions that prevent organizations like the IMF and the World Bank from providing the economic assistance Cuba requires to enter the world market. Providing credit to Cuba would not set a precedent in assisting a non-democratic government, demonstrated by the assistance the IMF and the World Bank provided Indonesia's wrecked economy in the mid-nineties while under a dictatorial regime that lasted over thirty years.

## Cuba without Castro

Fidel Castro is 76 years old and cannot live forever. Although he is reportedly in good health, takes care of himself and has given up unhealthy vices; such as smoking and drinking, and is very much in control of his faculties and his government, he cannot live forever. He recognizes his time is short and has openly discussed the day he will no longer be in control of Cuba. He steadfastly maintains he will not retire and will die as the leader of Cuba. He has actively taken measures to maintain his socialist views and legacy in place once he is gone.

After forty-four years in control of Cuba, it will be difficult for the Cuban people to imagine a society without Castro at the helm. An entire generation has grown up under Castro's rule and many of Cuba's population have known no other leader or way of life. Throughout the forty-four years there has been little revolt or unrest on the island. Castro has been able to quickly eradicate any one personality or group that may be hinting towards unrest or attempts to overthrow his regime. The population of approximately 11 million people seems to have accepted their fate many years ago. Those wanting a different way of life, board rafts and fight from Miami or simply forget Cuba and assimilate into the American culture for a better way of life. For these reasons, no strong opposition group has been able to rise in Cuba.

Castro's legacy will likely remain within the society and any future Cuban American negotiations for a very long time following his departure. Democracy will not happen the day after Castro dies. Cuban exiles will not board planes, reclaim their confiscated property, and gain control of the government. Whatever government remains

in place once Castro is gone, is the government the U.S. will have to negotiate with for progress and change.

#### Future Leadership

Castro has openly declared his brother, Raúl Castro, as the rightful heir to lead Cuba. Raúl is not as talented, intellectually capable and charismatic as his older brother is, and many question his ability to lead Cuba as his brother has for the past forty-four years. Raúl's strength lies in the military. His interests are in domestic security and maintaining the revolution. He does not have the political shrewdness and the international experience his brother has, and he rarely travels abroad. He is highly regarded within the military and has their support more so than the support of the politburo or civilian arm of the government. More importantly, Raúl Castro is not a young man at the age of 71. Fidel may very well outlive his younger brother, as Raúl is known to be in poor health and enjoys drinking.

#### Alternative Leadership

When Fidel Castro was severed from the Soviet Union's economic ties and was left with no other trading partners, he was forced to quickly develop a strategy for economic survival. Part of that strategy involved the generation that grew up under his rule. This generation has produced smart, more progressive thinking and opened minded individuals who are now in their thirties and forties and will most likely provide the true leadership of the future.

The generation that helped the Cuban economy survive is known as the younger "pro-reform bureaucrats" who run Cuba's social and economic programs today (Schwab 1999, 173). They are proud to be Cubans and support the revolution, but recognize that

survival depends on a strong economy that can only be fueled by trade and market reform. They are politically savvy and internationally experienced. It is impossible to know what ideology the younger generation really favors, as Castro is still firmly in control. However, there is evidence to support this generation welcomes reform and uses creative methods to run the economics of the country. This is not to say they will become a democracy overnight, but it is a foundation of leaders with the intellect and vision of a future. A future that involves improved human rights, an open society with free markets and the desire to improve conditions on the island.

Similar conditions existed on the island of the Dominican Republic when the dictator Rafael Trujillo was overthrown and assassinated in 1961. Young reformists headed a transition government that eventually led to reform and democracy. The Dominican Republic is similar to Cuba in natural resources, culture, economy, and historical significance, in that Trujillo, like Castro was a dominant long lasting dictator with 30 years in power before reform took place on the island. Reform in the Dominican Republic took place for two reasons: first, the desire of the people and secondly, U.S. intervention that was at first weak, but later became more committed to the transition government and later the permanent government, which eventually stabilized the island and improved the economy and well being of the Dominican people.

The Dominican transition did not happen overnight and took over five years before free and fair elections took place on the island. Unfortunately, the final U.S. intervention was not a peaceful intervention. The Johnson Administration was forced to invade the Dominican Republic in 1965, for fear of the Dominican Republic falling to the same fate as Cuba under the same ideology. It can be argued; in part, the invasion was the

result of a weak foreign policy that did not implement the full spectrum of the Diplomatic Instruments of Power. Clear strategic goals with an end state for the Dominican Republic were never identified. An invasion could have been avoided. Following Trujillo's assassination, U.S. support was half-hearted and minimal at best. The invasion took place four years after Trujillo was assassinated. Our current Administration should learn from this historical example to prevent a military intervention once Castro is gone.

Another prominent individual rumored to be in line to replace Fidel Castro, in lieu of Raúl, is 65 year old, Ricardo Alarcón. He is the president of the Cuban National Assembly of the People's Power and a dominant member of the Politburo of Cuba's Communist Party. Alarcón is the former Cuban Foreign Minister and former Cuban Ambassador to the United Nations. He is well versed in international politics and is believed to be a reform-minded politician. He has the unquestioned support of the younger pro-reform movement who speak highly of him and his representation of Cuba.

Alarcón is part of Castro's inner circle and gained most of his notoriety while serving with the United Nations. While at the United Nations he established relationships with American investors and gained a wealth of experience in the international scene. He is one of the few Cuban leaders to address the international community other than Fidel. He has no family ties to the Castro family and even by the Helms-Burton Act, if elected to office the United States should honor the people's choice.

Ricardo Alarcón's true ideology is also impossible to predict as his success depends on his loyalty to Castro. However, the facts are that his rhetoric and reputation are not as hard-line as Raúl Castro's. He would like to end the hostile relationship between the United States and Cuba. He is not a Castro family member; he has the

support of the young professionals and average Cuban citizen and has the charismatic ability to negotiate with both American politicians and his own politburo. He could be the right leader for a transition government that will appease both U.S. and Cuban American interest while maintaining regional stability and improving conditions for the Cuban people.

Another possibility for Castro's replacement may be Carlos Lage. He is not as well known as Ricardo Alarcón, but he is quickly gaining international recognition. Lage is 50 years old and is considered the leader of the movement of younger pro-reform bureaucrats. He is the vice president of the Cuban Council of State with the authority to oversee the administration of the government. In that capacity, he is charged with running the current economic reform programs and is considered the individual responsible for the success or failure of the Cuban economy.

Lage's position as vice president has allowed him to travel abroad on various occasions including appearances before the United Nations. Lage is a medical doctor and considered an intellectual. The hard-line Cuban Marxists consider him a threat for trying to introduce too much reform, too soon. For example, he proposed the privatization of certain state enterprises as part of one of his economic plans (Schwab 1999, 175). The hard-line Marxists quickly opposed the idea. Fidel Castro and Ricardo Alarcón support Lage's programs and for this reason he has been able to survive as the vice president.

Lage's true ideology, like Alarcón, is difficult to predict as his survival depends on his loyalty to Fidel Castro. His future role in a post-Castro regime may depend on his true standing with the politburo and the circumstances surrounding Alarcón's involvement in a post-Castro government.



What appears to be clear for Cuba's future is that first; Castro's influence will remain for a significant amount of time following his departure. Secondly, the known entities on the Cuban stage are divided between the hard-line Marxists and the pro-reformist. The hard-line Marxists fought with and supported Castro during the revolution and have no desire to improve relations with the United States. The converse to the hard-line Marxists are the younger pro-reform minded generation that has grown up under Castro's rule and are credited with saving the Cuban economy under Castro leadership and guidance. The pro-reformist want better relations with the United States and realize survival is dependent on free trade and integration into the world economy. However, they remain loyal to Castro and his socialist views. Economic reform is acceptable as long as the socialist character of the state is maintained (Schwab 1999, 181).

The more likely model of government Cuba would inherit, at least in the transition phase, is one similar to China where economic reforms have led to the world market. The expansion of political rights, for example, free elections, free press and freedom of speech would be kept under tight control or remain non-existent. The Chinese model will likely not be adopted in its entirety for fear of transitioning into a 'Glasnost' type model. The policy of political reform exercised by the Soviet Union, Castro considered as the downfall to communism. However, this is exactly the effect that introducing free markets and reform to Cuba will likely produce in Cuba--the downfall of communism.

American influence will be too overwhelming for Cuba to avoid over the long term. Cuba's small size and proximity to the United States, coupled with its physical location in a democratic region will cause it to become consumed by its environment.

Unlike China, that is a large and dominant presence in its region, Cuba is too small and will become too dependent on the region to help avoid the eventuality of democracy.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The President's National Security Strategy encourages promoting change throughout the world as we did in Central and Eastern Europe, Belgrade, Taiwan and the Republic of Korea through free markets and free trade. The National Security Strategy promotes the idea that a strong world economy enhances our national security by advancing freedom and prosperity. These same principles should be extended to the Cuban people. The United States maintains diplomatic and economic relations with China and Vietnam who have long standing repressive regimes and greater human rights violations than Cuba. That same principle should be applied to Cuba without partisan politics that influence and deter from the freedom of the Cuban people and ultimately Cuba's stability and prosperity.

Critics argue free markets do not promote democracy. However, free trade and open markets do promote open economies and societies with greater freedom for their people, with better opportunities and less poverty. Less poverty equals stability. Charles William Maynes, President of the Eurasia Foundation and a leading political scientist in the United States calls this idea of free markets promoting democracy "Liberal Internationalism." He argues open markets lead to the formation of a middle class; the middle class then brings pressure on non-democratic governments to open the political process; once that opening occurs, democracy develops.

With Cuba's proximity to the United States, democracy is inevitable. It will be a slow process. Nevertheless, it will happen, as it has in countless other countries like the

Dominican Republic, Chile, Argentina, El Salvador and the other thirty-one out of thirty-two countries in the Latin American region.

The first step before any real change happens in Cuba must be engagement within our own borders with the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF). The CANF is without question the center of gravity for this issue. The CANF is single handedly preventing progress in the Cuba policy. Clausewitz defines a center of gravity as “the hub of all power and movement, on which everything else depends. That is the point against which all our energies should be directed.” The United States should focus its energy on encouraging the CANF to reform its uncompromising stance against Castro.

Several actions, or decisive points, must occur for the CANF to compromise and ultimately create change in Cuba; beginning with the review of the Torricelli Bill and the Helms-Burton Act, followed by the opening of economic trade, and the lifting of restrictions on the travel ban and the sale of food and medicine. The CANF will not allow any of this to happen without the unconditional removal of Castro and anyone associated with the Castro family. This is an unrealistic goal that the embargo alone cannot accomplish. The CANF, as the source of all power in this issue, should be part of the solution by seeking ways to promote change in the Cuba policy, instead of seeking ways to prevent change in a failed policy.

The CANF’s power and influence is becoming less relevant each day with the shift in public opinion that is even transcending cultural lines to Cuban Americans in Miami who believe the embargo is a failed policy. Since 1993, the Florida International University in Miami has polled Cuban Americans on their position with regard to the Cuba Policy. In 1993, forty two percent of Cuban Americans believed better relations

with Cuba were needed. The most recent poll in 2002 indicates that number has grown to sixty-two percent who believe better relations are needed. However, the CANF's influence is still significant enough to prevent better relations and progress.

The U.S. strategic goal for Cuba should be a peaceful transition to a post embargo environment by gradually lifting the embargo with the implementation of the full spectrum of the Diplomatic Instruments of Power illustrated below. Fidel Castro should be inconsequential to the transition:

Diplomatic. Open dialogue with the government of Cuba. Fidel Castro says he wants to open negotiations with the U.S. The U.S. should capitalize on this new stance of openness and use it to its advantage. The U.S. has open dialogue with China; Cuba should be no different. This idea will also open doors to establish relationships with the progressive Cuban leadership willing to consider change. The Bush Administration should also consider supporting the Cuba Working Group's 9-Point Plan as a tool to initiate reform.

Information. Reform TV and Radio Marti by taking it out of the Cuban American National Foundation's span of influence. Place it under the control of a non-partisan government organization that can develop a robust and meaningful information campaign targeted towards the Cuban people and reform. Conduct an information campaign within our own borders to educate the American public on the costs and benefits of helping the Cuban people.

Military. Militarily engage Cuba by including it in one of the Unified Commands. Develop long term bilateral cooperation with the Cuban military and incorporate their armed forces in multilateral cooperation throughout the Caribbean region.

Economic. Incrementally lift the embargo beginning with the lifting of the travel ban and the restrictions on the sale of food and medicine, followed by reforming the Torricelli Bill and the Helms-Burton Act.

#### Final Analysis

Although the embargo has not achieved the primary objective of removing Fidel Castro from power, its secondary effects have been so effective that Castro's ability to threaten the United States is gone. Castro has been and will remain unable to influence radical movements throughout the world (Schwab 1999, 183). The Soviet Union has collapsed proving that globalization and capitalism is the dominant force of the 21st century. Cuba is an impoverished nation hanging on to survival and stability by Castro's sheer determination and ability to maintain power.

Castro's time in power is short and Cuba without Castro is extremely vulnerable to becoming a rogue state with the elements of transnational threats at Cuba's doorstep once he is gone. The Cuban American National Foundation grows weaker everyday and American public opinion that believes change must happen grows stronger everyday. The time for change in Cuba is now. Fidel Castro's presence in Cuba should be inconsequential to that change. A gradual lifting of the embargo should begin today with the United States committed to engaging Cuba in order to prevent Cuba from becoming a threat to the United States in the future.

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