



**Cuba Transition  
Project**

**THE CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY  
AND ELECTORAL POLITICS:  
ADAPTATION, SUCCESSION, AND TRANSITION**

**By**

**William M. LeoGrande**

INSTITUTE FOR CUBAN AND CUBAN-AMERICAN STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI





**THE CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY  
AND ELECTORAL POLITICS:  
ADAPTATION, SUCCESSION, AND  
TRANSITION**

# Cuba Transition Project – CTP

The Cuba Transition Project, at the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies (ICCAS), University of Miami, is an important and timely project to study and make recommendations for the reconstruction of Cuba once the post-Castro transition begins in earnest. The transitions in Central and Eastern Europe, Nicaragua, and Spain are being analyzed and lessons drawn for the future of Cuba. The project began in January 2002 and is funded by a grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development.

## Programs and Activities

- The CTP is publishing original research, with practical alternative recommendations on various specific aspects of the transition process, commissioned and written for the CTP by ICCAS Staff and U.S. and foreign scholars with expertise on Cuba.
- The CTP is developing four key databases:
  1. A full-text database of published and unpublished articles written on topics of transition in Cuba, as well as articles on transition in Central and Eastern Europe, Nicaragua, and Spain. It also includes an extensive bibliography of published and unpublished books, theses, and dissertations on the topic.
  2. A full-text database of Cuba's principal laws, in Spanish, its legal system, including the current Cuban Constitution (in English and Spanish), and other legislation relating to the structure of the existing government. Also included are the full-text of law review articles on a variety of topics
  3. A database on joint ventures and foreign investments in Cuba.
  4. Cuba On-Line, a database of historical and current information on Cuba. It includes a chronology from 1492 to the present and a comprehensive bibliography on most Cuba related topics.
- The CTP publishes electronically an information service, *Cuba Focus*, reporting on current issues of importance on Cuba.

All the products of the CTP, including the databases and subscription to *Cuba Focus*, are free and available to the public on the web at <http://ctp.iccas.miami.edu>.

The CTP can also be contacted at P.O. Box 248174, Coral Gables, Florida 33124-3010, Tel: 305-284-CUBA (2822), Fax: 305-284-4875, and e-mail: [ctp.iccas@miami.edu](mailto:ctp.iccas@miami.edu).

# **THE CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY AND ELECTORAL POLITICS: ADAPTATION, SUCCESSION, AND TRANSITION**

Prepared for the Cuba Transition Project (CTP)  
Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies  
University of Miami

**By**

**William M. LeoGrande**

*This publication was made possible through support provided by the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, U.S. Agency for International Development, under the terms of Award No. EDG-A-00-02-00007-00. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development.*

# **The Cuban Communist Party and Electoral Politics: Adaptation, Succession, and Transition**

## **Executive Summary**

The issue of transition in Cuba has attracted attention in recent years from scholars and policymakers alike. The dramatic collapse of European communism, the inexorable aging of the Cuban revolution's founding generation, and the "third wave" of global democratization all sparked renewed interest in the prospects for political change in Cuba. Three transitions are worth examining and keeping analytically distinct: first, the adaptations the Cuban regime has been forced to undergo as a result of the collapse of European communism and the reintegration of Cuba into the world market; next, the leadership succession, which will commence with the passing of Cuban President Fidel Castro from the political scene; and finally, a transition to democracy, which is possible, but by no means assured.

Economic adaptations since 1991 include the reintroduction of free farmers markets, the de facto privatization of agriculture, the legalization of self-employment, the reduction of subsidies to state enterprises, and the legalization of dollars. These reforms have created the social preconditions for the emergence of contentious politics: erosion of party control over the economy and employment, exacerbation of social stratification, and expansion of groups and organizations not controlled by the government and potentially in conflict with it. Politically, the regime has been weakened by the global failure of its legitimating ideology and by severe economic recession. At the height of the crisis, the leadership of the Communist Party was divided sharply over how much political reform should accompany economic reform, but by 1996, Castro had decided against any significant political liberalization.

The process of succession after Castro's departure will create an opportunity for greater political debate, at least within the party leadership, and a potential for that debate to spill over beyond the elite as it did in other communist systems. Although currently quiescent, the division between reform and hard-line factions of the Cuban Communist Party has

not disappeared. When Castro is no longer there to act as ultimate arbiter, existing divisions are likely to reemerge. Studies of democratic transition indicate that this sort of elite division is the sine qua non for the initiation of a transition process.

Democratic transition will depend on the emergence of elite conflict in which reformers come to have more in common with regime opponents than with elite hard-liners. Since no one can predict which faction of the Cuban Communist Party will be stronger when Fidel Castro departs, it certainly is not inevitable that Cuba will undergo a transition to multiparty democracy. China and Vietnam are as likely to be bellwethers for Cuba as are Eastern Europe or the former Soviet Union. If a transition to multiparty democracy does take place, however, the Eastern European experience suggests that the Cuban Communist Party, in a reformed guise, could retain considerable political appeal. The Cuban party will enjoy organizational superiority, a socialist value culture that favors continuation of social programs, strong nationalist sentiment that will impugn the patriotism of rivals too closely tied to the United States, and a formidable base of support among social groups that stand to lose if a transition to democracy in Cuba is accompanied by a transition to capitalism.

External actors can improve the prospects for peaceful democratic transition by pursuing policies that reduce the political elite's siege mentality, reward liberalizing reforms, and abstain from actions that could be regarded as interference in Cuba's internal affairs lest such actions spark a nationalist backlash. In this regard, Latin American and European actors are better positioned than the United States.

## Introduction

The issue of transition in Cuba has attracted increasing attention in recent years from scholars and policymakers alike. The dramatic collapse of European communism was the initial catalyst. The socialist bloc's sudden demise implied that its highly centralized, authoritarian approach to economic management and governance had exhausted itself and was far more fragile than most observers had imagined. Moreover, the disintegration of the Soviet Union left Cuba in desperate economic straits. Many people wondered if the Cuban regime could survive this double blow of wounded legitimacy and crippled performance.<sup>1</sup> Sensing Cuba's vulnerability, the United States tightened economic sanctions and put the issue of transition on the policy agenda by making democracy the *sine qua non* for improving relations between the two countries.

A second, less dramatic factor stimulating interest in transition is the inexorable aging of the Cuban revolution's founding generation. Generational transitions always are a major test of whether a postrevolutionary regime has become sufficiently institutionalized and legitimate to survive the passing of the personalities who forged it. This is especially true in the case of Cuba, where Fidel Castro has long stood as the quintessential example of charismatic leadership.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, the "third wave" of democratization that swept across not only Eastern Europe, but southern Europe and Latin America as well, sparked a renewed scholarly interest in the processes of democratization and transition from authoritarian rule.<sup>3</sup> It is logical to wonder if the same forces, both domestic and international, that produced democratic transitions elsewhere might not be operating in Cuba as well.<sup>4</sup>

At least three transitions, then, are worth examining and keeping analytically distinct: one already underway, another on the horizon, and a third that is possible, but by no means certain. The first transition involves the adaptations the Cuban regime has had to undergo as a result of the collapse of European communism and the reintegration of Cuba into the world market. This process of adaptation – political, social, and economic – may not yet be complete, but the major reforms adopted to meet the crisis are almost a decade old, and no major new reforms have been introduced since 1995. Thus, it is possible to make an initial assessment

of how this first transition has changed the political landscape.

The second transition, leadership succession, will commence with the passing of Fidel Castro from the political scene. Succession may not be imminent, but with Castro in his mid-70s, his passing is something the leadership will likely face in the medium rather than long term. Moreover, a certain amount of planning for the succession, directed by Castro himself, already has taken place. Drawing on the succession experiences of other communist political systems, we can make some reasonable projections about how this second transition may impact Cuban politics.

The third transition, a transition to democracy, is by no means assured. One can imagine scenarios in which such a transition might take place, as many people did in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of European communism. One can also imagine that instead of collapsing, the regime might continue to evolve and adapt gradually to changing social, economic, and international conditions.<sup>5</sup> China and Vietnam are as likely to be bellwethers for Cuba's future as are Eastern Europe or the former Soviet Union. Nevertheless, at the risk of venturing far out on a speculative limb, this paper will examine what a transition to a multiparty democratic regime would mean for the Cuban party system and the elected institutions of government.

## **Adaptation**

### *The Origins of the Communist Party of Cuba*

Inaugurated in 1965, the Communist Party of Cuba (Partido Comunista de Cuba – PCC) was the first communist party created *after* the triumph of the revolution it was intended to lead. During the regime's critical early years, it was the Rebel Army (later, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias – FAR) that provided the political apparatus through which Fidel Castro and his closest compatriots governed the nation. Creation of the new Communist Party followed Castro's declaration of the socialist character of the revolution during the Bay of Pigs invasion, and it had both domestic and international purposes. Domestically, Castro sought to forge a political instrument that would unify the fractious revolutionary family and mobilize supporters; internationally, he sought to

demonstrate to the Soviet Union that Cuba was a member in good standing of the socialist camp, worthy of Soviet economic assistance and military support.

The party-building process got off to a rocky start, however, shaken as it was by a series of conflicts among veterans of Castro's July 26<sup>th</sup> Movement, old communists from the Popular Socialist Party, and the student-based Revolutionary Directorate. Only Castro's personal intervention prevented the revolutionary leadership from shattering into warring factions. As a result of this turmoil, the leaders of the revolution were reluctant to turn over too much authority to the new party apparatus for fear that their efforts to institutionalize Fidel Castro's charismatic authority might instead dissipate it. Major policy decisions continued to be made by Castro and a small circle of trusted lieutenants, most of whom had fought together in the Sierra Maestra during the struggle against Cuban President and dictator Fulgencio Batista. When the new Communist Party finally was launched in 1965, this inner circle was formally installed as the party's Political Bureau, but the change was a matter more of name than of process. Castro continued to make major policy decisions in consultation with the same people. The more elaborate decision-making machinery of the party, including the 100-member Central Committee, remained unused for the most part. The PCC did not convene its First Congress until 1975, before which time it had neither a program nor statutes. Its small size (just 55,000 members in 1969, or 0.6 percent of the population) made it the smallest ruling communist party in the world by a wide margin, and it had party organizations in only 16 percent of the nation's work centers covering less than half the labor force.<sup>6</sup>

Only in the 1970s did the PCC develop into an organization strong enough to assert real direction over the Cuban political system. The PCC's founding Congress was held in 1975, by which time it had grown to 202,807 members (2.2 percent of the population). Its organizational apparatus was stronger and more elaborate. Party bodies at all levels, including the Central Committee, began meeting regularly. In short, by the late 1970s, the PCC had taken on the leading role in politics typical of ruling communist parties elsewhere.<sup>7</sup>

The 10 years (1975-1986) from the first to the third Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba might be called a period of routine or "normal" politics. Except for the internal turmoil sparked by the Mariel crisis in 1980, the domestic political scene was relatively quiet. Dramatic events

tended to be concentrated in the international arena – Cuba’s involvement in Africa, its chairmanship of the Nonaligned Movement, its confrontation with the United States over Central America, its defeat in Grenada. During these years, the PCC grew in size, organizational capacity, and administrative authority. Membership grew substantially, from 211,642 members in late 1975, to 434,143 in 1980, and to 523,639 in 1985. Party bodies met regularly and the apparatus developed a system for controlling the appointment of cadres to all major posts in the government and mass organizations.<sup>8</sup>

The dominant theme at the PCC’s Second Congress in 1980 was continuity. The Congress reaffirmed the validity of the program adopted at the First Congress and most of the supporting resolutions. The bulk of the discussion, both before and during the Second Congress, focused on social and economic development.<sup>9</sup> The party’s work, as Castro noted in his main report, had been “directed toward boosting and consolidating the Economic Planning and Management System, improving the mechanisms of economic leadership, and raising the quality of production.”<sup>10</sup>

The Third Congress, in 1986, was more tumultuous. It marked the launch of the Rectification campaign, a major retreat from the Soviet-sponsored socialist economic management system (System of Economic Management and Planning – SDPE) installed in the mid-1970s and praised during the Second Congress. Criticizing the SDPE for fostering inefficiency, corruption, and profit-minded selfishness, Castro called for the “rectification of errors and negative tendencies” in economic management. The campaign focused on recentralizing economic planning authority, dismantling SDPE material incentives and market mechanisms, abolishing the free farmers markets launched in 1980, and combating corruption.<sup>11</sup> By putting politics in command of economic policy, the Rectification campaign implicitly meant a more assertive role for the PCC. At the outset of the campaign, for example, principal responsibility for economic policy was moved from the Central Planning Board (Junta Central de Planificación, JUCEPLAN) to a special “Central Group” of the PCC’s Political Bureau.<sup>12</sup>

Over the next several years, a bewildering rush of events, both domestic and international, rocked the Cuban regime. At home, the arrest, trial, and execution of General Arnaldo Ochoa and his coconspirators for cocaine trafficking, and a subsequent series of corruption trials, struck a heavy blow to regime legitimacy. During a period when the standard of living for ordinary Cubans was falling and Castro was exhorting people

to emulate the selflessness of Che Guevara by working harder for less, a significant number of senior officials were living luxuriously through corruption.<sup>13</sup>

### *Adapting to Europe's Transition*

The sudden collapse of European communism triggered an economic cataclysm in Cuba, prompting an uncharacteristically vigorous debate within the Cuban political elite over the future of the revolution. Held at the beginning of Cuba's Special Period in Time of Peace, the PCC's Fourth Congress endorsed a series of economic and political reforms designed to bring Cuba safely through the trauma of the demise of the socialist bloc. The Special Period's economic measures were analogous to a wartime economic crisis plan; its political measures went under the general rubric of "perfecting" and "revitalizing" Cuba's political institutions.

As in 1970, after the failure of the 10 million-ton harvest, the Cuban leadership reacted to the crisis by both revising economic policy and trying to rebuild regime legitimacy by making political institutions more responsive to popular demands. From the outset, however, the basic strategy was to undertake only the reforms absolutely necessary to guarantee the survival of the existing order, and political leaders were not always in agreement about how extensive the requisite reforms needed to be. A transition away from either socialism (i.e., state control of the commanding heights of the economy) or Leninism (one-party rule) was never seriously contemplated, as symbolized by Castro's slogan, "Socialism or death!"<sup>14</sup>

In the economic realm, the leadership's initial plan was a short-term strategy during which Cuba would reorient its international trade relations and adjust to the loss of Soviet subsidies, but would not fundamentally alter its centrally planned economy.<sup>15</sup> By 1993, however, it was clear that these measures were inadequate. From 1989 to 1993, Cuba's GDP fell by 35 percent.<sup>16</sup> The resulting political discontent produced serious antigovernment disturbances and growing pressure for emigration, culminating in the so-called "rafters" crisis of 1994, when tens of thousands of Cubans set off for the United States on flimsy rafts.

Starting in late 1993, the government adopted a series of structural domestic reforms, including the reintroduction of free farmers markets,

the transformation of most state farms into cooperatives (Unidades Básicas de Producción – UBPC), the legalization of self-employment in most occupations, the reduction of subsidies to state enterprises, the reduction of price subsidies on nonessential consumer goods, and the legalization of dollars.<sup>17</sup> Together, these reforms fueled a gradual economic recovery beginning in 1994, and by the end of 2000, the economy had recovered to about 88 percent of 1989 GDP. Outside analysts disagree as to whether the limited reforms made thus far are sufficient to produce stable, long-term growth, but their success at reversing the slide in GDP meant that Cuba’s political leadership was able to forgo more drastic changes, such as the legalization of small and medium-size private enterprises.<sup>18</sup>

In the political realm, reforms have been less dramatic and could be seen as an extension of the changes initiated earlier as part of the Rectification process. Fidel Castro’s diagnosis of the regime’s political problem was that it had copied too closely the economic and political models of the European socialist states, thus reproducing in Cuba a form of socialism that was highly bureaucratized and apolitical in the sense that the party focused its efforts too much on economic management and not enough on the “political work” of sustaining its ideological hegemony.<sup>19</sup> This was Castro’s rationale for Rectification, his explanation for the eventual collapse of the European regimes, and his motive for limiting political reforms during the Special Period.<sup>20</sup>

To counter the political weaknesses they saw in Europe, the Cuban leaders sought to reform their political institutions by making them more responsive to popular concerns. For the PCC, the first wave of change was the introduction of secret-ballot elections for party leaders at the base (in the workplace “nuclei”) in early 1990. Prior to that, elections had been by open nomination and a show of hands. Subsequently, new municipal and provincial leaders were elected (in the usual way, from slates of pre-selected nominees), producing a 50 percent turnover in municipal leaders and the replacement of two of the fourteen provincial secretaries.<sup>21</sup>

Next came a major downsizing of the party bureaucracy preceding the Fourth Party Congress. The number of departments in the Central Committee staff organization was reduced from 19 to 9, and the staff was cut by 50 percent. The Party Secretariat was abolished as a separate organization, and its organizational responsibilities were distributed to individual members of the Political Bureau. Provincial committee staffs were cut as well, and overall, some two-thirds of the positions in the

PCC's paid apparatus were abolished. In the posts that remained, a significant number of the incumbents were replaced.<sup>22</sup>

The March 1990 call for the Fourth Party Congress sought an unprecedented openness in debate, not just among party members, but also among the entire populace, so as to foster greater participation and build "the necessary consensus" for the government's policy response to the Special Period.<sup>23</sup> However, the call was so extraordinary that people did not know how to respond, and the leadership halted the discussions after just a few weeks because the grassroots meetings were producing little more than hortatory praise for the party and the revolution. "We're just not used to debating," explained party ideological chief Carlos Aldana.<sup>24</sup> In June, debate resumed under the guidance of a new Political Bureau statement emphasizing the virtues of open discussion: "The quality of these meetings can't be measured – as we mistakenly have, at times – by the unanimity reached or by the absence of points raised that could be considered problematic or divergent."<sup>25</sup> Even then, however, it was clear that some in the leadership were worried that excessive democratic debate might get out of hand. The revised call also set limits, noting that the discussions were intended to provide "political clarification" and that the socialist character of the Cuban system and leading role of the party were not open to debate.

Eventually, some three million persons participated in the pre-Congress discussions.<sup>27</sup> Sharp debate ensued on such issues as whether to allow religious believers to join the Communist Party and whether free farmers markets, abolished during Rectification, ought to be resumed. The social and economic issues that concerned people most were the rising crime rate, the poor state of public transportation and housing, and the overall deterioration in the standard of living.<sup>28</sup> The principal political criticisms voiced in the discussions concerned the sclerotic bureaucratism that had overtaken local government and the mass organizations, especially the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), which some people argued should be disbanded or merged with the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR).<sup>29</sup>

The local Organs of People's Power, Cuba's legislative assemblies, were widely described as ineffective, largely for lack of resources and insufficient authority in dealing with the government's administrative bureaucracy. Created in 1976 after a two-year experiment in Matanzas province, the Organs of People's Power were part of the reorganization of the Cuban political system in the 1970s. Initially, local delegates to

municipal assemblies were nominated and elected directly by their constituents, whereas delegates to the provincial assemblies and the National Assembly of People's Power were elected indirectly by municipal delegates from slates of candidates drawn up by Candidacy Commissions chaired by the Communist Party. The Organs of People's Power are juridically the highest state authority at their respective levels, with the right to oversee the operations of all government agencies, including economic enterprises, within their jurisdiction. Government administrators are required to report periodically to OPP assemblies on the performance of their agencies.

In creating the OPP, the party leadership aimed to bolster its legitimacy by acknowledging the importance of elections as a mechanism for periodic renewal of the regime's mandate and by encouraging popular input to local government. Local delegates were required to hold periodic Assemblies for Rendering Accounts – neighborhood meetings in which delegates reported to their constituents and constituents could voice issues for the delegates to raise in their respective municipal assemblies. Another purpose in creating the OPP was to have an instrument of government that could augment the party's efforts to oversee the performance of government bureaucracy, something the party did not do very effectively in the 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>30</sup>

By the late 1980s, however, People's Power assemblies were suffering from serious public disaffection. At the local level, municipal assemblies had few resources at their disposal and so could not respond effectively to popular demands as expressed in the Assemblies for Rendering Accounts. Local administrators still responded more readily to their ministerial superiors in Havana than to their municipal OPP assemblies, making it hard for the assemblies to elicit positive responses from them.<sup>31</sup> Since local delegates served on a voluntary basis, without pay, and continued working their regular jobs, they had neither the time nor the expertise to make local assemblies work effectively. "What's missing from the People's Power is the power," lamented a former local delegate in 1990. "People would come to us and lodge scores of complaints, which I would run around trying to solve. But I didn't have the authority to solve problems.... So people started blaming me, when the solutions were out of my hands. Oftentimes, the solution was impossible because we didn't have the resources."<sup>32</sup>

A 1990 poll by *Bohemia* magazine found that only 75.2 percent of respondents knew the name of their local delegate. Most people, 59.1 per-

cent, had confidence in their delegates, but only 51.4 percent felt their delegates had “demonstrated authority in dealing with the problems of the district.” A majority, 55.8 percent, said People’s Power “needs improving,” while only 31.3 percent said they would accept the office of delegate themselves.<sup>33</sup>

In the pre-Congress meetings, people criticized the National Assembly for holding superficial and pro forma debates and for being little more than a rubber stamp for government proposals. The Assembly met for only a few days a year, and from 1988 to 1990, the position of Assembly president stood vacant. In early 1990, in conjunction with the PCC’s campaign to “revitalize” politics, Juan Escalona was named Assembly president and began to invigorate the body by holding extensive debates and strengthening its work commissions (i.e., its committee system).<sup>34</sup> In the pre-Congress meetings, one of the more popular proposals was to have provincial assembly and National Assembly delegates elected directly, rather than picked by the municipal assembly delegates.<sup>35</sup>

The party itself underwent significant changes at the Fourth Congress. Its statutes were amended to redefine the PCC as the party of the “Cuban nation” rather than the party of the working class, and the new statutes emphasized its ideological roots in the ideas of José Martí as well as those of Marx and Lenin.<sup>36</sup> The prohibition on party membership for religious believers was lifted, and the process for choosing new party members was simplified so that more members could be drawn from work centers based on a vote of their coworkers (dropping the requirement of sponsorship by existing members or prior membership in the Communist Youth Union – Unión Juventud Comunista, UJC).<sup>37</sup> Over the next five years, these changes produced a flood of new members as the PCC’s ranks grew from 611,627 at the Fourth Congress to 780,000 in 1997 on the eve of the Fifth Congress. By 1997, some 232,000 people, or one-third of the PCC’s total membership, had joined the party since the beginning of the Special Period.<sup>38</sup>

The Fourth Congress also adopted the suggestion that all delegates to OPP assemblies be elected directly by their constituents and called for the strengthening of the National Assembly’s work commissions. “The growing and legitimate wish of our population to participate in a more active and direct way in the decision-making process, made obvious in the discussion of the Call to the Fourth Congress, must be echoed in its [OPP’s] structure,” the Congress concluded.<sup>39</sup> However, it rejected proposals made in the pre-Congress meetings that candidates be allowed to cam-

paign and thereby present contrasting policy views. Nor did it endorse the idea of allowing competing policy views in the state media<sup>40</sup>

### *How Much Change Is Enough?*

By most accounts, the limited reforms produced by the Fourth Congress resulted from an internal struggle in the PCC between a reform faction led by party ideological chief Carlos Aldana, UJC First Secretary (and later Foreign Minister) Roberto Robaina, and economic manager Carlos Lage, and a conservative faction led by José Ramón Machado Ventura and José Ramón Balaguer. The reformers pushed for the use of market mechanisms to speed economic recovery and for greater political space for dissenting views that were not manifestly counterrevolutionary. The conservatives argued that rapid economic change would undercut the party's political control and that any political opening in the midst of economic crisis risked setting off a torrent of criticism that might sweep away the regime, as happened in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.<sup>41</sup>

Initially, the reformers seemed to have the upper hand. In early 1990, the Central Committee's announcement of the campaign to "revitalize" the party was accompanied by a call to create "a climate favorable for the development of creative thinking and fertile debate." At the same meeting, Robaina was elevated to alternate member status in the Political Bureau.<sup>42</sup> The call for the Fourth Congress followed shortly thereafter, stimulating unprecedented discussion, as we already have seen. Yet the call also contained a warning that the right to debate and criticize would not extend to regime opponents. "Counterrevolutionary and antisocial elements... should be warned that acting at this time as the puppets of imperialism will mean... becoming the biggest traitors Cuba has ever had[,] and that is how the law and the people will treat them."<sup>43</sup>

A delay of several months in convening the Fourth Congress was attributed to the unresolved internal debate between reformers and conservatives. "There is a major struggle between the forces represented by Aldana and those of Machado Ventura, and Fidel hasn't decided between them," explained an unnamed Cuban government official.<sup>44</sup> When the Congress did convene, radical reform proposals were not on the agenda. The leadership had decided that major political changes were too risky in light of Cuba's economic problems. Nevertheless, the reformers fared reasonably well in the new leadership lineup; Carlos Lage and Abel

Prieto, head of the National Union of Writers and Artists (UNEAC), were added to the Political Bureau, joining Aldana and Robaina.

After the Congress, the locus of debate between reformers and conservatives shifted to the local and national OPP elections scheduled for late 1992 and early 1993 – the first OPP elections to be held under the new direct ballot system. The most significant change in OPP recommended by the Fourth PCC Congress and implemented by constitutional changes in 1992 allowed direct election of provincial and national People’s Power delegates. Reformers saw the electoral process as a means of initiating political liberalization. “The system we’re putting in place will allow the emergence of new sectors that disagree with our policies, as long as they don’t have a counterrevolutionary past, nor a connection to the United States,” explained a senior Political Bureau member. “The electoral changes will not be cosmetic.”<sup>45</sup> Speaking on the record, Aldana also affirmed the party’s determination to open the electoral system gradually, albeit without allowing opposition parties to form. “Those that are in the internal opposition will have the opportunity to be elected, without ideological requirements,” he promised.<sup>46</sup>

When the new electoral law was finalized in October 1992, however, it dashed any hopes for a significant opening of OPP to alternative voices. The ban on campaigning was retained, and the nomination of provincial and national assembly candidates was entrusted to Candidacy Commissions. Through an elaborate process of consultation with and suggestions from mass organizations, municipal assemblies, and local work centers, the Candidacy Commissions (now chaired by trade union, rather than PCC, representatives) produced slates of nominees with just one candidate per seat. Voters only had the choice of voting yes or no.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the election process at the provincial and national levels avoided the possibility of even implicit policy differences among candidates of the sort that could occur in local contests.

Beginning in 1993 with the first election for provincial and national delegates under these new regulations, the government has campaigned hard for people to cast a *voto unido* (that is, a straight ticket vote for all the nominated candidates), which the vast majority of people have done. Voting has been portrayed more as an affirmation of support for the regime than as a means for voters to select among competing candidates or policies.<sup>48</sup>

The cause of party reformers was dealt a severe blow in September 1992 when Carlos Aldana, the most powerful Cuban politician besides

the Castro brothers (Fidel and Raúl), was dismissed from the Political Bureau, ostensibly for involvement in illegal financial dealings.<sup>49</sup> Aldana had been under a cloud for months. In a speech to the National Assembly in December 1991, he admitted his own early infatuation with Gorbachev's policies of perestroika and glasnost, and credited Castro with setting him straight. He went on to criticize Cuban dissidents as a "a mishmash of frustrated, bitter, and mediocre people."<sup>50</sup>

Regardless of the real reason for Aldana's dismissal, it changed the balance of power within the top echelons of the party in favor of the conservatives. Aldana's position as chief of ideology for the Central Committee went to conservative José Ramón Balaguer, who also was promoted to the Political Bureau. Shortly after taking over from Aldana, Balaguer told a national meeting of the Union of Cuban Journalists that journalists' role was not to foster debate, but to provide the Cuban people with the arguments needed to support the revolution.<sup>51</sup>

As the economy deteriorated in 1992 and 1993, the Cuban leadership's tolerance for political dissent contracted along with it. Raúl Castro emerged as the pivotal figure in the regime's response. Despite his hostility to the idea of political liberalization, Raúl was a persistent advocate of economic reforms. He called for application of the management experiments underway in the armed forces since 1986 to the state sector of the civilian economy. These reforms, adopted under the rubric of the Enterprise Perfecting Plan (Perfeccionamiento Empresarial), involved significant decentralization of management authority and increased use of market-based incentives.<sup>52</sup> In 1993, as food shortages worsened, Raúl finally convinced Fidel to allow the reopening of private farmers markets as a means of stimulating food production. Providing enough for people to eat had become a matter of national security. "Beans are more important than cannons," Raúl argued.<sup>53</sup>

On political issues, however, Raúl was intransigent. In the midst of a government crackdown on the small dissident movement that followed the Fourth Congress, he warned that the government might revive the Revolutionary Tribunals used to try accused counterrevolutionaries in the early 1960s.<sup>54</sup> As the economy continued to decline, political discontent grew, culminating in popular disturbances with political overtones – in the summer of 1993 in Cojimar, in August 1994 on the Havana waterfront, and in the "rafters" crisis of September 1994. By 1995, the leadership's tolerance for voices favoring even modest political change had evaporated.

In March 1996, Raúl Castro presented a report from the Political Bureau to a plenum of the Central Committee, in which he outlined, with considerable candor, the political and ideological challenges posed by the collapse of European communism, Cuba's terrible economic decline, and the regime's necessary concessions to the market and private sector. All this had created "feelings of depression and political confusion," he acknowledged. The party needed to wage a "battle of ideas" to explain these events, lest people lose faith in socialist values and be seduced by capitalist consumerism. "We must convince the people, or the enemy will do it."<sup>55</sup>

As a negative object lesson, Raúl Castro singled out the Central Committee's own research centers, especially the Center for the Study of the Americas (CEA), which he said had fallen prey to U.S. efforts at "internal subversion." Moreover, he extended his critique to every institution of intellectual pursuit. "Within the universities, in film, radio, television, and culture in general, both types of behavior exist: behavior which is faithful to our revolutionary people; and the minority with an annexationist orientation, far removed from the patriotic conduct of the majority of our intellectuals." He warned the mass media against taking an overly critical attitude – an error that had eroded party authority in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, paving the way for the restoration of capitalism. The party would need to "examine" all these institutions, he concluded, in order to thwart U.S. schemes to turn them into "fifth columnists."<sup>56</sup>

Party conservatives were able to gain the upper hand because of heightened tension between Cuba and the United States. Raúl's March 1996 speech came just a few weeks after the Cuban air force shot down two Brothers to the Rescue planes, which prompted the quick passage of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Helms-Burton), further tightening the U.S. embargo and writing it into law. Even before the shutdown, Cuban leaders had been increasingly concerned that Washington might exploit the growing diversity of Cuban society to subvert the revolution. Discontent and demoralization were real, for all the reasons Raúl Castro outlined, and the proliferation of groups and social sectors not directly under party control – small farmers, entrepreneurs, churches, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) – created openings that the enemy might exploit. Dissident groups, albeit small and isolated, were proliferating and trying to forge a coalition, Concilio Cubano, which the government quickly broke up by arresting its most

prominent organizers.

U.S. policy made it relatively easy for party hard-liners to attack any divergent opinion as potentially threatening. Beginning with the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 (the Torricelli bill), U.S. policy called for fostering people-to-people contacts that would help strengthen Cuban civil society at the expense of party control. The law even authorized U.S. funding “for the support of individuals and organizations to promote non-violent democratic change in Cuba.”<sup>57</sup> President Bill Clinton announced the first grant under this title of the law in October 1995, just a few weeks after his special adviser on Cuba, Richard Nuccio, gave a lengthy interview in which he explained that the purpose of these “Track Two” efforts was to weaken the Cuban regime from within.<sup>58</sup>

The Fifth Congress of the PCC, in 1997, offered an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the response of the party and the government to the crisis of the Special Period. Two main resolutions were discussed in the preparatory meetings leading to the Congress – one on economic policy and one on politics. Together, they demonstrated the limits of adaptive change. The economic resolution called for greater efficiency and continued growth of the tourist sector as the leading source of hard currency; it offered no new reforms.<sup>59</sup> The political resolution, entitled “The Party of Unity, Democracy, and the Human Rights We Defend,” constituted a manifesto against political liberalization. It argued in defense of Cuba’s one-party system led by the Communist Party, in favor of socialist democracy based on mass participation rather than the bourgeois “liberalism” of contention among diverse interests, and for human rights based on social justice rather than unfettered political liberties. In short, it presented a brief for the political status quo.

The document portrayed the revolution of 1959 as a direct continuation of the struggle for independence and national sovereignty stretching back to 1868 and depicted the Cuban Communist Party as the “legitimate heir” of José Martí’s Cuban Revolutionary Party. Disunity among revolutionary forces led to defeat in 1878, to U.S. domination after 1898, and to the collapse of the 1933 revolution. “Hence, the great lesson has emerged out of our own historical experience: Without unity, revolutionaries and the people can achieve nothing in their struggle,” the political resolution asserted, and unity required, as in the time of Martí, a single party to prevent the United States from reimposing neocolonial capitalism on Cuba.<sup>60</sup>

The Fifth Congress elected a new Central Committee of only 150 members, far fewer than the 225 elected at the Fourth Congress. The

downsizing was intended to make the body more efficient and to prevent it from being infected with any “ideological viruses,” explained Raúl Castro, who apparently had a major role in the selection process. “What happened to the socialist countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is not going to happen here,” he added. Apparently, the diversity of views inside the party that produced differences between reformers and hard-liners, although submerged since Aldana’s dismissal, persisted. Reformers suffered yet another blow when Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina was fired for poor performance in 1999 (although his termination coincided with a corruption inquiry into a firm of which his wife was a top official). He was replaced by Felipe Pérez Roque, Castro’s chief of staff, a reputed ideological hard-liner.<sup>62</sup>

The reaffirmation of the limited reform strategy at the Fifth Party Congress suggested that Castro and his top lieutenants were generally convinced they had weathered the worst of the economic and political maelstrom following the Soviet Union’s collapse. The gradual recovery of the economy and the absence of further outbreaks of public disorder after 1994 served as evidence of their strategy’s success. Nevertheless, below the surface, even the limited economic reforms forced on the regime by the need to reenter the global economy were having significant social reverberations and were changing the political terrain of the future.

As market reforms weaken the Communist Party’s control over the economy, its political monopoly becomes frayed as well. Emergent entrepreneurs, both farmers and small businessmen, depend less and less on the state for their well-being. As they accumulate wealth and grow increasingly indispensable to the health of the economy, their desire for less government interference is certain to take a more explicitly political direction. Even within the governing elite are pragmatic managers who are responsible for solving real problems and who constitute a force for change. Managers of joint ventures and externally oriented industries already are having to adapt to market discipline. As subsidies for state enterprises dry up, other Cuban managers also will be forced to adapt and presumably will press for government policies that make their jobs easier.<sup>63</sup>

As Cubans increasingly interact with populations abroad, through tourism, family visits, and professional cooperation (all of which the government promotes for economic reasons), the danger of “ideological contamination” increases. The proliferation of nongovernmental organizations in recent years has created social networks independent of party

supervision and direction. Even those that have been spawned by the government itself for the purpose of soliciting hard currency from foreign NGOs create mechanisms through which a growing number of Cubans will come into contact with people – and ideas – from abroad.

The government's rapprochement with the Roman Catholic Church is a bellwether accommodation because it represents the surrender of the regime's ideological and organizational monopoly. The Church is in the process of developing an infrastructure of religious, social, and charitable groups across the island – the only national organizational structure that is not state controlled. Though the Church is careful not to challenge the regime too directly, it does occasionally voice criticism of state policies, especially on human rights. Even the existence of small, harassed dissident groups is evidence of the erosion of political control since such opposition previously was not tolerated at all.

The government can try to quell these stirrings (as it has), but it cannot eliminate them because they are the unavoidable by product of the economic concessions to capitalism Cuba has been forced to make. The market has eroded the scope of state and party control, creating what an observer of Eastern Europe called "islands of autonomy" in civil society which serve, albeit fragily, as "safe spaces" within which people forge new social relationships and networks of communication, acquire consciousness of their common interests, and develop the capacity for politics outside the regime.<sup>64</sup> This strengthening of civil society at the expense of the state has led Jorge Domínguez to argue that Cuba already has made the transition to a "post-totalitarian" regime, following the analysis of Linz and Stepan, who describe this regime type as one with growing social pluralism, but very little political pluralism; a waning ideological commitment by the public; and bureaucratized state and party institutions.<sup>65</sup> In one important way, however, Cuba departs from the model of Linz and Stepan. Despite adaptations forced on the Cuban Communist Party over the past decade, the charismatic founder of the revolution, who keeps alive the flame of radical nationalism and social justice, still leads the PCC.

## Succession

### *Establishing New Rules of the Game*

“Men Die,” read the banner headline in Granma, “but the Party is Immortal.” As suggested by this headline from 1973, when the PCC was being strengthened as part of the “institutionalization” of the revolution, one purpose of the party is to assure the continuity of Cuba’s socialist system beyond the founding generation.<sup>66</sup> The passing of that generation and its maximum leader now looms on the near horizon.

Speculation about who the successors will be, though rife, is not very fruitful; the roster of favored personalities fluctuates too frequently – Antonio Pérez, Luis Domínguez, Carlos Aldana, and Roberto Robaina all have come and gone in just the past decade and a half. Whether the current crop of leaders most often mentioned as possible successors – Carlos Lage, Ricardo Alarcón, and Felipe Pérez Roque – still will be in place when Fidel finally passes from the scene, only time will tell. However, the PCC itself inevitably will undergo significant institutional changes following Fidel Castro’s departure. At the highest echelons of leadership, Castro’s heirs will have to settle on new rules of the game.<sup>67</sup>

As founder of the regime, Fidel Castro has maintained unassailable authority within the revolutionary leadership. This is not to say that other senior leaders cannot argue with him over policy differences; they can and do. Che Guevara differed with Castro over Cuba’s relationship with the Soviet Union; Carlos Raphael Rodríguez differed with him over the adoption of moral incentives in economic policy in the 1960s and perhaps again in the late 1980s; Raúl Castro differed with his brother over the need for internal economic reforms after the Soviet Union collapsed. Still, arguing over policy is different from questioning or challenging Castro’s leadership. The few members of the elite who have attempted the latter have been dealt with harshly. President Manuel Urrutia was forced out in 1959, and Huber Matos was arrested and imprisoned that same year for questioning the communist trajectory of the revolution. Anibal Escalante and his “micro-faction” of old communists were tried and imprisoned in 1968 for conspiring against Castro. General Arnaldo Ochoa and Minister of Transportation Diocles Torralba were prosecuted (and Ochoa was executed) for corruption, but part of their offense was that they had questioned Castro’s competence.<sup>68</sup>

At moments when the revolutionary leadership has been riven by

sharp cleavages, Fidel Castro's authority has provided the glue to hold the factions together – through the conflicts between the urban wing of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement and the Rebel Army, between the veterans of the Sierra and the old communists, between the armed forces and the Interior Ministry in the aftermath of the Ochoa affair, and between reformers and hard-liners during the Special Period.

Castro's preeminent authority imposes a particular sort of informal policy-making process within the top leadership, regardless of the formal rules. Since Castro can reach out and resolve any policy issue he chooses, elite decision making inevitably involves lobbying Fidel. Other leaders must compete for Castro's time and attention, striving to get him to focus on their priority issues and decide in their favor.<sup>69</sup> Proximity to Castro is the most precious political resource, and it is perhaps no coincidence that younger leaders (e.g., Carlos Lage and Felipe Pérez Roque) have risen to prominence by serving as his aides. Policy conflicts among elite factions thus are channeled upward to Fidel for resolution, instead of remaining below to cause permanent splits or expanding in scope to draw in potential allies from state and party institutions or the mass public.

When Castro departs the political scene, all this will change. Raúl Castro almost certainly will assume the formal mantle of leadership as head of the party and government since he already holds the number two position in both and has been publicly and repeatedly designated as the successor by Fidel since the earliest days of the revolutionary government.<sup>70</sup> In addition, Raúl alone among the heirs has a personal coterie of top officials in the party, government, and armed forces. Known as "Raúl's men," these include not only his contemporaries, but also a younger generation of managerial professionals like rising star Marcos Portal, Minister of Basic Industry.<sup>71</sup> Thus, a succession struggle of the sort that split the Soviet and Chinese leaderships after the death of Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong is unlikely in the Cuban case. When division in the party leadership stalemates succession struggles in Communist Party systems, the military becomes the critical bureaucratic actor whose support is decisive.<sup>72</sup> Given the preponderance in top commands of officers who have served for many years with Raúl Castro (Cubans sometimes refer to the army as "Raúl's party"), it is difficult to envision a scenario in which he would not emerge triumphant.<sup>73</sup> Still, despite a strong managerial record as Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, Raúl lacks his older brother's charisma and keen political instincts. He appears in public only occasionally, operating mostly behind the scenes. He may

inherit the regime's top titles, but he will not enjoy the authority to demand conformity from fellow leaders.

When succession commences, the first instinct of the survivors will be to present a portrait of unity to reassure the public that regime continuity and political stability are not at risk. No doubt both leaders and followers will suffer some anxiety born of uncertainty; after all, the Cuban regime never has had to face the future without Fidel at its head, charting the course of state policy, maintaining elite cohesion, rallying the population 'round the flag, and hitting the Yanquis hard.

On a number of issues, the post-Castro leadership undoubtedly will be in accord. They will be determined, for example, to maintain Cuba's independence and national sovereignty – in other words, to prevent the island from falling again into political and economic dependence on the United States. They will also agree on the need to maintain the social achievements of the revolution, especially those that enjoy the highest level of popular support: the advanced systems of health care and education. As the new leadership faces tough policy choices, however, debate surely will intensify, spurred by those who favor more thoroughgoing economic reforms and greater political liberalization. After winning some key battles in the early 1990s, the reformers have been frustrated by Fidel's intransigence. Pent-up demands for further change will be hard to contain when Castro no longer stands as an insurmountable bulwark against it.

How will Castro's heirs settle on the new rules of the political game? If history is any guide, the new leadership will be more collective, not only because no one can fill Fidel's boots, but also because surviving elites generally prefer a process that is more rule-guided and hence less arbitrary than the past. This, at least, has been the experience of communist successions in countries as diverse as the Soviet Union (Joseph Stalin), China (Mao Zedong), and Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh).<sup>74</sup> Raúl Castro himself has anticipated as much. "Many other comrades and I will have authority," he remarked in a 2001 interview. "However, we want the party to have it, which is the only thing which can guarantee continuity, the unity of the nation. Within that unity we can have differences and everything we might want to air." One former Cuban official has noted that Raúl always has been more willing than Fidel to entertain debate within the leadership. "Fidel is a god, and he [Raúl Castro] is a human being," the official said. "You can't argue with Fidel, you can't contradict him. You can with Raúl."<sup>75</sup>

Collective leadership typically means that intra-elite debates, at least within the Political Bureau of the party, become more meaningful and are decided by voting. The politics of leadership shifts from everyone lobbying the founding father to coalitions lobbying one another and paying special attention to the undecided. Political resources such as bureaucratic position take on new importance. Stalemates are possible, and losers may be tempted to expand the scope of conflict in hopes of prevailing by bringing new allies into the contest.<sup>76</sup> Nikita Khrushchev, when faced by a Politburo decision to depose him in 1957, successfully appealed to the Central Committee (and, implicitly, to the army) to confirm him in office. Mikhail Gorbachev, when faced with bureaucratic resistance to his reform program of perestroika, launched glasnost in order to appeal to the Soviet population.<sup>77</sup>

The National Assembly could benefit if the decision-making process within the elite were to become more routine and rule-guided. Along with the party Central Committee, the National Assembly is a broadly inclusive and representative collection of Cuba's top political leadership. As such, it constitutes a forum to which top leaders might appeal for support or for an airing of controversial policy proposals. In recent years, Assembly President Ricardo Alarcón has been among the half-dozen most powerful political actors in Cuba, and he has endeavored to make the work of the Assembly more professional and serious. If the National Assembly's president remains among the select group at the top of Cuban politics, the prestige and authority of the Assembly itself will likely increase.

The impact of a succession is bound to reverberate in lower party echelons as well. New leaders naturally seek to bring in their own teams of advisers and upper-level managers. These personnel changes, especially when they involve some degree of generational turnover, are bound to have policy consequences. Studies of leadership succession in Eastern European communist regimes have found that succession almost always initiated significant changes in the operation of the regime.

### *Legitimacy without Fidel*

In addition to the challenge of establishing new rules for policy-making and intra-elite conflict resolution, Castro's heirs will face the challenge of establishing their legitimacy. Fidel Castro's immense per-

sonal authority at the dawn of the revolutionary government was quintessentially charismatic – rooted in his personal courage, political savvy, and heroic achievements as the leader who made the revolution. He personally has embodied the revolution more than any other founder. At key moments in the past – the clash with Urrutia, for example, and the crisis over the communist party’s precursor, the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI) – Castro withdrew his support from existing institutions and thereby brought about their quick demise. Historically, the revolutionary regime has drawn legitimacy from Fidel Castro, not the other way around.

For Castro’s heirs, the situation will be reversed; their right to govern will derive from the legitimacy of the institutions over which they preside, not from their personal virtues, which can only appear weak and pallid in comparison to those of Fidel. Without Castro’s charismatic authority, those institutions will have less legitimacy and hence less claim on people’s unquestioning obedience. The global failure of socialism, Cuba’s subsequent economic crisis, and the reappearance of allegedly capitalist vices such as crime, corruption, and prostitution already have seriously eroded the regime’s legitimacy during the past decade.<sup>79</sup>

Moreover, as Cuba’s revolutionary generation passes from the scene, bureaucrats whose claim on the heroic past is tenuous are replacing the idealists who fought against Batista’s dictatorship. Fewer and fewer people even remember the hardships of prerevolutionary society. As managers replace visionaries, ideological ardor cools and the young take the revolution’s accomplishments for granted, seeing only its failures. In this, Cuba’s revolution is no different from those of Russia, China, and Vietnam.

To meet the challenge of diminished legitimacy, Castro’s heirs might well follow the pattern set by the successors of regime founders in Eastern Europe. Their strategies included appeals to culturally resonant themes, especially nationalism; the reinvigoration of representative legislative bodies to foster a great sense of popular participation; and modest political and cultural liberalization.<sup>80</sup> Notably, the Cuban government has already embarked upon precisely these approaches to bolster its legitimacy over the past decade: Nationalist themes featuring José Martí have gotten greater play than Leninist ones; the National Assembly of People’s Power has begun to operate as more than just a rubber stamp; and the Catholic and Protestant churches have been allowed to play an increasingly important social role. In the event of succession, further develop-

ments along these lines can be anticipated.

As an example, Castro was quick to recognize the political windfall represented by the Elián González affair in 1999-2000. Nonstop political mobilizations demanding Elián's return gave the regime an opportunity to reignite the nationalist fervor of the revolution's early years for a new generation of Cubans. "They gave it to us on a silver platter," said National Assembly President Alarcón on the confrontation with the United States and the Miami Cubans. "This is a battle of ideas that we appreciate clearly.... For the youth, January 1, 1959, was something they read about their parent's generation. This is theirs. We speak about how youth are into other things. But no one could imagine how the events here firmed up people of both generations."<sup>81</sup>

Cuba already has made significant progress in addressing one succession issue that stymied both the Soviet and Chinese regimes for years: the issue of generational leadership succession. The first hint of change came at the PCC's Third Congress, which for the first time removed a number of *los históricos* (the historic leaders of the revolution) from the Political Bureau and Central Committee. The Fourth Party Congress went even further in this regard. Of the 11 new people added to the 25-member Political Bureau, all were under 50 years old. The new Central Committee of 225 consisted of 126 new members and 99 incumbents, of whom only 23 were members of the founding Central Committee in 1965. The average age of the new Central Committee was just 47.<sup>82</sup> The Fifth Party Congress elected a Central Committee that was younger still, and only half the size of the previous body. On the new Political Bureau, Fidel Castro was the oldest member, and the average age was just 53. The National Assembly has experienced a similar process of incorporating younger leaders. The 1993 election produced an Assembly having 83 percent new members, with an average age of 43, which remained unchanged through the elections in 1998.<sup>84</sup> "There has already been a tangible transfer of power [to the next generation]," explained Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque, "and that has been done by Fidel."<sup>85</sup>

## Transition

### *The Dynamics of Democratic Transition*

The literature on transitions from authoritarian rule posits that elite division is the wellspring from which transition begins. The emergence of reformers within the elite who are prepared to bargain with regime opponents while at the same time lobbying hard-liners for liberalization is the sine qua non for setting democratization in motion.<sup>86</sup> Such a reform faction may emerge as a result of popular pressure from below, as in Chile and Poland, or it may emerge as a result of the internal dynamics of the elite itself, as in Brazil and Hungary.

In the Cuban case, Fidel Castro's dominance of the elite and his oft-repeated rejection of "bourgeois democracy" with its multiparty elections means that the overt emergence of such a political reform faction within the leadership is unlikely during his lifetime. An incipient effort along these lines, spearheaded by Carlos Aldana, began prior to the PCC's Fourth Congress and lasted until 1995. Fidel appears to have concluded, however, that political liberalization was the fundamental mistake that led to the unraveling of European socialism and that the Chinese strategy of combining limited economic reforms with tight political control was a better bet. The Castro regime's political survival and gradual economic recovery since 1994 stand as evidence of the viability of this strategy, at least in the medium term. If, indeed, Fidel Castro is a hard-liner on the issue of political reform, then succession probably is the first necessary condition for a Cuban transition.

After Fidel, a number of factors will come into play, making democratization more likely. As discussed above, intra-elite debate probably will be more vigorous and wide-ranging when Castro is no longer there to serve as final arbiter of policy. More intense and open policy debate among Castro's heirs will spark more open debate among the public. Some members of the elite – the reformers, most likely – will want to foster greater space for public discussion as a way of strengthening their hand in intra-elite argument.

Among the general public, the economic reforms pursued since the mid-1990s have produced both winners and losers. The winners include emergent social groups (small farmers, entrepreneurs, self-employed people, and dollar-economy workers) that are less dependent on the government and have conflicts of interest (and ideology) with it over issues like

taxation, regulation, and corruption. The losers include groups traditionally favored by the regime, most loyal to it, and well positioned to press their complaints (state and party bureaucrats, professionals, and state-sector workers). In short, pressing issues are on the agenda, and important social groups have a stake in them, making an outbreak of contentious politics likely when conditions become more propitious.

Finally, the international environment into which Cuba has been reintegrating itself since the collapse of the Soviet Union puts a premium on democracy and the observance of human rights. These issues are not pressed only by the United States (though Washington has been Cuba's most visible critic, taking the lead in international forums excoriating Cuba). Cuba's neighbors in Latin America and its main economic partners in Canada and the European Union also have a commitment to promote these values.<sup>88</sup> Despite Cuba's longstanding sensitivity and resistance to foreign attempts to pressure the regime on domestic political issues, the international environment in which Cuba must live and do business will continue to present incentives that encourage liberalization and discourage backsliding.

### *Communists after Transition: European Precedents*

If the emergence of a reform faction in the Cuban elite were to set in motion a process of liberalization and eventual democratization, what would become of the central civilian institutions of the present regime – the Communist Party, Organs of People's Power, mass organizations, and government bureaucracy? One might expect that the fate of the old regime's institutions would depend crucially on the nature of the transition, with a negotiated (or "pacted") transition preserving a great deal more of the old system than a transition forced "from below," especially if the latter were to entail significant violence. This certainly is the argument made in much of the transitions literature based on Latin America and Southern Europe.<sup>89</sup>

However, the experience of the European communist regimes belies these predictions. The demise of European communism followed a wide variety of transitional paths, from regime-initiated pacts in Bulgaria and Hungary, to pacts forced by mass mobilization in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Germany, to Romania's violent insurrection. Yet, the results have been surprisingly similar. Initially, the communists left

power in disarray and disgrace, and in most countries, they were trounced soundly in the first round of free, multiparty elections.

Nevertheless, the parties and their associated mass organizations did not disappear. They underwent a transition of their own, with reform factions taking control (sometimes even before the parties were forced from office, as in Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria) and reorienting the party toward either Western European-style social democracy (as in Poland and Hungary) or democratic socialism (as in Germany). Reemerging on the political scene relatively quickly, these “successor parties” presented themselves as the principal opposition within the new democratic systems and as the principal critics of economic privatization. Within just a few years, the communists’ rehabilitation was complete; they began to win back control of governments all across the region. The successor parties returned to power in Hungary and Bulgaria in 1994, Poland in 1995, and Albania in 1997. In Russia, after being banned in the wake of the attempted coup in 1991, the Communist Party won one-third of the seats in the Duma in 1995, making it the largest party. Even in countries where communists remained a minority (the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany), the successor parties showed surprising staying power, given how discredited the communist regimes were in 1989.

A complex set of causes lies behind the rebound of the deposed communist parties in Europe: (1) the parties’ organizational advantages, (2) the availability of natural constituencies, (3) the grievances produced by the transition itself, and (4) the persistence of socialist values.

Even in defeat, the communists in most places still had a functioning political apparatus and a core of dedicated activists. The comparative lack of organizational infrastructure among the political forces that opposed communism left the field open for the successor parties to persist as a significant element in the new democracies.<sup>90</sup> The weakness of the non-communist parties was caused by the conditions of communist rule, which allowed no opposition apparatus of any consequence to develop except in Poland, where Solidarity dominated the anticommunist forces. Mass mobilization against the communist regimes was largely spontaneous, based upon informal social networks of family and friends – networks sufficient to produce massive demonstrations leading to transition, but not suited for sustained political organizing. Moreover, in many Eastern European countries, the very idea of party politics had been discredited by communist rule, so that people spurned all party affiliations. Before the transitions, dissidents reinforced this aversion by posing the

expansion of “civil society” as an apolitical alternative to direct confrontation with communist rule. Consequently, in many countries, free elections produced a profusion of mini-parties, most of which were far weaker organizationally than the defeated communists.<sup>91</sup>

In many countries, the successor parties to the communists were able to assume the mantle of the principal party of the left, positioning themselves as the foremost voice of opposition to the economic pain inflicted by privatization and as advocates of social welfare and redistributive economic policies. The old communists could base their claim to represent the left on their historic commitment to social programs such as universal health care and education, which enjoyed wide popularity and which were eroded by the transition to capitalism. Polling data from across Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Republics has found the persistence of what Mahr and Nagle refer to as a *socialist value culture*, which includes commitment to egalitarianism, social solidarity, state involvement in economic management, and the provision of social goods such as health care, education, and social security – all policies associated with the previous communist regimes and advocated by the successor parties. In short, popular disappointment with the costs of transition – the economic dislocation, the corruption often associated with privatization, the political cacophony of democratic contention among the inexperienced – set the stage for the communist rebound.

In many countries, the communist-era trade unions continued to be the largest union federations, and they retained their ties with the successor parties. In Poland and Hungary, the unions actually were formal members of the electoral blocs led by the successor parties.<sup>93</sup> In addition to labor constituency support, the successor parties drew support from retirees who saw their standard of living plummet as a result of the eroding social welfare system and from former officials of the old regime, many of whom retained a degree of ideological loyalty to socialism.

Individual communist cadres fared well, too. Since party membership was a virtual requirement for attaining senior government or professional positions, the administrative apparatus of the state and economy was staffed almost entirely by nominal communists. To be sure, the ideological commitment of many was tenuous, especially toward the end of the regimes, but the dearth of noncommunist administrators meant that the bureaucracies continued to be run by former party members. The new states simply could not do without them<sup>94</sup>

## *Prospects for a Cuban Successor Party*

Many of the conditions that set the stage for the political resurrection of the Eastern European successor parties seem to be present in the Cuban case as well. Organizationally and ideologically, the PCC is stronger than most of the European parties were on the eve of transition. During the decade of the 1980s, the legitimacy of the European parties was eroded so badly that they steadily lost members even though membership was necessary for career advancement. In Cuba, by contrast, the party has grown rapidly throughout the Special Period, at almost double the rate of the decade before. In a time of serious economic dislocation, the Cuban leadership has tried to bolster the main instrument of ideological mobilization and motivation by widening its nationalist appeal as the party of the “Cuban nation,” by opening its doors to religious believers, and by making admission to party membership contingent on a vote of confidence by coworkers. That the party has grown as much as it has is a sign of its resilience. To be sure, tangible material benefits are attached to membership in the PCC (though the benefits are relatively few for the rank and file); but that was even more true of the Eastern European parties and yet did not halt the exodus of the disaffected.

Interviews with several hundred Cuban voters in 1989 local delegate elections found that people tended to vote for candidates based on positive personal characteristics such as honesty and civic-mindedness. Many voters did not even know whether candidates were PCC members, and only 10 percent of voters said that they took party membership into account in casting their ballots. Yet most candidates nominated and elected by their neighbors are, in fact, PCC members, which suggests that at the grassroots level the party is succeeding at incorporating people who are engaged and active and enjoy both respect and credibility among their fellow citizens – an enormous advantage in any future multiparty contest.

Moreover, Cuba has been less tolerant of other political parties or politically minded voluntary associations than were many Eastern European regimes. The few dissident groups that exist are harassed and tightly controlled to prevent them from gaining any mass following. Consequently, a transition any time in the foreseeable future would find opponents of the PCC poorly organized, fragmented, and dependent on the sorts of informal networks that proved crucial to the European transition, but served far less well there in subsequent elections. Cuba’s dissidents lack the organizational assets that enabled opponents of the Sandinistas to triumph

in the 1990 Nicaraguan election campaign (the difference being that the Sandinistas never had completely repressed its opponents). This organizational weakness of the Cuban opposition (or even the potential opposition that may emerge), makes it more likely that in the event of a democratic transition the PCC or its successor would be able to assume the role of Cuba's principal party of the left.

The PCC likely would be bolstered in that role by the continuing strength of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC). Despite the proliferation of independent unions during the transitions in Eastern Europe, the old trade union organizations proved to be surprisingly resilient. The reasons for this resilience parallel the reasons for the successor parties' continuing strength. Organized in virtually every work center in a country, the old unions had a highly developed infrastructure and experienced cadres, in some cases selected through elections free enough to produce local leaders respected by their coworkers. When Eastern Europe's transition to capitalism produced economic dislocations whose costs fell disproportionately on the working class, the old unions were able to respond to the challenge more effectively than the incipient independent unions. In fact, the loss of state support for Eastern European trade unions arguably strengthened them because it freed them to defend the interests of their constituents actively, rather than subordinate the interests of labor to the interests of the party and state as they were required to do under the old regime. In almost all the former communist countries in Europe, organized labor remains a key part of the successor party's electoral base.

In Cuba, the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC) has a history and tradition of militancy stretching back to the 1930s. In fact, since the CTC was led by communists for most of the years before 1959, its approach to trade union activity was more political than that of unions in many other countries. Even after 1959, when the CTC was subordinated officially to the leading role of the new Communist Party, the CTC persisted in trying to defend the interests of their members within the boundaries set by Cuba's Leninist system. The CTC leadership voiced concerns over labor issues directly to party and state leaders rather than mobilize workers to make demands with the threat of work stoppage. Indeed, as Debra Evenson points out, under the central planning system prevalent in Cuba prior to the Special Period, most working conditions in enterprises (including salaries and work force size) were set by national policy. Since enterprise managers had little discretion over such issues, local labor actions would not have been an effective remedy in any event.<sup>97</sup>

This “nonantagonistic” relationship between the unions and the state nevertheless did not mean no conflict existed. In the 1960s, the CTC resisted the imposition of moral incentives and voluntary labor mobilizations so vigorously that in 1966 most of its senior leaders were replaced by people with no history of labor activism. The intermediate-level apparatuses of the national unions were dissolved, leaving only the central confederation bureaucracy in place. In many workplaces, local unions were supplanted by the “advanced workers movement” composed of an elite group of exemplary workers whose principal merit was that they exceeded production goals. This degrading of the unions was reversed in the early 1970s, and the CTC resumed its dual role of both exhorting labor to greater productivity and representing the interests of workers in dealings with both enterprise management and the state.<sup>98</sup>

During the Special Period, the unions have been a voice, albeit muted, in protest against the growing social inequality produced by dollarization and the layoffs caused by the rationalization of state enterprises.<sup>99</sup> Gillian Gunn describes a conflict in the early 1990s between a CTC local and a foreign investor over harsh management practices, which nearly culminated in a strike.<sup>100</sup> As Cuba moves to improve economic efficiency by decentralizing decision making to the enterprise level (under the Enterprise Perfecting Plan), local unions are finding that local managers for the first time have the discretion to make decisions about wage rates, hiring and firing, working conditions, and so on, which directly affect the interests of union members. Collective bargaining agreements, largely pro forma in the past because so many of their terms were set by state policy, are becoming increasingly important in defining terms of employment and labor’s role in enterprise operations. Consequently, the CTC has embarked on a campaign to train local activists to negotiate more effectively in bargaining sessions, and CTC members have received some training on these issues from Western European unions.<sup>101</sup>

At the base, the election of local union officials is conducted by public nomination of multiple candidates and secret ballot elections.<sup>102</sup> Thus, local union leaders have considerable legitimacy in the workplace. In all probability, many of the same people would be union activists even if the Cuban political system were to experience a transition to multiparty democracy.

A series of polls taken over the past few years among both Cubans on the island and recent emigrés to the United States consistently indicates

the existence of a socialist value culture in Cuba to which a post-transition successor party could appeal. In early 1990, the Communist Party's polling agency asked people about social and economic conditions. Only 10 percent of respondents felt that public transportation was good and 20 percent felt that the food situation was good, suggesting that people were answering candidly; yet 77 percent felt that health services were good, and 83 percent felt that the education system was good.<sup>103</sup> Eight years later, a similar poll by the party found overwhelming majorities in favor of keeping health and education totally free (77.9 percent and 75.0 percent, respectively) or partially free (19.6 percent and 22.1 percent, respectively).<sup>104</sup> An independent poll conducted in 1994 by CID-Gallup asked Cubans what had been the major achievement of the revolution; education (29 percent) and health care (14 percent) led the list of responses, and equality (9 percent) ranked fourth. Fifty-eight percent of respondents said that there had been more achievements than failures since 1959, but 31 percent said there were more failures.<sup>105</sup>

While the results of polls conducted in Cuba, especially those conducted by the party's own polling agency, ought to be interpreted cautiously, a 1998-1999 University of Florida poll of Cuban emigrés to the United States confirms these same basic findings. In the emigré poll, 67 percent agreed that the revolution had improved education, and 53 percent agreed that it had improved health care. For more than 90 percent of respondents, the revolution's main accomplishment was having made these services freely available, and a large majority (90 percent for education, 71 percent for health care) thought that these services should remain free after a Cuban transition.<sup>106</sup>

The 1994 CID-Gallup poll also asked, "In a society, what do you consider most important for everyone? Should the law promote economic and social equality, or should the law promote individual freedom?" Half the respondents said equality; 38 percent said freedom.<sup>107</sup> When asked, "Who should run the farms and factories of Cuba?" 51 percent said the government should; 36 percent said they should be run privately. Still, 53 percent said they would be at least somewhat interested in setting up their own private business if the government would allow it, suggesting that Cubans want to preserve key features of their socialist system, while at the same time they hope for greater personal opportunity and freedom. These findings are very consistent with polls taken in Russia and Eastern Europe in the aftermath of transition, which leads to the conclusion that Cuba's revolutionary government has succeeded in cultivating values of

egalitarianism, social welfare, and state involvement in the economy that closely match Nagle and Mahr's concept of a socialist value culture to which a successor party on the left could effectively appeal in a post-transition Cuba.<sup>108</sup>

Nationalism also has been a potent ideological force in post-transition countries, especially in the Balkans. In some countries, the successor parties themselves have seized upon nationalist sentiments to bolster their appeal; in others (for example, Slovakia), nationalist parties of the right have blocked successor parties from regaining their base of support in the working class.<sup>109</sup>

In Cuba, of course, the party and revolutionary government have steeped themselves in the symbols of Cuban nationalism from the very beginning. It was no coincidence that Fidel Castro chose the moment of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion to declare that the Cuban revolution was socialist. The invasion gave him the perfect opportunity to wrap socialism in the Cuban flag, making it a nationalist project. Forty years later, the Elián González affair demonstrated that nationalism remains a potent political force, regardless of how disheartened ordinary Cubans may be about the decline in their standard of living or the sclerotic pace of change.

The CID-Gallup poll results also suggest that nationalism is an enduring value for Cubans; 88 percent of respondents said they were very proud to be Cuban; another 8 percent said they were somewhat proud; and only 4 percent said they were not proud. Asked what was the principal source of Cuba's problems, the U.S. embargo topped the list (31 percent). When asked specifically if the U.S. embargo or internal difficulties were more responsible for Cuba's problems, 49 percent named the embargo, and 28 percent named internal problems. Three out of four Cubans regarded the United States as Cuba's principal enemy and opposed U.S. limits on remittances and family travel.<sup>110</sup> In short, to the extent that the Cuban Communist Party can continue to project itself as the defender of Cuban dignity and national sovereignty in the face of U.S. hostility and dominance, it will be able to draw upon a deep well of popular sentiment. In a post-transition situation, when U.S. involvement on the island from both private and governmental sources presumably will increase dramatically, nationalist sensitivities could easily become inflamed.

Although two out of three Cubans regard Cubans abroad as "brothers," another one-third of them worry that the return of large numbers of exiles would bring "trouble."<sup>111</sup> The University of Florida emigré poll

indicated that Cubans worry that exiles might demand the return of their nationalized property, including homes. Needless to say, the property recovery provisions of the 1996 Helms-Burton law exacerbated such fears, which is one reason the Cuban government has focused so much attention on that legislation.

Aside from the issue of compensation for nationalized property, one can imagine that in a post-transition environment, Cuban-Americans would be the vanguard of the reassertion of U.S. influence in Cuba. The business sector of the Cuban-American community no doubt would be eager to serve as a commercial bridge between the two countries. If the Cuban-Americans were to return and buy up the island's productive assets (which are sorely in need of new capital infusions), thus creating a dominant class of expatriates, this could stimulate a backlash of resentment. Some Cuban-Americans might be tempted to try to use their wealth as leverage in order to influence Cuban politics in a post-transition environment. Indeed, this is precisely one of the fears of Cuba's current leaders. "As long as there is imperialism, we cannot afford the luxury of a multiparty system," argued Eugenio Balari, director of Cuba's Institute of Internal Demand. "We could never compete with the money and propaganda the United States would pour in here. We would not only lose socialism, but our national sovereignty as well."<sup>13</sup>

A successor party to the PCC might be able to capitalize on the fear and resentment that many Cubans would feel at seeing Cuban-Americans return to positions of economic power and political influence. In Germany, the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the successor to the communist party (Socialist Unity Party – SED) that once ruled the German Democratic Republic, has been able to establish itself as an "identity party" representing the interests and attitudes of former East Germans who feel that their society has been overwhelmed and deprecated by the West Germans.<sup>14</sup>

### *Elections after Transition*

People's Power was designed to operate in a political milieu without political parties. This reflects the PCC's intolerance of opposition, of course, and it also reflects a deeper current in Cuba's political culture – a popular aversion to party politics, rooted in the abuses by contending parties in the multiparty systems that existed before 1959. Both the theft of

elections and the theft of public funds were the norm, and the use of violence against opponents was common as well. When Castro refused to hold elections in the early 1960s, despite having promised them during the insurrection, his popularity – especially with the lower class – was not adversely affected.<sup>115</sup>

In OPP, the tasks that parties normally perform in an electoral system are performed either through other mechanisms or not at all. Candidate selection is accomplished at the local level by nominating assemblies of voters in subdivisions of a municipal delegate's constituency; nominations for the provincial and national assemblies are made by the Candidacy Commissions composed of representatives of the mass organizations.

Relatively modest structural changes would enhance OPP's democratic character significantly. Even today, at the municipal level, a group of like-minded people in a neighborhood could mobilize through existing friendship or religious networks to get out the vote for nominating assemblies and to put forward candidates representing their views. If they proposed a reasonably well-known and respected person, they might well be able to get him or her nominated. Although open campaigning is prohibited, such an informal caucus of friends could conduct a *de facto* campaign on behalf of their preferred candidate through existing social networks. Past research on OPP elections indicates that such informal networks already are the main mechanism through which information about candidates circulates among constituents. Indeed, any social group (e.g., trade unionists, *santeros*, community self-help organizations) with even modest mobilizing capacity in a particular neighborhood now has the potential to contest local elections.

To move beyond the local neighborhood to the level of the municipality, let alone the nation, however, political contestants need something more elaborate than informal networks. They need the ability to build explicit organizations and express their views openly so they can reach an audience broader than their friendship networks. The key prerequisites, therefore, are freedom of association and freedom of expression, which would allow like-minded people to organize, mobilize, and proselytize on behalf of their views and interests. Political liberalization along these lines almost certainly would produce incipient political associations that might not be called parties initially, but would in fact be embryonic parties – just as happened in Eastern Europe. If such freedoms were established, the only change necessary in the election law governing municipi-

pal elections would be a repeal of the prohibition on campaigning.

Regarding elections for the provincial assemblies and the National Assembly, the most serious structural constraints in the current system are the controlled nature of the nominating process and the single-candidate ballot. Election districts for these constituencies are probably too large to replicate the local assembly process for picking nominees, but some process is necessary for culling the potential field. If the nominating process is too open, a profusion of parties and candidates can make the process appear farcical. The first post-transition Polish elections, for example, featured 111 parties on the ballot.<sup>117</sup> Even though experience in Eastern Europe suggests that the number of parties would shrink quickly to a more realistic assortment, Cuba's negative historical experience with party politics would suggest a prudent approach from the outset, lest multiparty contestation become quickly delegitimized again. Some kind of petitioning process probably would be the most viable, with a relatively high threshold of signatures needed to get on the ballot for provincial or national contests.

While it is impossible to foresee the full spectrum of parties that might emerge in Cuba if the electoral system were opened to multiparty competition, one can make some educated guesses about some of the major contenders, based on experience elsewhere. Besides the PCC itself (or its successor), the Catholic Church has a head start on all other potential contenders because its parish organization, its training of local cadres, and its social work activities provide a nationwide apparatus of people with community-based networks and constituencies. It would be surprising if a Christian Democratic Party failed to emerge from such a wealth of resources. Given the demographics of the Cuban church, the constituency for such a party would be more urban than rural, and more white than black. And given the church's articulated views on political and social issues in recent years, such a party likely would favor the maintenance of a strong social safety net for the poor – a position that would align the party more with Latin American Christian Democrats than with those of Europe.

Another likely contender would be a party advocating a rapid transition back to capitalism based on neoliberal economic reforms, privatization, and the settlement of property issues with the United States and the Cuban-American community. Such a party might call itself Liberal or Conservative or something else. It would appeal to those most likely to gain from such a transition – Cuba's incipient private sector of small

farmers and self-employed entrepreneurs, and the managers of state-owned, but privately managed, corporations in the external sector of the economy. Cuban scholar Haroldo Dilla has argued that these emergent social sectors constitute the beginnings of a class base for capitalist restoration in Cuba<sup>118</sup> Such a party, advocating neoliberal economic policies, would no doubt be the party most favored by the United States and by conservative Cuban-Americans, who would be tempted to enhance the party's prospects with infusions of resources. Whether the effect of such foreign involvement would be to strengthen such a party or weaken it by offending the nationalism of the electorate would be, no doubt, a hotly debated issue.

Finally, Cuba will have a party of the left, most likely the successor to the PCC. Its constituents will be blue collar workers whose jobs are put at risk by market-oriented reforms, Afro-Cubans who already have been hurt disproportionately by such reforms, the elderly who depend on the social safety net because they have no independent means of support, members of the intelligentsia who remain loyal to the promise of socialism or social democracy, and former state and party officials not in a position to turn their political authority into wealth during the transition.

Cuba's working class, with its long history of union militancy and socialist orientation, will find the rapid economic transition program of a neoliberal party anathema. Afro-Cubans, who have been among the revolution's strongest supporters from the beginning, have marginal links to the Catholic Church and are therefore less likely to be attracted by the appeals of Christian Democrats. Nor are they likely to look with favor on a neoliberal party supported by the predominantly white Cuban-American community.

In short, Cuba's successor party is likely to enjoy political advantages much greater than those of many of its European comrades. These advantages include an unrivaled political apparatus filled at the grassroots with respected citizens, a socialist value culture that favors continuation of the social gains of the revolution, strong nationalist sentiment that will impugn the patriotism of parties and politicians too closely tied to the United States, and a formidable base of support among social groups that stand to lose if a transition to democracy in Cuba is accompanied by a transition to capitalism. Whether Fidel Castro and the Cuban Communist Party could win a free election if one were held today is a matter of speculation. In the wake of a democratic transition in Cuba, however, it is very likely that a successor party on the left would win its share of future elections.

## *Policy Implications*

What can be done by outsiders to ease a transition to a more democratic Cuba? The first, most important answer to this question is a negative: Democracy cannot be imposed from the outside except by military invasion and subjugation. Since only the United States would even contemplate such an action, any imposed democracy in Cuba would be tainted from birth by the reassertion of Washington's historic hegemony over the island – the same “original sin” that doomed the postcolonial government of 1904-1932 and the postrevolutionary government of 1933-1952. The workable options available to outsiders, whether they be the United States or actors in Latin America and the European Union, are limited to policies that will facilitate the operation of internal dynamics capable of moving the island toward liberalization and eventual democratization. Needless to say, avoiding policies that could impede the operation of these dynamics is equally important.<sup>119</sup>

Over the years, western countries have developed a wide repertoire of practices for supporting democracy abroad, many of them pioneered by the work of European foundations affiliated with Christian Democratic and Social Democratic parties. In the mid-1980s, the United States, using European predecessors as a model, created the National Endowment for Democracy and affiliated institutes, including the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI).

As Thomas Carothers has pointed out, democracy promotion has focused on three broad areas: assurance of free and fair elections, reform of state institutions, and the development of civil society.<sup>120</sup> Cutting across all these areas is the underlying logic of strengthening the organizational skills and mobilization capacity of democratic actors in various venues – political parties, trade unions, community groups, mass media – so that they will be more likely to prevail in political struggles with undemocratic actors. Typically, this involves training people in activities such as election monitoring, human rights reporting, union organizing, and party formation. It also involves supplying the democrats with the financial and material resources to build organizational capacity and reach out beyond their immediate supporters to present their message to a wider audience, whether face-to-face or through the mass media. In short, democracy promotion seeks to enhance the prospects for democratic development abroad by strengthening what sociologists call the resource

mobilization capacity of democratic social movements.<sup>121</sup>

Current U.S. policy toward Cuba has such a component. In addition to economic sanctions designed to weaken the Castro regime, it includes people-to-people contacts intended to ease Cuba's humanitarian crisis and foster the development of Cuban civil society. When not orchestrated by government, people-to-people contacts – through academic and cultural exchanges, improved air and telecommunications links, and aid from nongovernmental organizations – are laudable and valuable to the interests of ordinary citizens on both sides of the Florida Straits. From the outset, however, Washington conceived of people-to-people contacts as a way to undermine the Cuban government. First introduced in the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act, the policy was dubbed Track II (Track I being economic sanctions). In addition to academic and cultural contacts, the 1992 law authorizes U.S. government aid to support “individuals and organizations to promote nonviolent democratic change in Cuba.” The 1996 Helms-Burton law expanded the democracy-building mandate of this overtly political program, authorizing assistance to democratic and human rights groups in Cuba and humanitarian aid for former political prisoners and their families. “We believe that reaching out today will nurture and strengthen the fledgling civil society that will be the backbone of tomorrow’s democratic Cuba,” explained President Clinton. “We will continue to help Cuba’s democratic opposition and the churches, human rights organizations, and others seeking to exercise the political and economic rights that should belong to all Cubans.”<sup>122</sup>

It has not escaped Fidel Castro's notice that Washington envisions Track II as an instrument of subversion. “It seeks to destroy us from within,” he declared in July 1995. “These people want to exert influence through broad exchanges with diverse sectors they consider vulnerable.”<sup>123</sup> Predictably, the Cuban government has reacted harshly to Washington's attempts to foster internal dissension, treating all dissidents as if they were foreign agents and looking with suspicion at all Cuban contacts with foreigners. After the passage of the Helms-Burton legislation in early 1996, Raúl Castro denounced Cuban intellectuals for having developed dangerously close ties with U.S. groups and foundations. In 1999, after President Clinton legalized remittances to nonfamily members (thus enabling private organizations in the United States to fund Cuban dissidents directly), Cuba's National Assembly adopted the Law for the Protection of National Independence and the Economy, making collaboration with U.S. policy a crime punishable by up to 20 years in

prison. “The real opposition to the Cuban Revolution is the U.S. government,” declared Assembly President Alarcón. “Long years of experience have taught us that the CIA is responsible for manufacturing the opposition in Cuba. We have never known any opposition other than opposition made in the United States.”<sup>124</sup>

Leaving aside the merits and efficacy of current U.S. policy overall – and these issues are sharply debated – the policy has one undeniable cost: It enables Fidel Castro to wrap himself in the Cuban flag, identify his regime with the defense of national sovereignty and dignity, and brand all opponents as conscious or unconscious agents of the United States. *Annexationists* is the current term of opprobrium, harkening back to the mid-nineteenth-century upper-class movement that sought to have Cuba join the Union. The political space available for dissident voices, though never large, seems to fluctuate with the tenor of U.S.-Cuba relations. “Efforts to pressure and isolate Cuba simply give the leaders a pretext to continue their repression and allow them to divert attention from their failures,” according to Elizardo Sánchez, one of Cuba’s leading dissidents.<sup>125</sup> For this reason, the dissidents who met with President Jimmy Carter during his May 2002 trip to Cuba were “unanimous in wanting to see less harsh rhetoric, more American visitation, an end to the economic embargo on food and medicine, and no direct or indirect financial connection between themselves and the U.S. government.”<sup>126</sup>

Moreover, a chill in the political climate affects everyone, not just the dissidents that U.S. policy tends to favor. When the regime cracks down, even people who do not oppose the government, but simply seek to expand the boundaries of intellectual inquiry and policy debate, find themselves stifled. This cohort, far more numerous and politically well positioned than Cuba’s small dissident movement, comprises the people who are most likely to chart Cuba’s future course.

While Fidel Castro remains at the helm, the prospects for liberalization may be slim, regardless of other factors. However, if this analysis of the dynamics of succession is correct in its prediction of intra-elite rivalry and broader debate, then the impact of U.S. policy on the Cuban political climate may become far more important. Heightened bilateral tensions tend to reinforce the leadership’s siege mentality, handing the political initiative to hard-liners and giving weight to the argument that internal division risks defeat by the United States.

As discussed earlier, the sine qua non for democratic transition is division within the governing elite such that reformers (soft-liners)

develop closer political affinity to regime opponents than to regime hard-liners. To the extent that U.S. policy reinforces elite solidarity by drawing a bright line between Cuban officials, whom Washington despises, and Cuban dissidents, whom it overtly supports, Washington makes the emergence of such a coalition more difficult. From the Cuban perspective, U.S. political aid marks a dividing line between patriots and traitors – a line not easily crossed.

Is it possible for the United States to provide political aid to Cubans who favor a transition to multiparty democracy without making things worse, rather than better? That is, can U.S. aid increase the mobilization capacity of these actors enough to offset the inevitable exacerbation of the elite's siege mentality? The answers to these questions are subject to intense debate, of course, but one thing seems certain – the efficacy of such aid is not independent of its source. The United States carries such heavy historical baggage in its dealings with Cuba, from the imposition of the Platt Amendment onward, that U.S. political aid to Cuban partisans can only seem like a reassertion of U.S. hegemony.

Indeed, the United States has a long history of using covert CIA funding for newspapers, trade unions, political parties, and nongovernmental organizations to destabilize governments seen as unfriendly, regardless of their democratic credentials. This strategy disposed of Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran, Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala, Salvador Allende in Chile (where the policy was also called “Track II”), the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and Slobodan Milosevic in Yugoslavia.

Even when aid is given overtly, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), along with its affiliated institutes, do not have a good record of providing support to foreign democrats in a nonpartisan way. Which potential recipients are seen as “democrats” tends to be viewed through the lens of U.S. national interest. In the 1980s, for example, the Republican Institute for International Affairs sent almost half a million dollars to opponents of Costa Rican President Oscar Arias to finance a campaign against Arias's Central American peace plan, which President Ronald Reagan opposed. During the 1990 Nicaragua election campaign, NED would provide help only to those opposition parties willing to conform to U.S. policy by joining the broad anti-Sandinista coalition cobbled together by the U.S. Embassy.<sup>128</sup> More recently, more than three-quarters of a million dollars from NED went into the coffers of opponents of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, some of whom were involved in the

April 2002 attempted coup.<sup>129</sup> Such examples suggest that political aid from the United States is not divorced from self-interest, and democracy is not always at the top of the policy agenda. It is overly optimistic to think this would be different in the case of Cuba.

The problems of hegemonic presumption and partisanship that would plague a U.S. political aid program to Cuba would be far less severe if Washington would let the nations of Western Europe and Latin America take the lead. They have a less problematic history with the island and less compelling interests of their own at stake. Their support would thus be less suspect and less likely to provoke a nationalist backlash against recipients. Political aid from the United States should be restricted to building nonpartisan state institutions such as the judiciary and an elections apparatus, and at a time when all the principal political contestants in Cuba are prepared to accept such aid – that is, after a transition process has already begun. In fact, Washington should be prepared to agree explicitly *not* to provide political assistance to partisans, either in parties or civil society groups, if that would facilitate a transition pact. In Nicaragua, for example, the Sandinistas and their opponents finally reached agreement on the electoral process leading to the 1990 balloting when the opposition agreed not to accept any covert financing from the United States, and Washington pledged not to provide any.<sup>130</sup>

Across the U.S. political spectrum, deep differences exist over policy toward Cuba, but from left to right, almost everyone favors an expansion of political liberties on the island. On the left, the freedom of popular constituencies to organize and mobilize in defense of their interests is seen as essential to the preservation of the revolution's social gains as Cuba's market reforms produce growing social stratification. Otherwise, Cuba could end up following the path of former communist systems in Europe, where the *nomenklatura* (party elite) managed the transition back to capitalism by appropriating state property for themselves.<sup>131</sup> On the right, conservatives in the United States favor democratization in the belief that if Cubans can chose their social system freely, they will dump socialism in favor of capitalism.

The danger, familiar to students of U.S. policy toward Latin America generally and Cuba in particular, is Washington's historical inability to resist trying to control political outcomes in small nearby states. As often as not, our vision of democracy has proven to be parochial and self-interested, providing a poor foundation for the authentic, democratic development of our neighbors.<sup>132</sup> As political space opens in Cuba, it will take a

conscious effort by the United States not to rush into the openings created by liberalization and to resist the temptation to push the process in directions we find congenial. A democratic Cuba will be a Cuba in which the needs and aspirations of the Cuban people can be articulated freely and incorporated into governance undistorted by the heavy hand of the political and financial might of the United States.

## END NOTES

- 1 See, for example, Andres Oppenheimer, *Castro's Final Hour* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992).
2. For previous discussions of succession in Cuba, see Edward González, "Political Succession in Cuba," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 9, 1-2 (spring/summer 1976): 80-107; and Jaime Suchlicki, ed., *Problems of Succession in Cuba* (Coral Gables, Fla.: North-South Center for the Institute of Interamerican Studies at the University of Miami, 1985). For a more recent discussion, see Wayne S. Smith, "Cuba's Long Reform," *Foreign Affairs* 75, 2 (March/April 1996): 99-112.
3. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993); *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, eds. Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Lawrence Whitehead (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).
4. See, for example, Rhoda Rabkin, "Implications of the Gorbachev Era for Cuban Socialism," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 23, 1 (1990): 23-46; Andreas Pickel, "Is Cuba Different? Regime Stability, Social Change, and the Problem of Reform Strategy," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 31, 1 (1998): 75-90; Michael Radu, "Cuba's Transition: Institutional Lessons from Eastern Europe," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 37, 2 (1995): 83-111; Carmelo Mesa-Lago and Horst Fabian, "Analogies between East European Socialist Regimes and Cuba," in *Cuba after the Cold War*, ed. Carmelo Mesa-Lago (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), 353-380.
5. The case for regime continuity is made by Pickel, "Is Cuba Different?" and by Jaime Suchlicki, "Castro's Cuba: Continuity instead of Change," in *Cuba: The Contours of Change*, eds. Susan Kaufman Purcell and David Rothkopf (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2000), 57-80.
6. For a more detailed discussion of the conflicts within the revolutionary leadership and PCC's weakness in the 1960s and early 1970s, see William M. LeoGrande, "Party Development in Revolutionary Cuba," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 21, 4 (November 1979): 457-480.
7. William M. LeoGrande, "The Communist Party of Cuba since the First Congress," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 12, 2 (November 1980): 397-419.
8. Communist Party of Cuba, *Second Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba: Documents and Speeches* (Havana: Political Publishers, 1981), 77-84; Marifeli Pérez-Stable, "'We Are the Only Ones and There Is No Alternative': Vanguard Party Politics in Cuba, 1975-1991," in *Conflict and Change in Cuba*, eds. Enrique A. Baloyra and James A. Morris (Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico, 1993), 67-85.
9. Almost half of Fidel Castro's "Main Report" to the Congress focused on economic and social development plans, and the Congress resolution on this subject was 123 pages long. Communist Party of Cuba, *Second Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba*.
10. Communist Party of Cuba, *Second Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba*, 80.

11. Sergio Roca, "The Comandante in His Economic Labyrinth," in Baloyra and Morris, *Conflict and Change in Cuba*, 86-109. A less frequently articulated, but no less important, goal was to bring the burgeoning trade imbalance under control by stabilizing export production and reducing imports. Jorge F. Pérez-López, "The Cuban Economy: Rectification in a Changing World," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 16,1 (1992): 113-126; Susan Eckstein, *Back from the Future: Cuba under Castro* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 73.
12. Fidel Castro, *Main Report: Third Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba* (Havana: Editor Política, 1986), 38-39.
13. Juan M. del Aguila, "The Party, the Fourth Congress, and the Process of Counterreform," in *Cuba at a Crossroads: Politics and Economics after the Fourth Party Congress*, ed. Jorge F. Pérez-López (Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1994), 19-40.
14. Castro first used the slogan in January 1989 in two speeches commemorating the triumph of the revolution, but it became a routine closing to his speeches only in December, after the collapse of the Eastern European communist regimes.
15. Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), *La Economía Cubana: Reformas estructurales y desempeño en los noventa* (Mexico City: United Nations CEPAL and Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000), 15-16, 44-45.
16. Jorge F. Pérez-López, "The Cuban Economic Crisis of the 1990s and the External Sector," *Cuba in Transition* 8 (Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy, 1998): 386-413. CEPAL's estimate of the decline, 32 percent in real terms, is among the lowest. CEPAL, *La Economía Cubana*, 44.
17. Externally, the emphasis on attracting foreign investment and expanding tourism continued. For an overview of Cuban reform measures, see Omar Everleny Pérez Villanueva, "Cuba's Economic Reforms: An Overview," in *Perspectives on Cuban Economic Reforms*, eds. Jorge F. Pérez-López and Matías F. Travieso-Díaz (Tempe, Ariz.: Arizona State University Center for Latin American Studies, 1998). The texts of the decree laws legalizing dollars, legalizing self-employment, creating the UBPCs, and reorganizing the state bureaucracy are in Instituto de Relaciones Europeo-Latinoamericanas (IRELA), *Cuba: Apertura Económica y Relaciones con Europa* (Madrid: IRELA, 1994), 233-244.
18. For a pessimistic view on the long-term viability of the current reforms, see Andrew Zimbalist, "Whither the Cuban Economy?" in Purcell and Rothkopf, *Cuba: The Contours of Change*, 13-30. For a more optimistic, though not uncritical, view, see CEPAL, *La Economía Cubana*, 14-42. GDP data for 1989 to 1999 is from CEPAL, *La Economía Cubana*, Table A.10; data for 2000 is from CEPAL, *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean 2001* (Mexico City: CEPAL, 2002), Table 54.
19. According to the "Resolution on the Program of the Communist Party of Cuba," adopted at the Fourth Party Congress in 1991, under the SDPE, "The political work and the actions of the revolutionary vanguard were reduced to mere formalities." The text of the resolution is in Gail Reed, *Island in the Storm: The Cuban Communist Party's Fourth Congress* (Melbourne, Australia: Ocean Press, 1992), 101-110.

20. On the origins of Rectification and the collapse of socialism in Europe, see Castro's opening address to the Fourth Party Congress in Reed, *Island in the Storm*, 25-79.
21. Marifeli Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course, and Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 169.
22. Eckstein, *Back from the Future*, 114.
23. Pérez-Stable, "'We Are the Only Ones and There Is No Alternative,'" 81; "Llamamiento del Partido," *Granma Resumen Semanal*, March 25, 1990.
24. Reed, *Island in the Storm*, 14-15.
25. Reed, *Island in the Storm*, 14-15, quoting the Statement of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, from *Granma*, June 23, 1990.
26. Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, 169.
27. Reed, *Island in the Storm*, 17.
28. Eckstein, *Back from the Future*, 115.
29. Reed, *Island in the Storm*, 17-18; Eckstein, *Back from the Future*, 115.
30. William M. LeoGrande, "Participation in Cuban Municipal Government: From Local Power to People's Power," in *Political Participation in Communist Systems*, eds. Donald E. Schulz and Jan S. Adams (New York: Pergamon, 1981), 274-293.
31. Haroldo Dilla Alfonso, Gerardo González, and Aba T. Vincentelli, "Cuba's Local Governments: An Experience beyond the Paradigms," *Cuban Studies* 22 (1992): 151-172; Carolee Bengelsdorf, *The Problem of Democracy in Cuba: Between Vision and Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 155-165; Communist Party of Cuba, "Resolution on Improving the Organization and Functioning of People's Power," in Gail Reed, *Island in the Storm*, 120-126.
32. Medea Benjamin, "Soul Searching," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 24, 2 (August 1990): 23-31.
33. Caridad Carrobelló, Martha Campos, Pelayo Terry, and Ariel Terreno, "Opinión Pública: ¿Qué piensa el pueblo de su poder?" *Bohemia* 27 (July 7, 1990): 14; Caridad Carrobelló, Martha Campos, Pelayo Terry, and Ariel Terreno, "Debate público: los caminos del poder: Urge animar el parlamento cubano," *Bohemia* 28 (July 13, 1990): 9.
34. Bengelsdorf, *The Problem of Democracy in Cuba*, 162; Susana Tesoro, "A pecho descubierto," *Bohemia* 29 (July 20, 1990), 54. In 1993, Foreign Minister Ricardo Alarcón, widely regarded as one of the most influential national leaders, succeeded Escalona. Alarcón's ascendance marked an increase in the importance placed on the Assembly by the leadership, and he continued Escalona's efforts to strengthen further the Assembly and its role in national policy. Max Azicri, *Cuba Today and Tomorrow: Reinventing Socialism* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2000), 124.
35. Reed, *Island in the Storm*, 17.
36. Compare "Statutes of the Communist Party of Cuba," in *Second Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba*, 128, to the "Resolution on the Rules of the Cuban Communist Party" in Reed, *Island in the Storm*, 88.
37. "Resolution on the Rules of the Cuban Communist Party," in Gail Reed, *Island in the Storm: The Cuban Communist Party's Fourth Congress* (Melbourne,

- Australia: Ocean Press, 1992), 88, 89, 94.
38. Azicri, *Cuba Today and Tomorrow*, 338 (footnote 18); Fidel Castro Ruiz, *Informe Central, Discurso de Clausura: V Congreso del Partido Comunista de Cuba* (Havana: Editora Política 1997), 68.
  39. "Resolution on Improving the Organization and Functioning of People's Power," in Gail Reed, *Island in the Storm: The Cuban Communist Party's Fourth Congress* (Melbourne, Australia: Ocean Press, 1992), 122.
  40. Jorge I. Domínguez, "Leadership Strategies and Mass Support: Cuban Politics before and after the 1991 Party Congress," in *Cuba at a Crossroads: Politics and Economics after the Fourth Party Congress*, ed. Jorge F. Pérez-López (Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1994), 1-18.
  41. A number of analysts have described the factional cleavages in the PCC: Eckstein, *Back from the Future*, 257-258; Reed, *Island in the Storm*, 21; Oppenheimer, *Castro's Final Hour*, 379-380; Edward González, *Cuba: Clearing Perilous Waters?* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand, 1996), 39-42.
  42. "Pleno extraordinario del Comité Central," *Granma Resumen Semanal*, February 25, 1990.
  43. "Llamamiento del Partido," *Granma Resumen Semanal*, March 25, 1990.
  44. Pablo Alfonso, "Dispute Delays Party Session, Official Says," *Miami Herald*, March 29, 1991.
  45. "Unnamed Politburo Member Predicts Real Change," *Cubainfo*, December 13, 1991.
  46. Pascal Fletcher, "Cuba Vows Opening Will Come, in Time," *Miami Herald*, March 25, 1992.
  47. The nomination process is discussed in detail in Arnold August, *Democracy in Cuba and the 1997-1998 Elections* (Havana: Editorial José Martí, 1999), 299-317.
  48. "National Election Results," *Cubainfo*, March 19, 1993; Azicri, *Cuba Today and Tomorrow*, 116.
  49. James Canute, "Top Cuban Ideologue Dismissed over Scandal," *Financial Times* (London), October 13, 1992; *Miami Herald*, "Aldana Says Business Gaffe Led to Ouster," September 29, 1992.
  50. Mimi Whitefield and Andres Oppenheimer, "No. 3 Man in Cuba Is Booted," *Miami Herald*, September 24, 1992; Howard W. French, "Cuban's Exit Hints at Trouble at Top," *New York Times*, September 27, 1992.
  51. Andres Oppenheimer, "Cuban Expelled from Party," *Miami Herald*, October 27, 1992; Reuters, "Cuba Replaces Official with Close Castro Ties," *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1992; "Balaguer on Journalism in Cuba," *Cubainfo*, January 15, 1993.
  52. Oppenheimer, *Castro's Final Hour*, 385-386.
  53. Larry Rohter, "Cubans Find the Army Rising as the Party Sinks," *New York Times*, June 8, 1995.
  54. Lee Hockstader, "Cuba Steps Up Intimidation of Dissidents," *Washington Post*, January 21, 1992.
  55. Raúl Castro, "The Political and Social Situation in Cuba and the Corresponding Tasks of the Party," *Granma*, March 27, 1996.
  56. On the opposition of reformers in the party leadership, see Maurizio Giuliano, *El Caso de CEA: Intelectuales e Inquisidores en Cuba* (Miami: Ediciones

- Universal, 1998), 54. This account includes many of the internal party documents related to the investigation of CEA.
57. Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, Section 5 (g), Public Law 102-484 (October 23, 1992).
  58. *Washington Times*, "Aide Sees Embargo Over If Cuba Reforms," July 30, 1995.
  59. "Resolución Económica del V Congreso del Partido Comunista de Cuba," at <http://www.cuba.cu/politica/webpcc/resoluci.htm>.
  60. "The Party of Unity, Democracy and the Human Rights We Defend," *Granma International*, May 1997.
  61. Serge F. Kovalski, "Castro Appears Strong, Cuban Economy Weak," *Washington Post*, October 11, 1997; Juan O. Tamayo, "Raúl Castro Takes on a Higher Profile," *Miami Herald*, December 17, 1997.
  62. Serge F. Kovalski, "Cuba Replaces Foreign Minister with Top Aide to Castro," *Washington Post*, May 29, 1999.
  63. Gillian Gunn, *The Sociological Impact of Rising Foreign Investment*, Cuban Studies Program Briefing Paper (Georgetown University), no. 1 (January 1993).
  64. The concept of "islands of autonomy" is from Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: The Design and Destruction of Socialism and the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For a discussion of how economic reforms in a centrally planned economy can lead to social pluralism, setting the stage for political change, see David Stark, "Entrepreneurs on the Road to Post-Communism," *Contemporary Sociology* 18, 5 (September 1989): 671-674. The most detailed study of the evolution of Cuban civil society in recent years is Damián J. Fernández, *Cuba and the Politics of Passion* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2000).
  65. Jorge I. Domínguez, "Comienzo una transición hacia el autoritarismo en Cuba," *Encuentro* 6-7, fall-winter 1997: 7-23; Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 42-45.
  66. Castro first used the phrase in his July 26, 1973, speech commemorating the attack on Moncada barracks (which produced the headline quoted in *Granma Weekly Review*, August 5, 1973), and he has repeated the phrase frequently in the years since, most recently in a speech on February 23, 2001 (Speech given by Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic of Cuba, at the celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of INDER and the dedication of the International School of Physical Education and Sports, on February 23, 2001, at <http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/2001/ing/f230201i.html>).
  67. I begin with the assumption that succession will commence in earnest with Castro's demise from natural or accidental causes, rather than as a result of any regime crisis. If one lesson can be drawn from the Cuban government's survival through the economic catastrophe produced by the Soviet Union's disappearance, it is Fidel Castro's ability to maintain political stability in the face of almost any hardship. Moreover, I want to keep the changes attendant upon succession analytically distinct from those that might be expected in a regime transition, a contingency that will be taken up elsewhere.
  68. In a speech to the Western Army shortly after Ochoa's arrest, Raúl described confronting Ochoa with the charges against him, which included not only corruption, but also his open expressions of discontent with government policy. Fidel detailed his conflicts with Ochoa over the conduct of the war in Angola

- during his speech at the Council of State meeting that affirmed Ochoa's death sentence. These incidents are described in detail in Oppenheimer, *Castro's Final Hour*, 66, 82-91.
69. Reformers in the PCC acknowledge as much with the refrain, "With Fidel, everything; against Fidel, nothing." Quoted in Eusebio Mujal-León and Joshua W. Busby, "Much Ado about Something? Regime Change in Cuba," *Problems of Communism* 48, 6 (November-December 2001): 6-18.
  70. In a speech on January 21, 1959, Castro designated his brother as "second in command," to take over in case he himself were killed by the enemies of the revolution. "Castro Speaks before Havana Rally," Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Latin America Daily Report*, January 22, 1959. At the close of the Fifth Party Congress, Fidel referred to Raúl as his *relevo* (relief) when he passes away, and after Fidel's fainting spell in July 2001, he said, "If I go to sleep for eternity, Raúl is the one with most authority and experience." Juan O. Tamayo, "Raúl Castro Takes on a Higher Profile," *Miami Herald*, December 17, 1997; Andrew Cawthorne, "Castro Says His Health 'Better than Ever' after Fainting at Recent Rally; Brother Confirmed as His Successor," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, June 30, 2001.
  71. Pablo Alfonso, "El Organigrama de la Sucesión: Los Hombres de Raúl," *El Nuevo Herald*, August 12, 2001.
  72. William M. LeoGrande and Amos Perlmutter, "The Party in Uniform: Toward a Theory of Civil-Military Relations in Communist Systems," *American Political Science Review* 76, 4 (December 1982): 778-789.
  73. Juan O. Tamayo, "Raúl Castro Takes on a Higher Profile."
  74. On Stalin's succession, see Myron Rush, *Political Succession in the USSR* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965); on that of Mao, see Frederick C. Teiwes, *Leadership, Legitimacy, and Conflict in China: From a Charismatic Mao to the Politics of Succession* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1984); on that of Ho Chi Minh, see Robert F. Rogers, "Policy Differences Within the Hanoi Leadership," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 9, 1-2 (spring-summer 1976): 108-128.
  75. Vanessa Bauz, "Looking at Cuba's Future: Who is Raúl Castro?" *South Florida Sun Sentinel*, July 1, 2001.
  76. E. E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1960).
  77. Carl Linden, *Khrushchev and the Soviet Leadership, 1957-1964* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1964): 40-57; Robert Strayer, *Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse?* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1998).
  78. Andrzej Korbonski, "Leadership Succession and Political Change in Eastern Europe," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 9, 1-2 (spring-summer 1976): 3-22.
  79. Raúl Castro was candid in acknowledging that these problems posed a serious ideological challenge for the revolution and that the party needed to wage a "battle of ideas" in response. Raúl Castro, "The Political and Social Situation in Cuba and the Corresponding Tasks of the Party," *Granma*, March 27, 1996.
  80. Korbonski, "Leadership Succession and Political Change in Eastern Europe."
  81. David González, "Cuba Sees Fervor over Elián Useful in Other Battles," *New York Times*, July 5, 2000.

82. Domínguez, "Leadership Strategies and Mass Support," in *Cuba at a Crossroads*; and Juan M. del Aguila, "The Party, the Fourth Congress, and the Process of Counterreform," in *Cuba at a Crossroads*, 19-40.
83. Mark Fineman, "Castro Points to His Brother as Successor," *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1997.
84. David Clark Scott, "Castro's Foreign Office Choice: Sign of a New Generation?" *Christian Science Monitor*, April 1, 1993; interview with Ricardo Alarcón in Cynthia Tucker, "Communism after Fidel Castro," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, July 8, 2001.
85. Scott Wilson, "The Face of Cuba's New Generation," *Washington Post*, September 12, 2000.
86. Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Lawrence Whitehead, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).
87. For Castro's reflections on the Chinese model, especially China's "very wise" decision to undertake economic reforms slowly, while upholding the principals of socialism and party leadership, see "Castro Gives News Conference," February 24, 1993, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Latin America Daily Report*, February 26, 1993; and "Castro Addresses Sixth UPEC Congress," December 24, 1993, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Latin America Daily Report*, January 4, 1994.
88. Council of the European Union, "Common Position of 2 December 1996 Defined by the Council on the basis of Article J.2 of the Treaty on European Union, on Cuba," *Official Journal L 322* (December 12, 1996): 1; Organization of American States, "Inter-American Democratic Charter," September 11, 2001, at <http://www.oas.org>.
89. Terry Lynn Karl, and Philippe C. Schmitter, "Modes of Transition in Latin America, Southern and Eastern Europe," *International Social Science Journal* 43, 2 (May 1991): 269-284; Terry Karl, "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America," *Comparative Politics* 23, 1 (1990): 1-21.
90. Alison Mahr and John Nagle, "Resurrection of the Successor Parties and Democratization in East-Central Europe," *Communist and Post-communist Studies* 28, 4 (1995): 393-409; Michael Waller, "Adaptation of the Former Communist Parties of East-Central Europe: A Case of Social Democratization," *Party Politics* 1 (1995): 373-390.
91. Paul G. Lewis, "Civil Society and the Development of Political Parties in East-Central Europe," *Journal of Communist Studies* 9, 4 (1993): 5-20.
92. Mahr and Nagle, "Resurrection of the Successor Parties and Democratization in East-Central Europe," 393-409.
93. "Introduction: Special Issue: Parties, Trade Unions and Society in East-Central Europe," *Journal of Communist Studies* 9, 4 (1993): 1-2; Mahr and Nagle, "Resurrection of the Successor Parties and Democratization in East-Central Europe," 393-409.
94. John Higley, Judith Kullberg, and Jan Pakulski, "The Persistence of Post-communist Elites," *Journal of Democracy* 7, 2 (1996): 133-147. This article notes that communist elites have retained considerable power and influence in new states, which has provided a degree of stability.
95. Dilla Alfonso, González, and Vincentelli, "Cuba's Local Governments: An

- Experience Beyond the Paradigms,” 151-172; Domínguez, “Leadership Strategies and Mass Support: Cuban Politics before and after the 1991 Party Congress,” in *Cuba at a Crossroads*, 1-18.
96. Herbert Kitschelt, “Formation of Party Cleavages in Post-Communist Democracies,” *Politics and Society* 1 (1995): 447-472.
  97. Debra Evenson, *Workers in Cuba: Unions and Labor Relations* (Detroit: National Lawyers Guild, 2001), 53-56.
  98. Linda Fuller, *Work and Democracy in Socialist Cuba* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).
  99. Evenson, *Workers in Cuba*, 6, 11, 22.
  100. Gillian Gunn, *Balancing Economic Efficiency, Social Concerns, and Political Control*, Cuban Studies Program Briefing Paper (Georgetown University), no. 5 (March 1994).
  101. Evenson, *Workers in Cuba*, 53-61.
  102. Evenson, *Workers in Cuba*, 19.
  103. Dario L. Machado, “¿Cuál es nuestro clima socio-político?” *El Militante Comunista* 9 (September 1990): 2-12, quoted in Domínguez, “Leadership Strategies and Mass Support,” in *Cuba at a Crossroads*, 1-18.
  104. Darío L. Machado Rodríguez, “Democracia Política e Ideología: Una Opinión Después del V Congreso del Partido,” *Cuba Socialista* 9 (1998), quoted in Azicri, *Cuba Today and Tomorrow*, 120-122.
  105. Mimi Whitefield and Mary Beth Sheridan, “Cuba Poll: The Findings,” *Miami Herald*, December 18, 1994; “How Cubans Responded to Questions,” *Miami Herald*, December 18, 1994.
  106. Churchill Roberts, Ernesto Betancourt, Guillermo Grenier, and Richard Scheaffer, *Measuring Cuban Public Opinion: Project Report* (Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida, 1999).
  107. Mimi Whitefield and Mary Beth Sheridan, “Cuba Poll: the Findings;” “How Cubans Responded to Questions.”
  108. For an early discussion of how Cuba's traditional values were modified by the revolution, see José A. Moreno, “From Traditional to Modern Values,” in *Revolutionary Change in Cuba*, ed. Carmelo Mesa-Lago (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971): 471-500.
  109. John T. Ishiyama, ed., *Communist Successor Parties in Post-Communist Politics* (Commack, N.Y.: Nova Science, 1999); Mahr and Nagle, “Resurrection of the Successor Parties and Democratization in East-Central Europe,” 393-409.
  110. Mimi Whitefield and Mary Beth Sheridan, “Cuba Poll: The Findings;” “How Cubans Responded to Questions.”
  111. Mimi Whitefield and Mary Beth Sheridan, “Cuba Poll: the Findings;” “How Cubans Responded to Questions.”
  112. Churchill Roberts, Ernesto Betancourt, Guillermo Grenier, and Richard Scheaffer, *Measuring Cuban Public Opinion: Project Report*.
  113. Medea Benjamin, “Soul Searching,” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 24, 2 (August 1990): 23-31.
  114. Joanna McKay, “Keeping the Red Flag Flying: The Electoral Success of the PDS in East Berlin,” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 16, 3 (2000): 1-20; Oswald Franz, “The Party of Democratic Socialism: Ex-

- Communists Entrenched as East German Regional Protest Party,” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 12, 2 (1996): 173-195.
115. In a 1962 survey, sociologist Maurice Zeitlin asked the question, “Do you think the country ought to have elections soon?” Of his 202 respondents, 67 percent said no, 22 percent said yes, and 11 percent had no opinion. In open-ended interviews, Zeitlin found that among those who opposed the holding of elections, the corruption of past elections and parties was a “dominant theme in their comments.” Maurice Zeitlin, *Revolutionary Politics and the Cuban Working Class* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 38-44. For a quick review of pre-1959 electoral fraud, see Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution*, 36-52.
  116. In fact, a 1989 study of voters in local delegate elections found that most of them learned about candidates and made their voting decisions based on informal discussions with people in their friendship networks. Only one-third read the official biographies of candidates, and only 10 percent thought the biographies contained any useful information. Dilla Alfonso, González, and Vincentelli, “Cuba’s Local Governments: An Experience Beyond the Paradigms,” 151-172.
  117. Aleks Szczerbiak, “Electoral Politics in Poland: The Parliamentary Elections of 1997,” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 14, 3 (1998): 58-83.
  118. Haroldo Dilla Alfonso, “The Cuban Experiment: Economic Reform, Social Restructuring, and Politics,” *Latin American Perspectives* 27, 1 (January 2000): 33-44.
  119. Carothers, in his extended evaluation of democracy-promotion policies of the United States, concludes that one of the main failings has been the insensitivity of democracy promoters to local political conditions and dynamics, rooted in an attitude that democracy can be delivered to the locals from the outside. Democracy, Carothers argues, must be essentially a domestic product, though outside aid can be facilitative. Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999).
  120. Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad*.
  121. J. Craig Jenkins, “Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 9 (1983): 527-553.
  122. “Remarks to the Cuban-American Community, June 27, 1995,” *Public Papers of the Presidents: William J. Clinton, 1995, Volume 1* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996), 953-955.
  123. “Fidel Castro Speaks at Moncada Ceremony, July 26, 1995,” Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Latin America Daily Report*, 1995, no. 145.
  124. Ricardo Alarcón, “What They Have Done Is to Inform the World that the Blockade Stays in Place, that They Will Try to Foster It, to Convince Others, to Make More Propaganda, While They Continue on That Road Doomed to Failure,” *Granma International* (digital), January 1999.
  125. Elizardo Sánchez Santacruz, “Cuba Can’t Change on Its Own,” *New York Times*, April 22, 1997. Two other dissidents also have spoken out against U.S. political aid, arguing that it “fuels these accusations” that dissidents are “on the payroll of the United States,” and “gives the official propaganda machinery reason to accuse all of us of being mercenaries or parasites.” Pedro Pablo

- Alvarez Ramos and Héctor Palacios Ruiz, "Aid We'd Rather Not Receive," *New York Times*, June 18, 2001.
126. Jimmy Carter, "Openings to Cuba: We Must Find a Common Ground," *Washington Post*, May 24, 2002.
127. Robert S. Greenberger, "U.S. Group Aided Arias' Costa Rican Foes," *Wall Street Journal*, October 13, 1989.
128. Jacqueline Sharkey, "Nicaragua: Anatomy of an Election," *Common Cause*, May-June 1990.
129. Christopher Marquis, "U.S. Bankrolling Is Under Scrutiny for Ties to Chavez Ouster," *New York Times*, April 24, 2002.
130. This pledge was not entirely kept. William M. LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard: The United States in Central America, 1977-1992* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1998): 556-561.
131. Joel Edelstein, "The Future of Democracy in Cuba," *Latin American Perspectives* 22, 4 (fall 1995): 7-26.
132. Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998); Lars Schoultz, "Blessings of Liberty: The United States and the Promotion of Democracy in Cuba," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, forthcoming May 2002.

## About the Author

Dr. William M. LeoGrande is Acting Dean and Professor of Government in the School of Public Affairs at American University in Washington, D.C., where he has been on the faculty since 1978. He also served as Acting Dean of the school from 1997 to 1999, Chair of the Government Department from 1992 to 1996, and Director of the Political Science program from 1980 to 1982. From 1976 to 1978 he was Assistant Professor of Government at Hamilton and Kirkland Colleges in Clinton, New York.

Professor LeoGrande received his A.B. (1971) and M.A. (1973) degrees in Psychology and Political Science from Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science with Certificate in Latin American Studies from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University in 1976.

In 1982-1983, Dr. LeoGrande was an International Affairs Fellow of the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, and worked with the Democratic Policy Committee of the United States Senate. In 1985-1986, he served on the staff of the Democratic Caucus Task Force on Central America of the United States House of Representatives. He has also been a consultant to a variety of Congressional committees, Executive branch agencies, and private foundations. In 1994-1995, Dr. LeoGrande was a Pew Faculty Fellow in International Affairs.

Professor LeoGrande has written widely in the field of Latin American politics and United States foreign policy, with a particular emphasis on Central America and Cuba. He is the author of *Our Own Backyard: The United States in Central America, 1977-1992* (University of North Carolina, 1998) and *Cuba's Policy in Africa* (University of California, 1980). He is co-author of *Confronting Revolution: Security Through Diplomacy in Central America* (Pantheon, 1986), and co-editor of *The Cuba Reader: The Making of a Revolutionary Society* (Grove, 1988) and *Political Parties and Democracy in Central America* (Westview, 1992). His articles have appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *Latin American Research Review*, *American Political Science Review*, *The New Republic*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Miami Herald*, and other journals and newspapers. He is a member of the American Political Science Association, the Latin American Studies Association, and the Council on Foreign Relations.

# **Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies - ICCAS**

The Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies is unique in that ICCAS is a leading Center for Cuban Studies emphasizing the dissemination of Cuban history and culture. ICCAS sponsors academic and outreach programs and helps coordinate Cuban-related activities at the University of Miami including the Casa Bacardi; the Emilio Bacardi Moreau Chair in Cuban Studies; the Cuba Transition Project; the Cuban Heritage Collection at Otto G. Richter Library; the John J. Koubek Memorial Center, and other University components related to Cuban and Cuban-American Studies.

## **Programs and Activities**

The Institute undertakes a variety of programs and activities, including sponsoring and hosting public lectures and seminars. The Institute's Information Center provides current and historical information on Cuba and responds to requests from the academic, business, media and government communities. ICCAS publishes research studies and occasional papers, sponsors original research, and coordinates interdisciplinary courses at the University of Miami. The Institute also organizes art exhibits, musical programs, and an annual film festival.

## Recently Published

*After Castro: Alternative Regimes and U.S. Policy* – **Edward González**

## Forthcoming CTP Publications

*The Role of the Judiciary: Alternative Recommendations for Change* – **Laura Patallo Sánchez**

*Confiscated Properties in a Post-Castro Cuba: Two Views* - **Matías Travieso**, “*Alternative Recommendations for Dealing with Confiscated Properties in Post-Castro Cuba*” and **Oscar M. Garibaldi**, “*The Treatment of Expropriated Property in a Post-Castro Cuba*” with an introduction by **Laura Patallo Sánchez**

*A Transparency/Accountability Framework for Combating Corruption in Post-Castro Cuba* – **Sergio Díaz Briquets and Jorge Pérez López**

*A Constitution for Cuba’s Political Transition: The Utility of Retaining (and Amending) the 1992 Constitution* – **Jorge I. Domínguez**

*The Military in Cuba’s Transition* – **Brian Latell**

*The Greatest Challenge: Civic Values in Post-Transition Cuba* – **Damián J. Fernández**

*Establishing The Rule of Law in Cuba* – **Laura Patallo Sánchez**

*Growing Economic and Social Disparities: Impact and Recommendations for Change* – **Carmelo Mesa Lago**

*International Organizations and Post-Castro Cuba* – **Ernesto Betancourt**

*Cuba’s Transition from Communism to Political and Economic Freedom* – **Antonio Jorge**

*Privatization Strategies, Market Efficiency, and Economic Development in Post-Castro Cuba* – **Antonio Jorge**

*Foreign Direct Investment in Post-Castro Cuba: Problems, Opportunities, and Recommendations* – **Robert Cruz**

*The Role of the Cuban-American Community in the Cuban Transition* - **Sergio Díaz Briquets and Jorge – Pérez López**

*What Has Gone Wrong with Transitions in Post Communist Eastern Europe: Lessons for Cuba* – **Vendulka Kubalkova**

*Nicaragua: Political Processes and Democratic Transition - Possible Lessons for Cuba* – **Alvaro Taboada Terán**

*Rehabilitating Education in Cuba: Assessment of Conditions and Policy Recommendations* – **Graciella Cruz-Taura**

*The Role of Education in Promoting Cuba’s Integration into the International Society: Lessons in Transition from the Post-Communist States of Central and Eastern Europe* – **Andy Gómez**

*Republic of Cuba Telecommunications Fundamental Plan* – **Manuel Cereijo**

*Securing the Future: A Blueprint for the Reconstruction of Cuba’s Security Services* – **Eugene Rothman**

*Lessons for Cuba of the Romanian Transition* – **Michael Radu**

*The Spanish Transition and the Case of Cuba* – **Carlos Alberto Montaner**