A STRATEGIC FLIP-FLOP IN THE CARIBBEAN

Lift the Embargo on Cuba

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Executive Summary

For almost three decades the U.S. embargo of Cuba was part of America's cold war strategy against the Soviet bloc. It should have been lifted after that "war" ended since Castro ceased to threaten the United States and its neighbors and adopted the standard rules of international behavior. But inertia, a powerful Cuban American lobby, and misguided politicians set new demands: democracy, improved human rights, and economic reform. When Castro demurred we tightened the sanctions in 1992 and again in 1996 with the Helms-Burton Law. The United States has never committed the resources necessary to overthrow Castro, however, and the pressures we have applied have utterly failed to advance the three objectives. Worse yet, in the post–cold war world the policy and political outlook that sustain it have become a strategic liability. They promote conflict, both within Cuba—where a crisis might draw in the U.S. military—and abroad, as occurred in 1999–2000 after the arrival in Florida of the rafter boy, Elián González. They allow pressure groups to stand in the way of the policy-making process of the U.S. government. For example, the lobby manipulated wishy-washy politicians in 1998–1999 and got the president to turn down a widely supported proposal for a bipartisan commission to conduct the first comprehensive evaluation of the policy in four decades. Finally, the imperialistic Helms-Burton Law alienates allies worldwide and will poison relations between the United States and Cuba for decades to come. Castro will benefit no matter what we do, but on balance he gains more if we maintain the sanctions because they provide a scapegoat for his own repression and economic failures even as they enable him to maintain his cherished global image as the "scourge of U.S. imperialism." Castro can wage a worldwide campaign against the embargo to bolster his image knowing Washington is too inflexible to change it. Indeed, whenever Washington has lightened up, Castro has tightened up and effectively prevented further improvement. Lifting sanctions need not mean establishing friendly relations with Castro—which he

would reject in any event—or supporting his efforts to get international aid without meeting standard requirements. The ultimate responsibility for maintaining this antiquated and potentially dangerous policy falls on politicians who either do not understand the need for, or for political reasons are afraid to support, a new policy to benefit both Americans and Cubans in the post–cold war world.

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Lift the Embargo on Cuba

For more than four decades Fidel Castro has fueled an acrimonious dispute between supporters and opponents of both his government in Cuba and himself and his activities around the world.[1] During the cold war, the dispute generally pitted Marxists and other harsh critics of U.S. foreign policy against center-right opponents of communism in its varied forms. The Marxists and other critics traced Castro's hostility toward the United States, Cuba's political and economic problems, and Castro's Soviet-bloc alignment to Washington policies. The center-right opponents, more correctly, did not. Since the end of the cold war, however, distinctions between left and right have become blurred on many foreign policy issues, from the bombing of Yugoslavia to Cuba. Within the United States, disputes over U.S. policy toward Cuba have become openly divisive because former anti-Castro colleagues now are at odds with one another. Increasingly, longtime American critics of Castro and his policies are concluding that, in the post–cold war era, the United States needs a new policy toward the island. For some years the most prominent critics of the embargo ranged from the late president Richard Nixon through columnists William Buckley and George Will to the first Latin Americanist on President Reagan's National Security Council staff, and analysts at the Cato Institute and Hoover Institution. With

the initiative to set up a Presidential Bipartisan Commission on Cuba launched in October 1998, the number of those openly and as a group committed to at least seriously reevaluating current policy jumped exponentially. Among the supporters of a comprehensive reevaluation were former secretaries of state George Shultz, Henry Kissinger, and Lawrence Eagleburger and former Senate majority leader Howard H. Baker Jr. By mid-December 1998 Senator John Warner and twenty-five Senate colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, were calling for a bipartisan commission. This number included the majority of Republicans (most of whom had supported the 1996 Helms-Burton Law)[2] on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee chaired by current embargo architect Jesse Helms. Latent tensions flared in November 1999 when a young Cuban boy was picked up off the coast of Florida after his mother had drowned at sea trying to reach the states and when the pilot of a small plane rented in the United States "bombed" Havana with pamphlets.[3]

The most militant supporters of the embargo today—who might be called the embargo lobby—are mainly Cuban Americans, some members of Congress from both major parties, a diminishing number of professors and think tank analysts, and many people whose assets in Cuba were confiscated nearly four decades ago.[4] President Clinton has occasionally dropped the political clichés and spoken frankly on Cuba. For example, he has stated that Cuban Americans in Miami are largely responsible for U.S. Cuba policy today and that, for all his criticism of the embargo, Fidel Castro seems to do everything he can to maintain it.[5] Yet as a politician, his major official actions in 1992, 1996, and 1998–1999 brought about the worst aspects of current U.S. policy and prevented a serious evaluation of the sanctions. His occasional efforts to reduce tensions have been at best marginally successful, when they didn't actually backfire. All prominent hopefuls for the 2000 presidential election support some version of current policy. Most members of Congress—even those who privately imply or admit they think otherwise—still seem to think the lobby has enough votes, money, and

decibels at its disposal to warrant continued hands-off treatment for domestic political reasons.

The lobby is now led politically by the Cuban American and other members of Congress and the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF). Prominent individuals include Representatives Lincoln Díaz-Balart (R-FL), Robert Menéndez (D-NJ), and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and legislators from Florida, Indiana, North Carolina, and Indiana. The lobby demonstrated its clout between October 1998 and January 1999, when it got the Clinton administration to reject the proposed bipartisan commission.[6] The three Cuban American legislators wrote President Clinton in October 1998 calling the proposal for a commission "a blatant attempt by some elitist business interests to do what they have been unable to do in Congress: circumvent the will of the American people. The idea is clearly a subterfuge intended to create pressure to lift the embargo without securing freedom and democracy for the Cuban people."[7] But, if embargo supporters really believe their case will stand up to careful scrutiny, they did their cause a disservice by blocking the commission. In fact, the shrill public statements and arm-twisting typical of the embargo's loudest spokespersons are alienating more and more people, including former anti-Castro allies. What is more, the most ardent advocates are not bothered by facts. For example, they say "the will of the American people" is to maintain the embargo, but a recent Gallup poll shows that only 42 percent of those polled support the embargo while 51 percent oppose it.[8] Still for now the bottom line in Washington is that, on a policy of marginal interest to most Americans, a highly focused pressure group can wield political and economic clout few politicians have the political courage to contend with in the electoral marketplace.

Too often today the main issues raised, particularly by the most militant politicians and political activists who support sanctions, seem to be driven by an understandable but misguided and counterproductive vendetta against Fidel Castro that smacks of hysteria and cold war politics. For example, those who urge the lifting of sanctions are often

said to be "soft" on Castro, lack concern for the plight of the Cuban people and their desire for liberty, or be driven by an insatiable craving for money. But although some who support ending sanctions are indeed one or more of the above, many have a long record proving the contrary. Too many embargo supporters seem to have studied strategy and tactics with Don Quixote; they simply brandish slightly updated versions of old leftist/rightist clichés to tilt with windmills guarded by straw men. The tragic commentary on U.S. policy toward Cuba is that Don Quixote invariably wins.

This kind of pseudoargumentation effectively sidesteps—one must assume it is on purpose—the real issues, for the main challenge today is not who is tough or soft on Castro but what is the most productive way to deal with him and Cuba under post–cold war conditions.[9] As Henry Kissinger wrote in mid-1998, in a different but parallel situation, whatever chance sanctions have of working "depends on the ability to define an achievable objective."[10] U.S. policy toward Cuba today has no achievable objective. Just about the only people who benefit from it now are those who manipulate it for political purposes, mainly Castro and those in the United States who have made a career of fighting him in uncompromising terms. U.S. foreign policy should be built on more solid foundations and on behalf of broader constituencies.

In recent years, several mainly nongovernment commissions and organizations have examined U.S.-Cuban relations from a variety of perspectives. In 1995, for example, an Atlantic Council study dealt with "the range of topics that will need to be addressed once decisions are made to restore normal relations with a Cuba whose leaders are committed to establishing a fully democratic system of government." In January 1999 the Council on Foreign Relations produced a program for restoring relations step by step; in early 1999 the RAND Corporation published the results of a broader forum conducted the year before.[11]

There have been others, but none has been a detailed critique of current policy such as would have been produced by the bipartisan commission, which was aborted by a compromising president. This essay

is intended to provide at least some of the facts and analyses Cuban Americans, the Congress, and the president, by their actions, show they don't want Americans to know. It begins with a brief introduction to Fidel Castro, moves to a discussion of embargoes generally and the embargo of Cuba in particular, explaining why Castro gains more from keeping sanctions than from having them lifted but stands to win or lose some either way. Much of the study focuses on problems with U.S. policy today, particularly as embodied in its current formulation, the 1996 Helms-Burton Law. The analysis then turns to several general issues that should be considered in the discussion, including the long-term negative impact the 1996 law will have on U.S.-Cuban relations. In deference to those who focus their support for the embargo on its "morality," we discuss that aspect before turning to the path of serious reform that might be undertaken by Fidel and perhaps Raúl Castro in the years ahead and a conclusion.

Fidel Castro's Roots

For more than five decades, Fidel Castro's actions have suggested two dominant compulsions that, for four decades, shaped the lives of the Cuban people, dictated the Maximum Leader's international alliances, disrupted many lives and countries around the world, and determined the direction of U.S. relations with Cuba. As discussed in detail by Edward González and David Ronfeldt in a RAND Corporation study, these compulsions are opposition to the United States and everything Castro associates with this country, particularly its economic system, and an ego that demands gratification beyond the confines of a Caribbean island.[12]

In 1958, before he had even taken power by overthrowing then dictator Fulgencio Batista, Castro wrote a letter to his close colleague Célia Sánchez, 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 them [the United States]. I am aware that this is my true des-

tiny."[13] In the early 1960s Castro became an ally of the Soviet bloc but not because he believed in communism. Rather, Castro's words and actions over the decades suggest that he is instead a brilliant opportunist who adopts and adapts the relevant portions of whatever ideology seems to serve his interests at the moment. His great inspiration as a youth was Adolph Hitler, and by far the most famous lines he has delivered in tens of thousands of hours of speeches—"Condemn me, it does not matter. History will absolve me"—are simply a clever paraphrase of the conclusion of Hitler's self-defense after the Beer Hall Putsch in 1923.[14] Castro became a nominal Marxist-Leninist in the early 1960s for several interrelated reasons.[15] First, during the cold war communism gave his opposition to the United States and imperialism an intellectual coherence and respectability in many quarters around the world. But second, and more important, as a Marxist-Leninist he could be an ally of the Soviet Union, which for its own geostrategic reasons sought support from a government in the Western Hemisphere with a common mission to destroy "U.S. imperialism." This alliance allowed Castro to challenge Washington from behind the once formidable Soviet shield and assured him that Moscow and its bloc would bail him out of any self-inflicted domestic economic crises.[16] Only with this support and in this cold war context could Castro have been the international persona he was for decades and rallied so many to his "anti-imperialist" cause, from Latin America to Africa and Asia. Given these two driving forces he would have been foolish—and in promoting his own interests Castro is no fool—to persist in openly admiring Hitler or allying himself with Mao Zedong and his then weak, impoverished China. In fact, when Castro became "pro-Soviet" he became militantly hostile toward China's leaders even though his pseudo Marxism usually was much closer to Mao's than to that of his patrons in Moscow.[17]

But whatever his proclaimed ideological base, Castro has regularly convinced many outsiders that Cubans in general have gained far more from his forty years in power than they would have under a "bourgeois democratic" or any other kind of leader.[18] Although this claim cannot

be settled since the alternative never occurred, much history and testimony of those who worked with Castro suggest that he sacrificed general well-being for his personal objectives. For example, longtime Interior Ministry official Juan Antonio Rodríguez Menier, who worked directly with the Cuban leader, writes: "Fidel Castro has convinced many Cubans and others abroad that he is the champion of the poor when, in fact, he has manipulated the poverty of his once relatively well-off country in order to maintain his personal power and pursue his private agenda."[19] Castro is indeed the "great feigner and dissembler" Machiavelli described in *The Prince*, one who is surrounded both at home and abroad by "those who allow themselves to be deceived"—or whose interests are served for a time by cooperating with him.[20]

Castro and the Post-Soviet World

When the Soviet bloc collapsed, Cuba fell into what Castro himself has called the deepest economic crisis in the country's history. Cuba was a member of the Soviet bloc's Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), an alignment that made the island as dependent on the bloc as it had been on the United States on the eve of Castro's victory.[21] With Comecon's demise, Cuba's international trade and national production dived by an estimated 40 percent. As the only remaining satellite of a burned-out trade universe, Cuba had no significant surviving trade or barter partners, no convertible currency, no foreign exchange to buy from other countries, and few high-quality domestically produced products to sell abroad. Over time, this forced a reluctant Castro to make—but not always to maintain—modest economic changes in certain areas to help Cubans cope with life in this difficult "special period in a time of peace." At the same time, Castro has defiantly refused to reform, radically or systematically, Cuba's economy away from failed statism. Indeed, at the most recent Cuban Communist Party Congress in October 1997, he claimed that "socialism" would be maintained in Cuba at all costs, as he did during the November 1999 Iberoamerican

summit in Havana.[22] Although state control of the economy in Cuba has slipped slightly and limited pressures have mounted for political change, politics has remained monolithic and the military has remained loyal. Even so, recognizing mortality, Castro has taken steps to try to assure that his brother Raúl will succeed him—if indeed Raúl survives Fidel—and govern, probably in cooperation with National Assembly president Ricardo Alarcón and/or some other younger party leaders.[23] By the late 1990s Cuba's economy had stabilized, though many Cubans say living conditions are worse at the beginning of the new millennium than they were five years earlier, during the official lowest point in the nation's economic crisis.[24]

The end of the cold war didn't end Castro's criticism of the United States. His targets now range from the embargo in particular to Washington's orientation in general. U.S.-supported globalism, he said in mid-1998, is "unsustainable" and will result in an "inevitable" crisis worldwide, a comment that gained credibility as international economic problems increased in Asia, Russia, and Latin America. In September 1998 in Durban, South Africa, in the wake of U.S. air attacks on Iraq, he 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." The U.S-led NATO attack on Yugoslavia in 1999 gave Castro and much of the world tangible evidence of what the Cuban leader called the continuing threat of "U.S. imperialism" to individual countries and the world. Indeed, after NATO had bombed Yugoslavia for seventy-eight days, Castro could claim that in some ways Russia, China, and many other countries were "on his side" because of their concern for or anger at Washington's actual and threatened assault on national sovereignty worldwide. The embargo of Cuba allows Castro to paint himself as an early victim of Washington, whereas the bombing of Yugoslavia and the "Clinton doctrine" gave him grounds for arguing that, unless the world unites to protect itself, Washington as the sole superpower will find more victims like Yugoslavia—and maybe Cuba—in the future.[25]

The Embargo Then and Now

The embargo of Cuba was imposed by the United States when Castro nationalized U.S. properties in Cuba, established links to the Soviet bloc, and supported assorted anti-American countries and organizations in the context of the cold war. Although they did not bring Castro's government down, the sanctions made strategic sense for three decades because Cuba's global involvement in Soviet-promoted aggression was contrary to U.S. interests. In accordance with U.S. cold war objectives, the embargo complicated Castro's support for armed groups and other 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.

The logical U.S. response to the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the end of the cold war would have been to lift the embargo unilaterally, as it had been imposed, since the main conditions the embargo responded to were gone. The cold war was over, with its division of the world into competing political, economic, and military camps, as was Cuba as a significant strategic challenge and active patron of international subversion. The one additional factor that led to the embargo—the nationalization of U.S. properties after 1959—can never be resolved by an embargo. Lifting the sanctions would not require establishing close relations with Havana, which most Americans would not have wanted and Castro himself would have rejected in any event.

But when the cold war ended, Washington and the Cuban American communities in Florida and New Jersey devised new reasons for maintaining—even tightening—the embargo. Although some in the embargo lobby continue to argue that Castro is a strategic threat to the United States, this argument probably doesn't even convince most of those who make it; thus the essence of the new critique of Cuba has had to shift. As one of Clinton's special advisers on Cuba said, Washington "moved the goalposts."[26] On 20 March 1998 President Clinton summarized the alleged U.S. objective of the 1990s: "The overarching

goal of American policy must be to promote a peaceful transition to democracy on the island." A State Department official added 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 thus Washington will have to apply whatever pressure is needed, alone if necessary, to bring the change.[27]

The problem with U.S. policy is not that democracy and human rights are bad things to promote but that they cannot be achieved or even advanced in Cuba under present circumstances with the resources the United States is willing to commit.[28] Therefore, there is an unbridgeable gap between the high goals we proclaim and our ability to bring them about. It is as facile as it is futile for the U.S. government or the CANF or whomever to simply proclaim "Castro must go," for, like the police in Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *Pirates of Penzance*, history has shown that he "won't go," at least not according to our timetable.

This state of affairs has led to a great deal of superficial and tortured commentary by most embargo supporters, even from generally perceptive and informed analysts. A political adviser to one Republican presidential candidate took a disarmingly flip approach to the problem when she was asked if the United States should "normalize relations" with Cuba. "Not as long as Fidel Castro holds power," she quipped. "Castro 'bet on the wrong horse,' and he should pay for it."[29] Edward González and Richard Nuccio took a more serious look at the question but also oversimplified when discussing what they termed the *two opposing camps* in this policy dispute. Immediately after quoting the present authors as representatives of the antiembargo pole, González and Nuccio state the alleged assumptions of all of us in this "pole":

- "First, however halting it may be, Cuba is undergoing a process of system change comparable to the transitions that gripped post-Maoist China, Gorbachev's Soviet Union, and post-1987 Vietnam.

- Second, current U.S. policy toward Cuba is driven primarily if not exclusively by domestic politics because of the influence of the right-wing Cuban-American community, and the importance of Florida and New Jersey as key electoral states.
- Third, whereas our present confrontational and punitive policy serves as a brake on Cuba's transition, a more conciliatory policy would help accelerate economic and political reforms in that country."

They continue that "these assumptions are questionable. They are not grounded in Cuba's current reality."[30]

But these are precisely the kinds of characterizations and clichés—the Don Quixote approach—that serious analysts must transcend. Either supporters of current policy still don't understand what some critics are saying, or they are simply setting up straw men who can be bumped off to prop up a bankrupt policy. Not all critics of the embargo believe most of what González and Nuccio attribute to them, as will be shown below. For now, suffice it to say that we reject the first assumption outright, largely agree with the second, and believe the third is an open question.

Before beginning a detailed critique of the embargo, it may be instructive to look at an inclusive statement by the most important sanctions support group in the United States, the Cuban American National Foundation. The full CANF response to its own question—"Has the U.S. embargo against the Castro regime been successful?"—is as follows: "The trade prohibition imposed on Castro's regime advances four important U.S. policy objectives, which also serve the interests of the Cuban people.

- First, it is an enduring symbol of this country's firm stance against totalitarianism and a clear message to those who would rule by the

force of violence and repression rather than the will of reason and public consent.

- Second, it forced the Soviet Union to pay a tremendous, and ultimately unsustainable, price (approximately $100 billion since 1960) in order to maintain a far-reaching military outpost and subsidize an aggressively hostile Marxist dictatorship in the Western Hemisphere.
- Third, it limited Castro's ability to self-generate the resources necessary to project military power and support communist insurgencies abroad.
- Fourth, it limits Castro's ability to provide his inner circle and the privileged *nomenklatura* of the Communist Party with the perks and prerogatives essential to maintaining their loyalty to the Maximum Leader.

"As a result," CANF argues, "the embargo today serves as the major obstacle to the finding of substitute markets, credit and assistance at the crucial time when the Eastern bloc, Castro's former political and economic base of support, has collapsed. With nowhere to turn for aid, Castro must reform or leave. Since he is incapable of reform, he will be forced from power, perhaps by the same ones who until the day before were part of his entourage."[31]

Although comments on these points will be made throughout this essay, a brief response to these alleged "successes" of the embargo will put the CANF commentary and much proembargo argumentation in perspective. First note that the question is in the present tense, as it should be, saying the embargo "advances" U.S. objectives and will "serve the interests" of the Cuban people. But then note that two of the four "important objectives"—numbers 2 and 3—are quite rightly discussed in the past tense since they have already been achieved; that is to say, they are irrelevant to policy today. On the third point, it should be added that Castro did not stop supporting foreign insurgencies because

he lacked resources; he did so because few people in other countries retained any interest in armed insurgencies and because he could not continue supporting insurgencies and be an active participant in the contemporary international system, which he is almost everywhere except in Miami and Washington. For example, Castro could never have hosted the ninth annual Iberoamerican summit in Havana in November 1999 if he had still been supporting guerrilla bands around the hemisphere, that is, if he had not adopted a new international posture.

The CANF's other two proofs of the success of the embargo are at least properly in the present tense. Indeed, U.S. policy can be read as symbolizing a refusal to accept totalitarianism or as evidence of America's continuing "imperialistic" intervention in the affairs of smaller countries, which is the reading of the overwhelming majority of people outside Miami and Washington. How high is the price the Cuban people must pay day by day and year by year for the maintenance of this "symbol"? Finally, it may be correct that the embargo makes it harder for Castro to keep his most loyal supporters happy, though we have little or no empirical evidence of this. In any event this "benefit," if it exists, has to be weighed alongside the other gains and losses, discussed below, of the entire policy. For now, although it is true that conditions in Cuba might possibly lead to a coup against Castro by some of his leadership circle, it is less likely to come because they were deprived of payoffs by a discredited leader than because they see reform as necessary for the country and their own careers.[32] A decade ago, the one increasingly reform-oriented section of the government was the upper level of the Ministry of the Interior, the well-rewarded body that protects and promotes Fidel, which would be the last group to have its perks cut today or any time. The embargo does somewhat complicate Castro's search for foreign support, but the two sides in the embargo disagree on whether this is good or bad for the Cuban people.

The present study supports a reversal in U.S. policy because the embargo now

1. Polarizes Cubans in Cuba and abroad; thus to the extent that the pressure is significant it increases the prospects for an eventual civil war rather than the "peaceful transition" U.S. leaders say they seek, and this in turn raises the prospects of a costly U.S. military intervention in Cuba to prevent Castro from crushing the reformers.[33]

2. Sets the stage for innumerable small encounters that could escalate. For example, what if the bomber on 1 January 2000 had dropped explosives rather than leaflets, or if Castro had shot him down as he did two Cessnas that allegedly overflew Cuban territorial waters in 1996? As it was, Castro sent up two MiGs and the United States launched an F-16. The flight was not illegal under U.S. law, and since many in Miami hailed it as a heroic act, the same thing could easily happen again. Also, Cuban American hawks closed down parts of Miami and stoked international tensions, calling the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) decision in early January 2000 to send Elián González back to his father in Cuba a sellout to Castro. The abandon with which many advocates of family values cast aside the rights of the boy's father shows how politicized this matter has become.

3. Encourages determined pressure groups to lobby a constantly compromising U.S. executive and Congress in such a way as to threaten the essential interaction of several branches of the government in the analysis and defense of U.S. interests.

4. Antagonizes our allies around the world, complicating cooperation on other important issues.

5. Sets the stage for new generations of hostility between Cubans and Americans because of the imperialistic demands of the Torricelli Act and especially the Helms-Burton Law.

6. Serves more than it than impedes Castro's own interests by

providing a scapegoat for his hopeless economic policies and continuing domestic repression, making him the target of a U.S. vendetta that is condemned by the rest of the world and thus enables him to maintain at least a vestige of his all-important self-portrayal as a defiant warrior against "U.S. imperialism."

7. Imposes at least some degree of additional hardship on the Cuban people with no evidence that these hardships will improve their living conditions now or in the foreseeable future. Washington claims its policy is on behalf of the Cuban people, though there is no significant evidence that the Cuban people support the embargo and many indications that they do not. Even the majority of activists reportedly want it lifted.[34]

8. Makes critically important cooperation between and among Cubans in Cuba and abroad in the eventual post-Castro period more difficult to achieve.

9. Has at least a better chance of opening up society and the economy than current policy, which does nothing of the sort.

10. Is so cluttered with contradictions and inconsistencies it has become a dishonest, embarrassing, and pernicious policy unworthy of the United States.

A few embargo supporters try to defuse criticism by maintaining that sanctions are valuable because they can "weaken a target country" even if they don't "bring surrender on key issues." According to an analyst featured in a CANF newsletter, the critics of the embargo have "set the bar too high."[35] But that bar—the proclaimed goals of the embargo—is the one set by the U.S. government and most supporters of the sanctions, not by the critics who simply measure the policy against its stated objectives.

Embargoes and Foreign Policy

One analyst who defends the embargo argues that "the elimination of economic sanctions as a foreign policy tool . . . would leave our government with just two alternatives: words or war." Another observes that "economic sanctions are an invention of liberal statesmanship, a kind of peaceful alternative to the massive death and destruction caused by armed conflict. If trade embargoes are inhumane, the practice of bombing cities is infinitely more so."[36] First, the argument here is not that embargoes should never be used but that they should be applied only when they have a realistic chance of achieving a specified, desirable national and/or international—not domestic partisan political—objective. If the only foreign policy alternatives really were between words and "bombing cities," one might well subscribe to the Clinton administration's practice of applying unilateral or multilateral sanctions more often than all other presidents since the end of World War I combined.[37] But there are subtle options between words—what kind of words?—and bombs. What is more, when a policy is not working or is counterproductive, an honorable and rational nation should end that policy even if there is no obviously better thing to do. In the Cuban case, for example, the alternative of no sanctions is itself an improvement over current policy because it reduces the chances of negative fallout coming from the sanctions.

Gary Hufbauer and colleagues affiliated with the Institute of International Economics have conducted extensive studies of the embargoes of recent decades and found them to be ineffective in most cases. Jeffrey Schott told a House committee in June 1998 that in the 1990s sanctions have been successful in less than 20 percent of cases, even when "success" is defined as no more than making "a modest contribution to at least the partial achievement" of policy objectives. Among modern sanctions, Hufbauer concludes, the embargo of Cuba is one of the "unqualified failures."[38] With respect to sanctions as an alternative to words and guns, Hufbauer correctly warns: "When the president imposes

comprehensive sanctions on an authoritarian regime, he should view those sanctions as a prelude to an exercise of military force, not as a substitute for force. Unless we are prepared to remove bad governments with military force, we have no business heaping prolonged punishment on innocent people."

The embargo of Cuba is even less likely to reform or get rid of Castro than embargoes alone could have reformed or removed Manuel Antonio Noriega in Panama in the late 1980s or the generals in Haiti five years later. After trashing the frail economies in Panama and Haiti, and making subsequent economic recovery more difficult, the United States finally opted for a military solution in both instances, in the Haitian case with international support. The problem of repairing the ravaged economy in Cuba will be all the greater because Castro's misdirected policies and the embargo have lasted for decades. The challenge of recovery will be additionally complicated because U.S. policy is setting Cubans in Cuba against one another and in many respects turning most Cubans in Cuba against most Cubans in exile. Memories of these conflicts, which will not be easily forgotten when the Castros leave the scene, will complicate the period of transition, particularly because many Cuban-Americans will return far wealthier than Cuban Cubans and with what will be seen as Washington's blessing.[39]

Nevertheless, many U.S. politicians, led by President Clinton and Senator Jesse Helms, have become wedded to what Hufbauer has called this "snake oil of diplomacy."[40] These embargoes range from relatively insignificant measures to would-be brutal attacks on the economic life of a country: from the embargo of Cuba through denying basic supplies to the people of Iraq for a decade in a futile effort to overthrow Saddam Hussein to refusing to provide provisions for heating for Yugoslav Serbs in the winter of 1999–2000—after NATO bombed out their infrastructure in mid-1999—because to do so might possibly prolong the rule of Slobodan Milosevic. These sanctions allow politicians to pretend they are doing something to oppose bad and/or unpopular rulers abroad when in fact they usually are only making conditions in the target nations

worse to no constructive end. Of course politicians convey the false image of toughness or "principle" to their constituents since, except for the most naive—who actually think the policy might work—that is the primary reason for the embargo in the first place. With notable exceptions, they ignore the impact the policy is having on the target country, if they even know what it is.[41] The media usually don't say much either, or Americans don't follow what is reported so they don't really need to "trouble themselves" with the "unpleasant" consequences their policies have, often for years and years, in the target country. If presidents and other politicians were really—instead of just politically—conscientious about foreign policy and its impact abroad, they would think much more carefully than they do about imposing a new embargo each time a difference of opinion with another country arises. In recent years sanctions have become what Senator Richard Lugar correctly describes as "a roadblock to prudent diplomacy" and the variety of different options available to us. Although other options may not work, they are at least unlikely to have as destructive an impact on the target countries as embargoes do.[42]

Why Castro (Mostly) Wants the Embargo

Fidel Castro is in a good position when it comes to the embargo. He gains if it is lifted, though he also benefits in important ways from its continuation. If the sanctions are removed, money will come in more easily through trade and investments, thus providing funds to keep security and military personnel happier and perhaps even to raise minimally the living standards of the people. Much evidence suggests, however, that Castro personally benefits more from the continuation of what he calls the "blockade." The sanctions enable Castro to continue condemning the United States and playing at least some role on the world stage. Condemnations of the embargo and, since mid-1999, of U.S. (i.e., NATO) policies in the Balkans allow Castro to forcibly maintain his critique of "U.S. imperialism" continuing around the

world. The embargo gives Castro grounds for claiming 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. He can keep his "anti-imperialist" image by pointing to increasing U.S. pressures on Cuba even as Havana plays by most of the accepted rules of international relations and is accepted by almost all other nations of the world. He knows that, more than anything else, the embargo to some degree keeps him from becoming just another in a centuries-long string of failed Latin American dictators. Nothing would be more humiliating to Castro than to have to live his final years as an old, irrelevant anachronism. Nothing would come so close to "killing" him while he is still alive as lifting the embargo. As it is, U.S. intervention in Cuba, Yugoslavia, and other countries gives some meaning to his waning years.

On Pope John Paul II's arrival in Cuba in January 1998, Castro charged that the embargo was "suffocating" Cuba. That is nonsense. Cuba's economic problems are the result of Castro's own failed past alliances and past and present policies. He is now free to trade with virtually every country in the world except the United States. The embargo is mainly just a nuisance in economic terms, and the pope even chided Cuban leaders for blaming the United States for so many of their ills. Castro and some of his top aides sometimes admit as much.[43] Yet the more embargo supporters proclaim the importance of the sanctions, the more they fatten the scapegoat argument for Castro and Castro's claim that the United States—rather than his own policies—is responsible for Cuba's dismal economy and repression.

Some embargo supporters are indignant when critics say this "scapegoat" fools the Cuban people.[44] Of course it doesn't fool many Cubans, who know a lot better what is happening on the island than Washington politicians or Cuban Americans. The scapegoat line is persuasive largely in many foreign countries where Castro and conditions in Cuba are more matters of myth than fact, and where the myth is fed constantly by the globally rejected U.S. embargo. Even one prominent sanctions

supporter seems to acknowledge that Castro's main interest lies in maintaining rather than eliminating the sanctions: "Although Cuban officials will readily admit that getting the U.S. embargo lifted is the number one foreign policy priority," he writes, "arousing international sympathy for the Castro regime (and what amounts to the same thing, provoking hostility toward the United States) may well be the real name of the game rather than achieving the stated objective."[45] By the end of 1999 Cuba's National Assembly—that is, Fidel Castro—was insisting that U.S. officials be held responsible for the deaths and sufferings of Cubans as a result of an embargo that, the body says, "constitutes an act of genocide." Assembly president Ricardo Alarcón told the U.N. General Assembly in November 1999 that Havana would file a lawsuit against the United States for more than $100 billion in damages.[46]

There is good reason to conclude that Castro has deliberately countered any wavering in America's determination to keep him as its political and moral pariah; that is, many of his words and actions suggest that Castro will act vigorously when he senses any move away from sanctions in the U.S. government. For example, in late 1995 Castro saw that the U.S. Congress was considering a new bill—authored by Senator Jesse Helms and Representative Dan Burton—to further tighten the sanctions. Seemingly worried because the Senate had cut out the toughest clauses in committee, Castro exercised his veto over U.S. policy on 24 February 1996 by ordering Cuban MiG fighters to shoot down two unarmed Cessnas flown by a Miami-based Cuban American organization called Brothers to the Rescue.[47] Although some commentators have argued that the Cuban American planes were shot down by rogue Cuban pilots, this explanation is unconvincing because of Castro's personal control over decisions affecting policy toward the United States, a control embargo supporters themselves generally insist on in other contexts. Indeed, after the planes were shot down was it learned that the Brothers had been infiltrated by at least one Cuban agent and that the shootdown was planned in advance.[48] Other analysts have speculated that, because the Brothers had provoked Castro on many occasions, the

Cuban leader decided to punish them and at the same time show other Cubans that he would turn the military loose on anyone who dared to challenge him.

But the Cuban people know full well that Castro will do whatever he needs to in order maintain control; they have, after all, lived with him for decades. So although these matters may have figured into Castro's calculations, they could not have been decisive.[49] If improving relations with the United States and getting the embargo lifted were really Castro's top priority, he would never have shot down the planes just as a bill presented by the embargo lobby was being emasculated by Congress. Castro is not as stupid and short-sighted about the timing of his actions as some of his critics would have us believe. It could hardly have come as a surprise to Castro that immediately after the planes were shot down the toughest clauses were restored to the Helms-Burton Law, as discussed below, or that Clinton would sign it. As for the reaction of other governments around the world, Castro undoubtedly calculated that most would consider what he did justified or that it did not warrant such a severe response from the United States or that in any event it would be quickly forgotten. Of course he was right, as United Nations votes discussed below demonstrate. The shootdown meant the embargo would not only continue but be tightened. Thus again, unless one argues that Castro is a fool, the decision to shoot down the planes was taken in full knowledge that it would delay by years the lifting of the embargo and the possibility of better relations with the United States.

Another demonstration of Castro's contempt for any U.S. move toward conciliation occurred just weeks after Clinton slightly eased some conditions of the embargo in January 1999.[50] The next month Castro proclaimed a tough new law to punish those he calls criminals and subversives; according to human rights activist Elizardo Sánchez the end of the year 1999 saw "one of the largest waves of political repression" in twenty years.[51] What this shows once again is that Castro represses when he thinks it serves his interests irrespective of what Washington and Miami want or do. In fact, his timing suggests that

conciliatory actions by the United States sometimes have just the opposite impact from that intended by U.S. leaders, namely, they provoke Castro to increase repression. In November 1999 Sánchez even predicted that, after the Iberoamerican summit, during which he and some other Cuban dissidents were permitted to talk to visiting foreign dignitaries, the government would "harden its discourse and its positions on internal and external politics."[52]

A Pernicious Law of Shreds and Patches

After the end of the cold war, President Clinton and the U.S. Congress twice tightened the embargo. First, they agreed on the so-called Cuban Democracy Act (Torricelli Act) in 1992, which among other things prohibited U.S.-owned or -controlled subsidiaries located abroad from doing business with Cuba. President George Bush wisely rejected New Jersey senator Robert Torricelli's plan until Cuban American supporters of candidate Bill Clinton convinced him to endorse it during the 1992 presidential primaries in Florida. After that, undoubtedly for domestic political purposes, Bush concluded he had to do the same and signed the act when it was handed to him by Congress. The "just one more squeeze and Castro will collapse" argument made at least some sense in 1992, when many Americans thought that, with the end of massive Soviet bloc support, the rapid worsening of Cuba's post-Soviet economy would soon bring Castro down.[53]

Four years later, Congress and the president approved the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act (Helms-Burton Law), another matter altogether from the Torricelli Act, however desirable some but by no means all of its stated purposes seem on paper. In fact, many senators understood that Helms-Burton was bad policy, which is why they took out some objectionable passages in late 1995. (Predictably, they weren't about to shoot it down altogether, which is what they should have done.) But when Castro shot down the unarmed planes, "righteous indignation" and domestic politics overwhelmed serious

analysis and objective national interests, prompting immediate passage of just about the worst that Helms and Burton could devise. One chief drafter of the law says its objective was to "break the status quo through a proactive American policy to encourage the demise of Castro's repressive regime and to lay the foundation for American support of Cuba's democratic transition."[54] But it has done nothing of the sort so far and won't in the future. In addition, it took Cuba policy making out of the hands of the president through a counterproductive requirement that the law be amendable only by Congress itself.

The six stated purposes of the Helms-Burton Law (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"

Thus three of the six purposes claim to be directed toward conditions in Cuba; one deals with Castro's taking of U.S. property in the early 1960s, one with rallying international opposition to Castro, and one with "continuing threats" Castro presumably poses to the United States. The problem is that, given the realities of Cuba, the United States, and the world today, the Helms-Burton legislation on these noble-sounding

purposes is internally contradictory, largely unattainable, often disingenuous, and in places flagrantly and counterproductively imperialistic. Even the desirable objectives can not be advanced, much less achieved, today by the legislation in hand and with the resources Washington is willing to commit, and the repercussions are all negative.

What are the prospects for achieving these purposes? Three of the six purposes—1, 4, and 5—focus on promoting democracy in Cuba, something almost all Americans are proud to endorse. Two of these call for substantive democratic change in terms that imply feasibility during a Castro government, and one speaks of a framework for a transition to democracy. In a similar fashion, public statements by executive and legislative politicians and the State Department repeatedly say or imply the possibility of significant "peaceful" change under Castro—if embargo-type pressures are applied, that is, various versions of "if Castro will allow X, then we will do Y." For example, early in 1998 then House Speaker Newt Gingrich said that "the day after there is an international supervised free election, even if Castro wins the election, we will end the embargo."[55] Not so. The reality is that the degree of democratic change that would be acceptable to Washington is never going to come under Fidel Castro, as the participants in the RAND forum, the CANF, and others have recognized; even if it did the United States government would not accept it. 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." Why? Because Castro doesn't want such changes and he still is the Maximum Leader. In the end, nothing is going to liberate Cuba except Fidel Castro, in life if he so chooses or more likely in death.

But even more problematic in terms of U.S. policy, the Helms-Burton Law itself defines "transitional" government so as to preclude even the reasonable possibility allowed by Gingrich in his above-quoted statement. That is, in Section 205, the law says—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 our embargo pressures seek, and/or even if one or both were voted in democratically by the Cuban people in internationally supervised elections, we *still* would not change our policy. When Washington tells Cubans in advance that it will not accept a democratically elected Castro brother *even if the Cuban people want one* we make a mockery of the democracy we preach. As a Cato Institute study concluded, "U.S. policy toward Cuba should focus on national security interests, not on transforming Cuban society or micromanaging the affairs of a transitional government as current law obliges Washington to do."[56]

Purpose 2 (spelled out in more detail in Title I, Section 101) calls on the U.S. president to press the United Nations Security Council to impose a "mandatory international embargo" against Cuba like the one implemented against Haiti. But, to paraphrase former U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Adlai Stevenson in an earlier Cuba-related showdown at the United Nations, that international body will vote a mandatory embargo on Cuba "when hell freezes over." Before the passage of the Torricelli Act, Cuba couldn't even get a resolution rejecting the embargo on the floor of the U.N. General Assembly. But the year the Torricelli Act passed, the assembly condemned the embargo eighty-eight to four.[57] Every year since then, the General Assembly has become more overwhelmingly opposed. In November 1995, several months before Helms-Burton was signed into law, the vote was 117 against, 3 in favor (the United States, Israel, and Uzbekistan, though the latter two themselves had trade with Cuba), with 38 abstentions. In November 1997—*after* the unarmed planes were shot down—the vote was 143 against the embargo, 3 in favor, with 17 abstentions. In November 1998 the United States even lost the support of Uzbekistan (the vote was 152 to 2 with 12 abstentions). In November 1999 the General Assembly cast its most overwhelming vote against the embargo: 155 against, 2 in

favor, and 8 abstentions. How can the United States—how can the world—take Helms-Burton and the U.S. government seriously when it orders the U.S. president to get the United Nations to approve a "mandatory international embargo."[58]

A former high U.S. government official has argued that it doesn't matter if one is outvoted and ignored in the beginning, that in time America's principled stand will win others over, though as the U.N. votes above show, international opposition to and contempt for our "principled stand" increases every year. To make his point, the ex-official notes the success the United States has had fighting corruption internationally after passage of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act in 1977.[59] This act may indeed serve as an inspiration and model for some other efforts but not U.S. policy toward Cuba. The main reason is that the issues dealt with in the 1977 legislation—corruption, criminal law enforcement, drugs, and other such issues—relate in varying degrees directly and indirectly to the domestic and international relations of most countries. In contrast the world—in the United Nations, other international bodies, and bilateral relations—has shown that it increasingly and evermore vocally sees Cuban domestic politics as the business of Cubans in Cuba, not of Cubans in exile and Americans.

Purpose 3 speaks of protecting the United States from "continuing [national security] threats" from Castro. These "threats" are elaborated as

1. Cuban support for terrorism, which is now virtually nonexistent.
2. The theft of property of U.S. nationals almost four decades ago, a significant matter that is returned to in Purpose 6 and will be considered more below.
3. Castro's manipulation of Cubans who wish to flee the island. This serious concern is not advanced by sanctions because the more successful we are in making life in Cuba difficult, the more

> Cubans are tempted to try to get to the States or to start a civil war with the probable adverse consequences discussed below. (Of course it was easier for would-be refugees to get to the United States before 1995, when Clinton effectively turned the U.S. Coast Guard into an arm of Castro's security forces by ordering it to pick up and return to Cuba those who try to escape.)[60]

Title I, Section 101, returns to the matter of security with some of the same and some different specifics. It says "acts" of Castro's government, "including its massive, systematic, and extraordinary violations of human rights, are a threat to international peace." But as bad as Castro's human rights record is, calling it "massive, systematic, and extraordinary" is an exaggeration.[61] Castro certainly is not as repressive as the leaders of North Korea, who as of late 1999 no longer have to contend with a major embargo from the United States. The allegation that Castro's human rights violations constitute a threat to international peace warranting a nationwide embargo is not sustainable. The problems of nuclear facilities and the Russian intelligence station at Lourdes are serious but should be dealt with in other ways and with Moscow more than with Havana.

In conclusion, virtually the entire U.S. intelligence community and most outside analysts have said that Castro now poses no significant security threat to the United States. What is more, these sources find that there is no evidence the embargo will remove Castro or improve the situation in Cuba. 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." This report is important for other reasons too, as will be discussed later.[62]

Purpose 6 is the primary motivation for and bulk of the entire Helms-Burton Law. Counsel Daniel Fisk, a former Helms associate,

argues that the law's intent is "to deter third-country nationals from seeking to profit from wrongfully confiscated properties and to deny Castro a source of hard currency." It seeks to reduce investments in Cuba from other countries by threatening lawsuits and travel restrictions on foreign individuals and companies that invest in property allegedly confiscated from Americans after 1 January 1959. Title III of the law created "a private cause for action in U.S. courts," and Title IV "prohibits visas and entry into the United States to those who 'traffic' in confiscated property claimed by a U.S. national." The U.S. Foreign Claims Settlement Commission has certified 5,911 claims by U.S. citizens valued at $6 billion. The Helms-Burton Law added to that list about 400,000 Cuban Americans who were not even Americans at the time their property was confiscated, including the Bacardi empire, with its higher and more complicated claims. This move "gives a foreign court jurisdiction over what is in essence a domestic dispute between Cuban nationals and their government."[63]

A former U.S. diplomat writes that although Cuba has "recognized its obligation under international law to compensate the owners" of confiscated properties and has reached compensation agreements with other countries, it has not done so with the United States.[64] An international law professor at the University of Miami has written that if the law is fully implemented it will be "one of the most serious episodes of disagreement between Washington and Brussels since the end of the cold war, as well as between the United States and its partners in NAFTA."[65] In fact, the Castro government today could not put one centavo into any U.S. claims even if it wished to do so. What is more, it will be impossible for a post-Castro government—which must clean up the economic mess Castro will leave behind—to compensate claimants without getting the United States to give it the money first.

Fisk argues that the law is working, a conclusion substantiated by a State Department report issued in August 1999.[66] Clearly the law has made it somewhat more difficult for Cuba to get some foreign investments, but is that a "success"? If the matter in hand is one of establishing

respect for the rule of law, negotiation is the way to go, not economic confrontation; adding 400,000 claimants who were not even U.S. citizens at the time is dubious. In practice, President Clinton has repeatedly taken advantage of a clause within the law that enables him to waive the application of Title III. He always argues, in one way or another, that doing so is necessary to the national interest, that it will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba, and that international cooperation against Castro's dictatorship (Purpose 2 of the law) has increased. For this he is regularly condemned by the embargo lobby.

American businesses certainly "lose out" every time an investment opportunity arises and their access to the Cuban market (such as it is) is blocked by the U.S. government. Whether in the end individual businesses will be better off not having invested in Cuba is immaterial to our argument. Unless there is a serious national security reason for restricting contacts, businesses should be free to take their chances and reap or pay the consequences. The problem is the U.S. government's coercive power to enforce an agenda that has never been seriously examined by the American government and people. Indeed, in January 1999 the president decided that the government should not even seriously evaluate the policy.

Finally, there is the remote hope that this turgid law cataloging U.S. demands on Cuba may not be the only word we get over the next few years on terms for lifting the embargo. A change in policy will never come as easily as Newt Gingrich suggested in his reasonable if ill-informed quote above, but "concessions" directly from the three Cuban American members of Congress might. While campaigning against a Castro visit to Seattle for the World Trade Organization summit in November–December 1999, the three wrote a letter to fellow members of Congress that skips over all sorts of requirements in Helms-Burton and gets to what it calls "the three fundamental measures for the immediate lifting of the embargo." If we can take the members of Congress at their word, the three 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.[67] If the Cuban Americans in Congress would support a shorter and less offensive catalog of demands, other members of Congress would gratefully stampede behind them in drawing up a modified Helms-Burton. Of course Castro would never accept these terms, though they are less imperialistic. Although an embargo with only these demands would be better than what we have, the sanctions should be lifted immediately without qualifications of any sort.

The Post–Cold War Security Flip-Flop

During the cold war an embargo on Cuba made sense for the United States because Castro actively worked against U.S. interests, both on his own and as an ally of the Soviet Union, sometimes even contrary to Moscow's preferences. During the 1970s and 1980s Cuba sent several hundred thousand troops abroad and in late 1988 had approximately 60,000 military personnel in sub-Saharan Africa alone.[68] In 1989 Cuba had the largest military forces in Latin America on a per capita basis, and its troops and officers had much more battlefield experience—conventional and guerrilla—than any other Latin American military or indeed most in the world. But today, as the 1998 Defense Intelligence Agency report says, 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."[69]

In the late 1990s the strategic significance of the embargo and its supporting lobby has flip-flopped for various reasons. The continuation of the embargo, particularly in its Helms-Burton version

1. Increases the prospects for a civil war in Cuba, a conflict that could drag in the United States military

2. Tolerates and even encourages actions that could escalate into serious conflict
3. Encourages the embargo lobby to manipulate a poll-driven, wishy-washy executive and Congress in a way that seriously interferes in the process of assessing national security threats and the rational and informed evaluation and formulation of U.S. foreign policy
4. Plants the seeds for future Cuban-American conflict in the decades to come by being blatantly and uselessly imperialistic

The embargo lobby's power took several potentially dangerous turns between 1998 and 2000. At the end of March 1998 the Defense Intelligence Agency was about to give Congress a classified report it had prepared on Cuba in cooperation with other U.S. intelligence agencies. Its conclusion was that Cuba poses no significant threat to the United States. When this conclusion—reportedly shared by the current and just-retired chiefs of the U.S. Southern Command—was published in the *Miami Herald* just before being delivered to Congress, the lobby went berserk. Miami Republican Ileana Ros-Lehtinen shouted that it is clear that "these Pentagon types are very politicized. They get their instructions directly from the White House." Florida Democrat Bob Graham called on Secretary of Defense William Cohen to send the report back—which Cohen did—for what Graham's national security aide called a "ground-up review."[70]

The following notice from the weekly intelligence report of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers reviews the incident and shows understandable concern over it within the intelligence community, as there should be throughout America:

> DIA ESTIMATES CUBA IS NO THREAT—A recent estimate by DIA, prepared in consultation with CIA and other intelligence agencies, elicited considerable press reporting, not because the conclusions were

> surprising, but because of the political maneuvering accompanying the release of the report to Congress. DIA concluded that Cuba "does not pose a significant military threat to the U.S. or to other countries in the region." The report describes an army with mothballed equipment, incapable of mounting effective operations above the battalion level; a navy with no functioning submarines; and an air force with fewer than two dozen operational MiG fighter jets. When advance press accounts of this finding led to objections by Florida lawmakers, SECDEF [the Secretary of Defense] sent the report back to DIA for a "second look." Five weeks later Secretary Cohen forwarded the estimate with his personal views.[71]

When the DIA study was finally delivered in May, it reportedly was little changed.[72] Cohen's "personal views" were in a transmittal letter that tried to put a politically correct face on the delay and the report's findings. Cohen wrote:

> While the assessment notes that the direct conventional threat by the Cuban military has decreased, I remain concerned about the use of Cuba as a base for intelligence activities directed against the United States, the potential threat that Cuba may pose to neighboring islands, Castro's continued dictatorship that represses the Cuban people's desire for political and economic freedom, and the potential instability that could accompany the end of his regime depending on the circumstances under which Castro departs. Although the report assesses as unlikely the near-term risk of attacks on United States citizens or residents engaged in peaceful protests in international waters or airspace, Cuban authorities have miscalculated in the past and have not expressed remorse at their killing of four peaceful protesters in February 1996. Finally, I remain concerned about Cuba's potential to develop and produce biological agents, given its biotechnology infrastructure, as well as the environmental health risks posed to the United States by potential accidents at the Juragua nuclear power facility.[73]

Thus Washington's continuing deference to or even fear of the lobby was demonstrated in the first place by Cohen's sending the report back

for a ground-up review and then, when the report came back, by his transparent kowtow in his transmittal letter. The letter must have been intended to pacify the lobby, which of course it didn't. Briefly, a few of the problems with Cohen's letter, taking his "concerns" in the order he expresses them, are

1. Cuba's "direct conventional threat" to the United States has not just "decreased," it has, for all practical purposes, disappeared.
2. Cuba as a base for intelligence activities. It is hardly surprising that Cuba—like other hostile and even friendly governments—spies on us all the time within and outside our borders, just as we spy on it.[74] If Cuba is getting our secrets, it is because of negligence on our part. To the extent that our concern is the facility at Lourdes, that is above all a matter of U.S.-Russian relations. If Congress thinks Lourdes can be dealt with by an embargo, then the embargo should not be on Cuba but on Russia.
3. The potential threat Cuba poses to its neighbors. Clearly this is a case of our knowing better than those neighbors themselves, for they now fete Castro and try to incorporate him into their neighborhood, as during his Caribbean tour in August 1998 and on other occasions.
4. The Cuban people's lack of political and economic freedom. Decades of experience demonstrate that the embargo has not and is not helping bring freedom to the island, and the very DIA report in question offers no hope that the embargo will do so in the future.
5. The threat of potential instability when Castro departs. This serious problem is made far worse by our policy of deliberately trying to increase tensions on the island.

6. Castro's "miscalculation" and lack of "remorse." This is ridiculous. Castro undoubtedly calculated the shooting down of the planes in February 1996—as Clinton himself has now suggested—so it is silly to expect him to express "remorse" and disingenuous to point to that event to suggest possible "miscalculations" in the future.
7. The potential threat of Cuba's developing biological agents. This problem is real enough and warrants other more appropriate and effective responses.
8. The possible health risks from the Juragua nuclear facility. Again, real enough, but a problem that like some others above should be addressed in more appropriate ways than an embargo of the entire country.

A "small" incident that could have escalated—or might do so next time it happens—was the "bombing" of Havana with pamphlets by a private plane from the United States in January 2000. Two Cuban MiGs and one U.S. F-16 went up but did not engage, but what would have happened if the Cessna had dropped something physically destructive? Cuban fighters shot down two Cessnas in 1996 for just (allegedly) flying over Cuban territorial waters. Would the United States allow a plane from Cuba to dump—who knows what until after the fact?—on the White House or elsewhere in Washington? Nothing happened in January, but the hawks of the Cuban American community, several of whom have done it themselves, loved it. U.S. laws say there is nothing illegal about a private plane flying over Havana and dumping there. What will happen if is done again, maybe by several planes, maybe dropping something explosive?

Another issue often raised by embargo supporters, but not mentioned by Cohen, is that Cuba is involved in the transshipment of drugs to the United States. The three top antidrug officials in the U.S. government reported in late 1999 that after an "exhaustive review" they

found no good evidence that leading Cuban officials are involved in drug trafficking. The embargo lobby immediately turned on the drug experts as they had on the DIA. "Castro is using Cuba as a syringe to inject drugs into our country," said Helms-Burton coauthor Dan Burton. "Clinton is ignoring it—he is complicit with every ounce of cocaine that ends up on the streets of Chicago and Baltimore."[75]

Other counterproductive kowtows by the president and/or Washington politicians between 1998 and 2000 to Cuban American demands include (1) the successful campaign to keep the U.S. government and people uninformed on the impact of U.S.-Cuba policy by killing the proposed presidential bipartisan commission, discussed above, and (2) the eagerness with which so many U.S. presidential hopefuls who generally profess their support for family values rallied against the INS decision to send Elián González back to his father in early 2000.

When a small but wealthy and militant lobby in Washington, Florida, and New Jersey can make such headway against the U.S. intelligence community in its area of expertise—military and strategic threats to the United States—the pressures of that group on a compromising executive and legislature become potentially dangerous. Nor should one be encouraged by the lobby's success in crushing the commission proposal supported by such a distinguished group of former secretaries of state and others. The bottom line, however, is that since the lobby has every right to promote its own perceived interests, however mistaken it may be, the responsibility finally falls directly on the U.S. government officials who so easily cave in. From the president and vice president to the secretary of defense and members of Congress, broad national interests of the United States (and Cuba, for that matter) are set aside in favor of narrow domestic political expediency.

The Weight of History

Most Americans think that the way some other peoples remember history is pathological, dilettantish, or irrelevant. But the politically

active Cubans and many other nationalities do remember historical truths—and myths. Although we can't prevent the spread of myths altogether, we can at least avoid giving Cubans sound reasons for future resentments toward the United States. Looking back a century, the United States tried to micromanage Cuba for more than three decades after the war of 1898 and failed, just as Washington tried several times to make Haiti a functioning democracy and failed. Almost a century ago, U.S. policy toward Cuba was enshrined in the Platt Amendment of 1902, an attachment the United States pasted on the Cuban Constitution that forbade the Cuban government to make any agreements with third nations that would—the great 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 were in danger or if property rights and individual liberties were threatened. The anger over such high-handedness is still intense, even among Cuban Americans, which is of special significance. For example, note the sentiments and judgments on the Platt Amendment by Louis A. Pérez in the fall 1998 *Orbis:* "It was not enough to subordinate Cuban interests to North American ones. It also became necessary for the Americans to represent the deed then and thereafter as . . . a gesture of generosity, an act done in the best interests of Cubans." 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."[76] It is no coincidence that the two most successful Marxist-Leninist movements in Latin America during the second half of the twentieth century were in Cuba and Nicaragua, the countries with the most offensive U.S. involvement over the decades.

The Helms-Burton demands are as onerous and irresponsible in their way as those of the Platt Amendment, however desirable most of them may be. For example, a transitional government must release

political prisoners, disband the secret police, create an independent judiciary, respect human (including property) rights, and extend citizenship to returning Cuban Americans. Within eighteen months of taking power the new government must hold what Washington politicians consider fair and free elections, though as noted above those standards are utterly undemocratic. Under Title II, this U.S.-approved "democratically elected" government must move simultaneously to a free market, write a constitution, and return a portion of U.S. property to its rightful owners. This basket of demands, which may not in all cases be what a legitimate democratically elected government would want for the people—or at least not the first things it would want to do—would crush any fledgling government and at best would take many years to accomplish. We have imposed no such regimen on any other formerly Marxist state; if we had it would almost surely have done it in. Yet Helms-Burton demands this massive intrusion into Cuba's internal affairs during a most delicate and difficult moment in its history. Will it work? Not likely. Whether Spanish, American, or Soviet, overlords have always been deeply resented in Cuba, whose nationalism remains as intense as anyplace in the world. Many actions a post-Castro government would undertake in line with demands of Helms-Burton would immediately or in time be seen in Cuba as acting on orders once again from the Americans, possibly compromising Cuba's independence and those officials' reputations. Thus handicapped, any leader or government that had played this game would become the target of every demagogue and xenophobe—or patriot?—on the island, hardly the atmosphere in which a nascent democracy can thrive or even survive.

If Title II is to be the cornerstone of our future policy, as Helms-Burton says it is, then we are almost certain to repeat the earlier cycle of good intentions (some doubt how good), producing further negative consequences. The sections under Title II suggest that the true motivation for Miami and Washington is not bringing democracy to Cuba but persisting in a political and economic vendetta against the Castros backed by latent imperialistic instincts. In effect, it looks to making

Cuba once again a semicolonial satellite of the United States, a reality not altered by the fact that Castro has been and remains an often brutal master. The Platt Amendment planted what Mark Falcoff called the "seeds of a long-smoldering resentment,"[77] prolonged domestic instability, and poisoned U.S.-Cuban relations for two generations. Now Helms-Burton introduces the same scenario for undercutting future pro-American Cuban leaders; in time it will generate deep resentment and untold opportunities for demagogy. Many Cuban Americans who today idealistically or opportunistically proclaim their support for current U.S. policy may in time be caught up in the maelstrom.

OTHER EMBARGO ISSUES

Inciting an Insurrection

The strategy of U.S. policy is to make life evermore difficult in Cuba so that Castro will make reforms or the Cuban people will rise up and throw him out. Many acknowledge that the embargo doesn't accomplish either of these objectives, but what would happen if it *did* spark significant protests? Would that truly be desirable? According to a former Interior Ministry official, the protests would be countered by "violent repression by the state apparatus. The situation could degenerate into a massacre and begin a devastating civil war."[78] A poll conducted in 1997 by Florida International University and the *Miami Herald* showed some 66 percent of Cuban Americans favoring U.S. military action to overthrow Castro and 71 percent supporting military action against Castro by Cubans in exile.[79] But, as noted above, a recent Gallop poll showed that only 42 percent of Americans in general support even the embargo, much less a military operation. Our conclusion in talking with many Americans over the past decade is that few have any idea what the issues are and that support would plummet if people knew the facts or thought substantial numbers of Americans might be sent to die in or for Cuba. Nor would the U.S. military want to become involved in a

conflict in a country that poses no strategic threat to the United States according to its own and other U.S. intelligence analyses. But, even if U.S. domestic opinion opposed intervention, significant losses by anti-Castro forces during a general uprising or civil war—the reaction we have been encouraging—would result in enormous pressure on Washington to send military support to preserve those who remain and finally end Castro's rule.

Support for Reformers

Some embargo supporters believe that pressures by the United States strengthen reformers within Cuba. Two eminent embargo supporters are concerned that ending the embargo might mean that reformers would be swallowed up by hard-liners, though one also notes that even if the sanction supporters carry out reforms there is nothing to stop Castro from reversing reforms at will even as the sanctions continue.[80] In fact Castro sometimes reverses "reforms," such as they are, or arrests and sentences Cubans, seemingly in direct response to tougher—or milder—U.S. actions. Hufbauer is probably more nearly correct when he concludes that "when sanctions are applied broadside—as against Haiti, Cuba and Iraq—the hardest hit are the most vulnerable. . . . Left unharmed, and often strengthened, are the real targets: the political, military and economic elites."[81] In 1999 Elizabeth Gibbons, head of the UNICEF office in Haiti between 1992 and 1996, found a similar consequence of the multilateral embargo on that smaller island. Despite differences between Cuba and Haiti, her observations are relevant to the Cuban case:

> In a show of support for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, the international community imposed comprehensive sanctions on Haiti and in so doing mortgaged the nations' future. . . . The "preponderance of evidence" points unmistakably to the sanctions' disastrous impact on the Haitian economy and the welfare of ordinary, innocent citizens, even

> as they left their military target virtually unscathed. Surely no more than a preponderance of evidence is needed for the international community to question the efficacy, and the morality, of using economic sanctions to advance democracy and the full respect of human rights—and to seek urgent alternatives, particularly when those same rights are violated as a direct consequence of sanctions.[82]

If the embargo were lifted, for some time the state apparatus might well benefit more than the average Cuban from expanded tourism, trade, and investment. But in time increasing amounts would go beyond the state, and although economics will not single-handedly liberate Cuba, it may contribute some to that end. This is so, in part, because the repressive Cubans within the state apparatus are subject to influences that can tilt their allegiances in positive ways. Cuban Interior Ministry (Minint) founding member Rodríguez Menier has reported that it was precisely the top levels of the Minint that by the late 1980s were the most receptive to substantial reform. These were the best-informed bureaucrats in Cuba and those most directly charged with protecting and promoting Fidel. Little wonder these Minint officials were the largest group purged in 1989–90 when talk of reform ricocheted off walls from Moscow to Havana and came to a head during what was known as the "Ochoa affair," when Castro executed a prominent Cuban general for alleged dealing in drugs.[83] Increased contacts could have this kind of impact again and the next time Castro might not crush it so easily. Indeed, some inside "reports" and media stories indicate that, as in Minint in the late 1980s, some top Cuban leaders today are willing, indeed anxious, to support reform and get rid of Castro but are deterred because they fear a vindictive Washington. As noted earlier, the most prominent dissident in Cuba today has said that even most activist dissidents think the sanctions should be lifted.

Set Stage for Armed Intervention?

Of course there may be an unspoken purpose in the Helms-Burton Law, one hinted at by its authors' admiration for the experience with the embargo of Haiti.[84] By the time the Helms-Burton Law was written, it was clear that the Haitian embargo—even more than the Haitian military thugs—was making the tiny, destitute half-island poorer every day.[85] The embargo of Haiti was simply a way station to a military invasion, as the embargo of Panama had been. If the Helms-Burton legislation is consciously intended to lay the groundwork for an invasion of Cuba, then its authors should say so openly so that the American people and Congress can debate the desirability of that option and the policy that may bring it about. Senator Helms and others are correct that the pitiful justifications advanced by the Clinton administration for its alleged policy to "restore democracy to Haiti" apply much more convincingly to Cuba. But the fact that the executive acted demagogically and stupidly in the Haitian case is no excuse for Congress to do the same in the much more important relations with Cuba.[86] If there is no such intention to promote U.S. military involvement in Cuba, then Congress would do well to learn the lessons of the Haitian (and Panamanian) experiences so as to understand that embargoes both destroy fragile economies and increase the prospects for military involvement.[87]

Caving in to Castro?

Embargo supporters condemn any action that looks like a "cave in" to Castro. For example, in Miami the INS decision in January 2000 to return Elián González to his father was denounced as a "political pact with the regime of Fidel Castro."[88] More broadly, if the United States were to make the wise decision to change its policy toward Cuba, would this be caving in to Castro? No, not if the ending of the embargo is done from a position of strength, not weakness. An example of an ignominious retreat—not from an embargo but during an embargo—was the

flight of the U.S. ship from Port-au-Prince harbor when a few ragtag Haitian gunmen waved their weapons in the air. But not all withdrawals need be humiliating and politically harmful. If we lift the embargo, Castro will of course claim a propaganda victory. The Haitian action was evidence of utter U.S. confusion and lack of a rational policy and true commitment, but the Cuban case is one of recognizing that a policy no longer serves any constructive purpose or indeed that has become counterproductive. After Haiti, people all over the world blushed—or cheered—at the humiliation of the world's only remaining superpower. In contrast, after lifting the embargo of Cuba, most of the world's people would simply sigh, scratch their heads, and say, "What took them so long? Americans are such slow learners!"

The Embargo as a Moral Issue

The United States has a long history of tying politics to morality, a practice those such as Elliott Abrams and Donald Kagan consider critical to the U.S. mission in the world.[89] Thus it is hardly surprising that one of the most common arguments made by some members of the lobby—particularly by Cuban Americans—is that the embargo of Cuba is moral. By imposing it, they say, Americans are acting on behalf of the Cuban people and setting a high moral standard for the rest of the world. To them, lifting the embargo is a sign of indifference to or even complicity in Fidel Castro's repression of the Cuban people and sends the wrong message to other governments. But foreign policies undertaken largely on alleged moral grounds are at the very least problematical, though morality may be one among many factors in policy making. Only one of the complications is that in the Cuban and many other cases, "morality" can be used by both sides. It is discussed here in some detail largely because so many in the lobby emphasize it.

Elliott Abrams chastises the group USA* Engage—and the U.S. business community generally—which he says opposes the embargo on the grounds that "trade is essential for the spread of democracy and

human rights." Abrams says that what USA*Engage really means but won't say is that "the business of America is business [and] moral concerns have no place in U.S. foreign policy."[90] This argument is also made in various forms by the Cuban American National Foundation and the three Cuban American members of Congress. A self-satisfied moral superiority seethes from Florida representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, usually the shrillest of the Cuban American legislators in her public statements. After several members of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce visited Cuba in mid-1999, she proclaimed: "These are the kinds of 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."[91] But it is not as simple as morality and virtue versus callousness and money-grubbing. For instance, for many critics of sanctions—including us—the main reasons for lifting the embargo are not economic at all. Many of us have no business connections whatsoever in Cuba nor do we seek any. Many in the embargo lobby, by contrast, have some or enormous business interests in both the embargo itself and on the island, and although the Helms-Burton Law has a certain moral flavor to it, its true focus is economic. The law speaks directly to the economic interests of some six thousand Americans and, since the passage of the law in 1996, to hundreds of thousands of Cuban Americans who were added to the list of those who can make claims for confiscated property through U.S. courts.

In the Cuban and many other cases, a conclusive judgment on the morality of a policy is much more difficult to ascertain than is acknowledged by most of those who use the moral argument.[92] For one thing, morality is most readily fixed on individuals, not things or policies. Beyond that, although many advocates of the embargo—a high proportion of whom are Roman Catholics—find the embargo moral, Pope John Paul II considers it *im*moral. Of course the pope is not "infallible" in these matters according to church doctrine, as embargo supporters are quick to point out. Still, other things being equal, there is little reason to suppose the pope's credentials and judgments in this matter

are necessarily inferior to those of the Cuban American lobby members who disagree with him.

But the pope isn't the only one who argues the immorality or at least injustice of the sanctions. The embargo is condemned increasingly and overwhelmingly by ordinary citizens around the world as well as by the U.N. General Assembly and by virtually every foreign voice that speaks out on U.S. international policy. The vast majority of the Iberoamerican presidents, in their 1999 annual meeting in Havana, called on the United States "to put an end to the application of the Helms-Burton law, in conformity with resolutions approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations."[93] On trips around Latin America during the past decade, the authors have found that the vast majority of people on the right, center, and left oppose the embargo. Within the United States there is a marked increase in the number of longtime anti-Castro Americans with unimpeachable anticommunist credentials who say the policy should be changed or at least seriously reexamined. It's not left versus right anymore, in the United States or abroad, but the lobby's dwindling American ranks versus virtually everyone else in the world, what Mark Falcoff, speaking just of Americans, correctly calls "a coalition for change that spans the ideological extremes."[94] It is true, as embargo supporters say, that being in the majority doesn't necessarily mean one is right, but it doesn't necessarily mean that one is wrong either. Trying to make a virtue of the reality of increasing isolation on this issue, some in the lobby argue that being alone in the world is a badge of honor. For example, Senator Torricelli has said that when the United States stands alone on this issue it has never been in better company. This patronizing "moral" approach is taken by the Cuban American National Foundation (and many others) to try to write off international opposition—and domestic opposition as well?—as "cost-free anti-Americanism" from critics with no better ideas.[95] In fact, one suspects that many embargo supporters are fearful that their critics have too many ideas and that the best way to keep them from infecting the

body politic is to muzzle them, with the assistance of malleable politicians, as when they shot down the commission proposal.

Interestingly, most embargo supporters who make the morality argument skirt over the day-by-week-by-year impact of the embargo on the Cuban people. They make the utopian argument that in one form or another the sanctions will force Castro to reform or drive him from power, so people's lives will be better.

But the years and years "in the meantime" are a lot easier for people in Washington and Miami to discount than for people in Havana and Santiago. The utopianism persists despite the fact that the embargo is now four decades old and has continued for almost a decade beyond the collapse of the Soviet Union to no positive effect. Typically, to those who stress a "moral" critique of Castro, anyone who urges lifting the sanctions is a witting or unwitting accomplice of the dictator. But embargo critics find a greater callousness—or immorality, for those who think in those terms—in the actions of embargo supporters, many of whom are Cubans themselves and most of whom still have family and friends living on the island. The CANF's "Issue Brief," for example, says that "the role of U.S. policy is to keep Castro's predicament right before his eyes and force him to face the consequences of his misrule. Removing U.S. sanctions at this time will remove any need for him to further reflect on Cuba's desperate need for change." Like the political adviser who said Castro "bet on the wrong horse" and "should pay for it," the logic of this argumentation seems to be that the United States should do its best to make life miserable for the common people so that Castro will "reflect" on his decisions and misrule. These statements might be mistaken for jokes if they were not so tragically misguided. Even if the embargo were to make Castro "reflect," it would not be about how to make reforms Americans would approve of but how to better maintain control under changing circumstances.

Thus many critics of the embargo who are not themselves disposed to argue on moral grounds are forced to confront supporters who do. Note, then, that there is no evidence that a significant number of

Cubans in Cuba support the sanctions or intend to commit what they have decided would be suicide by taking up sticks against Castro's heavily armed police state. What is more, as the Florida International University polls show, the vast majority of Cuban-Americans themselves admit the embargo isn't working. So how do Cuban Americans, most of whom are now U.S citizens living comfortably in Miami and Washington, have the right—much less the moral duty—to impose ever greater hardships on the already impoverished Cuban people?

Finally, most Americans dislike Castro though they know little about the four-sided relationship between the dictator, the Cuban people, Cuban Americans, and the United States. The choice for Americans is not the simple "this moral good" against "that moral evil," as most morality advocates would have us believe. Speaking in the terms of the moralists, the challenge is how to pursue one moral objective within a context that includes other conflicting moral imperatives. The vast majority of anti-Castro embargo critics agree that Fidel Castro is a self-serving, amoral, if not immoral, dictator. But having agreed to that, they ask how embargo supporters can consider it moral to conduct what history has proven to be a hopeless vendetta against this dictator when doing so only further punishes the innocent and already long-suffering Cuban people—their own family and friends.

Cubans and Cuban Americans

Cubans' Attitudes toward Castro

Many in Cuba and abroad have long hoped to see a Cuba without the Castros. Nearly twenty years ago, in 1981, a poll conducted in the Vedado section of Havana by the General Directorate of Counterintelligence of the Cuban Interior Ministry (Minint) concluded that 71 percent of the people there were "enemies of Fidel Castro's government." A former high-level intelligence officer estimated that in 1993 only about 10 percent of Cubans around the country continued to

sympathize with Castro.[96] Despite the wish for new leadership, Cubans in Cuba have shown no inclination to launch a violent uprising against Castro. In mid-1997 many embargo supporters seized upon a series of bombings in Havana hotels, restaurants, and discotheques to conclude that, in the words of CANF directors, "incidents of internal rebellion . . . speak clearly of the exasperation of a people who are not resigned to a destiny of enslavement and misery" under Castro. "By these acts of rebellion," the CANF leaders continued, "the Cuban people are sending the world a clear and unequivocal message."[97] But it was all a fraud. The bombings were not initiated by Cubans in Cuba at all but by Guatemalan mercenaries evidently paid by Cuban Americans.[98] Over the years, foreign-produced anti-Castro materials have been distributed in Cuba in a variety of ways by such organizations as Brothers to the Rescue and the Support Group for Internal Dissidence (GADI), without promoting active uprisings. The Eastern section of the Catholic Church in Cuba noted the "induced hopelessness" of a people resigned to waiting out the present government.[99] Even though small dissident groups occasionally try to plan demonstrations,[100] there has never been significant opposition to Castro nor will there probably be any in his lifetime, with or without the embargo, for a variety of reasons.

The aforementioned former Minint official, as well as reports prepared by U.S. intelligence in the mid- and late 1990s, and most participants at the RAND forum agree that Castro is not likely to be overthrown or resign in the foreseeable future with or without the embargo. That is, the embargo is largely irrelevant in terms of Castro's personal well-being, political survival, or policy decisions. The mid-1997 Florida International University (FIU) poll of Cuban Americans in the Miami area showed that though 78 percent supported continuing the embargo, only 25 percent believed it was working. Meanwhile Cuban Americans are rapidly tilting toward another conclusion of the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency: Major political change is not going to come soon, embargo or no. Just after the Soviet Union fell, 88 percent expected major change within five years; by 1995 the percentage had

fallen to 41 percent, and in 1997 it was 36 percent. Embargo supporter Falcoff says there is "a real possibility" the Castro regime will last until at least 2010.[101]

Cuban Security Apparatus

Most Cubans seem to have simply given up on serious improvements until after Castro is gone, not wishing to provoke concentrated government repression on top of the lesser daily repressions they have learned to live with.[102] For decades the repressive apparatus in Cuba has been elaborate and formidable.[103] During the Reagan administration Castro became increasingly concerned that Washington might "go to the source"—Havana—as Reagan's secretary of state Alexander Haig once threatened. The U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983, and U.S. support for the contras in Nicaragua during the mid-1980s, worried Castro so much that he developed in Cuba what he called the "War of All the People." This broadly based defense system, inspired in part by the experiences of Communists in Vietnam, totally militarized the country by bringing Cubans into nationwide defensive and counterrevolutionary activities. This was supplemented and in some degree replaced by 1985 when Special Weapons and Tactics teams were created within the Minint to deal quickly and decisively with any challenge to Castro's leadership. So while Cuban Americans look forward to anti-Castro uprisings in Cuba, Cubans in Cuba have been understandably unwilling to seriously challenge this deadly apparatus and are resigned to the "nothing can be done" syndrome.[104]

The 1998 DIA report says that "relatively few Cubans now appear willing to risk the consequences of pressing for sweeping political changes." Participants in the 1998 RAND forum noted that the Cuban government has not chosen to "forcefully quash all opposition," but that this is only because the dissidents "are still very much fragmented," as the church too has noted. Should opposition become more than the "irritation" it is today, in the forum's correct judgment, "the government

would most certainly move against them in a more decisive fashion, even though such heavy-handed repression would incur high domestic and international costs for the regime."[105] The proof of this was the absence of any major demonstration at the 1999 Iberoamerican summit in Havana, when more than any time in the past forty years Cuba and Cubans had the attention of the international press. Several of the foreign delegations at the summit met individually with dissident leaders who urged the foreigners to encourage the Castro regime to open up to dissent, though with little hope that Castro will actually do so and even the fear that he may tighten up.[106]

Fearing the Future

Castro 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 and many undoubtedly fear that a new regime would mean a loss of status, homes, jobs, security, and, in some cases, lives. The new government, they fear, rightly or wrongly, would undertake major free market reforms that would bring chaos to Cuba comparable to that in post-Soviet Russia. Castro can no longer play on fear of Jorge Mas Canosa, the founder and late director of the CANF, but he can point to the economic problems in Russia and many other countries as a potent disincentive to undertaking reforms to open up the economy. Edward González notes that "the vast majority of discontented Cubans remain politically inert for any number of reasons." These include fear of "reprisals from state security organs," "the prospects of social upheaval," and "the return of vengeful right-wing exiles." Additional reasons include hopes that they will be able "to leave Cuba one way or another," that "the economic and political situation will improve," that "Castro and other leaders will embrace peaceful change," or "that the United States will lift the embargo or somehow

improve their personal prospects and those of Cuba." The Catholic Church, which is pressing for "a peaceful, negotiated way out" of the national stalemate, notes two obstacles to greater popular participation in national decision making: "the unwillingness of the government to engage in dialogue but also the absence of an organized counterpart: a civilian society, social movements or political groups" to represent the people. But "whatever their personal reasons," González concludes, "most Cubans so far have been unwilling to challenge the regime."[107] Given that Cubans themselves have shown no inclination to try to overthrow Castro, embargo "pressures" cannot legitimately be interpreted as contributing positively to a resistance movement on the island.

Living Abroad, Speaking for Cuba

The vast majority of the nearly 1.5 million or more Cubans living abroad reside in the United States, mainly in Florida and New Jersey. In 1981 Jorge Mas Canosa formed the CANF, and it has long played a major role articulating Cuban American anti-Castro interests, which during the cold war largely overlapped the anticommunist interests of Americans in general. But after the fall of the Soviet bloc, as most former cold warriors put aside their battle gear, the CANF donned more armor and intensified its attacks on Castro, one of the few communist leaders to survive into the new millennium. Until late 1997, when Mas Canosa died, the CANF was the main U.S. pressure group supporting an ever tighter embargo. After Mas Canosa's death, the three Cuban American members of the House of Representatives became more vocal than the CANF. These representatives, along with other legislators from Florida, Indiana, North Carolina, and New Jersey, Vice President Al Gore, and their allies killed the bipartisan initiative. On his South American tour in late 1997 President Clinton, in a rare moment of truth, alluded accurately to "the people in Miami who are basically responsible for the [present Cuban] policy."[108] There are many examples of the lobby's

power, but the most ominous were the two cases in 1998 discussed above—the DIA report and the proposed bipartisan commission.[109]

This Cuban American community has eagerly taken on the seemingly natural role as the voice of the beleaguered Cuban people on the island. It is worth noting, however, that while many in Cuba benefit from the dollars those in exile send to family and friends in Cuba (see below), Cuban Americans are by no means universally admired in Cuba. In its working paper, the Eastern dioceses of the Catholic Church calls those who leave Cuba "part of the problem." They take the "easy way out" (*la salida fácil*), the "individual solution" that is enormously appealing yet constantly drains talent and dissidents from the island and defuses pressures on Castro.[110] Meanwhile, many Cubans in Cuba seem to believe that Cuban Americans consider those who stayed on the island in varying degrees compromised by remaining there and accommodating themselves to living under Castro. Some Cuban Americans have in fact looked on refugees of the past decade as people motivated more by mere economics than hatred of Castro. The gap between Cubans in Cuba and Cuban Americans will pose an enormous challenge after the Castros are gone.

Supporting and Breaking the Embargo

One must note the irony that Cuban Americans, who are the strongest supporters of the embargo, are also the main group that violates it. In recent years Cuban Americans have sent an estimated $600–$800 million annually to family members in Cuba, a figure that "almost equaled the net inflow from tourism and sugar combined." The amount will rise substantially after the legal limit on remittances was raised in 1999.[111] Sending dollars is humanitarian, to be sure, and does help those individuals lucky enough to receive them to act more independently of Castro. But much of the money went illegally just the same—that is to say, against the embargo—and it passed through dollar stores and other routes into the general economy. Thus by the logic of the embargo this

money generously sent to Cuba nonetheless helps prop up Castro's dictatorship. While making some Cubans more free of Castro, the dollars have also helped to redivide Cuban society into the haves (those who receive U.S. dollars) and have-nots. Thus no group in the world so loudly supports and so regularly violates the embargo as Cuban Americans.

Among Cuban Americans

The Cuban American community is not as unified as has been alleged. Its power in substantial degree comes from a considerable unity on certain Cuba-related issues accompanied by an unwillingness of some to disagree with the militants in public.[112] Note that some 71 percent of Cuban Americans in the 1997 FIU poll agree that not all points of view on how to deal with Castro are heard in Miami, and among those in the eighteen to twenty-nine age group the negative vote rises to 83 percent. A young Cuban American wrote a letter to the *Miami Herald* in mid-1998 saying that "a substantial portion of the people in Greater Miami are not being represented in [the U.S.] Congress," correctly concluding that some of those who fight Castro have become as inflexible as Fidel himself.[113] What is more, though all age groups strongly support vigorous action to bring change in Cuba, the younger and U.S.-born respondents are substantially less hard-line than their elders. For example, although some 78 percent of those polled in 1997 supported continuing the embargo, a breakdown by age groups showed that, among those who fled Cuba between 1959 and 1964, 90 percent support the sanctions while among Cuban Americans born in the United States the support fell to (a still high) 65 percent.

One Option for Serious Reform

If Fidel Castro and/or his younger brother survive a few more years—or are replaced by undemocratic successors—what are they likely to do?

Fidel is not likely to seek friendship with or apologize to the United States for what he has said and done, nor is he likely to undertake serious market reforms, whether the embargo is maintained or not. Even if the embargo is lifted, he will continue attacking the United States as the world's sole superpower and self-appointed police chief. Just as the lobby today says the embargo has only had a chance of working in the years since the Soviet Union collapsed, so Castro will say that it will take years for Cuba to move beyond the destruction—the "genocide"—presumably caused by almost four decades of what he calls a "blockade."[114]

From the beginning, Castro has "warned" that many of the free market experiments in Latin America and elsewhere would fail, thereby lowering the image of the United States and the free market system associated with it. He fought off Soviet leaders who tried to get him to reform in the late 1980s and early 1990s, arguing that "liberalization" is against the interests of the people. His delight over the economic failures in Russia during the 1990s has been ill-disguised, for he has been able to make Russia's chaos one of the red flags he waves to warn the Cuban people of what will happen if the Americans and "their" Cubans return to Cuba to carry out reforms. But the leveling off and in some places decline around the world in enthusiasm for free markets doesn't make statism work. At some point Cuban leaders are bound to want to make their economy more productive, and to do so they are going to have to make serious changes. Whether this will be done by Raúl Castro alone or with others, or even what the successor government to Fidel Castro will be like, cannot be known at this point. But it is bound to happen.[115]

This is where the Chinese experience may influence Cuba's future. Both Fidel and Raúl have looked into this possibility with state visits to China in late 1995 and late 1997, respectively. Castro seized power in Cuba in 1959, only ten years after Mao Zedong conquered China. Relations between Cuba and China soared in the early 1960s, when Castro and Che Guevara fervently agreed with China on the need for armed struggle to seize political power around the world. They also

agreed on moral rather than material incentives to make the "new man" and other more esoteric ideological matters that then were grounds for liquidating all who disagreed. But in the mid-1960s Fidel seems to have carefully calculated which power in the emerging Sino-Soviet dispute could help him more and correctly settled on Moscow to underwrite his revolution and provide his shield against a possible U.S. counterattack. In the spirit of the Sino-Soviet dispute of the day, he launched frontal attacks on Mao and Sino-Cuban relations dived into the abyss. Mao's death in 1976 didn't make things any better at first. Deng Xiaoping, who took over China thereafter, was immediately called a "numbskull" and other less complimentary names.[116]

But over time the Soviet ally crumbled: The Communist Party of the Soviet Union was routed, the Soviet bloc collapsed, and Russia began lurching from crisis to crisis. For Castro this was concrete evidence of what happens when central authority is abolished and bourgeois "freedoms" are given a free hand. But China was different. By the time Deng died in 1997, Castro had changed his tune and lauded him as "an illustrious son of the Chinese nation and one of its foremost leaders" who had made a "valiant contribution to the consolidation of socialism in China." Thus Castro quietly ate crow on China and in the end judged Deng's reforms as "socialist." On the fiftieth anniversary of the victory of communism in China in October 1999, Castro said, "China's successes have been possible because of an ideology, because of a political science, because of Marxism-Leninism."[117] The key matter to Castro was that under Deng the Chinese Communist Party had maintained its control and guided "socialist" reforms from the top in a program of economic growth that over twenty years was the highest in the world. Reeling from their loss of Soviet subsidies and their own utterly failed economic policies, the Castros undoubtedly went to China with broad agendas. They wanted to see what the "numbskull" who became an "illustrious son" had done to promote such growth as well as to learn how Deng had kept the Communist Party in power and where and why some power had slipped from central control.[118]

To be sure, at the October 1997 Cuban Communist Party Congress (and subsequently), Castro warned that although China's reforms had been right for China, they were not right for Cuba. "Conditions are completely different," he said, for the Chinese economy is based in the countryside, the nation is much larger, and China does not face the hostility of an enormous neighbor. Cuba would not privatize state industries, he said—an objective the Chinese Communists had just emphasized at their Communist Party Congress in September 1997 and have repeated since that time—or allow more people to go into business for themselves. But these points don't make China's example irrelevant for Cuba in the absence of nondemocratic leadership. Fidel Castro is not likely to undertake the reforms himself since he has built his revolutionary career rejecting everything that resembles free market policies. But he has called what the Chinese are doing "socialist." It is possible that he will pass on the reins of power—by decision or death—to the more pragmatic Raúl. Some dispute Raúl's pragmatism since in public and small groups he always proclaims his total agreement with everything Big Brother says and does. But Rodríguez Menier, who had ample dealings with both Castros, wrote: "If Fidel were to die or disappear, Raúl would secure power within a couple of months. He probably would set up a collective government and follow an almost Chinese line of opening up the economic system." Edward González writes that Raúl "has always been far more pragmatic and administratively competent than his older brother." He is the leader of the "centrists" in the Cuban government and the one the "reformers" often have to cooperate with to get anything done.[119]

Of course, Fidel has always kept all power for himself. But at age seventy-three in early 2000 his health has had some down times. At the 1997 congress he heaped praise on Raúl, who heads the military and is second only to Fidel in all other major positions of power, as his successor. Among other things, Fidel said that Raúl's "reelection" as second secretary "gives us much security and great tranquillity." He had acclaimed Raúl before, of course, but when he was younger. Fidel repeated

this praise after the congress, even though he is undoubtedly certain that if he gets power Raúl, who spent two weeks in China, will make changes like those Rodríguez Menier predicts. So why promote him? Because besides wanting Cuba to have Latin America's only remaining family dynasty, Fidel recognizes mortality and knows that the years remaining for his policies—which he says will never be changed—are in fact numbered. He undoubtedly knows that whoever follows him will have to go in the direction of serious and systematic market reforms, which he has now said in his comments on Deng can be called "socialist." By elevating Raúl during his lifetime, Fidel could both indirectly influence the change and withdraw with his anti-imperialist, anticapitalist revolutionary credentials virtually untarnished. He could let Raúl make the changes, take the heat, and reap the "credit," as his favored successor. Chinese-style reforms would benefit the majority of the Cuban people without giving them "bourgeois" political freedoms, which is why Castro finally came to accept and praise what Deng did.

Castro's loudest critics in Washington and Miami, however, have refused to accept Raúl as an alternative to Fidel, even by law in Helms-Burton. But his taking power (if he survives Fidel) is probable whether the lobby wants it or not, unless Washington acts decisively to influence events. Some critics of the embargo have long asked how the United States can ostracize Castro on democracy and human rights grounds when it promotes ties to China, which has similar failings. The embargo's supporters usually argue correctly that Cuba has not made substantive reforms like those in China. But if Cuba *does* make major changes, would Congress reconsider Helms-Burton? The reality is that the old and frail Fidel is running out of options. If he beats a "dignified and stately" retreat, like the peers in *Iolanthe*, the prospects for a more peaceful transition in Cuba will be enhanced. He will even get some credit for promoting a reform-oriented Raúl and for having pushed open the door to the future. By lifting the embargo the United States will ease whatever transition of this sort may be in the cards and reduce the prospects for a violent transition after Castro's passing.

Conclusions

In this essay, we have noted many reasons the embargo on Cuba should be lifted, ranging from the possibility that current policy might drag the U.S. military into fighting in Cuba to the impact the blatantly imperialistic Helms-Burton Law will have on future U.S.-Cuban relations. A policy that purports to be humanitarian is in fact largely a vendetta against Fidel Castro. In fact, U.S. security interests in the Caribbean have flip-flopped, and a policy that made sense during the cold war has now become a threat to the well-being of the American and Cuban people. It needs to be changed and it is up to politicians in Washington to do so.

Americans are not prepared to commit the military resources that alone could remove Fidel Castro from power.[120] Thus Castro and Cuba's broader internal dynamics will continue to determine what happens on the island, as even the best-informed embargo supporters acknowledge. González and Nuccio conclude, for example, that "external actions are neither likely to be able to alter profoundly the government's economic and political policies, nor quicken the pace of reforms, as long as the Cuban leadership believes it is contrary to its interests to do so." Mark Falcoff concludes that for the foreseeable future the Cuban people "can anticipate nothing but continued deprivation, hunger and economic stagnation until the dictator himself is incapacitated or dies. Then and only then will new options become available."[121] T. S. Eliot's Rum Tum Tugger (slightly paraphrased) had it right when he said, "Fidel Castro *will* do, as Fidel Castro *do* do, and there's no doing anything about it."

No new options are available, that is, so long as our policy is virtually dictated by Castro. There *are* options if our politicians will develop and seize them. If they don't, they alone are to blame, not Cuba's dictator. After a visit to Cuba in late 1999, columnist Thomas Friedman wrote that "the U.S. and Cuban Governments have one thing in common today—they're both ready to mortgage Cuba's future for its past."[122] But

it is even worse than that, for U.S. policy also mortgages some of *America's* future to the past.

The tragedy of Elián González clearly demonstrates the negative impact of a foreign policy that promotes confrontation without any realistic hope of accomplishing its objectives. Responsibilities for the plight of the young rafter boy who suddenly arrived off the coast of Florida in November 1999 go back in two directions: to Fidel Castro in Cuba, who is out of our control, and to politicians in Washington. These are the politicians who passed the Helms-Burton Law itself and the assorted immigration regulations that make injustices and conflict inevitable. For example, U.S. immigration policy tempts Cubans—but not Haitians or Chinese or North Koreans—to defect with offers of automatic residency if they but touch dry land in America, while it simultaneously turns the U.S. Coast Guard into Castro's border patrol to try to prevent them from doing so.[123] Elián González did not reach dry land on his own but was brought there by the Coast Guard. Then he was placed in the custody of a great-uncle in Miami. Not only were those relatives predictably unwilling to give the boy back when the INS finally decided he should be with his father in Cuba, but the resulting response to the INS ruling became seriously divisive among Americans generally. The result was all sorts of schemes for keeping the boy here or getting him home. Polls suggest that Cuban Americans overwhelmingly supported his staying here, and many politicians concluded the same, while the majority of Americans generally thought he should return to his father and grandparents.[124] At this writing, the outcome is pending, but the hostilities between Cuba and the United States, and among Americans, because of this incident are escalating and will not be quickly forgotten. In this and other cases, confrontation is what U.S. policy promotes, and confrontation and crisis is what it causes. The only good things about the González incident are that the uproar has drawn attention to an outdated and inequitable U.S. immigration policy, the inordinate political clout exercised by a militant minority in Miami, and the degree to which many politicians support the wishes of a militant

community, seemingly to court their votes, over the interests of the nation as a whole.

Here is the great irony of current U.S. policy. 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, and Fidel was the most fulfilled guy in the Caribbean. Today Castro's foreign policies are generally conducted according to international expectations, and his strategic significance for the United States is roughly zero. But U.S. policy has not changed, and Castro's international political life remains a lot more fulfilling than it should be. In recent years the Cuban leader has increasingly become what he most resents but can't escape on his own, namely, a creature of his relations with the United States. But he has not been on his own. He has managed to hold onto some of his former, although now faded, glory with the essential aid of Cuban Americans, those he brands *worms*. The irony is that those who proclaim themselves Castro's worst enemies have in practice become his best friends and the 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.

Castro correctly argues that U.S. policy toward Cuba is part of a broader U.S. relationship with the world. That relationship took a wrong turn during the Clinton administration when Washington began using American power with increasing arrogance and recklessness. In the Caribbean, this is seen in the continuing effort to defend the embargo on "moral" and other grounds, and the assumption that the rafter boy would be better off in America than with his closest family members in Cuba. More broadly, the recklessness and arrogance are reflected in Washington's self-assigned role as leader—with Great Britain's prime minister Tony Blair—of an international moral and political police force. The critical action of this "humanitarian" imperialism was the 1999 bombing of Yugoslavia.[125]

International opposition to the embargo and support for the return of Elián González to his family are not the only propaganda victories

Castro has had recently. In moving to make several Western countries the political and cultural police force of the world, the Clinton administration has given life to Castro's "warnings" that America's long-term goal is still to dominate the world. The implications of this new "humanitarian" internationalism—to "right wrongs and prosecute just causes," as Tony Blair put it in 1999—are grave indeed. Among other things, it has already set in motion a possible new realignment of the world by driving the edge of a wedge between the democratic West and the developing nations, including Russia and China, who feel threatened by the new use of American power. Castro will be an enthusiastic member of any group dedicated to guarding against what Russia's January 2000 Security Declaration has called "a unipolar world surrounding the United States and its allies," a "threat" Castro has been pointing to for years.[126] Although most political leaders around the world today know that socialism doesn't work, they are also learning that for many reasons market reforms are not as easy to implement and consolidate as many of their advocates originally thought and said. Each complication or failure gives Castro, and others, a growing audience among the frustrated and the demagogues of the world.[127] Of course, although the difficulties of implementing market reforms do not logically mean they should be abandoned in favor of caudillo statism, that response to problems is deeply ingrained in Latin America's past and could play a role again in the region's future, spurred by Castro's advocacy.

When we propose lifting the embargo we are not endorsing Castro's leadership of Cuba but suggesting a more effective use of the resources America has available—and is willing to commit—to achieve the best outcome for the United States and Cuba. It is time Americans put this issue of Fidel Castro in perspective. Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger went to China in 1972—during the Cultural Revolution, no less—to talk with Mao Zedong, 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. President Clinton has negotiated with and feted former PLO guerrilla chieftain (now "Palestinian

leader") Yasir Arafat. In l999, the United States even struck a deal to lift the embargo on Stalinist North Korea and the discussions in Northern Ireland are serious if incomplete. Is Castro really more intractable than Mao and Arafat and Kim?

There are two basic ways to lift the embargo however intractable Castro proves to be: all at once or piecemeal. Lifting it unilaterally and all at once would be the better way to go. 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 to and improved human rights in 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 bad side effects. In fact, past experiences suggest that lifting the embargo, like earlier conciliatory gestures, may even spark a negative reaction from Castro.[128] If so, so be it. It is time for Washington politicians to make policy on behalf of this nation as a whole irrespective of the pressures of interested constituencies here or abroad.

Unilateral lifting of the sanctions is less practical, however, than a gradualism that doesn't force members of Congress to stand tall on an issue of little importance to most Americans but of passionate concern to a small, politically aggressive minority. It would be better to lift the embargo piecemeal than not at all if we do so on our own rationally decided timetable, irrespective of what outrageous actions Fidel Castro may undertake. Many embargo supporters will not even contemplate lifting the sanctions while the Castro brothers are in power. This is by definition a nonstarter. Seemingly more realistic sanctions supporters speak of an essential quid pro quo and say that the United States needs genuine reform in Cuba—or at the very least an "excuse" or cover—to lift the embargo. But this argument is equally problematical. A quid pro quo or indirect negotiation path gives Castro the opportunity to shift the focus of discussion from his own domestic failures and repression, and what would increasingly be his own international irrelevance, to

U.S. interference in Cuban affairs. In effect it gives him a veto over U.S. policy. Therefore the path of giving U.S. politicians a "way out" won't in fact work because Castro will twist it to his interests. Better to just do it unilaterally on our own timetable.

For the time being it appears U.S. policy will remain reactive—to Castro and to Cuban American pressure groups—irrespective of the interests of Americans and Cubans as a whole. Like parrots, all presidential hopefuls in the 2000 presidential elections propose varying versions of the current failed policy. We have made much here of the negative role of the Cuba lobby, but we close by reiterating that their advocacy has not usually been different in kind from that of other pressure groups, simply much more effective. The buck falls on the politicians who cannot see the need for, or are afraid to support, a new policy for the post–cold war world.

Notes

1. This presentation of the issues is based on but goes far beyond written testimony—"U.S. Cuban Policy—a New Strategy for the Future"—which the authors presented to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 24 May 1995. We have long advocated this change, beginning with William Ratliff, "The Big Cuba Myth," *San Jose Mercury News*, 15 December 1992, and William Ratliff and Roger Fontaine, "Foil Castro," *Washington Post*, 30 June 1993.
2. Cuba Commission supporters as of 11 December 1998 included U.S. senators: John W. Warner (R-VA), Rod Grams (R-MN), Christopher "Kit" S. Bond (R-MO), James M. Jeffords (R-VT), Chuck Hagel (R-NE), Richard G. Lugar (R-IN), Michael B. Enzi (R-WY), John H. Chafee (R-RI), Arlen Specter (R-PA), Gordon Smith (R-OR), Craig Thomas (R-WY), Barbara Boxer (D-CA), J. Robert Kerrey (D-NE), Dale Bumpers (D-AR), Jack Reed (D-RI), Rick Santorum (R-PA), Christopher J. Dodd (D-CT), Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY), Dirk Kempthorne (R-ID), Pat Roberts (R-KS), Patrick J. Leahy (D-VT), Thad Cochran (R-MS), Pete V. Domenici (R-NM), Patty Murray (D-WA); House of Representative members Jon Christensen (R-2nd/NE)

and Charles B. Rangel (D-15th/NY); former undersecretary of state William D. Rogers; former assistant secretary of state Harry W. Shlaudeman; former secretary of defense Frank Carlucci; former ambassadors J. William Middendorf and Timothy Towell; former CIA deputy director of operations Max Hugel; and Lieutenant General (Ret.) Gordon Sumner Jr., among others. On the Internet, see uscubacommission.org.

3. See William Ratliff, "While We're at It, Let's End the Embargo," *Los Angeles Times*, 7 January 2000.
4. The embargo lobby is not to be confused with its opposite, the "Cuba lobby," which for decades has opposed U.S. policy toward Castro. Some embargo supporters today say longtime Castro critics who now call for an end to the sanctions have in effect "joined" the Cuba lobby. On this see Irving Louis Horowitz, "The Cuba Lobby Then and Now," *Orbis*, fall 1998.
5. Linda Robinson, "Cuba: Time to Rethink U.S. Strategy?" *Great Decisions*, 1998; Reuters, "Clinton favorece relajar el embargo a Cuba," *Miami Herald*, 6 November 1999.
6. See, for example, Rui Ferreira and Roberto Fabricio, "Graham y Gore convencieron al Presidente," in *El Nuevo Herald*, 10 January 1999; William Ratliff and Roger Fontaine, "Preparing the Ground for Election 2000," *San Jose Mercury News*, 24 January 1999.
7. Lincoln Díaz-Balart, Robert Menéndez, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Letter to President Clinton, 13 October 1998.
8. The Gallup Organization poll released on 24 May 1999. A major movement toward accommodation has occurred since 1994 when a Time/CNN poll found only 35 percent favored ending the embargo. The 1999 poll also found that 71 percent of Americans support reestablishing diplomatic relations with Cuba.
9. The present authors made several attempts over a six-year period to get the CANF to sponsor and publish a debate on the embargo among longtime critics of Castro, namely, ourselves and two other analysts of the foundation's choice who still support the policy. Although during the 1980s Ratliff published frequently with the foundation—and just over a decade ago even drafted the CANF's official statement entitled *Towards a New U.S.-Cuba Policy* (Washington, D.C.: CANF, 1988)—the suggestion was not accepted or rejected, just systematically ignored.

10. Henry Kissinger, "India and Pakistan: After the Explosions," *Washington Post*, 9 June 1998.
11. Sarah Carey and Richard Nelson, chair and director, "A Road Map for Restructuring Future U.S. Relations with Cuba," a policy paper, the Atlantic Council, June 1995; Bernard Aronson and William D. Rogers, cochairs, "Independent Task Force Report—U.S.-Cuban Relations in the 21st Century," Council on Foreign Relations Report, January 1999; and Edward González and Richard Nuccio, eds., *The RAND Forum on Cuba* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1999). The Cuban American National Foundation's "Transition Program" deals primarily with change in Cuba rather than foreign relations, but it covers many of the issues discussed by those working on foreign policy.
12. In their detailed psychological analysis of Castro, Edward González and David Ronfeldt, in *Castro, Cuba and the World* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, June 1986), explain Castro's character as a fusing of hubris and nemesis. They summarize his "mindset" as "unrelenting ambition for power and . . . continuing animosity toward the United States," p. v. Also see Tad Szulc, *Fidel: A Critical Portrait* (New York: Morrow, 1986), and Georgie Anne Geyer, *Guerrilla Prince* (Boston: Little Brown, 1991).
13. See Rolando Bonachea and Nelson Valdés, eds., *Revolutionary Struggle, 1947–1958: Volume 1 of the Selected Works of Fidel Castro* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1972), p. 379. Also Carlos Franqui, *Diary of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1980), p. 338, and Hugh Thomas, *The Cuban Revolution* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 278.
14. Hitler said: "You may find us guilty a thousand times over, but the goddess of the eternal court of History will smile and tear up the indictment of the prosecutor and the verdict of the judges. She will acquit us!" Quoted in Robert Quirk, *Fidel Castro* (New York: Norton, 1993), p. 59n. Also see Hugh Thomas, *The Revolution on Balance* (Washington, D.C.: Cuban American National Foundation, 1983), p. 19.
15. "Nominal" because Castro's "beliefs" have almost nothing to do with what Marx or Lenin said, aside from the latter's concept of the vanguard, and in Castro's case the "vanguard" is himself. One of the world's foremost scholars of Marxism and Leninism put Castro's "communism" into ideological and political perspective decades ago. In *Marxism: 100 Years in the Life of a Doctrine* (New York: Dial Press, 1964), pp. xv, Bertram D.

Wolfe correctly notes that "for intellectual purposes, we need not take [Castroism] too seriously," though its "influence on political acts and passions may be serious indeed."

16. In large part, this is the argument made in a talking paper prepared for a meeting of Catholic priests from the Eastern dioceses of the Cuban Catholic Church held in Santiago de Cuba. The document—"Cuba, su pueblo y su Iglesia de cara al comienzo del tercero milenio," *El Nuevo Herald*, 27 September 1999—is a scathing critique of Castro's "totalitarian" government. For an incomplete English translation, see "We Cannot Remain Silent," *Miami Herald*, 24 October 1999.

17. On Castro's greater tilt toward Mao, notwithstanding his often vituperative criticism of Chinese leaders, see below and William Ratliff, "Cuban Foreign Policy toward the Far East and Southeast Asia," in Georges Fauriol and Eva Loser, eds., *Cuba: The International Dimension* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1990), p. 206ff; and William Ratliff, "Castro Eats Crow in China," *Miami Herald*, 1 February 1996.

18. Castro's health and education programs have been much praised and overpraised. On this see Jacobo Timerman, *Cuba : A Journey*, trans. by Toby Talbot (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1990); Department of State, *Zenith and Eclipse: A Comparative Look at Socio-Economic Conditions in Pre-Castro and Present Day Cuba* (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, 9 February 1998). Also see articles on Cuba in successive editions of the Hoover Institution's *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs*, ed. Richard F. Staar. For a warm appreciation of Castro's reforms in terms of economic benefits and social rights, even in the relative absence of political and civil rights, see Peter Schwab, *Confronting the U.S. Embargo* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

19. Juan Antonio Rodríguez Menier and William Ratliff, eds., *Inside the Cuban Interior Ministry* (Washington, D.C.: Jamestown Foundation, 1994), p. 3. Also see Juan Antonio Rodriguez Menier and William Ratliff, "Protecting and Promoting Fidel," mms. in Hoover Institution Archives.

20. Georgie Anne Geyer entitled her biography of Castro *Guerrilla Prince*. In her Introduction, after having thanked a string of psychiatrists who had helped her understand the Cuban leader, she remarked that after

1959 Castro "proceeded to transform [Cuba] with a wave of his 'princely' Machiavellian hand," p. xv.

21. See Robert Packenham, "Cuba and the Soviet Union: What Kind of Dependency?" in Irving L. Horowitz, ed., *Cuban Communism: 1959–1995* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1995), pp. 141–71.
22. EFE, "No de Castro al llamado de apertura," *El Nuevo Herald*, 17 November 1999.
23. For a good summary of this situation, see González and Nuccio, eds., *Forum*, pp. 3–11, and John D. Harbron, "Everyone (Even Castro) Is Preparing for Cuba after Castro," *Miami Herald*, 6 August 1999.
24. See Juan Tamayo, "Average Cuban Says Economy Is Worse," *Miami Herald*, 30 March 1998; Juan Tamayo, "Havana Challenges Talk of a '99 Exodus," *Miami Herald*, 3 June 1999; Carlos Batista, "Mejora la economía de la isla, pero no para el pueblo," *El Nuevo Herald*, 26 November 1999.
25. William Ratliff, "'Socialism or Death' in Havana," *Washington Times*, 14 October 1997; James Anderson, "Castro Casts Spell over Caribbean," Associated Press, 25 August 1998. British prime minister Tony Blair, who emerged as NATO's chief cheerleader, wrote in "A Military Alliance, and More," *New York Times*, 24 April 1999, that NATO must be prepared to "right wrongs and prosecute just causes" around the world.
26. Richard Nuccio quoted by Wayne S. Smith in "Our Dysfunctional Cuban Embargo," *Orbis*, fall 1998, p. 536.
27. Michael Ranneberger, "U.S. Cuba Policy," statement to U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Trade, 7 May 1998.
28. This and related dilemmas of U.S. foreign policy are discussed in a different context in David Fromkin, *Kosovo Crossing: American Ideals Meet Reality on the Balkan Battlefields* (New York: Free Press, 1999).
29. An interview with Condoleezza Rice by Geneva Overholser, "Profile of a Heavy Hitter," *Washington Post*, 7 September 1999.
30. González and Nuccio, "The Cuban Conundrum," pp. 32, 36–37.
31. Cuban American National Foundation, "FAQs on U.S. Policy toward Cuba," www.canfnet.org/htm, 30 October 1999. Many of these points are made in other CANF releases, including "U.S. Policy Towards Cuba: A Defense," 19 January 1998. This "defense" consists of seven unconvincing "answers" to seven unreal "assertions" of embargo critics, mostly the positions of "critics" who never really opposed Castro.

32. The year 1999 saw the first defection of an officer on duty in Fidel Castro's security team. Pablo Alfonso, "Ranking Castro Security Official Reportedly Defects," *Miami Herald*, 22 April 1999.
33. As Edward González notes in *Cuba: Clearing Perilous Waters?* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1996), p. 90, Helms-Burton could lead to "growing civil strife, state repression, and direct U.S. intervention."
34. The best-known dissident in Cuba today is Elisardo Sánchez, who says that in 1996 his opposition to the embargo was a minority position among active dissidents, whereas in 1999 the majority have concluded the sanctions impede their activities. Juan Tamayo, "Cuban Human-Rights Activist Takes Center Stage," *Miami Herald*, 18 November 1999. Some activists reportedly support sanctions; see CANF, "FAQs on U.S. Policy toward Cuba."
35. William Hawkins, "Big Business vs. National Security?" *Cuba Survey* (CANF), February 1999.
36. Elliott Abrams, "When Trade Lets down the Flag"; and Mark Falcoff, "Is It Time to Rethink the Cuban Embargo?" *AEI Latin American Outlook*, March 1998.
37. Senator Helms is correct that not all of these sanctions are as sweeping as the embargo against Cuba, which is why it is appropriate to say "at various levels." Senator Jesse Helms, "What Sanctions Epidemic?" *Cuba Survey* (CANF), winter 1999.
38. Jeffrey J. Schott, "US Economic Sanctions: Good Intentions, Bad Execution," testimony to U.S. House Committee on International Relations, 3 June 1998. Gary Hufbauer, "The Snake Oil of Diplomacy," *Washington Post*, 12 July 1998. With Kemberly Ann Elliott, they are coeditors of *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered* (Washington, D.C.: IIE, 1990). Also see Rodríguez and Vásquez, "Cuba."
39. See Falcoff, "Reflections on a Dying Revolution"; Griswold and Lukas, "Trade Sanctions"; Wilfredo Cancio Isla, "Politólogo pronostica una 'transición larga y trabajosa' en Cuba," *El Nuevo Herald*, 25 October 1999.
40. Jesse Helms says the "sanctions epidemic" is a red herring. Helms, "What Sanctions Epidemic?"
41. One exception is Daniel Fisk, for some years a member of the Republican Senior Professional Staff and an associate counsel of the Senate Com-

mittee on Foreign Relations. In "How Sanctions Can Affect U.S. Policy Interests," a prepared statement for the Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D. C., 3 June 1998, he openly acknowledges that "it is impossible to hurt a national government without negatively impacting its citizens, and there is no way to help its citizens and not help the government."

42. See Lugar's speeches of 7 November 1997 and 25 March 1998 and the Lugar-Crane bill to limit the use of sanctions.

43. Castro remarked in late 1999 that Cubans "have become accustomed to the blockade, we are immunized." AFP, "Castro dispuesto a restablecer relaciones a pesar del embargo," *El Nuevo Herald*, 29 October 1999. Ricardo Alarcón, the no. 3 man in Cuba, said the worst thing that could happen to the United States would be for its embargo to become irrelevant and disappear and "that, in a sense, is already happening." Romero, "Voces del Milenio: Ricardo Alarcon."

44. For example, Jorge Mas Santos, "Remarks at Tulane University in October 1998," *CANF Foundation News*.

45. Mark Falcoff, "Is It Time to Rethink the Cuban Embargo?" *AEI Latin American Outlook*, March 1998.

46. Associated Press, "Cuba Calls for Sanctions against U.S. for 'Genocidal' Embargo," 14 September 1999; Reuters, "Cuba to File $100 Billion Lawsuit over U.S. Embargo," 9 November 1999.

47. President Clinton even suggested this at one point; see Reuters, "Clinton favorece relajar el embargo a Cuba."

48. See Pablo Alfonso, "'Conspiración para asesinar' en el derribo de los aviones," *El Nuevo Herald*, 8 May 1999. On Cuban infiltration in Miami, see series of articles collected under title "Espionaje Castrista en Miami," *El Nuevo Herald*, consisting of articles between September 1998 and August 1999. *Some* of the counterproductive militancy of organizations in Miami may be attributable to these infiltrators.

49. See Brothers to the Rescue Press Conference Statement, 15 September 1998; Associated Press, "Pilot Admits He Was Double Agent for Cuba," 27 February 1996.

50. Some critics agree with Wayne Smith, "After 40 Years, Isn't It about Time for a Sensible U.S.-Cuban Policy?" *Los Angeles Times*, 9 January

2000, that "the hard fact is the Clinton administration has never tried to improve relations with the Castro government."

51. Serge Kovaleski, "Latin Leaders Meet in Cuba for 1st Time," *Washington Post*, 16 November 1999.
52. John Rice, "Summit of Gains, Losses," *Miami Herald*, 18 November 1999.
53. Andrés Oppenheimer, *Castro's Final Hour: The Secret Story behind the Coming Downfall of Communist Cuba* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1992). The present authors were among the very early wishful thinkers—see Roger Fontaine and William Ratliff, "In Cuba, Swapping Bulls for Tractors?" *New York Times*, 19 November 1990—but never supported tightening the embargo.
54. Daniel Fisk, "How Sanctions Can Affect U.S. Policy Interests," prepared statement for Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C., 3 June 1998.
55. See Helms-Burton Law Sections 2 and 3; Chelsea Carter, "Gingrich Defends Cuban Embargo," Associated Press, 28 March 1998.
56. L. Jacobo Rodríguez and Ian Vásquez, "Cuba," Section 50, in Edward Crane and David Boaz, eds., *Cato Handbook for Congress: Policy Recommendations for the 106th Congress* (Washington, D.C.: CATO Institute, 1999).
57. See Carmelo Mesa-Lago, "Cuba's Raft Exodus of 1994: Causes, Settlement, Effects, and Future," North-South Agenda Papers No. 12, University of Miami, April 1995, p. 22; and Smith, "Our Dysfunctional Cuban Embargo," p. 536.
58. Mesa Lago, "Cuba's Raft Exodus," p. 22, noted after the 1994 vote that "this third resolution puts the United States in an embarrassing situation that has made justification of the status quo increasingly difficult."
59. Elliott Abrams, "When Trade Lets down the Flag," *American Purpose*, spring/summer 1998.
60. The potential dangers of this policy were highlighted in September 1999 when the coast guard brutally prevented some would-be defectors from actually touching shore and thus winning asylum. See Andres Viglucci, "Clash at Sea Puts Coast Guard in Spotlight," *Miami Herald*, 6 September 1999.
61. We have long criticized Castro and the longtime refusal of some inter-

national human rights organizations to seriously and consistently condemn these violations. See, for example, William Ratliff, "Call It Amnesia International," *New York Times*, 20 March 1989.

62. 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.
63. Ann Davis, "Helms to Cuba: See You in Court," *National Law Journal*, 10 July 1995. Frank Davies, "Clash on Seizure of Cuban Assets," *Miami Herald*, 28 October 1999.
64. Smith, "Our Dysfunctional Cuban Embargo," p. 535.
65. Joaquín Roy, "The Helms-Burton Law: Development, Consequences and Legacy for Inter-American and European-US Relations," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, fall 1997, p. 83. Also see Daniel T. Griswold and Aaron Lukas, "Trade Sanctions," Section 56, *Cato Handbook for Congress: Policy Recommendations for the 106th Congress.*
66. Fisk, "Testimony," June 1998. A State Department report of 30 August 1999 says, "Implementation of Title IV has had a significant negative impact on investment in the Cuban economy. Since enactment, as a result of the Department's investigations, including contacts with companies, firms from the various parts of the world have changed plans for investment in Cuba, or have pulled out altogether. Implementation has exacerbated the unstable and risky investment climate, and interest rates for projects in Cuba have been driven in excess of 20 percent." Quoted in *U.S.-Cuba Policy Report*, 30 September 1999, p. 2.
67. Pablo Alfonso, "Congresistas en campaña contra la probable visita," *El Nuevo Herald*, 20 November 1999.
68. William Ratliff, "Cuban Military Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa," in Sergio Díaz-Briquets, ed., *Cuban Internationalism in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Duquesne University Press, 1989), p. 43.
69. Christopher Marquis, "Pentagon Calls Cuban Forces Weak," *Miami Herald*, 29 March 1998; Marquis, "Report Downplaying Cuba Threat Back for Review," *Miami Herald*, 8 April 1998.
70. Ibid.
71. Association of Former Intelligence Officers, *AFIO Weekly Intelligence*

Notes, 28 June 1998. Also see William Ratliff, "La mordaza del exilio sobre el Pentágono," *El Nuevo Herald*, 14 de abril de 1998.

72. Steven Lee Myers, "The Pentagon Now Belittles the Menace Posed by Cuba," *New York Times*, 7 May 1998.
73. William S. Cohen, transmittal letter addressed to Senator Strom Thurmond, undated accompanied by Department of Defense press release, "Secretary Cohen Forwards Cuban Threat Assessment to Congress," 6 May 1998.
74. The United States too often tries to blame others for its own failures to keep its secrets secret. See William Ratliff, "Rebuilding Burned Bridges," *MSNBC on the Internet*, 13–20 September 1999.
75. Frank Davies, "Anti-Drug Officials Downplay Cuba's Role in Trade," *Miami Herald*, 18 November 1999; George Gedda, AP, "Castro's Critics Say Administration Blind to Cuban Trafficking," 17 November 1999; Gerardo Reyes, "La Habana, pieza clave en el ajedrez de los narcos," *El Nuevo Herald*, 29 November 1999.
76. Louis A. Pérez Jr., "Between Meanings and Memories of 1898," *Orbis*, fall 1998, p. 516; and Hugh Thomas, *The Cuban Revolution*, p. xxv.
77. Mark Falcoff, "Reflections on a Dying Revolution," *Orbis*, fall 1998, p. 573.
78. Rodríguez Menier and Ratliff, *Inside the Cuban Interior Ministry*, p. 62; González, *Cuba*, p. 49, says the Minint "will take whatever forceful measures are necessary to ensure regime survival."
79. The poll by the Institute of Public Opinion Research at FIU consisted of 1,200 random interviews conducted between 30 May and 14 June 1997 in Florida's Dade County.
80. Falcoff, "Reflections on a Dying Revolution"; González, *Cuba*, p. 84.
81. Hufbauer, "The Snake Oil of Diplomacy."
82. Elizabeth Gibbons, *Sanctions in Haiti: Human Rights and Democracy under Assault* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1999), pp. 92, 99.
83. William Ratliff, "Fidel's Minint, or Institutionalizing Independence from Moscow?" in Robert Conquest and Dusan Djordjevich, *Political and Ideological Confrontations in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), p. 129; and Rodríguez Menier and Ratliff, "Protecting and Promoting Fidel."

84. William Ratliff, "Is Invasion of Haiti a Test Run for Cuba?" *Insight*, 4 July 1994.
85. Gibbons, *Haiti: Human Rights and Democracy under Assault*.
86. Also see Fisk, "Testimony," June 1998.
87. The authors met with Fisk and another top member of Senator Helm's staff in 1996 to discuss the Helms-Burton Law just then coming into effect. When we stated that U.S. policy increased the chances of civil conflict in Cuba and thus the possibility of U.S. military involvement the "other" member of Helms's staff became furious, abusive, and stalked out of the room.
88. See Anabelle de Gale et al., "Decisions Inflame Two Worlds," *Miami Herald*, 6 January 2000.
89. See Abrams, "When Trade Lets down the Flag." Also see Donald Kagan, "Honor, Interest, and the Nation-State," in Elliott Abrams, ed., *Honor among Nations: Intangible Interests and Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1998), pp. 15–16.
90. Abrams, "When Trade Lets down the Flag."
91. Juan Tamayo, "Cuban-American Representatives Rip Policy on Rafters," *Miami Herald*, 14 July 1999.
92. David Fromkin, *Kosovo Crossing: American Ideals Meet Reality on the Balkan Battlefields* (New York: Free Press, 1999), cautions (pp. 162, 196) that Americans "should pause to meditate on the uses of power and on the achievability of goodness. . . . There are limits to our strength and wealth, and more important, there are limits to our knowledge and wisdom." While most U.S. and British publicists insisted on the virtue of the war against Yugoslavia, in most countries, "television viewers and newspapers readers watched American bombs and missiles raining down on Serbian cities and civilians, and concluded that Americans were the war criminals" (p. 186). Ratliff visited eight European and Latin American countries during and just after the bombing campaign and in talks with scores of people ranging from taxi drivers to government ministers never found one who approved of NATO's campaign.
93. Andres Oppenheimer, "Cuba Summit: A Shout in the Dark," *Miami Herald*, 24 October 1999. AP, "Agreements Reached at Cuba Summit," 16 November 1999.
94. Mark Falcoff, "Is It Time to Rethink the Cuban Embargo?" Also see

Michael Radu, "Don't Reward Castro, Keep the Embargo," *Orbis*, fall 1998, p. 547.

95. CANF, "U.S. Policy towards Cuba."
96. Rodríguez Menier and Ratliff, *Inside the Cuban Interior Ministry,* p. 61.
97. "A la Opinión Pública: Mensaje de la Junta de Directores de la Fundación Nacional Cubano Americana," 11 de agosto de 1997.
98. Tim Golden, "Cuba Bombings Provided Defendants with Quick Cash," *Miami Herald*, 15 January 1999; "Cuba Allows Guatemalans to Serve Prison Term at Home," *Miami Herald*, 7 October 1999.
99. Catholic Church, "Cuba, su pueblo y su Iglesia."
100. Wilfredo Cancio Isla, "Inundan Cuba con documento disidente," *El Nuevo Herald*, 25 October 1999; Juan Tamayo, "Dissidents Plan Various Disruptions of Cuba Summit," *Miami Herald*, 22 October 1999.
101. Institute of Public Opinion Research, Florida International University, May–June 1997. The institute also conducted polls in 1991, 1993, and 1995. Falcoff, "Reflections on a Dying Revolution," p. 567.
102. Catholic Church, "Cuba, su pueblo y su Iglesia." One report dated October 1999 by the Cuban Democratic Revolutionary Directorate, "The Life and Freedom Fast in Cuba: A Preliminary Report," circulated by the International Republican Institute, concluded that a prodemocracy fast in mid-1999 had received important support from "the Cuban exile community" and "most importantly" had "confirmed the increase in civic defiance, and demonstrated how a sector of the population is overcoming its fear of repression."
103. For a short history, see Rodríguez Menier and Ratliff, *Inside the Cuban Interior Ministry* and *Protecting and Promoting Fidel*.
104. William Ratliff, "Military Affairs in Cuba," Hoover Institution Working Papers in International Studies, September 1989. Catholic Church, "Cuba, su pueblo y su Iglesia."
105. Gonzalez and Nuccio, *Forum*, p. 7.
106. Tamayo, "Cuban Human-Rights Activist Takes Center Stage"; Anita Snow, "Leaders Push Democracy in Cuba," *Washington Post*, 16 November 1999; John Rice, "Summit of Gains, Losses," *Miami Herald*, 18 November 1999.
107. González, *Cuba*, p. 31; Catholic Church, "Cuba, su pueblo y su Iglesia."

108. Clinton's comment was made in Argentina and is quoted in Robinson, "Cuba: Time to Rethink U.S. Strategy?"

109. The embargo lobby reports on what it considers the greater funding and potential power of the Castro lobby, "that assortment of left-wing activists and think tanks whose agendas dovetail neatly with that of the Castro dictatorship . . . in advocating the unilateral lifting of U.S. sanctions against the regime." CANF, "Banking the Ca$tro Lobby," May 1999. As noted earlier, the foundation refuses to acknowledge that the argument on the embargo is no longer themselves against the left but themselves against the world, including rightists, centrists, and leftists in the United States and throughout the world.

110. Catholic Church, "Cuba, su pueblo y su Iglesia."

111. Ernest Preeg, "A Look at Myths of Cuba: U.S. Embargo: The Illusion of Compliance," *Washington Post*, 1 November 1997; Bill Clinton, "Statement by the President," White House, 5 January 1999.

112. Prominent Cuban Americans who since the mid-1990s have privately admitted that the embargo should be lifted often will not say so in public for fear of seeming to betray their friends. Some Cuban Americans deny that this is the case, which reflects either their ignorance of the Cuban American community or their willingness to manipulate the truth for their own purposes, whatever those may be.

113. "Some Cuban Americans Feel Voiceless," *Miami Herald*, 21 July 1998. When one author told a prominent Cuban American leader and former U.S. government official about this letter from a student group that had been thrown out of the offices of two of the aforementioned Cuban American members of Congress, he said: "Yeh? Let them get their own representative," remaking the students' point. Although living in a democracy for many years, he still did not understand that it was not unreasonable for the young students who were raised in the United States to think that a member of Congress represents a district and should at least listen to constituents who disagree with him/her.

114. He previewed this line when he told South African parliamentarians they had to heal economic division with moderation and patience: "Such a dreadful legacy cannot be changed overnight." Paul Harris, "Castro: Patience Heals Economic Rift," *Miami Herald*, 5 September 1998.

115. One of the probable post-Castro leaders, Ricardo Alarcón, says nothing

will change when Fidel dies since though the revolution will lose a personality of "tremendous importance" it has already been "consolidated." That is, Cuba has "revolutionary continuity and generational replacement" (*continuidad revolucionaria y un relevo generacional*). It remains to be seen if Alarcón actually believes this or simply is marking time while Castro lives. Ana Romero, "Voces del Milenio: Ricardo Alarcón," *El Mundo*, Madrid, 21 November 1999.

116. Ratliff, "Cuban Foreign Policy toward Far East and Southeast Asia."

117. Anita Snow, "Castro Salutes China Anniversary," 29 September 1999.

118. "Castro Praises Deng for Consolidating Socialism," Reuters, 20 February 1997; Ratliff, "Castro Eats Crow in China" and Ratliff, "Cuban Foreign Policy toward Far East and Southeast Asia."

119. Rodríguez Menier and Ratliff, *Inside the Cuban Interior Ministry*, p. 10; González, *Cuba*, pp. 38–42.

120. In an April 1999 Gallup poll Americans opposed the use of U.S. troops in Cuba even if the people there attempted to overthrow Castro. Although Americans in general opposed U.S. military involvement (by 51 percent to 38 percent), Cuban Americans in the 1997 Florida International University polls overwhelmingly supported it. In conversations with U.S. military leaders, and in seminars at leading U.S. military academies, the authors have found most American military officers extremely reluctant to commit U.S. troops in Cuba.

121. González and Nuccio, "The Cuban Conundrum," p. 45; also see González, *Cuba*, p. 96; Falcoff, "Reflections on a Dying Revolution," p. 567.

122. Thomas L. Friedman, "A Deadly Embrace," *New York Times*, 6 October 1999.

123. See Charles Lane, "First, Solve Desperation inside Cuba," *Los Angeles Times*, 23 January 2000; see also Bronwyn Lance, "Cold War Hangover," *Washington Times*, 14 January 2000.

124. A Gallup poll released on 12 January 2000 showed 56 percent of Americans thought the boy should go back to his father; 36 percent thought he should stay in America. See also Carol Rosenberg, "Where Should Rafter Boy Live? South Florida Split," *Miami Herald*, 12 December 1999; Peter kilborn, "Custody Case Is Overshadowing Shift among Cuban Immigrants," *New York Times*, 16 January 2000; Carl Hiaasen, "U.S. Immigration Policy Is Inconsistent," *Miami Herald*, 5 January 2000. Some

Cuban Americans even say the majority of Cuban Americans are against the embargo and think the boy should return to his father, the misperceptions resulting from the fact that these Cuban Americans are not as well organized or vocal as other groups. See Alex Veiga, "Cuban-Americans Split on Elian," Associated Press, 24 January 2000.

125. See Ted Galen Carpenter, ed., *Nato's Empty Victory: A Postmortem on the Balkan War* (Washington, D.C.: CATO Institute, 2000) and an analysis of the international impact of NATO's war by William Ratliff and David Oppenheimer in *Harvard International Review* later this year.

126. Reuters, "Highlights of Russia's Security Declaration," *New York Times*, 14 January 2000. For some of Castro's comments on this subject, see Anita Snow, "Castro Lashes Out at U.S. Gov't," AP report, 19 January 1999; Snow, "Castro Closes Economic Forum," AP report, 23 January 1999.

127. William Ratliff and Roger Fontaine, "Foil Castro, Lift the Embargo," *Washington Post*, 30 June 1993; Steven Gutkin, "Chavez in Asia: Testing Protocol," *Washington Post*, 18 October 1999; Andres Oppenheimer, "Chavez, Not Castro, Was the Scariest Speaker at Summit," *Miami Herald*, 21 November 1999.

128. Cardinal Jaime Ortega, the archbishop of Havana, told a San Francisco, California, audience in late 1999 that the pope's visit to Cuba in 1998 had raised hopes for religious freedom and the lifting of economic sanctions but that the dreams had not become reality. Associated Press, "La Iglesia aún carece de libertad, dice Ortega," 26 October 1999 and Agencia EFE, "Denuncian el deterioro de los derechos humanos," *Nuevo Herald*, 20 January 2000. Elisardo Sánchez says that after the Clinton administration slightly eased restrictions on Cuba, the government launched "one of the largest waves of political repression against the peaceful and small internal opposition in 20 years." Serge Kovaleski, "Latin Leaders Meet in Cuba for 1st Time," *Washington Post*, 16 November 1999.