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**THE DECLINE OF POLITICAL PERTINENCE:
U.S. ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST CUBA**

BY

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**The Decline of Political Pertinence:
U.S. Economic Sanctions Against Cuba**

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ABSTRACT

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For more than four decades Fidel Castro has created tension and confrontations between the United States and Cuba. In response, every President since Eisenhower has elected economic sanctions as the primary instrument of U.S. national power in dealing with Cuba. For three of the last four decades, the embargo of Cuba was part of America's larger Cold War strategy against the Soviet bloc. Despite the end of that "war," Washington has continued the strategy, but switched objectives from the foreign policy arena, to demanding internal domestic change in Cuba. The stated policy objective of a "peaceful transition to democracy" in Cuba cannot be achieved with the blunt instrument of an economic embargo. The current policy actually serves Castro's interest better than those of America. The embargo enables him to garner both international and domestic support for his chosen role as the champion of anti-imperialism aimed at Washington. U.S. foreign policy should be built on more solid foundations benefiting both Americans and Cubans in the post-Cold War world. This study analyzes the flaws in U.S. policy and offers a more rational alternative.

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THE DECLINE OF POLITICAL PERTINENCE; US ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST CUBA

The problem is that sanctions are most often imposed against regimes that have only their own interests and the retention of power at heart. And since these leaders are still going to have a roof over their heads, food on their table, gas in their tank, and power in their hands, sanctions rarely work against them.¹

— Colin Powell

For more than four decades Fidel Castro has created tension and confrontations between the United States and Cuba. In response, every President since Eisenhower has elected economic sanctions as the primary instrument of U.S. national power in dealing with Cuba. For three of the last four decades, the embargo of Cuba was part of America's larger Cold War strategy against the Soviet bloc. Despite the end of that "war," Washington has continued the strategy—now serving a policy that has no achievable objective.² U.S. foreign policy should be built on more solid foundations benefiting both Americans and Cubans in the post-Cold War world. The purpose of this study is to analyze the flaws in this policy and offer a more rational alternative.

CUBAN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER CASTRO

COUNTER-DEPENDENCY AND THE COLD WAR

Fidel Castro has played a role on the world stage dominated by an anti-American theme of counter-dependency as the central pillar of the Revolution's foreign policy, and buttressed by an ego and charisma that demand gratification on a much bigger scale than that provided by a small Caribbean island. This theme has shaped the lives of the Cuban people, dictated the Maximum Leader's international alliances, and determined the direction of Cuban relations with the United States.³

Counter-dependency has long been a key ingredient of the island's political culture and the leitmotif underlying Havana's international actions. This core concept flows from the strong nationalistic tradition established by José Martí and other Cuban patriots, and is an essential analytical tool for understanding the dynamics of Cuban foreign policy. Just as "Containment" provided Washington with a grand strategy during the Cold War years, so counter-dependency politics serve a similar function for Castro.⁴

Born out of nationalism, it naturally followed that the focus of Cuba's counter-dependency would be the Yankee monolith to the north. America has long behaved in an imperial manner

toward the island. Prior to the Civil War, Southern interest proposed Cuba's acquisition as a slave state, and U.S. intervention in 1898 in Cuba's war for independence was seen by many as unnecessary and unwanted. Finally, there was the U.S. authored Platt Amendment to the Cuban Constitution. This amendment, pressed on the Cuban government by the United States, forbade Havana to make any agreements with foreign (European) nations that would—the imperialistic irony—compromise its independence. Nor could Cuba grant any other nation special rights or privileges without Washington's approval. Further, the amendment gave the United States the right to intervene in Cuban affairs if Washington believed Cuban independence or stability was in danger or if property rights and individual liberties were threatened. Taken together, these requirements effectively transformed Cuba into a U.S. protectorate.⁵

A century later the anger over such high-handedness is still intense, even among Cuban Americans. American occupation forces withdrew a year after forcing limited sovereignty on the island leaving behind, in Louis Pérez's devastating assessment, a "stunned Cuban republic fashioned by the U.S. proconsuls," with institutions that had "little relevance to Cuban social reality."⁶ This pernicious pattern culminated after World War II with American support of the right-wing Batista dictatorship against the backdrop of the emerging Cold War—a pattern already established with the Somoza regime in Nicaragua. It is no coincidence that the two most successful Marxist-Leninist movements in Latin America during the second half of the twentieth century occurred in these two countries.⁷

This tradition of suspicion and antagonism would intensify under Castro, fueled by ideological hostilities and the confrontational psychology of the Cold War. By becoming a communist, Castro's opposition to the United States and imperialism gained an intellectual coherence and respectability in many quarters around the world. More importantly, however, this transformation gained Castro the Soviet Union as an ally. The alliance allowed the Cuban leader to openly challenge Washington from behind the military and economic shield of the Soviet Union. Only with this support in the Cold War context could Castro have become an international persona and rallied so many over the decades to his "anti-imperialist" cause throughout the world.

COUNTER-DEPENDENCY POST COLD-WAR

When the Soviet bloc collapsed, Cuba fell into what Castro himself has called the deepest economic crises in the country's history. Between 1990 and 1993, the country's economy shrank by at least 34 percent. The immediate cause of this decline could be found in the

political changes occurring in the Soviet Union. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev could ill afford to continue subsidizing the Cuban economy, and Cuba's sharp rejection of the reforms in the Soviet Union eventually reflected back in dramatically reduced trade and aid packages from its former favorite ally. The result was that Cuba had no significant surviving trade or barter partners, no convertible currency, no foreign exchange to buy from other countries, and was left with only a few high-quality domestically produced products to sell abroad.⁸

Castro dealt with this difficult "special period in a time of peace" by turning to non-Communist countries for increased trade and investment.⁹ This forced Havana to introduce elements of a mixed economy even as the Cuban leader stubbornly insisted on maintaining state ownership and central control over most areas. Nevertheless, the reforms were significant, and included the opening of tourism, the encouragement of foreign investment, the legalization of the dollar, and the authorization of self-employment for some 150 occupations. In 1992 Castro modified the Constitution in order to recognize a variety of new forms of property. Cuban corporations and joint ventures were legalized. Foreign corporations were given the right to repatriate profits freely. In 1993, the government began to dismantle state-run farms and replace them with worker-managed cooperatives. Small business enterprises and farmers' markets were also legalized.¹⁰

In addition to economic reforms, Castro has also diversified Cuba's political relations, thereby avoiding the isolation that Washington assumed was inevitable and would ultimately cause the Fidelista structure to crumble. By making this transition, Cuba has proven that it can withstand Washington's hostility even under the more onerous economic pressures exerted by the U.S. in the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act and the 1996 Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act, popularly known by the names of its authors, Helms-Burton.¹¹

As a result, the end of the Cold War has not ended Castro's counter-dependency stance against the United States. In September 1998, in Durban, South Africa, in the wake of U.S. air attacks on Iraq, Castro told delegates at the Non-Aligned Movement summit that "it was hard enough to withstand the worldwide feud between two superpowers, but to live under the total hegemony of only one is still worse."¹² More recently during the visit of Russian President Putin to Cuba, Castro could not resist claiming seniority in the struggle against a world dominated by the United States. "Who knows better," he asked, "than the country situated only 90 miles from the biggest superpower of the world?"¹³ It is this resistance to perceived U.S. hegemonic pretensions that remains the Cuban Leader's dominating counter-dependency theme. Both during and following the Cold War this theme has exerted a major impact on Cuba's foreign policy decisions.

COUNTER-DEPENDENCY AND THE EMBARGO

The U.S. embargo gives sustenance to Castro's counter-dependency objectives of limiting U.S. influence over Cuba, and provides him his best excuse for the poverty in his country. The embargo is also the basis for the claim that even during a period of expanding market reforms in much of the world, the United States will not tolerate even one alternate approach to economic growth in its geographic neighborhood. Moreover, Castro can maintain his "anti-imperialist" image by pointing to increasing U.S. economic pressure even as Cuba plays by most of the accepted rules of international relations and is accepted by almost all other nations in the world.¹⁴

Two recent events point to the fact that Castro may be as committed to keeping the embargo as are the most militant Cuban-Americans. In October of 1995, with Helms-Burton bogged down in conference committee by moderates, President Clinton announced that he was easing some of the travel and other restrictions of the embargo. On 24 February 1996 Castro ordered Cuban MiG fighters to shoot down two small civilian aircraft flown by members of an anti-Castro organization.¹⁵ The timing is particularly telling. It could not have come as a surprise to the Cuban dictator that immediately after the planes were shot down, the toughest clauses were restored to the Helms-Burton Law, and that Clinton, who had earlier threatened a veto, signed the adjusted legislation.¹⁶

The most recent example of Castro's determination to block any easing of the embargo came just weeks after President Clinton again slightly eased some restrictions in January 1999. The next month Castro proclaimed a tough new law aimed at combating political dissent, necessary, the regime maintained, to counter continuing U.S. efforts to destroy the Revolution.¹⁷

Castro's timing suggests that conciliatory actions by the United States sometimes may have the opposite impact from that intended by causing the Cuban leader to increase repression. The possibility certainly exists that Castro may not be as anxious to lift U.S. sanctions as he has declared. The United States is more useful to him as an enemy; the sanctions serve his purposes better than normalized relations do.

THE EMBARGO'S MOVING GOAL-POSTS

Eisenhower imposed the Cuban embargo in 1960 when Castro nationalized U.S. properties in Cuba, proclaimed himself a communist, established links to the Soviet bloc, and supported assorted anti-American countries and organizations in the context of the Cold War.¹⁸

Although they did not bring Castro's government down, the sanctions made strategic since for three decades. Cuba's global involvement in Soviet-promoted aggression was contrary to important if not vital U.S. interests. Moreover, in accordance with U.S. Cold War objectives, the embargo complicated Castro's support for anti-U.S. activities—both in cooperation with and independent of the Soviet bloc—and for decades helped make Cuba the greatest Third World drain on a deteriorating Soviet economy.¹⁹

Washington's Cold War preconditions for lifting the sanctions have long sense been met. First, the removal of Cuban forces from Africa was completed by the spring of 1991. Second, Castro announced in August 1993 that Cuba would no longer provide support to guerilla forces and other armed subversive movements in Latin America. While direct assistance to guerilla movements had been part of the Revolutions policies during its initial phases, the Cuban leader pointed out, Havana now adhered to a noninvolvement stance based on strict respect for the principle of sovereignty and for the democratic political decisions of its hemispheric neighbors.²⁰ Finally, the last precondition concerning reduced Soviet presence and influence in Cuba disappeared with the disintegration of the USSR. The only significant vestige of a Russian presence on the island is the intelligence-gathering station at Lourdes—an installation perceived by the Russians as necessary to monitor U.S. implementation of arms control and reduction agreements.²¹

The fact that all these preconditions had been met did not seem to impress Washington. Instead, a major new element was injected into the equation. Before, the preconditions imposed on Cuba were related almost solely to foreign affairs issues. Now, the emphasis in the United States shifted to an insistence on reform in the domestic arena.

In February 1996, President Clinton signed the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, H.R. 927. The law takes Cuban policy making out of the hands of the executive branch by codifying into law all previous executive orders on the embargo. By signing the law into effect President Clinton seriously jeopardized the ability of future presidents to launch initiatives to improve relations with revolutionary Cuba. Prior to March 1996 the White House exercised sole control over its options: the president could forgo better relations with Cuba by continuing to pursue the blockade, or he could promote normalization by modifying or abandoning it. Such latitude no longer exists. Codification has bestowed a virtual congressional veto over any presidential initiatives concerning the embargo.²²

In 1995 many senators understood the law was bad policy and moderates had held it up in committee. There they were successful in deleting some of its most objectionable passages. Unfortunately, when Castro shot down the unarmed Brothers to the Rescue's planes in

international waters, indignation and domestic politics overwhelmed serious analysis. The law was passed with the worst of its passages intact.

The six stated purposes of the LIBERTAD act of 1996 (Section 3) are:

1. Assisting the Cuban people in "regaining their freedom and prosperity."
2. Strengthening "international sanctions against the Castro government."
3. Providing for the "continued national security of the United States in the face of continuing threats from the Castro government."
4. Encouraging the "holding of free and fair democratic elections."
5. Providing a framework for a "transition government or a democratically elected government."
6. Protecting U.S. nationals "against confiscatory takings and the wrongful trafficking in property confiscated by the Castro regime."

Three of the six purposes focus on promoting democracy in Cuba. This is a noble goal that the vast majority of Americans are proud to endorse. However, an embargo is not an appropriate tool to achieve a peaceful transition to democracy. The reality is that the degree of democratic change that would be acceptable to Washington is never going to come about under Castro. The Helms-Burton Law itself states (Section 2) that "the Castro regime has made it abundantly clear that it will not engage in any substantive political reforms that would lead to democracy, a market economy, or an economic recovery."

But even more important, the Helms-Burton Law itself defines "transitional" government in terms such as to preclude any possibility of a peaceful change under the current conditions. In Section 205, the law stipulates in advance of any possible forthcoming internationally supervised election—that neither now nor in the future will the United States recognize any Cuban government as a "transition" government if Fidel and/or Raúl Castro are in it. Thus the law stipulates that even if Fidel or Raúl were to implement the substantive changes the embargo pressures seek, and/or even if one or both were voted in democratically by the Cuban people in internationally supervised elections, the U.S. still would not change its policy.

Added to this are a myriad of criteria prescribed for a transitional government which may not in some cases be what a legitimate democratically elected government in Cuba might want for its people—or at least not the first things it would want to do. America has imposed no such intrusion into the internal affairs of any other former Marxist State.

These demands simply will not work. Cuba's nationalism is as intense as any country's in the world, and counter-dependency to the United States is firmly rooted in its psyche. Were any post Castro government to bow to such demands from the United States, it would be seen as

acting on orders once again from the Americans, possibly compromising Cuba's independence. The officials of that government and its legitimacy would likely be challenged by some patriot who insists the island maintain its sovereignty and not become once again a protectorate of the U.S.

The second purpose of Helms-Burton is to press the United Nations Security Council to impose a "mandatory international embargo" against Cuba like the one implemented against Haiti. But there has been no multinational agreement with America on this unilateral policy. In fact, in 1993 the U.N. Assembly condemned the embargo eighty-eight to four. Every year since then, the General Assembly has become even more overwhelmingly opposed to the U.S. policy toward Cuba. The latest vote was a scathing one-hundred-sixty-seven to three against the United States, and not one other nation has joined the U.S. trade embargo against Havana.²³

Purpose 3 is to protect the United States from "continuing [national security] threats" from Castro. The fact is Cuba is not a threat to the United States or any of its neighbors. In May 1998 the Defense Intelligence Agency, in cooperation with four other U.S. intelligence agencies, concluded that "Cuba does not pose a significant military threat to the U.S. or to other countries in the region. Cuba has little motivation to engage in military activity beyond defense of its territory and political system."²⁴

The primary motivation for and bulk of the entire law is built around Purpose 6. Helms-Burton seeks to reduce investments in Cuba from other countries by threatening lawsuits and U.S. travel restrictions concerning foreign individuals and companies that invest in property confiscated from Americans after 1 January 1959. This portion of the law is by far the most controversial with America's allies, because it attempts to place foreign nationals and companies dealing within a third country under the rule of U.S. law. The law also added about 400,000 Cuban Americans who were not even Americans at the time their property was confiscated to those who can pursue claims against Cuba.

In other words, if a Cuban plantation owner left Cuba in 1959, and in the late 1990s a Spanish company built a hotel on the old plantation, the former Cuban citizen, if now a U.S. citizen, can sue the Spanish company in a U.S. court for "trafficking in confiscated property." The U.S. court is therefore exercising jurisdiction over actions of a foreign company that took place in a foreign land, for the benefit of someone who was, at the time of his loss, a foreign citizen.²⁵ The fact is that the Castro government can not afford to pay the claims even if it so desired. Furthermore, it will be impossible for a new government, which must clean up the economic mess Castro will leave behind, to compensate claimants without financial aid from the United States, thus undermining its own counter-dependency legitimacy.

In all this, Helms-Burton has shifted U.S. preconditions for lifting the embargo from foreign affairs to an insistence on reforms in the domestic arena. On February 27, 1998 Secretary of State Madeleine Albright summed up the new U.S. post-Cold War focus: "The policy of the United States is clear," she stated, "We want a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba. It is that simple. It is that unshakable. And towards that goal, we will never compromise our principles, nor cease our efforts."²⁶ A State Department official further explained that "a fundamental premise of our policy toward Cuba has been that the current Cuban government will not institute political and economic change unless it has to," and therefore Washington will have to apply whatever pressure is needed, alone if necessary, to bring the change.²⁷

THE EMBARGO AND THE LAW OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

During the Cold War the embargo on Cuba made sense for the United States because Havana actively worked against American national interests, both on its own and as an ally of the Soviet Union. But today, things have changed. The Cuban revolutionary Armed Forces retain only "some residual combat support strengths that are essentially defensive in nature" and has been transformed "from one of the most active militaries in the Third World into a stay-at-home force that has minimal conventional fighting ability."²⁸ During the Cold War, the embargo worked to limit violence by limiting the adventurism of the Cuban military and its Soviet sponsor. Today the continuation of the embargo, particularly the Helms-Burton version, may have the opposite effect.

The strategy of the U.S. policy is to make life evermore difficult in Cuba so that Castro will make reforms or the Cuban people will overthrow him. In other words, if the embargo's economic pressure will not force Castro's adoption of democratic elections, the only implicit rationale for keeping the embargo is that the overall economic suffering will trigger the violent overthrow of the government. Considering the extensive and heavily armed security forces within Cuba, such a transition could be very violent. An attempt at violent overthrow could entail a split among the various security forces, which would likely increase the level of initial armed conflict, not to mention a continuing aftermath of retribution.²⁹ The resulting chaos could draw the United States into involvement. Therefore, even if U.S. domestic opinion generally opposed such an intervention, significant losses by anti-Castro forces during a general uprising or civil war would result in enormous pressure on Washington to send military support.

This strategy can only aid Castro who does his best to convince Cubans that if the Cuban-Americans return in force, backed by Washington and the International Monetary fund, they will seize the properties they abandoned—or that were confiscated—nearly four decades ago and in

general retake and remake Cuba in their own image. Cubans have been told that a new regime would mean a loss of status, homes, jobs, security, and in some cases, lives. The new government, they fear, would undertake major free market reforms that would bring chaos to Cuba comparable to that in post-Soviet Russia.

Helms-Burton gives Castro his best propaganda tool to feed these fears, and he has used it masterfully. In January 1997, Cuba passed a law penalizing U.S. citizens who seek restitution of their expropriated properties under the Helms-Burton provisions. Significantly, the law recognizes the right of individuals to seek compensation for their losses prior to the 1959 revolution, once the United States and Cuba negotiate an agreement. However, it excludes U.S. citizens from any indemnification settlement if they take action against Cuba under Helms-Burton. The Cuban law also allows Cuban citizens to sue for claims of "theft, torture, corruption and murder" from Batista era officials who now reside in the United States. Finally, it allows Cubans to pursue damage claims against the United States stemming from U.S. military and economic action against the island.³⁰

The LIBERTAD act is so imperialistic and offensive to Cubans that Castro has made it widely available to be read and discussed in schools, universities, work centers, and civic organizations. Because the bulk of the legislation focuses more on property claims and less on the stated goal of "assisting the Cuban people in regaining their freedom and prosperity," Castro recognizes the powerful affront ordinary Cubans feel concerning the spirit of the law. Rather than causing Cubans to rise up and revolt against the Castro government, the embargo has actually had the affect of uniting Cubans in Cuba against the common enemy: the Cubans in Miami and the United States. The gap between Cubans in Cuba and Cuban-Americans, as one analyst points out, will likely pose an enormous challenge after Castro is gone. "By bringing back the issue of property rights and the division between the 'haves' who left and the 'have-nots' who stayed," notes Ana Jatar, "Helms-Burton has reunited the Cuban society behind the Castro government, and deepened feelings of distrust against the United States. Read from Havana, U.S. policy seems more concerned with old properties than with new democracy."³¹

CONCLUSIONS

The irony of U.S. policy toward Cuba is that it seeks a peaceful transition to democracy in that country, yet actively encourages the opposite effect. During the cold war, Castro's Soviet-oriented policies were a challenge to U.S. interests. Washington was constantly at war in various ways with the Cuban Leader, elevating him in status to a world figure, far out of

proportion to his position as the dictator of a tiny Island. Today, Castro's foreign policies are generally conducted according to international expectations, and his significance for the United States has largely disappeared. But the U.S. has not changed its policy toward him and thus continues to project him as larger than life onto the world stage. Therefore those who proclaim themselves Castro's worst enemies have in fact become guarantors of his heritage as an unflinching "anti-imperialist," still defying what he calls U.S. efforts to stamp out any diversity in the world.

Advocating the lifting of the embargo is not an endorsement of Castro's leadership of Cuba, but rather a more effective use of America's resources to achieve the best outcome for the United States and Cuba. When President Nixon began the normalization process with the Peoples' Republic of China in 1972, he was dealing with a leader in Mao Tse-Tung whose policies during the Great Leap Forward just over a decade earlier had killed enough people to equal the current total population of Cuba three times over. A quarter of a century later, the United States even struck a deal to lift the embargo on Stalinist North Korea. Is Castro really more incorrigible than Mao Tse-Tung and Kim Jong Il?³²

The fact is that Havana's counter-dependency achievements have served to enhance its already considerable political and diplomatic credentials in the hemisphere as well as in the larger international community. Moreover, Havana has already met the challenge of making the changes in both its domestic and foreign policies necessary to assure that the Revolution will survive in the post-Cold War world. This makes it increasingly difficult for those in the United States who argue for a hard-line policy of Cuban exceptionalism. The basic idea here is that it is rather difficult to portray Havana as a special case—a "rogue government"—requiring abnormally harsh treatment when practically all other countries in the Western Hemisphere and elsewhere (among them Washington's closest traditional allies) maintain conventional diplomatic relations with Cuba. Many of them are expanding their trade and commercial ties to the island, and some are establishing cooperative developmental coalitions with it.³³

There are two basic ways to lift the embargo, piecemeal or all at once. A partial lifting of the embargo in response to some change for the better in the Castro regime will not work. First, it is inconceivable to any but the most intractable anti-Castro elements in the United States that a settlement could occur on the basis of the Helms-Burton provisions calling for virtual political suicide on the part of the Revolution. Second, this quid pro quo approach has failed in the past and likely will fail in the future. Castro will never willingly allow himself to be seen as succumbing to Washington's directives. He may play with the idea of normalization; but at the

moment he perceives his control and Cuban sovereignty threatened, he will revert to the status quo.³⁴

The only way to take the initiative away from Castro and give it to the U.S., for the first time since 1959, is to lift the embargo all at once. Cuba's reputation as a giant-killer would initially soar. In effect, it would finally have won the century-old battle to have its sovereignty and legitimacy officially recognized by the United States. For America's part the act should be accompanied by clear statements that Castro has been dropped from America's "Most Wanted" to its "Least Relevant" list. The point is not that declaring a one-sided truce with Castro—by lifting the embargo—will necessarily bring democracy and improved human rights to Cuba, but rather that the embargo has not brought these either, shows no signs whatsoever of being able to do so in the future, and has many actual and potential adverse effects on U.S. interests.

WORD COUNT = 4537

ENDNOTES

¹ Colin L. Powell, My American Journey (New York, Random House Inc., 1995), 491.

² The National Security Strategy states that U.S. policy is to promote a peaceful transition to democracy, control migration and encourage economic reform. See William J. Clinton, A National Security Strategy for a New Century (Washington, D.C.: The White House, December 1999), 41. The Helms-Burton law, discussed later, expands these objectives considerably.

³ Counter-dependency politics is the theme of H. Michael Erisman, Cuba's Foreign Relations in a Post Soviet World (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2000).

⁴ H. Michael Erisman, Cuba's Foreign Relations in a Post Soviet World (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2000), 20-21 & 207. For more on this topic see also Louis A. Pérez, Jr, Cuba Between Empires, 1878-1902 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1982); Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990); and Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁵ Mark T. Gilderhus, The Second Century: U.S.—Latin American Relations Since 1889 (Wilmington, DE; Scholarly Resources Inc., 2000), 22-23.

⁶ Louis A. Pérez, Jr. Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 102-13.

⁷ In fact, as historian Hugh Thomas has said, ongoing U.S. interference in Cuban affairs at the beginning of the century "fatally delayed the achievement of political stability in Cuba—and in effect opened the door for a Fidel Castro." Hugh Thomas, The Cuban Revolution (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), xxv.

⁸ Cuba was a member of the soviet bloc's Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon). In 1988, 85 percent of Cuban trade had been with the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Cuban trade with former Comecon nations declined by two-thirds between 1989 and 1992, a heavy blow for a country that had depended on Comecon for over four-fifths of its imports. Donna Rich Kaplowitz, Anatomy of a Failed Embargo: U.S. Sanctions against Cuba (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1998) 145.

⁹ William Ratliff and Roger Fontaine, A Strategic Flip-Flop in the Caribbean Lift the Embargo on Cuba (Sanford, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 2000) 7.

¹⁰ Jay Gordon, "Cuba's Entrepreneurial Socialism," The Atlantic Monthly, January 1997, 18-30; "Cuba Country Information," 16 November 1999. Available from http://www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/cuba/country_info.html; Internet; Accessed 18 Sep 2000, 6-7.

¹¹ Erisman, 224.

¹² Ratliff and Fontaine, 8.

¹³ Patrick E. Tyler, "Putin Feels Whiff of Soviet Era In Cuba," The New York Times December 15, 2000.

¹⁴ He knows that, more than anything else, the embargo keeps him from becoming just another in a centuries-long string of failed Latin American dictators. Ratliff and Fontaine 19-21.

¹⁵ During the investigation it was learned that the Brothers to the Rescue had been infiltrated by at least one Cuban agent and that the shutdown had been planned in advance. For a very detailed account see John Dorschner, "Clear and Present Danger," The Miami Herald 16 February 1997, available from <http://www.fiu.edu/~fcf/brothers21497.html>; Internet, accessed 12 December 2000.

¹⁶ For a point by point narrative of the legislative process and timing surrounding the passage of Helms-Burton see Erisman, 178-184.

¹⁷ Law 88, the Law for the Protection of the National Independence and Economy of Cuba, provides a penalty of up to 20 years imprisonment for a series of offenses. These include providing information to the US government; owning, distributing or reproducing material produced by the US government or any other foreign entity; and collaborating, by any means, with foreign radio, television, press or other foreign media, with the purpose of destabilizing the country and destroying the socialist state. Amnesty International Annual Report 2000, Cuba 1.

¹⁸ Gilderhus gives a readable account of the tit for tat events between Castro and America leading up to the embargo, 164-171.

¹⁹ Ratliff and Fontaine, 9.

²⁰ More significantly, the U.S. State Department now acknowledges (on its Internet web pages) that Cuba has abandoned support for guerrilla movements. Country Information, 8. Erisman, 170.

²¹ Erisman, 170-171.

²² *ibid.*, 183-184.

²³ For a record of the votes from 1993 to 1998 see Erisman, 193. For a report on the latest vote see "U.N., Cuba Urge U.S. to End Embargo; Resolution Passes by Widest Margin," The Washington Post, November 10, 2000 A32.

²⁴ Defense Intelligence Agency, "The Cuban Threat to U.S. National Security," released in May 1998, prepared in coordination with the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, the National Security Agency, and the United States Southern Command Joint Intelligence Center.

²⁵ Jay Gordon, "Cuba's Entrepreneurial Socialism," The Atlantic Monthly January 1997, 18-30.

²⁶ U.S. Department of State, U.S.-Cuban Relations available from <http://www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/cuba/policy.html>; Internet; accessed 2 October 2000.

²⁷ Made by Michael Ranneberger to the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Trade, quoted in Ratliff and Fontaine, 10.

²⁸ Defense Intelligence Agency, "The Cuban Threat to U.S. National Security," released in May 1998.

²⁹ Ernest H. Preeg, Feeling Good or Doing Good with Sanctions, Unilateral Economic Sanctions and the U.S. National Interest (Washington, D.C.: The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) 1999) 34.

³⁰ Kaplowitz, 185.

³¹ Ana Julia Jatar, "Helms-burton Backfires," Washington Post, July 22, 1996, A19.

³² Al Neuharth, "Clinton's Last Legacy: 'Tear down this wall'" USA Today, Nov 10, 2000, 15.

³³ Erisman, 225.

³⁴ Richard N. Haass, ed., Economic Sanctions and American Diplomacy (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations, 1998) 54.

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