

July 2, 1992

## HASTENING CASTRO'S DOWNFALL

### INTRODUCTION

Fidel Castro's communist dictatorship in Cuba, only 90 miles off the coast of Florida, is on the brink of collapse. Over three decades of communist economic mismanagement and political repression have ruined Cuba's economy. Castro's problems have been compounded by the thirty-year-old U.S. economic embargo of Cuba and the suspension of the former Soviet Union's \$6 billion in annual economic and military aid. The crisis is so severe that Cuba's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) shrank by 20 percent last year and this year could plunge by as much as 60 percent.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the imminence of Castro's demise, some American congressional and business leaders are advocating that relations between Washington and Havana be normalized. This would be a mistake. Lifting the U.S. economic embargo against Havana, or allowing U.S. tourism and investment to flow into a Castro-ruled Cuba, would only breathe new life into a dying communist dictatorship. Such a move would prop up Castro's junta, and therefore prolong the suffering of the Cuban people.

Now is the time to increase the pressure on the Castro regime and to help the Cuban people liberate themselves by tightening the embargo. At the same time the U.S. should increase contacts with Cuban government, military, and opposition leaders who might be willing to champion democratic and free market change in Cuba. The Cuba

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This is the second of two studies on Cuba's transition to democracy and a free market economy. It focuses on political and security issues under the Castro regime and on how the U.S. can hasten Castro's collapse. A previous study by Bryan T. Johnson, "Preparing for a Free Market Cuba," *Heritage Foundation Background* No. 890, April 8, 1992, addressed primarily economic reform in a post-Castro Cuba.

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1 Jorge Mas Canosa, "Toward a Future Without Castro: Cuba's Transition to Democracy," *Heritage Lecture* No. 369, February 19, 1992.

Democracy Act of 1992,<sup>2</sup> a comprehensive bill with wide bipartisan support, would do just that. Introduced in both houses of Congress on February 5, the bill would prohibit foreign subsidiaries of American companies from trading with or investing in a Castro-ruled Cuba. Moreover, it would condition U.S. aid to Russia on termination of Moscow's assistance to Havana, as well as improve mail and telephone links between the U.S. and the Cubans.

Cuba's fate, of course, ultimately should remain in the hands of Cubans. The U.S., however, has a deep and historical interest in seeing that democracy, stability, and economic prosperity return to its Caribbean neighbor. Washington also has an interest in assuring that the transition from communism to freedom in Cuba occurs as peacefully as possible. The Bush Administration and Congress, therefore, should take advantage of Castro's weakness and isolation by pursuing a policy that hastens his downfall and helps assure a smooth transition to a post-Castro Cuba.

To accomplish these goals, the Bush Administration should:

- ◆ **Tighten the U.S. embargo against Castro.** One way of doing this is to prohibit overseas subsidiaries of American firms from doing business with Cuba.
- ◆ **Reject attempts to lift the travel ban on American citizens seeking to visit Castro's Cuba.**
- ◆ **Call upon the Organization of American States and United Nations to continue sending delegations to Cuba to monitor human rights abuses and meet with pro-democracy forces.** This would focus international attention on Cuba and lend legitimacy to Cuba's growing pro-democracy and human rights community.
- ◆ **Call upon the OAS to place economic and diplomatic sanctions on Cuba as it did following the September 30 coup in neighboring Haiti and the April 5 coup in Peru.**
- ◆ **Offer to open talks with any Cuban government or military officials other than Fidel and Raul Castro<sup>3</sup> to discuss Cuba's transition to democracy.**
- ◆ **Increase Cuban contacts with the outside world.** Doing this would entail additional broadcasting by Radio Martí and TV Martí, allowing American

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2 The Cuba Democracy Act was introduced in the Senate on February 5, 1992, by Bob Graham, the Florida Democrat and Connie Mack, the Florida Republican. The legislation was introduced in the House the same day by Robert G. Torricelli, the New Jersey Democrat. Co-sponsors in the House include Republican Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Democrat Stephen J. Solarz, and Dante B. Fascell, Democrat and Foreign Relations Committee Chairman. The Act, which among other things, bans subsidiaries of U.S. companies overseas from trading with the Castro regime, was approved by a June 4 voice vote in the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

3 Raul Castro is Cuba's Defense Minister and Fidel's younger brother. He has a great deal of power over Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces and is considered to be the most powerful man in Cuba after Fidel.

telephone companies to upgrade telephone service from Cuba to the U.S., and expanding mail service between Miami and Havana.

- ◆ **Authorize the National Endowment for Democracy to increase its annual funding for pro-democracy organizations in Cuba from \$462,000 to \$4 million.**
- ◆ **Make U.S. aid to Russia and other former Soviet republics conditional on the complete termination of military deliveries, technical assistance, economic subsidies, nuclear assistance, and other forms of aid to Cuba.**
- ◆ **Enlist the help of regional leaders from such countries as Argentina, Canada, Mexico, and Venezuela, to encourage Castro to step down.** These leaders should threaten to curtail trade and diplomatic relations with Cuba if Castro refuses to leave power.
- ◆ **Prepare a comprehensive program that will help build a free market and democracy in a post-Castro Cuba.**

## THE CUBAN CRISIS

Before Castro took power in 1959, Cuba ranked third in per capita income—at \$353 per person—among Latin American nations, behind only Argentina and Venezuela. Today, however, after 33 years of socialism and more than \$75 billion in Soviet economic and military aid, Cuba's per capita income of less than \$1,500 ranks it firmly in the bottom half of nations in Latin America.<sup>4</sup>

There are many causes of this economic decline. Most of the blame goes to Castro and his ruinous economic policies. His command and control economic system completely destroyed the free market in Cuba, hindering economic growth and prosperity in the process.<sup>5</sup>

The most recent cause of the decline, however, has been Cuba's loss of aid from the former Soviet bloc. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has deprived Cuba of partners whose trade and barter deals subsidized Castro's regime. Moscow's refusal in 1990 to sign a new five-year trade agreement with Cuba marked the beginning of the end of the two nations' special relationship. Over the past two years, deliveries of Soviet oil, lumber, foodstuffs, and spare machine parts have been delayed or stopped. In exchange, the Cubans had sent the Soviets sugar, citrus, nickel, and tobacco. The reason: economic chaos in the former Soviet Union and

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4 Thomas E. Cox, "Preparing for a Post-Castro Cuba," Heritage Foundation *Background* No. 768, May 14, 1990, p. 4.

5 Castro methodically eliminated economic, personal, and political freedom in Cuba. In 1960, he created the Central Planning Board to control all aspects of the Cuban economy. His Revolutionary Law of 1963 eliminated private business and free market activities. Castro's Institute for Agrarian Reform nationalized private farms and took complete control of the agricultural sector. Castro also nationalized American-owned assets, including oil refineries, sugar plantations, and the telephone company. He effectively turned Cuba's small and vulnerable economy away from the world's most modern and productive economy—America's.

Havana's inability to pay hard currency for such items. Last year, for example, the Soviets were able to deliver only 8.6 million metric tons of oil to Cuba, instead of the promised 10 million tons. This was down from 13.4 million tons in 1990.

**The Decline of Cuban Sugar.** Cuba specialists at the then-Soviet Academy of Sciences predicted in late November that the Russian cutoff in economic assistance will "fully paralyze" the Cuban economy within about one year.<sup>6</sup> They noted "that because of the gradual scaling down of Soviet and Eastern European economic assistance to Havana after 1989, Cuba's GNP dropped by some 10 percent in 1990 and by an estimated 20 percent [in 1991]." In the first quarter of 1992 alone, Cuba's GNP shrank by a further 20 percent. Moreover, in late 1991 the U.S.S.R. held some 750 million Cuban pesos, which are worth approximately \$900 million dollars at the official exchange rate, although they cannot be exchanged on the international market. Cuba's hard currency reserves fell from \$242 million in 1985 to \$50 million last year. Cuba's national debt to Western countries rose from \$45 million in 1959 to \$8 billion in 1990.<sup>7</sup>

An important measure of Cuba's economic decline is the collapse of sugar production. Sugar, of course, is the staple agricultural export of Cuba, comprising 75 percent of Cuba's annual export income. Cuba's production of sugar has dropped from a high of 8.1 million tons for the 1988-1989 growing season to about 5.5 million tons for 1991-1992. For the sake of comparison, this is approximately five percent above the sugar harvest of 1929. This year, sugar production is expected to continue to fall. The reasons: Cuba cannot afford to produce or import fertilizer and farm equipment, and diesel-fueled agricultural machinery has been idled by fuel shortages. The Cuban economy also is suffering because of low international sugar prices.

To make matters even more critical, officials of the Russian sugar-buying agency *Prodintorg* announced in Havana on May 7 that Russia has no plans to import sugar from Cuba in the second half of this year. *Prodintorg* President Sergei Barykin claimed that Russian sugar refineries would produce sugar from Russian sugar beets. He maintained that there is "no prospect" for a new sugar-for-oil barter agreement between Moscow and Havana. During the first three months of this year, Cuba delivered some 500,000 tons of raw sugar to Russia in return for 900,000 tons of oil products. This is a radical decrease in the volume and value of Cuba's oil-for-sugar trade with Russia. As recently as 1990, for example, some 3.5 million tons of Cuban sugar were exchanged at a subsidized rate for an estimated 13 million tons of Soviet oil products.

According to Moscow, all Soviet trade subsidies to Cuba were eliminated on January 1, 1992. Cuba's problems were further compounded by last year's transfer of all Soviet mineral rights to the former Soviet republics, many of which refused to exchange oil for Cuban goods, insisting instead on hard currency. Russian President Boris Yeltsin froze all future shipments of oil to Cuba on November 16. Soviet aid to Castro declined from a high of \$6 billion per year in the mid-1980s to several hundred million dollars this year.

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6 Carlos Alberto Montaner, "Moscow's Perspective on Fidel Castro's Cuba," *The Wall Street Journal*, November 29, 1991, p. A7.

7 Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

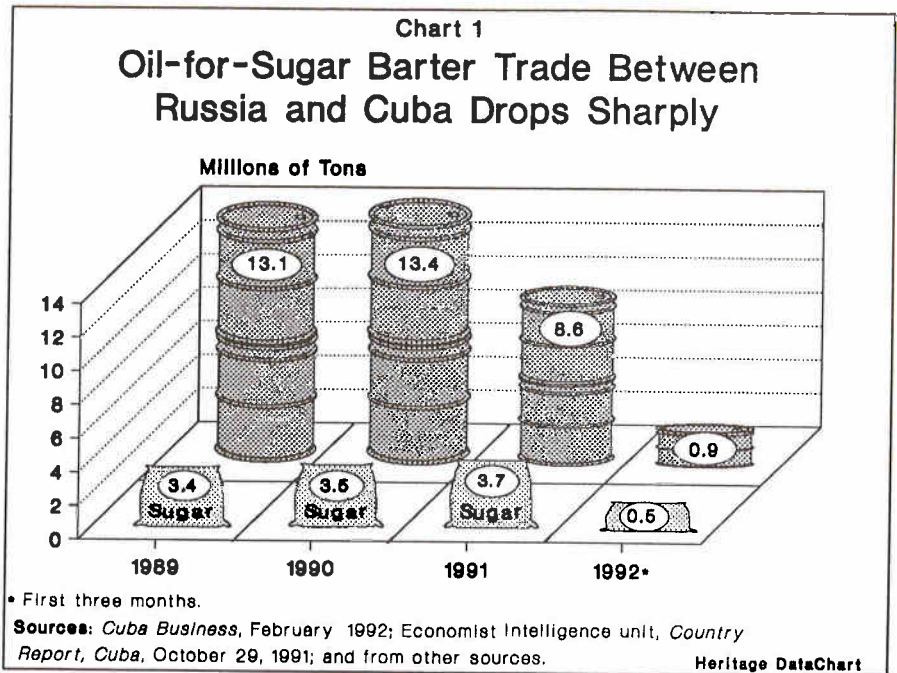
The cutoff of aid and the energy shortage have caused tremendous problems for the Castro dictatorship. The government now must ration gasoline, diesel fuel, and liquid gas for cooking and has reduced electrical power generation, producing frequent blackouts in Havana and other cities. Factories

have been closed and construction projects canceled. Commodities rot in storage facilities because of inadequate transportation. Pushcarts have begun to replace garbage trucks, and shortages of gasoline and spare parts have brought buses and tractors to a standstill. As substitutes, Cubans have begun using old model bicycles imported from China and some 100,000 bulls and water buffalo from Vietnam to work as beasts of burden.<sup>8</sup>

Confronted with these international and internal setbacks, Castro has reaffirmed his commitment to socialism and designed contingency plans for coping with economic hardships and diplomatic isolation. He is orchestrating what some Cuba experts call Castro's Cultural Revolution, stressing that it is Cuba's mission to "perfect Socialism." Speaking at a March 7, 1990, rally in Havana, Castro lamented that the "socialist bloc has disappeared," but vowed that "Cuba is ready to confront the whole world alone if necessary to defend [its] socialist system and revolution." Castro also proclaimed defiantly that Cuba's future is "Socialism or death."

## NEW ANTI-CASTRO GROUPS EMERGE IN CUBA

Despite Cuba's growing isolation, the Cuban people, like the East Europeans and Russians in the late 1980s, are beginning to agitate against communism. The opposition basically is split into two camps: those that call for Castro's ouster and oppose dialogue with Fidel and Raul Castro, and those that favor dialogue with the regime. While they are not large in numbers, perhaps several dozen members per organization, these groups have managed to survive in an atmosphere of repression and violence.



<sup>8</sup> Susan Kaufman Purcell, "Collapsing Cuba," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 71, No. 1, 1992.

**Peaceful Opposition.** The Cuban Democratic Coalition (CDC), a grass roots umbrella organization that represents seventeen pro-democracy groups in Cuba, is the leader of the rejectionist camp. It is led by Daniel and Thomas Aspillaga, two brothers currently in prison for speaking out against the regime, and Jose Antonio Fornaris, President of the National Unity Front. The National Unity Front is an anti-Castro, pro-democracy group in Cuba that seeks a peaceful transition to democracy. The Havana-based CDC rapidly is building momentum in Cuba and adding hundreds of members each year. The CDC promotes amnesty for political prisoners and peaceful resistance to Castro. It also supports continued U.S. economic sanctions against Castro. CDC members challenge the government assertion that “the people are united behind their leader” and call for democratic elections and respect for human rights.

The second camp, favoring dialogue, is represented by the Democratic Convergence. This group, which consists of a shrinking base of several dozen human rights advocates, is an umbrella organization led by Elizardo Sanchez, a professor of Marxist philosophy. The Democratic Convergence seeks to work within the system to negotiate improved human rights conditions. Unlike the CDC, it does not call for the formation of a rival political party or the ouster of the Castro brothers. Factions within the Convergence, however, increasingly are embracing positions of the more radical CDC. For example, some support U.S. sanctions against Castro and call for bolder opposition to Castro’s repression while others even oppose dialogue with the Castro regime.

Cuba’s economic chaos and isolation in the wake of the collapse of global communism have increased grass roots opposition to the government. Opposition members largely are made up of human rights activists, intellectuals, and Catholic clergy. As Castro’s repression increases and Cuba’s economy deteriorates, the opposition movement likely will expand to include more bureaucrats, technocrats, military personnel, members of the security forces, and Communist Party officials.

**Fidel’s Thugs.** Castro has countered the growing courage and activities of these opposition groups by stepping up attacks against their members. According to a February 24, 1992, report on Cuba published by Americas Watch, a leading monitor of human rights conditions in Latin America, Communist party thugs organized into “rapid-action brigades” move quickly against government opponents during public demonstrations. For example, when the CDC led a demonstration in front of the Interior Ministry headquarters in Havana on September 6, 1991, the demonstrators were clubbed and some were arrested and sentenced to jail terms.<sup>9</sup> A prominent CDC leader, Yndamiro Restano, was sentenced to twelve years in jail on March 27 for distributing pamphlets critical of the regime. At his trial, Castro’s prosecutors maintained that “a one-party system is the only way to guarantee national independence in the face of U.S. hostility” and that it is treasonous to criticize it.

Castro’s desperation in the face of this opposition has led him to articulate what he calls the “zero option.” First announced in September 1991, the zero option is a draconian program of rationing to enable Cuba to weather the storm of the current economic crisis. So far food, electricity, and petroleum have been severely rationed under the plan. The zero option is the economic companion of the Castro campaign of political

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9 Mas, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

oppression—it is intended to quell the popular discontent caused by the many shortages of food and fuel.

## CUBA AND THE SOVIETS

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev on December 25, 1991, told anti-communist Cuban exile leaders in Moscow that Russia would begin curtailing economic, diplomatic, and security ties with Havana. "In the future," he said, "Cuba would be on its own." Kozyrev called for a "democratic Cuba" and announced a "sweeping agenda" to cooperate with the Miami-based Cuban exile leadership to hasten Cuba's move toward democracy and a free market.

Since the failed coup last August by communist hard-liners in Moscow, Russia has reduced military and security ties to Havana. Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev vowed on September 11, 1991, to remove all of the Kremlin's estimated 7,000 troops and personnel from

Cuba and to halt all military deliveries to Castro, which had been averaging some \$1.5 billion a year. Russian officials also have hinted repeatedly that they might consider closing down the Lourdes electronic listening post currently manned by some 2,000 Russians and Ukrainians. Located 40 miles southeast of Havana, the Lourdes facility is the largest Russian listening post outside of the former Soviet Union. It monitors telecommunications on the U.S. east coast, military and civilian space launches from Cape Canaveral, Florida, and U.S. naval maneuvers in the Caribbean and mid-Atlantic regions.

**Conflicting Reports.** According to Anatoli Glinkine, the Director of Latin American Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences, "Since 1990 there have been no Cuban-based Soviet reconnaissance flights, while port calls by Soviet surface ships and submarines [at the former-Soviet naval base in Cienfuegos] are ending."<sup>10</sup>

Despite the claims of Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and academics like Glinkine that Cuban-Russian military cooperation is ceasing, a U.S. spy satellite earlier this year spotted a Russian freighter unloading artillery and air-defense missiles in the Cuban port of

### Castro's "Zero Option"

1) Castro has ordered thousands of people out of the cities and into the countryside to boost food production and quell urban dissent.

2) Cuba has imported thousands of water buffalo from Vietnam to replace gasoline-powered plows and to pull Havana's buses.

3) The Castro government has imported 500,000 bicycles from China to replace automobiles and buses.

4) Cuba is rationing such items as cigars, cooking oil, rum, soap, and sugar, normally considered staples.

5) The Castro regime on January 20 executed Eduardo Diaz Betancourt, a Cuban exile from the U.S. after he was apprehended while infiltrating Cuba from Florida.

6) Castro's secret police in early January arrested seventeen democratic opposition leaders from the CDC, and a revolutionary tribunal convicted them of treason.

10 Anatoli Glinkine, "Collapse of the U.S.S.R. and Relations with Cuba," Speech given at an Americas Society conference "Cuba at the Turning Point," New York, March 13, 1992.

Mariel, on Cuba's northern coast. U.S. intelligence sources also report that satellites have detected sporadic shipments of Soviet-made T-64 tanks and modern artillery at other Cuban ports since the beginning of the year. Soviet and Russian officials maintain that such military deliveries to Cuba were "already in the pipeline" prior to the January

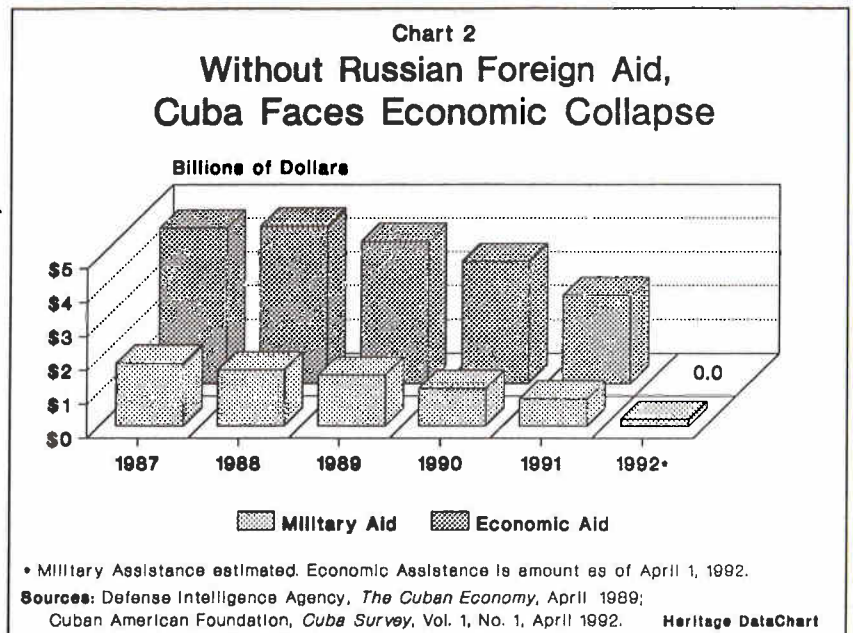
1992 cutoff of arms deliveries to Castro. Yet some U.S. officials, wishing to remain anonymous, claim that Moscow may be selling weapons to Havana to help keep the Russian defense industry afloat.<sup>11</sup>

**Seeking New Allies.** As a result of the falling out between Cuba and former communist allies, Castro has been busy seeking new allies, almost all of which are other dictatorships. For example, Cuba is now the People's Republic of China's most significant trading partner in Latin America. Trade between China and Cuba reached approximately \$420 million in 1990. Cuba exchanged citrus fruit, medical products, and sugar for Chinese foodstuffs and industrial goods. Cuban-Chinese trade protocols signed last year pave the way for Cuban exports of biotechnology products, citrus fruit, processed fruit juices, tobacco, and rum. These are exchanged for Chinese bicycles, clothing, cosmetic items, industrial machinery, shoes, and textiles. Meanwhile, North Korea plans to provide the Castro government with technical assistance in the construction of Cuban hydroelectric plants and will import Cuban sugar in exchange for grains and other foodstuffs.

## THE U.S. EMBARGO OF CUBA

Another cause of the Cuban crisis is the deepening effect of the U.S. embargo against Cuba. In the past, the embargo was an irritant. With the cutoff of Soviet aid, however, it has become a major source of trouble for Castro.

The embargo restricts U.S. exports to Cuba, Cuban exports to the U.S., travel by American citizens to Cuba, and American investment there.<sup>12</sup> The embargo has forced Castro to cut government spending and curtail his support for Third World communist



<sup>11</sup> "Cuba's Mystery Missiles," *Newsweek*, May 11, 1992.

<sup>12</sup> For more information on the U.S. embargo against Cuba, see R. Richard Newcomb, "Cuba: The U.S. Economic Embargo," *Treasury News*, U.S. Department of the Treasury, May 5, 1992.



regimes and revolutionaries. According to Castro, the U.S. trade and investment sanctions against his government have caused “mountains of difficulties and obstacles” for the Cuban economy.<sup>13</sup> For example, since 1963 the embargo has deprived Castro of an average of \$750 million worth of imports a year from the U.S. The embargo also prohibits the sale of badly needed U.S. agricultural technology and equipment. This has forced Havana to rely on less advanced, low-quality supplies from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

The main goal of Washington’s sanctions against Havana, of course, is to force the downfall of the Castro regime. This has not yet happened, but because of Castro’s weakness, the embargo could end up accomplishing its original goal. Many of the embargo’s tactical objectives, in fact, already have been accomplished.

**Objective #1:** By denying Cuba investment and trade opportunities with the U.S., the embargo has limited Castro’s ability to export revolution to the Third World. Because of Havana’s mounting economic woes, Castro increasingly no longer can afford to ship weapons and advisors to terrorist groups.

**Objective #2:** The embargo forced the Soviet Union to pay a high price to prop up the Cuban economy and military machine. Moscow pumped approximately \$75 billion of aid and subsidies into Cuba from 1959 to 1991, thereby weakening its own economy, which helped to bring down its own communist regime.

**Objective #3:** Washington is on the verge of achieving the third objective of U.S. sanctions against Cuba: the international isolation of Castro. With the defeat of communism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Castro now is left with the moral and diplomatic support of only a few outlaw regimes, such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, and Vietnam. Latin American democracies that once were friendly with the Cuban dictator, particularly Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela, are curtailing trade with Cuba and criticizing Castro’s human rights record. They also are rejecting Castro’s pleas for economic assistance.

## CASTRO’S ISOLATION: CUBA IN A POST-SOVIET WORLD

Castro’s diplomatic isolation is the result of the worldwide collapse of communism and the decline of anti-American regimes in Latin America. The U.S. liberation of Panama in December 1989 and the ouster of Noriega’s pro-Cuban government was a serious blow to Castro’s influence in the Americas. Only two months later, the stunning defeat of the communist Sandinistas in Nicaragua deprived the Cuban dictator of his top ally in the region. The peace accord signed on January 16, 1992, in Mexico City between El Salvador’s Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) guerrilla

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13 Cited in Jorge L. Mas Canosa, "Towards a New U.S.-Cuba Policy," Cuban American National Foundation, Monograph No. 24, p. 21.

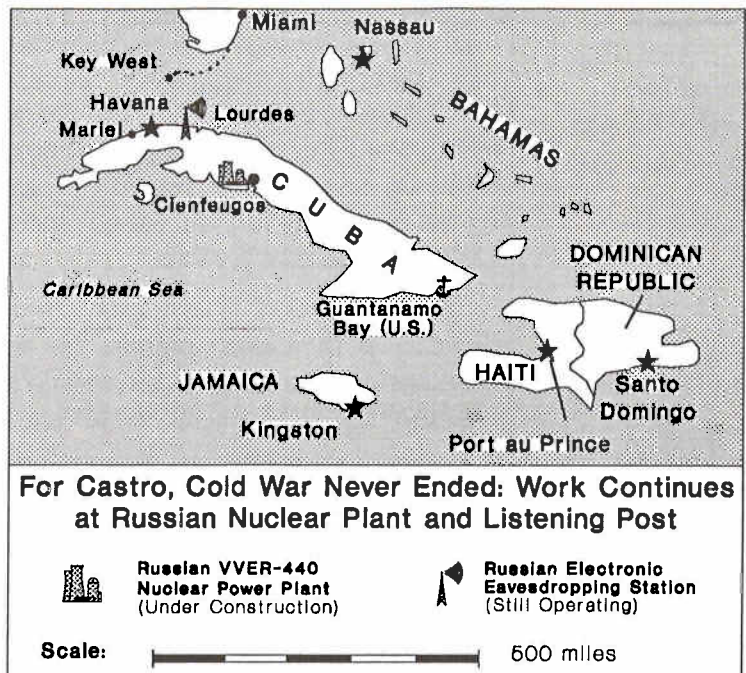
group and the Salvadoran government removed another staging ground for Cuban meddling.

The biggest setback for Castro's regime, however, was the collapse of the August 1991 putsch in Moscow. Castro, along with Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, Libyan strongman Muammar Qadhafi, and several other despots, were quick to support the attempted coup. Their support, however,

backfired. The eventual triumph of Yeltsin and democracy in the former Soviet Union and the defeat of Soviet communism left Castro without his chief protector, benefactor, and ally. These events greatly increased Cuba's isolation. Stanislav Levchenko, a KGB defector who had spent time in Cuba, predicted in January that Castro will remain in power "only one more year." He added that "International socialism is dead" and "not even a dictator like Castro will save it."<sup>14</sup>

**Cold Shoulder.** Castro also is increasingly shunned by his own neighbors in Latin America. President Carlos Menem of Argentina, for example, vowed on November 19, 1991, to "make it a personal crusade to persuade [Castro] to leave power." Said Menem: "No man can be against freedom and liberty. I intend to repeat this in all national and international places I go—President Castro, give your country a democratic way out. The people of Cuba want their freedom."<sup>15</sup>

Castro also received a cold shoulder from the democratic presidents of Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela following an October 23 meeting of the San Jose Pact in Cozumel, Mexico. The San Jose Pact, signed in 1980 in San Jose, Costa Rica, is an accord between Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela, that offers petroleum at reduced prices to other Latin American countries. The Cuban dictator showed up unexpectedly at the meeting seeking pledges of financial and energy assistance from the three Latin American countries. He left empty handed. Presidents Cesar Gaviria of Colombia, Carlos Salinas de Gortari of Mexico, and Carlos Andres Perez of Venezuela all said that Cuba should not be brought into the San Jose Pact. They maintained that increased economic contacts with Cuba would be forthcoming only if Castro reformed his rigid communist system.



14 Clifford E. Griffin, "Cuba: The Domino That Refuses to Fall," Hoover Institution, *International Studies Working Paper*, I-92-1 (February 1992), p. 2.

15 Menem's comments were made during a meeting with the *Miami Herald's* editorial board in Miami, Florida.

**U.N. Condemns Castro.** Even the once silent U.N. increasingly is attacking Castro's track record on democracy and human rights. In a surprising move, Russia joined other members of the Geneva-based U.N. Human Rights Commission by voting on March 4 to condemn Cuba for its human rights violations. This was the first time since Castro came to power that Moscow took the U.S. side in the U.N. on this question of human rights in Cuba. The 53-member U.N. Commission adopted a resolution sharply criticizing Castro's human rights record by 23 votes to 8, with 22 abstentions. In response, the Cuban delegation denounced the vote and stated that it would not cooperate with a special U.N. human rights investigator assigned to the island.

## CASTRO'S CONTINUED SECURITY THREATS

The Soviet aid cutoff and the subsequent isolation of Cuba has undermined Castro's ability to support guerrilla insurgencies, revolution, terrorism, and drug trafficking. This became apparent in Havana's military withdrawal from Ethiopia and Mozambique in the late 1980s and Angola and Nicaragua in 1990. Castro's failure to prop up communist dictatorships, despite the battlefield deaths of thousands of Cuban soldiers, was a stunning blow to Castro's prestige and popularity. These defeats, along with the purge of Cuban Army Major General Arnaldo Ochoa in July 1989, brought disillusionment to the Cuban military and people.<sup>16</sup> Castro's African and Latin American adventures drained Cuba's coffers, bred anti-communist sentiments in the Cuban armed forces, and increased popular dissent.

Despite these significant setbacks, Castro still retains the capability to create trouble abroad. Security threats from Cuba include:

**1) Continued but limited support for revolutionary groups and terrorists.**

Cuba's dire economic condition will force Castro to become more selective about which guerrilla and terrorist groups he will support. Havana probably will give more training and advice than military aid. It likely will attempt to stir up new trouble in Panama and undermine the peace process in El Salvador. Persistent turmoil in Colombia, Nicaragua, and Peru also will offer Castro opportunities for mischief. For example, he may continue providing training, intelligence, and limited amounts of weapons to the FMLN in El Salvador, the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) in Peru, the National Liberation Army (ELN) in Colombia, and pro-Noriega underground forces in Panama.

**2) Support for international drug cartels.** According to Cuban defectors and U.S. intelligence officials, Castro has used the Cuban military to assist in drug shipments from South America to the U.S. He also has used Cuban territory as a sanctuary for drug traffickers. Documented evidence of Cuba's role in drug trafficking dates back to the early 1960s. According to a U.S. Drug

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<sup>16</sup> The Castro regime in July 1989 executed four high-level military and intelligence officials, including Ochoa, on trumped-up of drug trafficking and corruption charges. The executions, in reality, were a purge of possible coup plotters and successors to Castro and his brother.

Enforcement Administration (DEA) intelligence report released in 1982, meetings were held in Havana in 1961 between top international communist officials to discuss creating a narcotics network to smuggle drugs into the U.S.<sup>17</sup> More recently during U.S. Senate hearings in 1989, Jose Blandon, a former top aid to then-Panamanian strongman General Manuel Antonio Noriega, testified that he was present at a June 1984 meeting in Havana where Castro mediated a dispute between Colombia's Medellin Cartel drug lords and Noriega. The evidence of Cuban involvement in the drug trade is so solid that several members of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party have been indicted by a U.S. federal grand jury in Florida for their involvement with the drug cartels.

Castro likely will continue his involvement in the drug smuggling business because it earns him hard currency and imposes tremendous social and law enforcement costs on Washington.

- 3) **Another Mariel-type refugee crisis.** During the 1980 Mariel boatlift, some 125,000 Cuban dissidents and criminals fled Cuba for Florida. Castro used the exodus as an opportunity to empty his jails and to rid Cuba of political opponents. U.S. official estimates show that if the boatlift had continued, as many as 2.5 million refugees could have ended up on American shores. Castro easily could spark another refugee crisis by forcing hundreds of thousands of Cubans into the sea. The U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. immigration officials, already overwhelmed by a flood of Haitian refugees, would be unable to handle another Mariel-type influx of Cuban refugees. Moreover, such a crisis would restrict the Coast Guard's ability to interdict drug shipments in the Caribbean, cost U.S. taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars, and lead to a surge in crime in Florida similar to the one that followed the Mariel boatlift.
- 4) **Threat to Guantanamo.** Castro can undermine the security of the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay without using military force. He has on repeated occasions threatened to encourage dissatisfied Cubans to seek refuge at the naval base, where thousands of Haitians already are being housed. Such an action could lead to a new refugee crisis, drain badly needed financial and other resources from the base, or even lead to violence along the perimeter of the base.
- 5) **Chemical and biological weapons capabilities.** Cuba easily could convert its relatively sophisticated biotechnical and medical industries to produce lethal chemical and biological weapons. If Castro became extremely desperate, he could either sell chemical or biological warfare agents to terrorists or could use them against a U.S. target. While this possibility remains unlikely, it nevertheless must be considered.

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17 For more information on Castro's ties to the drug trade, see Michael G. Wilson, "Castro's Show Trials Do Not Mean an End to Cuba's Drug Trade," Heritage Foundation *Executive Memorandum* No. 242, July 18, 1989.

6) **Suicide attacks against U.S. targets.** The military machine built up in Cuba by the Soviet Union is impressive. Castro, for example, has over 200 advanced Soviet fighters, including a fourteen-plane squadron of advanced MiG-29 *Fulcrum* jet fighter bombers, the most advanced Soviet fighter ever made. One of these jets could reach southern Florida's Homestead Air Force Base or Turkey Point Nuclear Facility in approximately six minutes. Castro alluded to the possibility of an attack on the U.S. during a speech at the Fourth Cuban Communist Party Congress in mid-October 1991.

Castro also could attack the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, hoping to provoke a military response by Washington. His aim would be to exploit the likely outburst of Cuban nationalism and anti-American sentiment. He also may hope to "internationalize" the Cuban crisis by forcing such international organizations as the OAS and the U.N., as well as individual foreign governments, to side with him against Washington. While it remains a dangerous possibility, it is unlikely that the Cuban military would carry out such suicidal orders.

7) **A Cuban Chernobyl.** Another major concern for the U.S. and the international community is the construction of two Soviet-designed nuclear power plants in the town of Juragua, near Cienfuegos, just 250 miles south of Miami. Built with Russian assistance, these reactors have a similar design and many of the poor safety features as the doomed reactor in Chernobyl. A Cuban engineer who detected in early 1992 confirmed to U.S. government officials that the Castro government is aware of faulty seals and defects in the support structure that holds the nuclear reactor in place. He also said that sensitive material and components used in the facility's control room had been stored improperly for almost two years, exposed to corrosive tropical air.<sup>18</sup>

Cuba has been building the nuclear plants, with the help of some 450 Russian technicians, for more than a decade. The facility was originally targeted to open in 1987, but the date was moved back to 1994. The project involves some 10,000 workers and has cost Havana and Moscow approximately \$2 billion.

The Soviet-designed VVER-440 reactors in the plants, while a slight improvement on the Chernobyl design, do not come close to meeting minimum U.S. and international safety standards. To do so would require advanced technologies available only from Western firms. According to a U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration study of wind patterns, radioactive fallout from an accident at the plants could reach Miami and Tampa on the third day after an accident. Radiation then would continue to spread across much of the U.S.<sup>19</sup>

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18 "Foreign Help is Being Sought for Damage Control on Cienfuegos Nuclear Project," *The Center for Security Policy Decision Brief* No. 92-D 51, May 8, 1992.

19 Susan Benesch, "Cuba Warns of Risky Reactors," *The Washington Times*, May 6, 1992.

## SEVEN SCENARIOS FOR CASTRO'S DEMISE

Regardless of how Castro's government falls, the U.S. must be ready. Several scenarios are possible. They are listed here with a probability rating of 1 (low) to 5 (high).<sup>20</sup>

### **Scenario #1: Cuban military or intelligence forces launch a coup**

**(Probability = 4 to 5).** Beneath the top layer of Castro loyalists, there are many younger and better educated technocrats increasingly eager to open Cuba to the outside world. This growing segment of Cuban society poses the most serious long-term threat to Castro's power. Ousting Castro and his inner circle would enable officers in the Cuban military or intelligence forces to distance themselves from the regime's past crimes and blunders. Such a coup, however, would have to be a sudden action carried out by a small group, rather than an elaborately organized conspiracy. The reason: Castro's extensive counterintelligence capabilities likely would detect the coup early on. Nevertheless, Cuba's isolation, the fall of international communism, and growing anti-Castro sentiment in Cuba give this scenario a high probability rating of between four and five.

**Scenario #2: Food riots, demonstrations, and strikes lead to a spontaneous anti-Castro revolt (Probability = 4).** Cuba's loss of foreign support emboldened the Cuban people, making them more likely to revolt against Castro's rule. Moreover, Cuba's collapsing economy, combined with severe food shortages and increased pro-democracy information from the U.S., has fueled a steadily growing mood of public discontent. As the economy continues to implode and the effects from the cutoff of Soviet aid become more severe, the Cuban people may take to the streets as the Romanians did in December 1989. Because democracy and free markets are infectious, this scenario warrants a fairly high probability rating of four.

**Scenario #3: Castro is assassinated (Probability = 3 to 4).** To be effective, the plotters would have to target both Fidel and Raul Castro. Castro's personal security precautions, combined with his impressive counterintelligence capabilities, make this a risky choice for opponents of the Cuban dictator. The July 1989 Ochoa purge has made an assassination attempt against Castro less likely; potential opponents to the regime were executed and others will be deterred by such a clear example of Castro's ruthlessness. Castro, nevertheless, continues to make enemies both at home and abroad—thus the probability rating of between three and four.

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20 Some of the information contained in this section was adapted from a presentation given on January 7, 1992, by Jaime Suchlicki, the Executive Director of the North-South Center at The University of Miami. Suchlicki was speaking at an American Bar Association and University of Miami conference on "Strengthening Regional Security, Democracy and the Rule of Law in Latin America and the Caribbean," held in Miami, Florida.

**Scenario #4: Castro muddles through (Probability = 3).** Castro is shifting the blame for Cuba's economic troubles onto the U.S. and his former allies in the Soviet bloc, while trying to increase agricultural output to compensate for the decline in outside aid. The Cuban dictator also is seeking new trading partners in Latin America, Western Europe, and Asia to replace former ones in the Soviet bloc. Finally, he is hoping that an influx of foreign tourists will generate more hard currency for his regime. These desperate efforts, combined with occasional cosmetic reforms, could enable Castro to muddle through for several more years — thus the middle-range probability rating of three.

**Scenario #5: Castro transfers power to another leader (Probability = 2).** The 66-year-old Castro could transfer power to another individual, but still control the regime from behind the scenes. This might be done if Castro's health falters or if he decides to fake reform. The most talked about potential successors to the Cuban dictator are his brother, 61-year-old Defense Minister Raul Castro, and his son, 43-year-old Fidel. If Castro were to turn over power to another leader, he could go into exile in Mexico or Spain. Castro's determination to "perfect socialism" in Cuba, however, also makes this scenario unlikely—thus the probability rating of two.

**Scenario #6: Castro initiates perestroika and glasnost (Probability = 1).** This is often referred to as the "Nicaraguan solution," because the communist Sandinistas attempted unsuccessfully to hold onto power in Nicaragua in 1990 by reforming the system. Most Castro watchers agree that Castro never would permit this. He sees himself as Cuba's "maximum leader" and never would be willing to share or give up power—thus the low probability rating of one.

**Scenario #7: The U.S. or a multinational coalition ousts Castro with military force (Probability = 1).** Although Castro continuously warns the Cuban people of an imminent U.S. invasion, there is little chance that the U.S. or a U.S.-led OAS force would intervene in Cuba to protect human rights, to stop the outflow of Cuban refugees, or to establish democracy. The White House understands correctly that the Castro regime eventually will collapse under the weight of his failed policies, the U.S. embargo, and the frustration of the Cuban people. The only chance that the U.S. or a multilateral force would intercede in Cuba would be if massive and prolonged bloodshed broke out during a transition to a new government—thus the low probability rating of one.

## HASTENING CASTRO'S DOWNFALL

While most of the responsibility for bringing democracy and free markets to Cuba rests on the shoulders of the Cuban people at home and the Cuban exile community abroad, the Bush Administration should accelerate its efforts to bring Castro down. Washington should seek to assure that the transition from dictatorship to democracy occurs as peacefully as possible. To accomplish this, the U.S. should:

✓ **Tighten the U.S. embargo against Castro.**

Washington should close loopholes in the 1963 embargo. Bush announced on April 18 that he was signing an executive order that would prohibit ships trading with Cuba, or vacation cruise liners that stop in Cuba, from docking at American ports. This measure, however, does not go as far as it should. Bush should expand the executive order to prohibit foreign subsidiaries of U.S. corporations from trading or investing in Castro's Cuba. Also tax deductions for expenses generated by trade with Cuba should be denied to these companies. This language already is contained in the Cuba Democracy Act in an amendment originally proposed in July 1989 by Senator Connie Mack of Florida.

Business between American subsidiaries overseas and Cuba, estimated at approximately \$700 million last year, is fast expanding. This trade, which currently is not prohibited by the U.S. embargo, helps prop up Castro's communist regime by providing it with a source of hard currency. It should be stopped.

✓ **Reject attempts to lift the travel ban on American citizens seeking to visit Castro's Cuba.**

There is growing support in the U.S. for relaxing travel restrictions to Cuba. Some believe that expanded contact between Americans and Cubans will spread democratic and capitalist values on the island. This is only partially true. Canadian, European, Latin American, and Japanese tourists frequently travel to Cuba with little or no impact on the pace of Cuban reform.

Travel by U.S. citizens to Cuba currently is banned by the Cuban Assets Control Regulation in the embargo. This restriction, which is administered by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (FAC) in the Department of Treasury, prohibits normal tourist travel by U.S. citizens to Cuba. The purpose is to deny the Castro government hard currency earnings. Travel to Cuba is permitted only for: 1) visiting close relatives living in Cuba, 2) official government travel, 3) news gathering by the press, and 4) professional academic research. The restrictions on travel for personal business or recreational purposes should be maintained.

✓ **Call upon the Organization of American States and United Nations to continue sending delegations to Cuba to monitor human rights abuses and meet with pro-democracy forces.**

According to Americas Watch, "The Cuban government intensified its campaign of repression against human rights advocates and dissidents in 1991....An increase in limited forms of independent political activity was met with increasingly brazen and violent responses by internal security forces." For simply insulting Castro, individuals routinely are imprisoned for up to three years. One of the most worrying developments last year in Cuba was the development of "rapid action brigades," manned by Communist Party henchmen who brutalize Castro's opponents. The U.N. Human Rights Commission voted on March 4 to condemn Havana for human rights abuses. As a result of the vote, U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali appointed a special U.N. representative to monitor human rights conditions in Cuba. Castro, however, often bars U.N. and OAS human rights monitors from visiting Cuba or restricts severely what they are allowed to see.



Washington should press the U.N. and the OAS to increase their pressure on Havana through diplomatic and economic sanctions. Specifically, they should demand more inspections of Castro's jails and mental institutions and increased outside contact with pro-democracy groups. If Castro balks, the U.S. should try to expel Cuba from the U.N. Cuban participation in the OAS already has been suspended, which is a useful precedent for expulsion from the U.N.

- ✓ **Call upon the OAS to place economic and diplomatic sanctions on Cuba as it did following the September 30 coup in neighboring Haiti and the April 5 coup in Peru.**

The Bush Administration should urge OAS members to treat the Castro regime no differently than they do the military government in Haiti or the government of Alberto Fujimori in Peru. The OAS claims correctly that these governments have suppressed democracy. As a result, it placed trade and aid sanctions on Lima and Port-au-Prince. It should do the same with the far more repressive regime in Havana. Castro no longer has the means to blackmail nations in Latin America into supporting him by threatening their security with guerrilla insurgency and terrorism. It is time, therefore, that the region's democracies treat him like the illegitimate dictator that he is. Therefore, they should place a trade embargo on Cuba and cut off all economic assistance for the communist regime to force him to give up power peacefully.

- ✓ **Offer to open talks with any Cuban government or military officials other than Fidel and Raul Castro to discuss Cuba's transition to democracy.**

These talks should be strictly informal contacts, rather than a high-level U.S. dialogue that would lend legitimacy to Castro's regime. They should be conducted by the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the State Department's Inter-American Affairs Bureau, and the National Security Council's Latin America division. Discussions should focus only on creating a post-Castro free market and democratic Cuba, and not on normalizing or improving ties with the existing dictatorship. The purpose is to convince dissatisfied Cuban officials to support economic and political reform in Cuba that could lead to Castro's overthrow.

- ✓ **Open Cuban communications up to the outside world.**

This can be accomplished by expanding the programming of Radio Martí and TV Martí. These are U.S. Information Agency (USIA) stations that beam uncensored news and other programs into Cuba. Although Castro sometimes jams the broadcast of Radio Martí, it is still the most popular radio program in Cuba. Havana, however, has had more success in jamming TV Martí. This television program broadcast from the Florida Keys is on the air only late at night due to limited funding, bureaucratic red tape, and concerns over angering Castro. Moreover, because it is transmitted mainly to western Cuba where Castro has much of his jamming equipment, few Cuban actually see TV Martí.

To remedy this situation, the USIA should broadcast TV Martí programs during prime time and daylight hours to attract more viewers. Also TV Martí should add more news and informational programs, and cut back on entertainment programming. This would have a greater effect in disseminating pro-democratic and free market messages

to the Cuban people. The USIA also should broadcast programs to the highly populated Santiago de Cuba area in eastern Cuba where there is less jamming equipment and where Cuban revolutionary activity historically has started.

As Castro's fuel supplies are depleted, he will be less able to afford to run the generators to power his jamming equipment. In addition, he increasingly will deprive the Cuban people of badly needed fuel to run his jamming equipment, thereby increasing their misery. The U.S. should take advantage of this by using TV Marti to spread information on the fuel and financial costs of jamming. This will lead to increased popular discontent. Such programs are the Cuban people's only source of free information, and like Radio Free Europe during the Cold War, they successfully counter anti-American and pro-communist propaganda.

Because democracy and free markets are infectious, the U.S. also should allow private telephone companies to modernize telecommunications links to Cuba by replacing old and damaged telephone lines, thereby increasing the Cuban population's contacts to the outside world. Moreover, the Bush Administration and Congress should allow the U.S. Postal Service to open direct mail service to and from Cuba so that families divided by Castro's dictatorship can communicate and exchange information more easily. Currently mail can only be sent from the U.S. to Cuba via third countries and only about 600,000 phone calls each year can be made to Cuba from the U.S. Castro may allow these changes in order to alleviate some of the public discontent in Cuba. Improving communications between the Americans and Cubans would make it clear that the U.S. embargo is aimed at the Cuban government, not the Cuban people. As a result, the Cuban people increasingly will blame Castro, not the U.S., for Cuba's problems.

- ✓ **Authorize the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) to fund pro-democracy organizations in Cuba with \$4 million.**

The NED is a U.S. agency created by the Reagan Administration and Congress to nurture democratic movements around the globe. It provided \$462,000 for Cuban-related projects in 1991, almost double the amount it allocated in 1990. This amount should be increased to approximately \$4 million to encourage democratic change in Cuba. The additional money could be used to help pro-democracy groups in Cuba purchase printing and office equipment, and pay transportation costs, legal fees, and other expenses related to democratic political activity. First on the list of recipients should be the seventeen groups represented by the Cuban Democratic Coalition that bravely are championing free markets, democracy, and human rights. Such funding already is provided to hundreds of such groups all over the world. The purpose should be to help unify the opposition and make clear that the U.S. embargo is aimed at Castro's regime, not the Cuban people.

- ✓ **Make U.S. aid to Russia and other former Soviet republics conditional on the complete termination of military and technical assistance, economic subsidies, nuclear assistance, and other forms of aid to Cuba.**

For 33 years, Moscow almost singlehandedly propped up Castro's brutal regime. The Yeltsin government, however, repeatedly has announced that the U.S.S.R.'s \$6 billion-a-year aid package would end as of January 1992. Nevertheless, some Russian

economic, technical, and military aid still flows to Cuba. For example, Moscow still is helping with the construction of the two nuclear power plants near Cienfuegos. Washington should press Yeltsin's government to back up its criticism of Castro with concrete actions. American economic aid to Russia and the other former Soviet republics, therefore, should be linked to a verified termination of this military, technical, and economic aid to the Castro regime. Russian-Cuban trade, however, is acceptable as long as it does not involve Russian subsidies to Cuba.

✓ **Enlist the help of regional leaders to pressure Castro to step down.**

The Bush Administration should call upon such democratic leaders as Argentina's Carlos Menem, Canada's Brian Mulroney, Mexico's Carlos Salinas de Gortari, and Venezuela's Carlos Andres Perez to pressure Castro to relinquish power peacefully. Washington should enlist the help of these and other Latin American and Caribbean leaders to further isolate the Cuban dictator economically and diplomatically. Public denunciations by such leaders, combined with trade and investment restrictions, would help accelerate Castro's downfall. They do not have to join the U.S. economic embargo, but merely cease favorable trade subsidies with Cuba and terminate all aid programs.

✓ **Prepare a comprehensive program that will help build a free market and democracy in a post-Castro Cuba.**

Compared to other post-communist regimes, Cuba's economic reconstruction probably would proceed rapidly after Castro's regime collapsed. Some 10 percent of all Cubans live in the U.S., and the exile community can be expected to supply experience, investment funds, and access to credit for the rebuilding of Cuba. The Cuban tourist industry would experience rapid growth because of the island's natural beauty and proximity to the U.S. Also, the Cuban people are justly renowned for their energy and ambition, as Americans have discovered to their delight in Florida. However, as former Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Elliott Abrams points out, the transition will not be easy: "The challenges on the economic front will be great. The infrastructure is appalling and will need costly modernization. The housing supply is poor. The GNP declines every year, and with each passing year, Cuba will have that much farther to climb."<sup>21</sup>

The main problem for a post-Castro Cuba will be political, not economic. Cuba may suffer through a period of instability after Castro's fall. Cuba has no deep democratic traditions and has lived under dictators for the past forty years. There also will be many rival domestic political groups and international exile groups competing for power. For the past 33 years, Castro's propaganda has painted the Cuban exile community in the U.S. as Washington-controlled traitors. Many Cubans inside Cuba fear that they will lose their homes and jobs once the exiles return to claim the property taken from them after the revolution. The post-communist experiences in Eastern Europe, however, should help alleviate these fears; many property issues there have been resolved with

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21 Elliott Abrams, "A New Door Opens: Changed and Opportunities in Latin America," *Hudson Briefing Paper* No. 139, April 1992, p. 5.

relative ease. Moreover, most Cuban exile leaders, such as Cuban American National Foundation Chairman Jorge Mas, insist that a strict restitution of property across the board to former owners is not realistic. Mas and others believe that the emphasis instead should be on compensating former owners, combined with a full-scale program of privatization of Cuba's state-owned industries.

Following Castro's demise, Washington should assist Havana to create a market economy as quickly as possible.

In the **short term**, the U.S. should urge a free Cuba to:

- ◆ **Quickly privatize state-owned industries;**
- ◆ **Establish a stable, convertible currency;**
- ◆ **Guarantee private property rights; and**
- ◆ **Liberalize trade.**

In the **medium term**, Washington should press Havana to:

- ◆ **Promote rapid development of competitive and efficient financial institutions, including stock and bond markets;**
- ◆ **Establish a tax structure that encourages economic growth; and**
- ◆ **Shun foreign aid when possible.**

Finally, in the **longer term**, Washington should:

- ◆ **Restore Cuba's most-favored-nation trading status and negotiate a free trade pact with Havana;**
- ◆ **Return Cuba's share of the U.S. sugar quota to near its 1958 level of 38 percent of America's total sugar imports; and**
- ◆ **Include Cuba in the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, which seeks to create a free trade zone stretching from Alaska to Antarctica.<sup>22</sup>**

## CONCLUSION

For three decades, American economic, political, and diplomatic sanctions have limited Castro's freedom of action and forced the Soviet Union to pay an enormous price to prop up the Cuban dictatorship. These policies now are paying off. Moscow no longer can afford its annual economic and military subsidy of the Castro regime. This has forced the Cuban economy into a tailspin. Moreover, Castro's international isolation is nearly complete, and democratic opposition is increasing in Cuba.

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22 For a detailed discussion of these recommendations see Johnson, *op. cit.*

Under the circumstances it would be a severe mistake for Washington now to normalize relations with Havana. The U.S. has nothing to gain economically or politically from such a policy—and everything to lose. Today more than ever, the economic embargo against Cuba has a real chance of ending Castro's dictatorial grip on power. If the U.S. were to lift the sanctions today, it would breathe new life into a dying regime, prolonging the suffering of the Cuban people. Changing policy in mid-stream also would signal that the U.S. is not serious about supporting economic and political freedom in the Americas.

**Tightening the Economic Noose.** Instead of making concessions to Castro, the Bush Administration should seek to further tighten the embargo. It should work with other democratic governments in the U.N. and the OAS to bring greater pressure to bear on the Castro regime for its human rights abuses, support of terrorism, and drug trafficking. Washington also should condition aid to Russia and the former Soviet republics on their complete termination of aid to Havana. These measures should be combined with support for the emerging pro-democracy groups in Havana. Washington also should initiate informal talks with Cuban leaders outside Castro's inner circle.

While political upheaval could follow Castro's demise, Cuba's economy likely will bounce back rapidly. The U.S. should do all that it can to assure that the transition is as smooth as possible and help prepare for a return to the free market. While the responsibility for Cuba's freedom and reconstruction clearly remains primarily in the hands of the Cuban people, Washington can assist them by promoting free trade with a post-Castro Cuba and welcoming it into Bush's Enterprise for the Americas program. A Cuba free of Castro could once again become the strongest economic power in the Caribbean.

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