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**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**  
**Monterey, California**



**THESIS**

**CUBA: THE SURVIVAL OF COMMUNISM IN  
THE POST-COLD WAR ERA**

by

Michelle D. Carter

December, 1996

Thesis Co-Advisors:

María José Moyano  
Scott D. Tollefson

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**CUBA: THE SURVIVAL OF COMMUNISM IN THE POST-COLD WAR  
ERA**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the survival of Cuban communism in the post-Cold War era. The question addressed is: how viable is communism in Cuba now that communism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has failed? This thesis is a case study of communism in Cuba post-Cold War that looks comparatively at Poland and China. Four hypotheses are tested to isolate the variables leading to regime transition in Cuba. Four independent variables are tested: (1) regime legitimacy; (2) economic performance; (3) development of civil society and an autonomous political culture; and (4) United States foreign policy as an agent of regime change.

This thesis concludes by addressing United States foreign policy as it relates to Cuba and by recommending a more open relationship that engages the current regime in Cuba. A policy of engagement in Cuba, much like the current United States policy with China, is a win-win strategy that would help oppositional forces in Cuba to find a public space, while denying the current regime a justification for its continuance.





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Finally, I thank my mother whose belief in me and my abilities sustains me in everything I do.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This thesis examines Cuban communism in the post-Soviet Union era. The question addressed is: how viable is communism in Cuba now that communism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has failed? In determining whether communism has failed or not, I define "failed" not by the quality of communism or how well it is working but by its existence as the sole economic and political system of government in a country. This study is significant because it is important to understand why some political systems fail and others succeed over time. Specifically, this study is important because it seeks to understand what the United States foreign policy should be vis-à-vis Cuba. Further, studying Cuban relations with the United States and Russia is useful so that intelligent predictions can be made about the future of socialism in Cuba.

The methodology employed is a case study of Cuban communism that looks comparatively at Poland (where communism has failed) and China (where communism remains). Four independent variables are tested: (1) regime legitimacy; (2) economic performance; (3) development of civil society and an autonomous political culture; and (4) United States foreign policy as an agent of regime change. The hypotheses are as follows: (1) The greater the legitimacy of the regime, the greater the chance of regime survival; (2) the greater the ability of a regime to transform its economy, the greater the chance that the regime will survive; (3) the more developed the civil society and the more autonomous the political culture, the greater the likelihood that the civil society will oppose the regime; and (4) the more United States foreign policy (inadvertently) supports a communist regime, the

greater the likelihood that communism will survive.

The first chapter introduces the three countries, exploring their relevant differences and similarities and establishing the basis for comparison. The second chapter tests the four independent variables in Poland and China to determine why communism has failed in the former but not the latter country. The third chapter tests the four independent variables in Cuba. The fourth chapter unites the findings from the two previous chapters comparatively to answer the central question of why communism remains in Cuba.

The final chapter of this thesis provides conclusions, recommendations and analysis of the current U.S. policy to determine the best method to achieve regime change in Cuba. This thesis concludes that the Cuban regime maintains a certain amount of legitimacy with Cubans on the island, and is not in imminent danger of collapse. The economic changes in Cuba has allowed the regime to survive the fall of the Soviet Union and with it the ending of the economic subsidies. Rather than transforming the Cuban economy from one that is based upon state to market mechanism, the Cuban regime is doing what it must to survive, and increasingly, survival is its only discernible goal.

Cuban civil society is underdeveloped, but changes are more promising now than ever before, given that the Catholic Church has begun to call for liberalization. With the elevation to cardinal of Havana Archbishop Jaime Ortega in November 1994, the Catholic Church has taken on a more aggressive role in Cuban society and is attempting a slow, but steadfast resurgence on the island.

Finally, after more than three decades of an economic embargo designed to destroy the Cuban economy and bring down the Castro regime, Castro still remains defiant. The

collapse of Cuba's traditional trading markets in the Eastern bloc significantly hurt the Cuban economy, but Castro is transforming it enough to keep it alive. The question remains as to how long.

As long as the United States continues its current foreign policy of "squeeze," Castro will continue to be able to control civil society with his anti-American rhetoric and nationalism. The confrontation strategy he employs is only successful to the extent that United States policy allows it to be. The United States has nothing to lose and everything to gain from implementing a communication strategy. The most important thing for the United States to do is to stop playing to Castro's strengths and start playing to his weaknesses. Each new United States threat gives Castro another opportunity to wrap himself in the Cuban flag and appeal to Cubans to do the same in the name of country. Castro has played the confrontation game well. He may not know how to play the communication game. He is not accustomed to an informed population with detailed, up-to-date information on the benefits of liberal democracy and free-market economy. The sooner the United States shifts the game from one Castro plays so well - confrontation - to one he is unaccustomed to playing - communication - the more effective the United States foreign policy in Cuba will be.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The fall of the Berlin Wall was far-reaching. The countries in Eastern Europe are now transitioning from authoritarianism to democracy and from centrally planned to market economies. The international impact of the regime transformations is great. For Americans, the most obvious impact is the disappearance of the communist threat in Europe. With the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the problem of communist expansion dissipates as does the once useful policy of containment. Because communism no longer needs containing, the United States policy and the Cold War conflict between the superpowers came to an end. These changes dramatically reshaped the international political environment and require new thinking in dealing with communism elsewhere.

Cuba is in crisis to no small extent because of the changes in Eastern Europe and, more significantly, within the Soviet Union. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and its disintegration in the Soviet Union present Castro with his most serious threat since the 1962 missile crisis. The removal from the socialist ranks of the Eastern European communist regimes leaves Cuba almost alone in the world, clutching a dying ideology, robbing the nation of both the critical reference group for its own political and economic system and a body of allies upon whose political and ideological support Castro had come to depend. His defiant vow of "socialism or death" may reflect his view of his only alternative. Unwittingly Castro stands on the sidelines of the vast transformations underway elsewhere, exerting his staying power and demonstrating to the world that Cuba is an exception. The sense of moral righteousness and the belief that history was on the Cuban side has, in the past, legitimized Castro's regime. But ideology and rhetoric alone may not be enough to sustain Castro



through these turbulent times.

This thesis will examine Cuban communism in the post-Soviet Union era. The question to be answered is: how viable is communism in Cuba now that communism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has failed? In determining whether communism has failed or not, I define "failed" not by the quality of communism or how well it is working but by its existence as the sole economic and political system of government in a country. This study is significant because it is important to understand why some political systems fail and others succeed over time. Specifically, this study is significant because it seeks to understand what the United States foreign policy should be vis-à-vis Cuba. Further, studying Cuban relationships with the United States and Russia is useful so that intelligent predictions can be made about the future of socialism in Cuba.

The methodology employed is a case study of Cuban communism that looks comparatively at Poland (where communism has failed) and China (where communism survives). Four independent variables will be tested: (1) regime legitimacy; (2) economic performance; (3) development of civil society and an autonomous political culture; and (4) United States foreign policy as an agent of regime change. The hypotheses are as follows: (1) The greater the legitimacy of the regime, the greater the chance of regime survival; (2) the greater the ability of a regime to transform its economy, the greater the chance that the regime will survive; (3) the more developed the civil society and the more autonomous the political culture, the greater the likelihood that civil society will oppose the regime; and (4) the more United States foreign policy (inadvertently) supports a communist regime, the greater the likelihood that communism will survive.

This work is a case study of communism in Cuba that seeks to understand why communism remains entrenched in Cuba. To that end, this study comparatively exams Poland where communism has failed and China where communism survives, albeit in a different form. The second chapter tests the four independent variables in Poland and China to determine why communism has failed in the former but not the latter. The third chapter tests the four independent variables in Cuba. The final chapter unites the findings from the two previous chapters comparatively to answer the central question of why communism remains in Cuba.

The first hypothesis deals with regime legitimacy. The central argument for this hypothesis is that if a regime is viewed as legitimate by the people, then the regime has a greater chance of survival. Specifically, the first hypothesis is: the greater the legitimacy of the regime, the greater the chance of regime survival. For clarity, legitimacy refers to the belief amongst a substantial number of citizens that in spite of shortcomings and failures of the regime, the existing political institutions are better than any others that might be established, and that they can therefore demand obedience.<sup>1</sup>

East Europeans did not voluntarily adopt socialism after careful examination of its possible advantages and pitfalls. Stalin imposed his communist vision on Eastern Europe with deadly force. This explains the thoroughness with which the bulk of Eastern Europe changed in less than a decade from the end of World War II until Stalin's death. It is the

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<sup>1</sup>Definition provided by Juan J. Linz, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, & Reequilibration (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 16.

communism of the Stalinist strain that could have created such havoc in such a short time.<sup>2</sup>

All governments, democratic or authoritarian, use some means to establish their legitimacy in the eyes of the population. No regime can last solely on the strength of its ability to employ threats, coercion or force against its people. In the communist party-states of Eastern Europe, political legitimacy was built on three main pillars: the communist ideology, widespread participation, and socioeconomic performance.<sup>3</sup> Initially, the communist governments were able to gain some political legitimacy with the people by encouraging popular involvement in the political process and because most of the countries experienced rapid economic growth which improved the standard of living, especially in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>4</sup> Eventually, however, these early sources of legitimacy began to erode as people became wary of the omnipresent political slogans and the inability of the regime to live up to the basic ideals of communist ideology.

An aim of this work is to try to understand the processes taking place in Eastern Europe, particularly in Poland, for the Polish case seems to be an especially good example of the broader trends occurring in previously communist societies. Nowhere else in Eastern Europe did a Communist regime have to contend with so many popular challenges to power sustained over so many years. In Poland, student protests in 1968 and again in 1976 weakened the government's control before they finally collapsed. In 1988, two strike waves

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<sup>2</sup>David D. Mason, Revolution in East-Central Europe: The Rise and Fall of Communism and the Cold War (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 8.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 36.

forced the regime to negotiate directly with the outlawed trade union Solidarity the following year. Unlike the party-state authorities in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, which were able to reequilibrate and restore order after a major crisis, successive Polish regimes failed to restore stability for any significant length of time following a crisis. Thus, for these reasons, Poland is, if not a unique case, at least a special case to study in Eastern Europe.

In Eastern Europe, particularly in the Soviet Union, Stalin developed the "cult of personality," and for a short time his charisma unified the Soviet bloc. This short-lived period was soon replaced by Khrushchev's revelations about Stalin's murderous actions and his public denouncement of Stalin. This de-characterization of Stalin, among other things, led to a general de-legitimation of the Communist Party itself. An analogous process occurred in China, but the effects were much more dramatic than in Eastern Europe. Mao Zedong had been a genuine charismatic leader who, in the minds of many Chinese, was deified. Therefore Mao's fall from grace was greater in scope than Stalin's.<sup>5</sup> The Chinese Communist revolution under Mao Zedong achieved a tremendous victory in conquering the Chinese Nationalists (Guomindang) and taking control of the fourth largest country in the world. Mao came to symbolize the Chinese revolution and until his death legitimized the Communist regime.

In the Cuban case two points apply. First, the distinctive traits of the Batista regime were such as to engender a significant national opposition to his regime, throwing radical revolutionaries into an alliance of convenience with more moderate opponents of the regime.

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<sup>5</sup>Tony Smith, Thinking Like a Communist: State and Legitimacy in the Soviet Union, China and Cuba (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987), 180.

Second, the characteristics of the Batista regime meant that the ruler and the military were increasingly isolated from civil society itself, and therefore had no taproots of support or legitimacy among any social classes or social institutions. When confronted with a growing revolutionary movement, the Batista regime could not mobilize social support (even international support) for its own continuity.<sup>6</sup>

The Post-Cold War regime in Poland currently faces a similar challenge in maintaining popular support in the aftermath of the collapse of communism. One particular danger facing post-communist Poland is that hard liner elements from the old system can then take a chance and appeal to the public by reminding them about the good side of the old system while pointing to the current hardships - for example growing material inequalities - in the new order. This tactic can lead to frustration and to rejection of growth-inducing or transformation-instigating policies. In Poland one aspect worked to prevent this tactic from destroying the economic transition. The initial stages of economic growth or systemic transformations are often characterized by a surprisingly high tolerance toward inequalities. This is one of the most important features of a period called by Leszek Balcerowicz (Poland's first post-communist minister of finance) as "extraordinary."<sup>7</sup> However, this extraordinary tolerance is temporary. Eventually the new system must fulfill social expectations, or the transition will fail.

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<sup>6</sup>Timothy P. Wickham-Crowley, Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes Since 1956 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 7.

<sup>7</sup>Michael H. Bernhard, The Origins of Democratization in Poland: Workers, Intellectuals, and Oppositional Politics, 1976-1980 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 33.

The phenomenal growth of the Chinese economy, if it can continue, may be the most important trend in the world for the next century. China has the fastest growing economy in the world, displacing the United States which has, until recently, possessed the world's largest economy for more than a century. Yet there is still a significant possibility that China will never manage what economic historian Walt Rostow has called an economic "takeoff." The concept of a takeoff has been used to imply that development once started proceeds automatically along well-traveled routes until the country becomes a modern industrialized nation. In an authoritarian (or "neo-authoritarian") regime such as China, either poor economic performance or rapid economic growth can stir up popular dissatisfaction and resistance to the established power. Similarly, in a totalitarian regime such as Cuba, poor economic growth or rapid economic growth can lead to regime instability.<sup>8</sup>

The proximate cause of Cuba's current economic crisis is not hard to define. Cuba has a small and heavily trade-dependent economy. In the presence of the United States economic embargo, Cuba came to depend heavily on the former Soviet Union trade bloc, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), for over four-fifths of its imports. Without access to the United States market, with access to other markets restricted and with imports from the former CMEA countries significantly reduced, Cuba's economy and its people are struggling to survive.

Although the level of economic development does not determine democratization, as

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<sup>8</sup>Malcolm Gillis and others, eds., Economics of Development 3d ed., (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), 26.

both Samuel P. Huntington in The Third Wave<sup>9</sup> and Larry Diamond, Juan Linz and Seymour Martin Lipset in Politics in Developing Countries<sup>10</sup> have observed, comparative studies indicate that certain levels of economic development and democratization tend to run in parallel. If as posited by the aforementioned authors, a reasonably high level of economic development is a necessary condition for a stable democracy, then logically the converse is true. Economic stagnation and negative rates of growth impede the transition to stable democracy. In determining the effects of economic performance on regime transitions, this work will compare the economies of Poland and Cuba after the end of the Cold War and of China since 1978 when Deng Xiaoping began the “open door” reform program. The second hypothesis is as follows: the greater the ability of a regime to transform or “marketize” its economy, the greater the likelihood that communism will survive.

The criteria for understanding civil society and culture is less defined than the economic conditions previously explored. Civil society constitutes the sphere of autonomy from which political forces representing a myriad of interests in society have contested state power. Civil society is a necessary condition for the existence of representative forms of government, including democracy. In Poland, the reconstitution of civil society was the first step in curtailing the autonomy of the party-state from society and in creating representative

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<sup>9</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century (London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 59-72.

<sup>10</sup>Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds. Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy 2d ed., (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), 21-27.

forms of authority dependent on societal consent.<sup>11</sup>

A capitalist system produces a civil society centered on the market. Market factors mean that citizens can obtain political influence by buying their way into the public sphere. The public sphere in capitalist society is thus limited by the market because not all citizens have an equal opportunity to participate, regardless of the force of their ideas.<sup>12</sup> A state socialist system produces a civil society centered on the state. Instead of the market's selecting which voices are heard in the public sphere, the party decides. With social groups forbidden from articulating their own particular interests, the state mobilizes civil society and smothers the right of free discussion.<sup>13</sup> Thus market and statist principles both appear as constraints on public freedom. From this reasoning comes the idea of a "third road" - a civil society based neither on the state nor on the marketplace, but on a vibrant political public sphere itself. This seems to be the theory underlying the post-1968 social movements of Eastern Europe, particularly Solidarity's practice in the early months of its existence.<sup>14</sup>

In China during the post-Mao period, the Chinese people experienced the reestablishment of the power of Deng Xiaoping, and new values began to take shape as the open-door policy and the emerging market economy took center stage. This was particularly the case amongst the younger generation who grew up during the post-Mao era and knew

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<sup>11</sup>Bernhard, 2.

<sup>12</sup>David Ost, Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics: Opposition and Reform in Poland since 1968 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 30.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 30.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 31.



little or nothing of the bitterness of the Cultural Revolution. In fact, this generation experienced the cultural diversities of a society in transition simultaneously exposed to the old traditions and Western culture. Individualism and not the traditional selflessness of the past became the hallmark of this new, free market-economy generation which was to pose a frontal challenge to the legitimacy and authority of the state in 1989.

The early years of a revolution are the years to implement the greatest change with the least amount of resistance as the legitimacy of the regime fosters euphoria and unity amongst the populace. At the core of the ideology of the Cuban Revolution lie two intertwining themes: the theme of *lucha*, or struggle, and the theme of utopia, or the millennium.<sup>15</sup> Struggle has been central to the revolutionary creed since Castro took up arms against Batista in the late 1950s. And the Cuban people have continually been asked to continue the struggle against neocolonialism, imperialism and capitalism. Over the years the targets may have changed, but the tactics remain virtually the same. And *lucha* continues for the Cuban people.

The millennium is the complement of *lucha*. The persons, conditions, problems and attitudes that Cubans are called on to struggle against are the very factors that impede the coming of the political kingdom. The millennial vision justifies the hardships of the moment, for the political kingdom is not easily won. Translation: many must suffer and some must die before the promised land is reached.<sup>16</sup> To achieve the promised utopian society, the

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<sup>15</sup>Richard R. Fagan, The Transformation of Political Culture in Cuba (Stanford University Press: Stanford, California, 1969), 11.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 12.

leadership must give a universality and an almost spiritual quality to the day-to-day affairs of the Cuban man and woman. The message is that “these are not ordinary times, but ultimately the joy of victory will follow if we struggle for a while now.”<sup>17</sup> Essentially this is the hope upon which the Cuban people have been forced to hang their hats for the last 37 years.

At this point it is important to define the concept of political culture. While recognizing the importance of the work of Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba in The Civic Culture,<sup>18</sup> this work rejects its assumption that models drawn from the United States or Great Britain can be imposed on other cultures with dissimilar histories and experiences. Instead this work takes the definition posited by Archie Brown and Jack Gray in Political Culture and Political Change in Communist States<sup>19</sup> defining ‘political culture’ as a subjective perception of history and politics, the fundamental beliefs and values, the foci of identification and loyalty, and the political knowledge and experience of a nation and its people. Finally, in describing civil society, this work takes the definition posited by Alfred Stepan in Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone which describes “civil society” as that arena where manifold social movements (such as neighborhood associations, women’s groups, religious groupings and intellectual currents) and civic organizations from all classes associate

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>18</sup>Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 1-9.

<sup>19</sup>Archie Brown and Jack Gray, eds., Political Culture and Political Change in Communist States (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1977), 2-10.

so that they can express themselves and advance their interests.<sup>20</sup> The third hypothesis guiding this work is as follows: the more developed the civil society and the more autonomous the political culture, the greater the likelihood that the civil society will oppose the regime.

The final hypothesis to be tested is: The more United States foreign policy (inadvertently) supports a communist regime, the greater the likelihood that communism will survive. Specifically, this work seeks to understand how and to what extent U.S. foreign policy acts as an agent of regime transition. A significant dimension that facilitated the series of changes taking place in Poland at the end of the Cold War was the contribution of the West, particularly the United States. The mere existence of Western Europe and the United States gave Eastern European people hope that they would enjoy independence and liberties.<sup>21</sup>

Since World War II three basic factors have shaped U.S. policy toward Eastern Europe in particular and Poland in general: the critical position of Eastern Europe in the global superpower confrontation, including its direct relationship to the security and political orientation of Western Europe; the influence of organized ethnic groups representing immigrants and their descendants from Eastern Europe; and the idealistic pursuit of the universal desiderata of national self-determination and respect for human rights, it being especially painful to see those principles violated among peoples so akin to Americans.<sup>22</sup> The

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<sup>20</sup>Alfred Stepan, Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 3-4.

<sup>21</sup>Robert F. Byrnes, U.S. Policy Toward Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), 10.

<sup>22</sup>Lincoln Gorson, Eroding Empire: Western Relations with Eastern Europe (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1987), 67.

first and by far the most important factor listed remains central to U.S. foreign policy concerns in post-Cold War, but the second and third have often been decisive on specific issues over a broader spectrum of policy.

The Tiananmen Square massacre, the collapse of the communist world, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the emergence of new states from the territories of the former Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War have undermined any consensus among American policy makers as to what extent the United States can maintain a close relationship with the People's Republic of China (PRC).<sup>23</sup> The United States has a growing trade deficit with the PRC. The two sides also have differing opinions with regard to Chinese arms sales and human rights policies. At the same time the PRC will continue to be a regional power capable of playing a global role in the future. The PRC can still influence North Korea. China's seat on the UN Security Council allows it to block or facilitate any UN response to a crisis.<sup>24</sup> For all these reasons, it is in the United States interest not to isolate, but to engage China.

The emergence of the United States as one of the world's two superpowers after 1945 brought with it the tendency to look at events everywhere as part of the continuing struggle with the Soviet Union. At the height of the Cold War in the 1950s the intuitive response of the United States government to revolutions, changes in governments and shifts in international alignments was to calculate their impact on the Soviet-American balance.

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<sup>23</sup>Alexei D. Voskressenski, "New Dimensions in the Post-Cold War Russian-PRC-American Relationship," Issues and Studies: A Journal of Chinese Studies and International Affairs, 31, no. 2 (February 1995): 49.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 50.

Events were not neutral. They benefitted either the United States or the Soviet Union.<sup>25</sup> In such a world, there were no shades of grey or countries left unaffected by the contest between democracy and communism.

The overall policy formulated by the United States to deal with the communist threat was containment. By restricting communist, and particularly Soviet expansion, the United States and its allies hoped not only to defend the free world but also to convince the aggressors that since they could not succeed, their only alternative was to cooperate. Initially designed in 1947 for application in Europe, by 1960 containment had become a global policy, guiding United States reactions to events in the Third World.<sup>26</sup> It is in this framework that Cuba became a Cold War pawn. The United States' obsession with Cuba - prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union - may constitute what Jorge Domínguez labels "Cubaphobia," an exaggerated fear both of Cuba's potential for spreading revolution and of its ties to the Soviet Union.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Harold Molineu, United States Policy Toward Latin America: From Regionalism to Globalism (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), 167.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 168.

<sup>27</sup>Abraham F. Lowenthal and Gregory F. Treverton, eds., Latin America in a New World (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994) 209-214.

## II. THE COMMUNIST EXPERIENCE

### A. POLAND

#### 1. Regime Legitimacy

The objective of this section is to understand to what degree Polish people viewed the communist regime as legitimate. Specifically, this section tests the first hypothesis: the greater the legitimacy of the regime, the greater the chance of regime survival. Particular attention is paid to the Stalinist period when the communist regime attempted to fundamentally transform the social, economic and political institutions in Poland.

To understand recent developments it is necessary to recall earlier social and political transformations. The first and the most basic was completed by the early 1950s during what is called the 'Stalinist period.' Under Stalinism Poland was transformed from a traditional society to a mass society based upon a totalitarian theoretical framework. This work accepts the definition posited by Wlodzimierz Wesolowski in "Transition from Authoritarianism to Democracy." He defines totalitarianism as an economic, social and political system extending the principles of authoritarian rule into all spheres of life. It depends on detailed penetration and complete subjugation of all spheres of life by the central system of government, which shapes them according to a global plan. Totalitarian systems are characterized by an all-engulfing ideology, a hierarchy of powers managing the society, a mass party which aims to indoctrinate and mobilize and a political police with unlimited prerogatives. Further, totalitarian systems seek to dissolve all social structures and bonds existing prior to their introduction. They also aim at the captivation of minds, which would

make individuals prone to control and manipulation from outside.<sup>28</sup>

Because totalitarianism was *imposed* upon Poland by the Soviet army, that system of rule could never be completely assimilated and was not legitimate. At the very least, no government can survive without a basic belief amongst the populace that in spite of shortcomings and failures, the existing political institutions are better than any others that might be established, and that they therefore can demand obedience.<sup>29</sup> Clearly, the resistance of the Polish people demonstrated their unbelief in the political system. Three significant trends that reveal Poland's rejection of the totalitarian pattern were (1) the resistance of the Catholic church, which retained its integrity and autonomy; (2) the resistance of farmers, who did not enter into the agrarian cooperatives; and (3) the survival of some intellectual circles which rejected the communist ideology and kept alive democratic ideals.<sup>30</sup>

In all three countries that will be discussed here, the revolutionary elites who seized power attempted, with varying degrees of success, to use ideology to justify both the seizure of power and the policies to transform society. In the case of Poland, the ideology employed to legitimize rule was Marxism-Leninism. While the Stalinist regime in Poland commanded sufficient obedience to maintain itself in power and to carry out its policies of social transformation, it did not manage to convince the masses of the true efficacy of Marxism-Leninism. Obedience out of belief in the ideology did not take root. One reason is that many

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<sup>28</sup>Włodzimierz Wesolowski, "Transition from Authoritarianism to Democracy," Social Research, 57, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 437.

<sup>29</sup>Linz, 16.

<sup>30</sup>Wesolowski, 438.

complied out of fear of retribution. Others obeyed in order to improve their standard of living or social status. Still others saw their original enthusiasm for the stated aims of the regime betrayed by its failure to live up to its promises and by the means by which it pursued those aims.<sup>31</sup> Thus, Polish Stalinism had been forced upon the will of the society. Mass obedience was contingent on the perpetuation of coercion and the continued ability of the regime to provide material gains<sup>32</sup>.

When the regime stopped using terror and coercion to deliver on its promises, Poles not only stopped obeying, they also began resisting. When terror was relaxed following the death of Stalin, elites began to organize and speak out publicly against the system. The working class demonstrated over the poor standards of living, and the peasants rejected the regime's agricultural program. All three of these actions significantly demonstrate the Poles' rejection of Marxism-Leninism. Marxism-Leninism as the dominant ideology did not become legitimate in Polish society. The absence of another more compelling reason to give obedience to the regime explains why communism failed in Poland.

## **2. Economic Transformation**

This section attempts to determine to what degree the communists were able to transform the state-run centrally planned economy in Poland. The second hypothesis to be tested is: the greater the ability of a regime to transform its economy, the greater the chance that the regime will survive.

In the early 1970s, Poland's economic system had begun to show signs of exhaustion.

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<sup>31</sup>Bernhard, 34.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 35.



After worker protests in 1970, the new Edward Gierek regime attempted to “jump-start” the economy by upgrading the technology of Polish industry, but without a change in the economic system. The main idea was to stimulate new exports by importing modern technology, while remaining squarely within the socialist economic framework.<sup>33</sup> Between 1970 and 1977, Poland borrowed approximately \$20 billion from the Western governments and banks. The idea was simple: Poland did not need to change the economic system, but to use better machinery.<sup>34</sup>

Two features of the reforms ultimately doomed them. First, the communist reformers did not institute measures that would encourage competition, so that decentralization did not lead to functioning markets. Prices remained controlled; entry by new firms into existing markets was discouraged; and international trade remained restricted so that the international market provided no real competition for domestic producers. In short, despite being given more freedom of maneuver, existing state enterprises were never put to the market test. Second, the communist reformers had no interest in privatizing industry so that enormous inefficiencies that came from the lack of proper ownership of the enterprises continued to plague the system. They failed to realize that the “insiders” of the enterprises, the management and workers, could seriously distort enterprise behavior to their own advantage.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Jeffrey Sachs, Poland's Jump to the Market Economy (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1993), 26.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 27.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 29.

When the commands, and the threat of force, were removed in the enterprise reforms in the second half of the 1980s, managers and workers attempted to increase their incomes at the expense of the state by absorbing whatever income flow and whatever assets they could from state enterprises.<sup>36</sup> After the enterprises were granted autonomy in 1987 and as an attempt to mollify a bitter population, a small measure of worker self-management was introduced into the enterprises. In a sense, this can be thought of as the communist regime's response to the public's growing demands for political representation: no free elections, but a modest degree of worker representation.<sup>37</sup>

There were two ironic effects of this limited devolution of power to the plant level and to the workers. First, as decentralization progressed, workers gained enough influence to push for higher and higher wages. This contributed to an explosion of wages during 1987-89. The second effect was to instill in parts of the Solidarity movement a commitment to worker-managed enterprises, which complicated the government's desire to convert firms into joint-stock companies organized along Western lines.<sup>38</sup>

Ultimately the failure of the communist piecemeal approach to reform was due to the government's unwillingness or inability to implement the kind of radical change needed to create a competitive, private market economy. Such a transition was barred by ideology, by party elites desire to maintain power, by the distrust of the public who viewed the government

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 30.

<sup>37</sup>Jeffrey Sachs and David Lipton, "Poland's Economic Reform," Foreign Affairs, 69, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 50.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 50.

as illegitimate and by the reluctance of the Western governments to fund the ad hoc reforms when what was needed was fundamental change. The communist regime's attempt at piecemeal reform failed to sufficiently transform the regime and contributed to the failure of communism in Poland.

When the new Solidarity government began to define its strategy, its policy makers knew well the failure of piecemeal change. They recognized that thoroughgoing measures were needed, and they explicitly rejected the idea of experimenting with a "third way" between capitalism and state socialism, aiming instead to replicate the economic institutions of Western Europe. The basic economic questions facing Poland were not mainly about the desired ends of reform, but rather about the strategy for making the transition from state socialism to a market economy.<sup>39</sup>

When Solidarity's Tadeusz Mazowiec became prime minister in September 1989, his new government was facing a financial crisis among the worst in the world - with inflation of about 40 percent per month and widespread shortages of basic goods. The Polish public was thoroughly demoralized by a long-term crisis of economic decline that had lasted in acute form since the late 1970s. Under the leadership of Deputy Prime Minister Leszek Balcerowicz, the government fashioned a program of comprehensive and rapid change, aimed at ending hyperinflation and shortages and at creating a market economy as rapidly as possible.<sup>40</sup> Poland's economic strategy for a "leap to the market" also known as the Balcerowicz plan was based on the following precepts: Reduce budget deficit; decontrol

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 47.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 48.

prices and eliminate subsidies; establish a regime of free trade with the West; eliminate restrictions on the private sector; and privatize as soon as possible.<sup>41</sup> Emphasis was placed on implementing these measures rapidly in order to take advantage of the vital freedom of action made possible by high public trust and the shared sense of national emergency following the new government. The public expected strong measures and the government had the political space to implement the programs.

How are they doing? Polish industrial production remains below its 1991 level but has begun to increase. Unemployment stands at almost 14 percent but growth in the private sector is beginning to lower that. Inflation has gone from 586 percent in 1990, when the reforms began, to an estimated 50 percent in 1992. Although the loss of the once assured Soviet and East European trade still hurts, Poland now exports to the West more than it imports. This reflects both the increasing marketability of Polish goods and the smaller market in Poland for Western foods as the zloty has fallen in value.<sup>42</sup>

The future of the Polish economy is still uncertain, yet the economic measure implemented have transformed the economy from one that is centrally-planned to one that is market-based. Although the economic statistics are still more negative in Poland than in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the other developed post-Communist states, it appears that the bottom has been reached.

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 55.

<sup>42</sup>Jane Leftwich Curry, "The Puzzle of Poland," Current History, 91, no. 56 (November 1992): 388.

### 3. Civil Society

After World War II, with the defeat of the Nazis, the central issue was that civil society could not be organized until the question of who would control the postwar Polish state was answered. In the period from 1944 to 1968, with the exception of the Stalinist years between 1948 and 1954, the Polish opposition always had reason to believe that its political strategies might succeed in transforming the state or changing its policies.<sup>43</sup> It was when the system appeared to be incapable of reform that the state orientation was seen as hopeless. This juncture occurred in 1968, with the twin developments of the “march events” in Poland and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. At that point, the opposition needed to find a different orientation in order to avoid elimination.<sup>44</sup>

By 1949, the orthodox Marxist-Leninists of the Polish Workers Party (PPR) or the Polish communist party had destroyed both the Polish Peasant Party (PSL) and the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), made illegal all independent interest associations, and liquidated all independent organs of the political public sphere. The Stalinist years had begun in earnest. No opposition political parties existed, legally or illegally in Poland.<sup>45</sup> The Stalinist period was the attempt to eliminate independent civil society completely, or to realize the Marxist-Leninist assumption that state and society become reunited when the party of the “universal class” takes power. So the effort to “unify” state and society meant the destruction of all civil society, including independent associations and the public sphere, and the replacement of civil

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<sup>43</sup>Ost, 33.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 38.

society by the state.<sup>46</sup> With civil society silenced by terror, there was no political opposition at all.

But the Stalinist period could not last forever, for a number of reasons. The terror became harmful to the elite and dysfunctional to the economy, and the Party always comes up against the fact that although social divisions could be *declared* obsolete, they could not be *made* obsolete. Differences, in other words, persisted.<sup>47</sup> An example of the persistence of social divisions and the state's response to it can be seen in the 1955 de-collectivization of farmers in favor of establishing progressive cooperatives.<sup>48</sup> This meant that the Polish agricultural sector was dominated by a small-holding peasantry. The other area in which the Polish system was exceptional was the degree of autonomy granted the Catholic Church.<sup>49</sup> Thus the Party was forced to vacillate between a strict totalitarian tendency with terror as a means of compliance and a reform tendency with interaction and concessions as a means to extinguish social pressures.

As mentioned earlier, two developments in 1968 destroyed the opposition's orientation to state-sponsored democratic reform: the anti-Semitic "March events" in Poland, and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. By eradicating the Prague Spring, the crowning achievement of the regime, the invasion wiped out the belief in the ability of an East European socialist state to undergo genuine democratic reform, at least as long as the Soviet Union did

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 39.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 39.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 42.

<sup>49</sup>Bernhard, 35.

not undergo such reform itself. The "March events," meanwhile, had earlier destroyed the belief in the willingness of any section of the Polish Party to carry out such a reform.<sup>50</sup> After the December 1970 brutal shootings by the police of workers who were returning to work after the strike was called off, the opposition determined that it could not negotiate with the government. This was a turning point as the opposition recognized the folly of reform and began to embrace a new strategy of democratization.

The opposition strategy articulated in the 1970s proved to be extraordinarily successful, as it led directly to the rise of Solidarity. The essence of the program was that opposition practice had to focus only on rebuilding civil society. The goal was to transform society in a democratic direction, and not the state, which appeared to be incapable of reform.<sup>51</sup>

Most important, the goal of the opposition in the 1970s was to get the Polish people to do things - anything - just as long as they did it on their own, with no official mediation. Organizing, publicizing or attending a lecture series or discussion group, a theatrical work, or an art exhibit presented in a private apartment, basement or some other space not under state control; assisting people persecuted for political reasons - these were among the main forms of oppositional activity. For all these civic activities were felt to produce an ethos of self-determination, a belief in one's own ability to act publicly.<sup>52</sup> The idea was to inspire new beliefs and ideas about an individual's activities, to encourage individuals to view each other

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 49.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 57.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 70.

as equals on a variety of levels, and to encourage individual Poles to interact in a public sphere that has nothing to do with government.

The first step in the self-liberation of civil society in Poland was the successful implementation of an oppositional, rather than a dissident, resistance strategy in response to the crushing of the strike movement of 1976. Opposition grew throughout the late 1970s, so that even prior to the strike wave in 1980, the struggle between the party-state and the opposition became the dominant axis of Polish political life. By the end of the 1970s, as a result of the proliferation of various organizations and movements and the broad dissemination of the underground press, the public space in Poland had been liberated and the actors therein were positioned as the potential basis for a reconstituted civil society.<sup>53</sup>

The third hypothesis is: the more developed the civil society and the more autonomous the political culture, the greater the likelihood that the civil society will oppose the regime. Thus the Polish civil society, developed and autonomous before the Stalinist takeover, was able to overcome the communist regime's attempt to destroy old vestiges of civil society in favor of a Marxist-Leninist state and society based upon the universal class. The communist effort to unify state and society by destroying the civil society failed as the Polish civil society opposed the regime.

#### **4. U.S. Foreign Policy**

The official United States foreign policy position toward Eastern Europe during World War II was that the disposition of Eastern European problems should await the peace

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<sup>53</sup>Bernhard, 10-11.



settlement. After the war, when the area became dominated by the Soviet Union, the American interest in Eastern Europe was overshadowed by the policy of containment. Containment was meant to halt further expansion of Communism, but by its nature it had only indirect bearing on areas already under Soviet domination. As a result, Soviet control of Eastern Europe was not seriously contested by the West during the period roughly from 1948 to 1953, when the Eisenhower Administration enunciated its short-lived policy of liberalization.<sup>54</sup> Subsequent events increasingly demonstrated the lack of realism and purpose behind this policy, and it soon became an empty slogan as popular uprisings and the subsequent military responses ended the hope that American intervention would be forthcoming.

It is in this setting that the United States developed the policy of peaceful engagement in Eastern Europe. Based on the premise that change in the Eastern Bloc could only come about through internal evolutionary processes, peaceful engagement was designed to affect both the regimes and the peoples, to stimulate diversity within the area, and to increase the chances of a higher degree of external independence. In a sense, peaceful engagement was a conceptualization of the post-1956 trend in American policy toward Poland and an argument for its enlargement. The long-range objective was a neutral belt of East European states enjoying a status comparable to that of Finland, that is, staying clear of Western alliances, displaying no hostility toward the Soviet Union, and possessing a genuine freedom

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<sup>54</sup>Zbigniew Brzezinski and William E. Griffith, "Peaceful Engagement in Eastern Europe," *Foreign Affairs*, 39, no. 2 (January 1961): 642.

of choice in domestic affairs.<sup>55</sup>

On political and moral grounds, the policy also combined a continued demand for national self-determination in Eastern Europe with an effort to promote the peaceful transformation of existing regimes from communist systems into democracies. In essence, the policy reflected American recognition that not much else was possible considering the East-West standoff, but most important, the policy reflected an American distinction between assistance to the Polish people and the Polish government. Throughout the East-West conflict United States foreign policy was geared toward the former and not the latter.<sup>56</sup>

The German question played an important part in the formulation of American policy toward Poland due the boundary issues between the two nations. It was in America's interest to diminish Poland's links with the Soviet Union while simultaneously attempting to reduce Polish fears of a German-inspired revision of the boundary at the Oder-Neisse frontier. To that end the United States used diplomatic measures to impress upon West German public opinion that the reunification of Germany would be impossible without major changes in Polish-Soviet relations. Specifically, American policy stressed that until German-Polish differences had been resolved, a completely united Europe was impossible, and the continuance of the differences would lead to unsatisfactory relations between Germany and its western neighbors, particularly the United States.<sup>57</sup> In encouraging Germany not to use

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<sup>55</sup>Piotr S. Wandycz, The United States and Poland (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980), 374.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 375.

<sup>57</sup>Brzezinski and Griffith, 651.

force against Poland, the United States linked the security of Europe with the commitment of Germany to adopt a more flexible stance with regard to the German-Polish territorial concern.

U.S.-Poland relations were strained during the Vietnam War and following the U.S.-backed failed invasion of Cuba (Bay of Pigs) and Cuban Missile Crisis, in which the Polish government aligned with the Soviet Union in support of Cuba. The most dramatic change in Polish-American relations took place under the Gierek Administration. The distinctly cold climate which prevailed in the later Gomulka years (1956-1970) gave way first to businesslike contacts and then to mutual efforts at cooperation. The United States' response to Poland's overtures was both positive and swift. Three successive American presidents visited Poland: Richard Nixon in May 1972; Gerald Ford in July 1975; and Jimmy Carter in 1977.<sup>58</sup>

Nixon's visit to Warsaw, like his visit a few months earlier to China, signaled a new American effort to engage communist nations in the larger effort to contain the Soviet Union. The growing dependence of the Polish economy on economic cooperation with America provided a useful counterweight to the overriding Polish-Soviet economic links. Friendly political ties with the United States were seen as capable of providing a useful counterbalance to the unavoidable and necessary political links in the Polish-Soviet alliance.<sup>59</sup> In this way, Poland was able to take advantage of the East-West conflict and use its relationship with both superpowers to gain economic support for its economy and increase Polish security.

Today, U.S. foreign policy aims vis-à-vis Poland remain fundamentally unchanged.

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<sup>58</sup>George Blazynski, Flashpoint Poland (New York: Pergamon Press, 1979), 227.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 229.

No other country among the prospective candidates for membership in NATO matches the potential strategic significance of Poland in terms of geo-strategic location, population and size. The collapse of the Soviet empire and Germany's reunification have placed Poland along the strategic periphery of western Europe and between Europe's two giants, Russia and Germany.<sup>60</sup> With a population of nearly forty million and a size roughly equal to that of Spain, Poland is the linchpin state of central Europe. If the continued revolutionary upheaval in Russia results in a fuller democratic government in Moscow, Poland will become a bridge between the West and the East. If Russia repeats the cycle of authoritarianism and repression, Poland will become the critical buffer state for Germany and the West against the unstable East. Thus the United States support for NATO enlargement to include Polish membership demonstrates a recognition of the strategic importance of Poland and a willingness to support the Polish transition from a Warsaw Pact to a NATO member nation.<sup>61</sup>

Following the Second World War, the U.S. policy of containment was reflected in NATO, which became the umbrella which provided protection for Western Europe from the Soviet threat and from which there emanates an attraction for the countries in Eastern Europe under Soviet control. Soviet control was so great in the early 1950s and information within Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe about developments in the rest of the world was so fragmentary that the Western Allies resorted to floating balloons into Eastern Europe, particularly in Poland, where mechanical or chemical devices loosed leaflets upon the isolated

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<sup>60</sup>Andrew S. Michta, "Poland and NATO: The Road Ahead," SAIS Review, 15, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 1995): 137.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 138.

peoples below.<sup>62</sup> After a brief change in U.S. policy from containment to the liberation “of the captive peoples” of Eastern Europe during the Eisenhower administration (1952-1956) the main emphasis of U.S. policy after 1956 reverted back to containment, upon strengthening the areas of the world most susceptible to communist pressure, upon persuading the communist rulers that the Western states would resist expansion, by war if necessary, but would not attack the communist states, and upon some effort to direct all of the energies of the communists and of the rest of the world toward a peaceful solution to the problems which threatened the peace of the world.<sup>63</sup>

The death of Stalin in March 1953 set in motion a series of events in Soviet and world politics which helped lead to the abandonment of liberation, brought a new series of achievements to the policy of containment, and ultimately led to a serious crisis in world affairs at the close of 1956. These events ultimately led to the Polish revolt against the communists who abolished collectivization, gave new authority and power to the Catholic Church, tolerated criticism and expression of ideas which had previously been forbidden, and opened up contracts in trade and in cultural exchange with the West which made Poland the freest communist country in the world.<sup>64</sup>

The U.S. Government acted on the policy that it should provoke no crisis, but should work instead for gradual change within Poland and within the other communist countries in Eastern Europe. It sought to encourage the hopes of the people of Poland for self-

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<sup>62</sup>Byrnes, 18.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 23.

determination, and it promoted contacts of all kinds between Western and Eastern European peoples by providing economic and cultural assistance.

The fourth hypothesis tested was: the more U.S. foreign policy (inadvertently) supports a communist regime, the greater the likelihood that communism will survive. U.S. foreign policy has acted as an agent of regime transition in Poland. Currently the question of NATO membership is a central tenet of Polish security policy, and U.S. foreign policy initiatives stress that NATO expansion with the inclusion of Poland is a question of "not if, but when."

## **B. CHINA**

### **1. Regime Legitimacy**

The uncertainty facing many Chinese after World War II and the occupation by Japan, goes far to explain why, once the new regime was clearly in control, so many Chinese were willing and anxious to conform to the demand for participation in the new order. Historically, Chinese people have responded to the end of chaos and to the establishment of a new dynasty with a great commitment of order and industry,<sup>65</sup> and given the truly monumental confusion of the preceding years and the general disorder of earlier decades, their craving for order allowed them to view the new communist rule as legitimate. Thus, the stage was set, both psychologically and politically, for an era of conformity and for widespread acceptance of the dictates of an acknowledged superior authority. The search for security and the need to escape from uncertainty, confusion and disorder provided strong reinforcements for the

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<sup>65</sup>Lucien W. Pye, China: Management of a Revolutionary Society ed. John M.H. Lindbeck (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1971), 18.

natural acceptance of the new regime.<sup>66</sup>

The Chinese people accepted their new roles as social and political participants. And the Chinese Communist leaders were ready to provide them with a variety of socially and politically acceptable vehicles for mass, but essentially limited and controlled, participation. During the consolidation phase (1949-1953), the Chinese Communists created organizations that reached every segment of the population and every area of the country.<sup>67</sup> At the same time, the Chinese people quickly learned the style and the vocabulary of proper participation in all manner of new organizational contexts. Both teacher and student seemed to be well suited for the tidiness of obligatory participation.

The Communist takeover and subsequent consolidation of the new regime in the early 1950s shared many basic similarities with patterns of traditional China. Individuals were compelled to find their social identities in the context of associational relationships; much of society was organized into distinct groups which limited multiple membership and which were not truly voluntary in recruitment; and above all, government was untouched by anything resembling pressures from private groups and organizations.<sup>68</sup> An amazingly high level of participation produced, paradoxically, a docile population. Political sensitivity and awareness produced conformity and discipline, not autonomy and initiative.<sup>69</sup>

Thus, the more the regime called for revolutionary changes, the more anxious the

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 19.

Chinese people were for the opportunity to demonstrate in public their readiness to identify with the new regime.<sup>70</sup> For, at the time the Communists came to power, the Chinese people had an almost compulsory need to “participate.” Further, the Chinese traditional reverence for order and conformity, and the similar fear of not being identified as a part of the group compelled the Chinese people to become more accepting of the new order taking place under the Communists.

One critically important advantage that flowed from the popular mood and behavior of the Chinese was that their capacity for disciplined participation did provide legitimacy to the Communist regime. Regime legitimacy is critical to regime survival. The first hypothesis to be tested is: the greater the legitimacy of the regime, the greater the chance of regime survival. The readiness of the population to adhere to the new practices and to follow the leadership of the mass organizations implies that the Communist regime was accepted by the people as the rightful authority.

## **2. Economic Transformation**

The earliest major institutional change in China was in the form of rural reform, initiated, in fact, by the peasantry itself. The leadership did not openly encourage the reform experiments until they began to significantly stimulate agricultural output. Gradually and without violent disruption, rural reform began to change the character of the economy. The peasantry, deprived of all economic freedom during the quarter century under the former supreme leader, Mao Zedong, regained it in some measure, and the free-market system began

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 19.



to be dominant in the rural economic sector. The results in the period from 1979 to 1990 were a 6 percent average annual growth rate in agriculture and a 22 percent growth rate in rural industrial output. Because the peasantry is generally less educated than the urban population, and less mobilized politically, and because the regime has historically relied upon an urban support base, grounded in the public sector, this transition in the rural economy has been a substantial stimulus to economic modernization while posing no direct threat to the regime.<sup>71</sup> The second hypothesis to be tested is: the greater the ability of a regime to transform its economy, the greater the chance that the regime will survive.

The most striking feature of China's economic reform, and the most troublesome for the regime, is the coexistence of two apparently irreversible tendencies: an unprecedented expansion of the private sector, both in the rural and (to a lesser degree) in the urban economies, and the rapid deterioration of the public sector. In the simultaneous quest for modernization and consolidation of its supremacy, the regime has been trying with great difficulty to balance these two goals, while keeping the public sector - the last socioeconomic bastion of authoritarian communism - in a privileged position.<sup>72</sup>

The process of the decentralization of power between the central and provincial governments meant that the local powers increasingly controlled the distribution of investment funding. The flow of power used to be wholly centralized, with all regional production going to the central government and then being redistributed according to a

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<sup>71</sup>Cheng Xiaonong, "Dilemmas of Economic Reform in China," World Affairs, 154, no. 4 (Spring 1992): 155.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 156.

central plan.<sup>73</sup> The reform, in contrast, created a contract system in which each province was obligated to produce a certain amount set by the central government, based on the region's previous economic performance. Local governments were allowed to invest any excess profits in infrastructure, public services, etc. Not surprisingly, this policy, begun in the early 1980s, stimulated a dramatic increase in total production. This outcome in turn weakened the control of the central government, and the power of its economic plan began to rest more in the hands of the rural sectors greatly strengthening local powers.

Most of the former socialist countries have adopted fundamental economic reform measures, including opening up their markets, removing restrictions on commodity prices and the use of production elements, limiting the money supply, privatizing state-owned firms and significantly changing the political, social and ideological structures. In mainland China, however, reform has been introduced at a slower step-by-step process. The private sector has been encouraged to marketize while the planned economy has been kept intact.<sup>74</sup> State-owned enterprises which in the past formed the core of the planned economy have been transformed into a mixed economy. These efforts have been aimed at creating a "socialist market economy" while, for the time being, avoiding the issue of enterprise property rights.

The positive results of the new system are clear in three main aspects. The first aspect is the industrial growth rate, which has increased since 1979. For example, steel output in

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<sup>73</sup>Shen Tong, "Will China Be Democratic?" *World Affairs*, 154, no. 4 (Spring 1992): 143.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, 144.

mainland China exceeded 43 million tons in 1984, compared to 25 million tons in 1977.<sup>75</sup> From 1953 to 1978, the average annual growth rate of Chinese industry was 6.1 percent; but from 1979 to 1988, it was 9.6 percent. From 1980 to 1986, the average annual growth rate of the world's gross national product (GNP) was 2.6 percent; the average annual GNP growth rate of developed countries was 2.3 percent; and mainland China's average annual GNP growth rate was 9.2 percent. On average, for the past fourteen years, mainland China's real GNP has grown 9 percent annually, and industrial output has increased by 20 percent. This means that mainland China's economic growth has been 6.5 percentage points faster than America's during the same fourteen year period.<sup>76</sup> Sustained growth of this kind is difficult, yet economists at the World Bank predict that by the year 2010 mainland China will have the world's largest economy.

### **3. Civil Society**

The events surrounding the Tiananmen Massacre of June 4, 1989 demonstrate the dominant themes of Chinese political culture, both in the students' drive to gain modernity and respectability in the eyes of the world, and the unaltered instincts of authoritarianism in the leadership. Thus to understand the Chinese political culture, this work will trace the events leading up to that confrontation in which idealistic students called for democracy in a society not yet ready to shed its authoritarian traditions.

For clarity, this work defines political culture as a subjective perception of history and

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<sup>75</sup>Zhong Zhu Ding, "The Role of the State and the Planned-Market System in Mainland China," *Issues and Studies*, 30, no. 7 (July 1994): 75.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, 75.

politics, the fundamental beliefs and values, the foci of identification and loyalty, and the political knowledge and experience of a nation and its people. Civil society is that arena where manifold social movements (such as neighborhood associations, women's groups, religious groupings and intellectual currents) and civic organizations from all classes associate so that they can express themselves and advance their interests. The third hypothesis to be tested is: the more developed the civil society and the more autonomous the political culture, the greater the likelihood that the civil society will oppose the regime.

The story points to a host of relevant conclusions about Chinese political culture. These include such themes as the sensitivity of authority to matters of "face," the need for authority to claim omnipotence, the urge to monopolize virtue and to claim the high ground of morality, the drive to try to shame others, an obsession with revenge and the inability to compromise publicly, to name a few.<sup>77</sup>

The Tiananmen Massacre demonstrated some of the basic elements of Chinese political culture. The idealism of the student demonstrations was a reminder of the degree to which modern Chinese politics has been carried along more by hope than by actual accomplishment. It is a politics of becoming, not of being.<sup>78</sup> Chinese leaders and intellectuals concentrate on how wonderful the "New China" will be in the future, avoiding analyzing the problems of the present. Students of China are equally caught up in this spirit of hope for the future, so much so that wishful thinking replaces critical analysis.

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<sup>77</sup>Lucian W. Pye. "Tiananmen and Chinese Political Culture." *Asian Survey*, 30, no.4 (April 1990): 332.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, 332.

The death of Hu Yaobang, respected for championing the reforms of Deng Xiaoping, meant the loss of what the students proclaimed was their last hope of a good leader for China and was a trigger for their activism. The rule in China is that when the situation is hopeless, take hope. In fact, in Chinese political culture action in hopeless circumstances captures the spirit of the heroic, for the heroic is always flavored with a touch of the tragic. This connection between the heroic and the tragic repeatedly surfaced during the uprising.<sup>79</sup>

The lofty sentiments of the students' activities further escalated tensions when, at the memorial service for Hu's death, they publicly dramatized their unhappiness by holding written petitions above their heads while surrounded by other tearful students in an attempt to get state officials present at the memorial to meet with them. The state officials refused, and instead, police appeared directing the students back to their campuses. At this point and from the outside looking in, there was nothing for the students to do but to return to their normal lives. But in terms of what is important in Chinese political culture this was not possible. There was instead an inexorable movement toward confrontation, for in the eyes of the leaders the students had already gone too far. Therefore, the leaders had to take on the task that in Chinese political culture is a prime responsibility of government: teaching the lessons of correct behavior.<sup>80</sup> The students, in proclaiming their superior moral righteousness, had directly challenged the legitimacy of the leadership. In Chinese political culture this was a serious challenge because rulers in China are supposed to have the monopoly on morality, and to question their pretensions to virtue is to challenge their very

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 333.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 338.

status.

The state could not abide by such a challenge, and it decided that the students represented an evil, anti-socialist movement that threatened the sanctity of the party and the state. So the government ordered an official to produce an editorial for the main Chinese daily paper explicitly condemning the students in the strongest possible language as subversive and evil. The editorial elevated the students into a position of personal conflict with Deng Xiaoping. In Chinese political culture, public insults have to be redressed publicly, and since the editorial directly attacked the students, they were compelled to demand that the authorities "reverse the verdict" of the editorial. However, in calling for a "reversal of the verdict" all knowledgeable Chinese recognized that they were mocking Deng Xiaoping because in his return from disgrace after Mao's death he had made a major issue of "reversing the verdict" of the first Tiananmen incident.<sup>81</sup> Once again the students had responded to the state by escalating the tensions not only by embarrassing the country's top leader, but also by calling into question the legitimacy of the government.

Thus the conflict with the state was fully engaged, and the students and the government acted in terms of three significant themes in Chinese political culture. First, their battle became one in which each tries to shame the other on the assumption that humiliation is an absolute weapon. Second, the students in particular, knowing that they were engaged in a conflict with a superior force, sought the rewards of heroic posturing, which they linked in the Chinese manner with tragedy and visions of death. Third, in the Chinese tradition of

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 339.

ascribing great power to the manipulation of symbols, they sought to turn politics into theater.<sup>82</sup>

Without reversing the verdict on the editorial, the government tried to tone down the rhetoric and dampen the damage caused by the confrontations with the students. Yet their decision to impose martial law shortly thereafter perhaps sent a mixed signal. Further, after the authorities gave the students a deadline to clear the square, the students responded by writing their “last wills” and swearing an oath to the progression of democracy in China.<sup>83</sup>

For the small period between the initial declaration of martial law until the massacre that ended the confrontation, the ultimate power of the government seemed in question. In some ways during that period, the students had “won” a kind of negative victory in that they had not been defeated, and therefore the government would have to accept more political liberties. The party leadership, by holding back its power of repression, seemed to be tacitly recognizing some merit to the students’ demands and that once opened, the door to political liberalization could perhaps be controlled but never completely closed. Then came the brutal massacre on June 3-4, 1989, demonstrating once again that the “people’s army” was, in fact, capable of doing harm to its own people.

In terms of Chinese political culture, the following three points are relevant with respect to the tragedy of the massacre and its aftermath. First, the act was a gross violation of the basic principles of Confucianism that hold that a ruler should always be benevolent and kind to the people. Second, the army relied upon the traditional Chinese tactic of surprise and

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 340.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 344.

deception in preparation for an attack against its own people. And third, there is in the aftermath the heightened importance of revenge, always a driving force in Chinese politics.<sup>84</sup>

Despite the calamitous ending to the student protest movement in China, the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre did demonstrate the potential for civil society in China to collectively form and act in opposition to the government. The means and stated goals of the students demonstrated a widespread desire for an autonomous civil society and some capacity to organize political organizations and associations separate from that of the state. Seen in this light, the crisis of 1989 indicated that the leadership was momentarily stalemated by the tensions created by the students and the corresponding dilemma about how to respond appropriately to the challenge. The crisis also highlighted a breakdown in the relationship between state and society.

#### **4. U.S. Foreign Policy**

The U.S. administration has a clear stake in its policy toward China. Further, this policy is broadly supported by the American business community, which is interested in maintaining a high level of trade with the PRC. In this sense, a new consensus on U.S. policy toward China has been reached: not to ignore or isolate China but to support China's move toward economic freedom, hoping that this will lead to the introduction of political democracy there.<sup>85</sup> Most sanctions implemented against the PRC after the massacre have been lifted. The Bush administration found it necessary to use both the "carrot and stick"

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 345.

<sup>85</sup>Kenneth Lieberthal, "A New China Strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, 74, no.6 (November/December 1995): 50.



approaches to achieve the desired results in its China policy. Likewise, the Clinton administration theoretically can still use the “war” between the White House and Congress as another lever to influence China, and congressional criticism can be used as a threat that most-favored-nation (MFN) status will not be resumed.<sup>86</sup> Also with the end of the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy has been undergoing a radical restructuring. The PRC’s strategic, regional and economic influence continues to grow, making U.S.-Chinese trade an “independent” factor in bilateral relations. The fourth hypothesis to be tested is: the more U.S. foreign policy (inadvertently) supports a communist regime, the greater the likelihood that communism will survive.

A strong China will inevitably present major challenges to the United States and the rest of the international system. In the past, the rise of a country to great power status has always forced realignment of the international system and has more than once led to war. Thus one of America’s most important diplomatic challenges, therefore, is to try to integrate China into Asia and the global political system.<sup>87</sup> A secure and cohesive China will feel less pressured to build up its military and demonstrate its toughness. It will not confront the world with large refugee flows and internal warfare, and it will not invite external intervention because of political fragmentation. A reform-minded and modernizing China will continue to advance toward a market-driven system which will better meet the material needs of its citizens, eventually creating a middle class with a moderating influence.<sup>88</sup> A stable China

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 50.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 36.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 36.

requires a political system that is responsive enough to keep up with rapid social changes that will accompany reform and modernization. An open China will be more prosperous, expose its citizens to international thinking and practices, and have strong incentives to participate constructively in the international system.<sup>89</sup>

The major pieces of this policy seemed largely in place at the onset of 1995: the United States had 'de-linked' from Beijing's human rights policies the annual recertification process for most-favored-nation (MFN) trading status for China; the military-to-military relationship had been reestablished after a post-Tiananmen hiatus; sanctions imposed on China for missile sales to Pakistan had been removed;<sup>90</sup> and, at present, political relations appear to be progressing, albeit unevenly.

Thus the current administration's foreign policy is engaging China's baseline "realpolitik" view as it seeks a friendly and constructive relationship with China free of human rights as a central issue. The United States has huge stakes in the political transitions of China and other East Asian nations. By remaining engaged in the region, particularly in China, the United States can improve the odds that the transitions will be toward stable democracy.

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 37.

<sup>90</sup>Jonathan D. Pollack, "The United States and Asia in 1995: The Case of the Missing President," *Asian Survey*, 36, no. 1 (January 1996): 3.



### III. CUBA

#### A. REGIME LEGITIMACY

The two previous chapters have argued that no government can survive without the belief on the part of a substantial number of the citizens and an even larger number of those in control of government that in spite of shortcomings and failures, the existing political institutions are better than any others that might be established, and that they can therefore demand obedience.<sup>91</sup> The first hypothesis to be tested is: the greater the legitimacy of the regime, the greater the chance that the regime will survive.

Whereas communism in Eastern Europe was imposed upon the people by the Soviet Union, communism in Cuba had come about through native forces uniting to rid the country of a dictator. Cuba had a revolutionary tradition that made the Revolution of 1959 possible. Political and social turmoil had engulfed the island since the middle of the nineteenth century. In the absence of stable political institutions, Cuba could rightly claim the right or rather the obligation to revolt to eliminate old grievances. In short, the Revolution of 1959 took place because non-revolutionary changes had failed.<sup>92</sup>

Initially lacking a well-defined ideology, Fidel Castro proclaimed that the overthrow of the repressive Fulgencio Batista regime was Cuba's sole, overriding task. After January 1, 1959 when Castro's 26th of July Movement overthrew Batista and filled the power

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<sup>91</sup>Linz, 16.

<sup>92</sup>Ramon E. Ruiz, Cuba: The Making of a Revolution (Massachusetts: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1968), 123.

vacuum, Castro quickly began the rapid confiscation and redistribution phase of the Revolution, which lasted until the formal establishment of the socialist economy in April 1961, when he proclaimed that the Revolution was socialist.

The subsequent radicalization of the Revolution and the breakdown in the relations with the United States corresponds with the growing Cuban-Soviet rapprochement. In 1960 the United States announced an economic embargo on most exports to Cuba, severed diplomatic relations and withdrew its ambassador, signaling an end to Cuba's economic and political dependence on the United States and the beginning of Cuba's dependence on the Soviet Union.

The Cuban Revolution began in earnest with Fulgencio Batista's escape from Cuba in the early hours of January 1, 1959 and ended soon after Castro's assumption and consolidation of power, his declaration of allegiance to Marxism-Leninism and Cuba's full admission to the Soviet bloc. One of the most defining features of the Cuban Revolution at the time it came to power was that it did not have essential state structures - a party, a coherently articulated ideology or a significant army. From the time of Cuban independence, various forces conspired to undermine any coherent national ruling class form establishing itself and a state structure to serve it. The Revolution could take power essentially without a party structure, without an army, without an articulated ideology, in an extremely brief time period, precisely because there was no party structure, no strongly held ideology, no loyal army, and no powerful institutions that had to be countered or overthrown.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>Carol Bengelsdorf, The Problem of Democracy in Cuba: Between Vision and Reality (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 68.

A second consideration involves the primary factor influencing the Cuban revolutionary leadership from the beginning: the central importance of unity. In Castro's mind, unity was the indispensable element in forging a new Cuba able to withstand the enormous internal and external threats that would face the country in the aftermath of the victory of the Revolution<sup>94</sup> The revolt against then president Fulgencio Batista, much like the 1979 revolt that overthrew the long-standing dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua, was a nationalist effort that deposed a decadent and crumbling state structure that had maintained itself by corruption and brute force. In Cuba, however, class war broke out in full intensity immediately with the revolutionaries' accession to power. And the opposing classes could find strong and active support in the United States. At the time of the Cuban Revolution's triumph, only five years had passed since the CIA openly sponsored and organized the overthrow of the legitimately elected socialist Jacobo Arbenz government in nearby Guatemala.<sup>95</sup>

Thus it was Fidel Castro's requirement for unity that kept him from calling a national plebiscite or national elections in the first years of the Revolution. By most estimates, even those of the CIA and the State Department, Castro would have won by an overwhelming victory in any such election.<sup>96</sup> The most fundamental reason no such elections were held had to do precisely with this idea of unity. Jean Paul Sartre asked Castro about the question of elections in 1960: "It (a referendum) would be such a triumph and it would nail shut so many

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<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 73.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 73.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 74.

hostile mouths that I don't understand why you should deprive yourself of it." Castro's answer was revealing: "For one single reason. We don't want to pay for triumph of the revolutionaries by wiping out the Revolution. What is the meaning of our group? The unity of views, practical union. At present, what would an elected assembly be? The mirror of our discord."<sup>97</sup>

The importance of unity can be seen in the strategic method with which Castro dismantled potential forces competing for power in the years immediately following Batista's departure. Essentially, what Castro did was to let each possible contending group play itself out and destroy itself before he took a formal role in the new government. Those people who carried prestige and were remnants from the past represented the first threat to a unified Castro rule. Thus they were the first to be eliminated.<sup>98</sup>

It is Fidel Castro, most fundamentally, who constitutes the center of the drive for unity and the symbol of that unity. Observers of the Cuban revolutionary process cannot ignore the centrality of the figure of Fidel Castro as the architect of the Revolution, particularly during the 1960s. Thus the overwhelming importance of Fidel Castro to the Revolution and the new government goes a long way toward explaining a state structure in Cuba in which the only institution of any permanence is Castro himself.

With Fidel Castro acting as "the institution" and with all decision making vested in him, the relationship between the state and Cuban society can be described as "direct

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<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 74.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 75.

democracy in action.”<sup>99</sup> This “direct democracy” or what Che Guevara called the “dialectical unity between the individual and the mass,” took essentially two forms. The first was the huge rallies held in the Plaza of the Revolution during the first decade of the Revolution, at which Castro spoke, sometimes for hours, sometimes to literally millions of people. The second form was Castro’s constant presence, his endless pilgrimages through the island, promoting the feeling that he was everywhere, dealing with sometimes the most trivial of individual or village problems.<sup>100</sup> Encircling this energy, this level of communication and involvement that is Castro’s “direct democracy” is an extreme and implanted paternalism. The phrase that visitors hear over and over again in Cuba among those discontent over something, “If Fidel only knew,” gives a good indication of the level of popular internalization of what can only be described as a deeply paternalistic structure.<sup>101</sup>

One of the most perplexing paradoxes of the post-Soviet Union era is that as international communism disintegrates and loses its claim to global supremacy, Cuba’s communist regime shows signs of strain but no fundamental weaknesses. It endures despite the dramatic changes taking place in Eastern Europe and Russia. Although undeniably affected by the collapse of an order which it had willingly joined and from which it derived some legitimacy - and significant material benefits - Fidel Castro’s regime has asserted itself

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 79.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 79.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 83.



as the last bastion of Marxism-Leninism.<sup>102</sup> After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuban observers knowledgeable about the conditions that precipitate the downfall of a dictatorship, predicted that Castro's days were few. The regime's ability to endure the crisis points to its survivability and legitimacy with the Cuban people. The Cuban Revolution and the construction of socialism has been complex in Cuba, a country that has confronted these transformations from a relatively low level of development in most every respect. Perhaps one of the most relevant peculiarities of the Cuban case has been that Cuba has maintained a flexible and self-critical position, which has allowed for correction and innovative experimentation without abandoning its Socialist orientation.<sup>103</sup>

From this perspective, one test of the regime's ability to adjust to institutional strains came in a struggle between the Communist Party and the military. The 1990 execution of General Arnaldo Ochoa, accused of drug smuggling and corruption, and of three other military officers in 1995 led to speculation about the dire consequences that surely would follow, with observers willing to place a specific time on the regime's collapse.<sup>104</sup> In fact, the crisis hardly affected the power of the Castro regime, and it did not have deleterious consequences either in the military or in the security apparatus. The demonstration effect of the executions themselves probably suppressed any real or potential conspiracy.<sup>105</sup> So far,

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<sup>102</sup>Juan M. del Aguila, "Why Communism Hangs on in Cuba," Global Affairs, 6, no. 1 (Winter 1991): 87.

<sup>103</sup>Joseph S. Tulchin and Rafael Hernández, eds., Cuba and the United States: Will the Cold War in the Caribbean End? (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991), 9.

<sup>104</sup>del Aguila, 88.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., 89.

it is clear that no major inter- or intra-elite factionalism threatens to rupture the regime. Factions at time overlap as well as compete with each other for resources and influence, meaning that the rules of the game are still observed. Through various techniques in political control, Castro is able to anticipate dangerous strains at the higher levels of the party and government and preempt their most ominous consequences.<sup>106</sup> Even with the changes in the international system after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Castro's responses to them, the state remains the principal source of employment and income for the officialdom, and Castro is the linchpin of that system. Few among the elite would contemplate leading a move toward something fundamentally different, something beset by uncertainties and personal risks.<sup>107</sup>

Those who look at the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe as a demonstration of what is to come wherever it remains elsewhere, fail to recognize that they are observing two differing phenomena. One important difference is that in Cuba, communism came through *internal* revolution and was not imposed by Soviet tanks. Also, many who objected to the regime were allowed to leave - thus letting some of the steam escape from the boiler - another difference from Eastern Europe.<sup>108</sup>

Further, the knowledge that the alternative to the current regime could well be the diametric opposite world view directed from Miami may unnerve many Cubans on the island, especially the blacks who, rightly or wrongly, perceive the exile lobby in Florida as anti-black.

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid., 89.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 90.

<sup>108</sup>Tulchin and Hernández, 121.

It is true that some 95 per cent of exiles are white, while now just over half the population on the island is black.<sup>109</sup> Crucially, the revolutionary government has been adept at binding its identity to a more enduring focus of loyalty: Cuban nationhood. The Cuban Revolution was, above all, in its first critical years, more a nationalist than a Communist affair. Those who criticize the status quo are made to feel that they are not just opponents or dissidents but anti-Cuban - disloyal not just to the regime but to the country. This is the precise reverse of the situation in Eastern Europe, where it was the resurgence of a sense of nationhood itself that helped to throw off the Communist yoke.

## **B. ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION**

Two events that led to the end of the Soviet-Cuban partnership were the economic agreement of December 31, 1990 between the two countries, and, following the failed military coup, Gorbachev's announcement of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Cuba on September 12, 1991. The report by the Soviet minister of oil and gas in the mid-1990s that oil production would begin to fall rapidly in two years also signaled an end to the Soviet Union's ability to continue to supply 90 percent or more of Cuba's oil. The trading of oil and sugar was a crucial element of the Soviet-Cuban economic relationship in which Cuba sometimes paid more than the world market price for oil, but was receiving from the Soviet Union far more than the world market price for sugar. The crisis in the Soviet oil industry was a major catalyst that precipitated the review of Soviet aid to Cuba.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup>Isabella Thomas, "Cuba: Change and the Perception of Change," The World Today, (May 1995):101.

<sup>110</sup>Carmelo Mesa-Lago, ed. Cuba: After the Cold War (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1993), 88.

The new principle emerging from the review was mutual reciprocity. Exchanges were to follow world market prices and be denominated in dollars. The market, not ideology, would govern economic relations. The new arrangement freed the Soviet Union from the costly pressures of Cuban needs on the Soviet oil supply and reduced resource transfers to Cuba through subsidized prices, grants and deficit financing. Another benefit is that the new market arrangement would let Soviet planners know in market terms the cost of the Cuban tie.<sup>111</sup> Clearly this new relationship disadvantaged the Cuban economy, disrupting an economic relationship based upon heavy Soviet subsidies and non-market transfers.

The failed coup attempt of August 19, 1991 and Castro's belated public reaction to it resolved the remaining bilateral relationship between the two countries. The reversal of the fortunes of the old-guard leadership who favored the Castro regime was also telling. Although in his public statements regarding the coup, Castro did not take sides, his failure to support Gorbachev left open the possibility that he may have favored the coup.<sup>112</sup> Further as many of Castro's supporters were no longer in the picture, the authoritarian nature of the Cuban regime became a legitimate reason to cut Soviet aid.

These developments led to the second defining event, the announcement of a troop withdrawal from Cuba. Gorbachev unexpectedly announced on September 12, 1991, that Soviet troops would be withdrawn from Cuba, without previous consultation with Castro and without any concessions from the United States. The withdrawal was a staggering blow to the Castro regime who had always insisted that Soviet troops not be removed from Cuba until

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<sup>111</sup>Ibid., 88.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., 89.

the United States left Guantánamo Bay.<sup>113</sup> Coupled with the economic cutbacks, the announcement spelled the end of Cuba's status as a favored client of the Soviet Union. These actions allowed Gorbachev to both reduce Cuba's drain on the Soviet budget and to placate the United States as a highly valued political and prospective economic partner.

The Soviet economic crisis was the definitive cause of Moscow's retreat from Cuba. The drop in Soviet oil output was a major factor. Yet even without the economic crisis, ideas like *glasnost* and *perestroika* had created social pressures in the legislature, the press and the public that accelerated the reversal of policy toward Cuba. Faced with such severe sacrifices at home, public officials and private opinion could no longer justify billions in foreign aid.<sup>114</sup> The rapid deterioration of the Soviet economy hardened attitudes toward the massive subsidies going to maintain Cuba's needy economy. Finally, the fact that the Soviet Union was undergoing a regime change meant that the issue of Cuba got lost in the struggle over the future of the union.

Apart from China, in 1989 Cuba's trade turnover with other socialist countries (Albania, North Korea, Mongolia, Vietnam, South Yemen, Yugoslavia) was \$135 million, or 1 percent of the total, and showed a declining trend; at its peak in 1980, commerce with these countries reached 1.6 percent of total trade.<sup>115</sup> These countries cannot provide substitutes for most Eastern imports; they either are not in great need or lack resources to buy Cuban sugar or citrus. Therefore, China is the best hope for a trading partner in the socialist camp. Trade

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<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 90.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 92.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., 198.

turnover with China in 1988 was \$402 million, a twofold increase over 1987, and rose to \$472 million in 1989 and \$500 million in 1990. In 1991 Cuba and China signed a five-year trade agreement for \$500 million annually, and in 1992, they signed another agreement for economic and commercial collaboration.<sup>116</sup> With the disappearance of trade with the Eastern European countries, particularly the German Democratic Republic with whom Cuba's trade turnover reached \$645 million in 1989, China is Cuba's second largest trading partner after the former Soviet Union.<sup>117</sup>

According to the trade agreement, Cuba mainly exports sugar, nickel, citrus and medical products to China. Chinese exports include food and fodder, textiles and clothing, raw materials, chemicals, machinery and road vehicles (bicycles). In addition, China is building bicycle plants in Cuba to help reduce fuel consumption. Yet the possibility of Cuba expanding trade with China beyond current levels is low for the following reasons: (1) China has a program to achieve self-sufficiency in sugar; (2) although China is the second most important importer of Cuban sugar, this is for political reasons, since the Chinese do not have a great craving for sugar; (3) most of China's trade is with Asia (70 percent exports and 60 percent imports), and China could buy sugar from Thailand and Australia at much cheaper freight rates than from Cuba; (4) China cannot send Cuba the capital goods and most manufactures that were previously supplied by Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union - furthermore, China has only enough oil for itself and cannot export any, nor can it provide aid or price subsidies to the island; and (5) Cuba has no strategic or ideological significance for

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<sup>116</sup>Ibid., 199.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., 199.

China. In addition, there is a long history of quarrels between the two countries.<sup>118</sup> Thus the Sino-Cuban trade relations will continue to be small, consisting mostly of exchanges of sugar for rice and bicycles, and Cuba's search for trading partners continues.

There seems to be a consensus among top Cuban government officials and academic economists that, in order to survive, Cuba must reintegrate itself in to the capitalist market. It must diversify exports, increase domestic efficiency, find a solution to the hard-currency debt, set a more realistic exchange rate and attract foreign capital. Expanding trade with market economies is severely limited by Cuba's significant hard-currency debt (which is not being serviced), the six-year deadlock in negotiations with lender nations, and the island's scarce international reserves and lack of external credit.<sup>119</sup> Major creditors include Spain, France, Canada, Italy, West Germany and Japan. Hence Cuba is caught in a cyclical pattern: Cuba wants to unblock stalled debts but cannot pay without fresh loans; in turn, the Paris Club refuses to extend new loans until Cuba starts repaying old ones.

Another remedy to the hard currency problem was to open the country to foreign investments in joint ventures up to a maximum of 49 percent of the shares. In 1991 the Fourth Party Congress approved a resolution legitimizing what was being done informally and allowing various types of foreign investment such as joint ventures, cooperative production, marketing agreements and shared accounts. Foreign partners now are allowed to own a majority of shares in enterprises the government has given priority to (such as tourism - which accounts for more than half of all foreign investment), total or partial exemption on profit (as

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<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 200.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 200.

much as ten years in tourism) and customs duties, freedom to hire foreign executives, free repatriation of profits and salaries of foreigners, state intervention to dismiss unruly or unproductive workers, a ban on strikes, low wages, special government services (legal, architectural) and accounting and management control by each party.<sup>120</sup>

As more information becomes known about the number of new investors, who they are and what business they are involved in and so forth, it becomes apparent that the current regime has placed most of its hope for recovery and growth in tourism. Indeed, tourism is attracting much of the attention from foreign investors; hotels are at 90 percent capacity and higher in Havana, Varadero, and Santiago de Cuba. The biggest investors in joint ventures with Cubanacán, one of Cuba's tourism agencies, are Spain, the Netherlands, Canada, Colombia, Germany, and Jamaica.<sup>121</sup>

After the Cuban regime legalized the possession of dollars by ordinary Cubans in 1993, the dollar took hold as Cuba's second currency. Many on the island have come to depend on remittances from exiles abroad. These remittances are enormous. At a conservative estimate, exiles send at least \$800 million a year to their relatives on the island. The sugar industry, which has been virtually in ruins since the Soviet Union abrogated sugar-for-oil barter agreements, accounts for approximately \$300 million in earnings. The largest single foreign investment in Cuba, the nickel mines under development by the Canadian corporation Sherritt International, had revenues of about \$250 million in 1995, while the

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<sup>120</sup>Ibid., 202.

<sup>121</sup>Pamela S. Falk, "Eyes on Cuba: U.S. Business and the Embargo," Foreign Affairs, 75, no. 2 (March/April 1996), 17.



gross receipts of the tourists sector were between \$700 million and \$1 billion.<sup>122</sup>

Externally, the biggest stumbling block to Cuba's integration into the world market is the United States and its 35-year old economic embargo. Currently the U.S. legislature has taken measures to tighten the embargo in an attempt to hasten the detrimental effects of Cuba's loss of trade partners. In the spring of 1990, a bill empowering the president to withhold federal assistance to countries that buy sugar from Cuba was passed by Congress and approved by the president. And, in the aftermath of the Cuban government's decision to shoot down an unarmed American civilian aircraft that had allegedly penetrated Cuban air space, the United States President approved on March 12, 1996 the Helms-Burton Bill (formally called the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Bill). The bill's provisions attempt, among other things, to promote third party enforcement of the current United States embargo against Cuba and to ensure that Russia's trade with Cuba is conducted strictly on market terms.

Since the end of the Cold War, one major reform theme in Cuba has been an increase in the use of the market. The first, and perhaps most significant, move in this direction has been the de-penalization of the use of the dollar. This has essentially legalized much black market activity and also opened up another way for the state to resolve its foreign exchange problems by attempting to capture the dollar flow, including allowing Cubans to purchase foods in special dollar shops at inflated prices.<sup>123</sup> Another example of the de-penalization of

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<sup>122</sup>David Rieff, "Cuba Refrozen," Foreign Affairs, 75, no. 4 (July/August 1996): 64.

<sup>123</sup>Mesa-Lago, 209.

the dollar is the loosening of restrictions on the dollar flows that can be sent by Cubans in Miami to Cubans on the island. However, in August 1994, the United States government, as part of a new initiative against Castro (The Cuban Democracy Act of 1992), prohibited all remittances from and nearly all travel by the United States and Cuban-American community.<sup>124</sup> The effect of this ban will be to make illegal family remittances through the United States in order to restore a substantial part of the flow.

A second aspect of Cuba's crisis strategy is to enlist foreign capital to provide the expertise and the resources in order to promote hard currency earnings and to help ease Cuba's reintegration into the world market place. Cuba's 1982 foreign investment code has been made more liberal, permitting minority or majority foreign-ownership. Production sharing arrangements, whereby foreign companies provide inputs, technology, finance, marketing or packaging for an operation and receive a percentage of its revenues, have also been introduced. As of January 1992, there were some 60 joint venture or production sharing deals functioning. Most of the initial deals were in tourism, but during 1991 their scope broadened considerably, involving biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, nickel, oil, textiles, construction, sugar derivatives, transportation, cosmetics and food processing.<sup>125</sup> Some of the deals involve substantial investment; for example, Canada's Sherritt Gordon company is reported to have planned investments of \$1.2 billion in the Cuban nickel industry.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 209.

<sup>125</sup>Andrew Zimbalist. "Teetering on the Brink: Cuba's Current Economic and Political Crises," Journal of Latin American Studies, 24, part 2 (May 1992): 412.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., 412.

Tourism has been the primary focus of the new joint ventures. The number of tourists visiting Cuba has grown steadily from 243,056 in 1985 to around 400,000 in 1991. The gross revenue from the tourist trade in 1991 was approximately \$300 million. Since foreign inputs needed to be purchased to service this sector and since profits were shared with Cuba's foreign partners, the net foreign exchange earned from this activity probably did not exceed \$100 to \$120 million. Every little bit helps, but to keep things in perspective, Cuba lost approximately \$4 billion on imports from the former Soviet trade bloc (CMEA) between 1989 and 1991.<sup>127</sup>

Interestingly, Cuban foreign trade with other countries is beginning to look more "normal" for a Caribbean country. Most Caribbean countries, after all, do not trade much with Romania, but they do trade with Canada. Also the Cuban regime's promotion of the tourist industry by means of joint ventures with foreign firms represents a double about-face: the welcome to tourism and the welcome to private foreign investment. Thus the net effect of these policy changes with regard to tourism and private foreign investment has been, again, to make Cuba's foreign policy more closely resemble that of a Caribbean country.<sup>128</sup>

The reforms are definite steps in the right direction, yet they will not in and of themselves alleviate Cuba's economic difficulties. A broader, more comprehensive commitment to a competitive internal market mechanism along with privatization of small- and medium-sized activities is necessary to bring greater efficiency to Cuba's internal markets and to attract the foreign investment that Cuba so desperately needs in this post-CMEA

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<sup>127</sup>Ibid., 413.

<sup>128</sup>Lowenthal and Treverton, 209-214.

world. Further, without new oil the aforementioned projects do not promise to bring in much more than a billion dollars in new revenue annually in the coming years. The loss of the CMEA trade is four times this amount, and the reduction of Soviet oil deliveries along with the expected smaller sugar harvest, lower sugar prices and the tightening of the United States economic blockade darken the prospect for Cuba's reversal of its declining economic performance.

The economic reforms in Cuba have transformed a centrally-planned economy heavily subsidized by the Soviet Union to one that is more responsive to market mechanism. The new emphasis on foreign investment and tourism, structural reforms in the operation of foreign trade, and the realization of the impossibility of central planning have combined to transform the nature of Cuba's economic mechanism.<sup>129</sup> The second hypothesis tested is: the greater the ability of a regime to transform its economy, the greater the chance that the regime will survive.

### C. CIVIL SOCIETY

This section attempts to understand Cuban civil society before and after the Cuban Revolution to determine the potential for the formation of an opposition to the current regime. The hypothesis to be tested is: the more developed the civil society and the more autonomous the political culture, the greater the likelihood that the civil society will oppose the regime. Accepting Alfred Stepan's assertion that it is essentially civil society that transforms the regime,<sup>130</sup> this section examines Cuban civil society to determine its ability to

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<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 407.

<sup>130</sup>Stepan, 1-10.

oppose the current regime.

Living under a totalitarian regime for more than a generation drains much of a society's rebellious energy. In Cuba, civil society never developed, so there is essentially nothing to be restored. In the true corporatist nature, only "official" groups and organizations are sanctioned by the state, itself a monolithic and ideological institution. Under these circumstances society becomes a passive agent, to be led in the direction desired by the regime. And yet, the belief that the state represents society is natural in a consolidated revolutionary system like Cuba's which assumes a unanimity of interests that is fictional. Over time this becomes part of the ruling myth. It is precisely this ideological stranglehold that screens new ideas out and preserves the false unity among the leader, the party, the state and the nation.<sup>131</sup>

Once the totalitarian state is consolidated it acquires its own properties. It absorbs society and remains independent of and unrestrained by it. Institutions and organizations serve to nourish the state, not to disperse its strengths. For the most part this is evident in Cuba where there are no significant groups active in the social milieu that could claim recognition.<sup>132</sup> In the absence of organizational pluralism or effective civil organizations that can function independently of state dominance, society is unable to fully express itself, much less accommodate to the changes that come with time. Rigidity and decay become the standard. In this type of atmosphere, the very idea of challenging the system and attempting to remove its leaders is probably alien to a society increasingly accustomed to little more than

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<sup>131</sup>del Aguila, 90.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., 90.

sheer survival. Consequently, life in Cuba is becoming nasty, brutish and short. No redemptive impulse, if felt, can be expressed effectively because the notion of radical new change is inconceivable, even if the dreariness of the present cries for new departures.<sup>133</sup>

Cuban communism has thoroughly decapitated those institutions - like universities - that have defied central authority in other communist countries, and from where protest movements were launched.<sup>134</sup> The intellectuals at the universities, active against other dictatorships in the past, have been coopted institutionally and frightened into silence and passivity. The Cuban system places two choices before the academics. They can submit to state control in return for "official" support and privileges, or they can refuse and be marginalized, jailed or worse. Hence, Cuban universities once known for their rebellious students (like Castro), their political activism and zealous faculties, are now controlled institutions. The universities' inaction is further due to the fact that selection and performance are judged on political criteria. Their thorough de-politicization - in the sense that Marxism is the only acceptable doctrine - indicates that universities are not repositories of anti-system behavior. Nor are they likely to be agents of change.<sup>135</sup> Thus the unconventional, defiant behavior often expected of academia and intellectuals is silenced in Cuba, where there are few critical voices left.

Neither are the churches actively pursuing avenues to move from communism to a less restrictive and repressive society. They have failed to provide the moral leadership from

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<sup>133</sup>Ibid., 91.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid., 91.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid., 91.

which many may well hunger. In this, Protestant sects as well as the Catholic Church have been forced to endorse the turgid claims of Liberation Theology, equating liberation with salvation. The revolution is for the poor, so it must be supported and its enterprise praised.<sup>136</sup> In effect, the church has become subservient to the state. Thus a potential source of moral leadership to the Cuban masses instead preaches obedience breeding a sense of inertia and fatalism.

A third source of potential anti-regime action is the human rights groups which are without any concrete social base because of fears that association would bring repression. The human rights' community finds itself under harassment and social ostracism. For example, Elizardo Sanchez, a human rights leader, was jailed because he called General Ochoa's execution in 1989 murder. Individual courage is coupled with organizational weaknesses, scarce resources and the hostile environment in Cuba. All of this works against the movement's expansion and ability to get a democratic message out to a society so controlled through propaganda.

These elements, if mobilized, could move the masses, but other elements, like a well-defined anti-Castro faction, are not yet present. Potential leaders may be building contacts and organizing networks that would serve as a new foundation, but their radius of action and the obstacles confronting them are so large. And so the critical mass necessary for even minor breakthroughs cannot take shape. Individual acts of courage and defiance do not necessarily lead to meaningful protest necessary for creating a consciousness for change.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup>Ibid., 92.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., 102.

Further, without change from the middle or upper-middle ranks, the system can stave off collapse and contain dangerous penetrations.

Most Cubans have experienced neither capitalism nor the hardest years of the revolution. Their culture, like their ideology, is a result of the new social relations brought about by the revolutionary process. As a consequence, state protection of individual and community rights, access to social life and work, and the opportunity for individual participation - in short, the elements of this new "civility" that are in fact the basis of social life in general - are incorporated into the fabric of their political culture.<sup>138</sup> These elements are social values reinforced by ideology.

One notion that individuals acquired as part of their understanding of the revolution was reflected in their idea of work. Most Cubans take it for granted that, whatever the country's economic situation, all citizens will be guaranteed a job. Consequently, notions of a fixed income, social security and the satisfaction of basic necessities have become part of the expectations of daily life.<sup>139</sup> Ideologically, the most conspicuous component of the revolutionary political culture is equality. This is the notion that the regime will provide all public services to the whole population either free of charge or at subsidized rates, and equal access to basic consumer foods. These values are essential to political consensus, but at the same time inequalities persist as a result of occupational, regional or urban-rural differences.

Two final ideological components are national defense and internationalism. Revolution

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<sup>138</sup>Rafael Hernández and Haroldo Dilla, "Political Culture and Popular Participation in Cuba," *Latin American Perspectives* 69, no.2 (Spring 1991): 38.

<sup>139</sup>*Ibid.*, 41.



intensifies feelings of nationalism and patriotism. Additionally, the United States' policy toward Cuba has also contributed to the identification of national defense as a priority. In that national defense is a part of every day life, Cubans are conditioned to expect a new crisis with the United States as the tensions between the two nations reinvent themselves anew with changes in the international environment and U.S. foreign policy.

#### **D. U.S. FOREIGN POLICY**

This section attempts to understand to what degree U.S. foreign policy acts as an agent of regime change in Cuba. The final hypothesis to be tested is: the more U.S. foreign policy (inadvertently) supports a communist regime, the greater the likelihood that communism will survive. One central clue to understanding this hypothesis is the recognition that the stated foreign policy objectives and the ends the policy achieves are not congruent. Specifically, in the case of Cuba, the stated U.S. foreign policy aim since the Cuban Revolution of 1959 has been to end communist rule under Fidel Castro. Because this goal has eluded the United States for 37 years, perhaps the means of bringing about regime transition in Cuba, namely confrontation with the Cuban regime, does not support the desired end: regime transition.

After the interventionist period (direct military) in U.S.-Cuban relations ended in the early 1930s, Washington began instead to rely increasingly on the Cuban presidents to mediate tensions between nationalism and promote United States interests. Public corruption and the lack of real political power in semi-sovereign Cuba reinforced the tradition of using public office for personal gain and brought to office governments like the Auténtico administrations, that wasted Cuban assets in ineffectual nationalistic rhetoric and a legacy of

unprecedented corruption. From this era of corruption emerged Fulgencio Batista who broke constitutional order by overthrowing President Carlos Prío Socarrás just prior to the 1952 national elections.<sup>140</sup>

United States relations with Batista turned out to be more amicable than those it had had with the previous Auténtico presidents. Batista met a long-standing United States desire by breaking relations with the Soviet Union - which he himself had established in 1942. He went further and outlawed the Cuban Communist Party. He created more favorable conditions for foreign capital and oversaw a significant increase in United States investments and tourism.<sup>141</sup> Ties between the United States and Cuba were further strengthened in this period as Washington grew more concerned about the question of "hemispheric defense."

The rise and fall of the Batista dictatorship coincided with the first Eisenhower administration (1953-1956) in Washington and also with slow changes in United States policy toward Latin America that eventually affected relations with Havana. Eisenhower and his advisers retained the Cold- War perspective on foreign policy that they had inherited from the Truman era often furthering that policy with notions of rolling back communism instead of merely containing it.<sup>142</sup> Well into the second Eisenhower term, the principal theaters of the Cold War were in Europe and Asia. Latin America was considered reasonably secure from

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<sup>140</sup>Harold Molineu, United States Policy Toward Latin America: From Regionalism to Globalism (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), 169.

<sup>141</sup>Jules R. Benjamin, The United States and the Origins of the Cuban Revolution: An Empire of Liberty in an Age of National Liberation (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), 123.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid., 134.

communist threat. In fact, Washington did not worry much about communism in the hemisphere until it discovered the “subversion” of the government of Guatemala in the early 1950s. This episode caused only brief alarm because the “infected” regime of Jacobo Arbenz was easily dispatched in 1954 with the aid of a new weapon in the United States Cold-War arsenal - covert warfare undertaken by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).<sup>143</sup> With only minor damage to the United States’ image as defender of freedom, the tainted regime was uprooted and the country’s communist party destroyed.

If the United States was able to ease its mind about communist control of a Western Hemisphere state, the problems of communism as a strategic and social threat still remained. Ever since the late 1940s, the CIA had warned the White House of two special dangers from communism in Latin America. The first was that in a war with the Soviet Union, Latin American communists could attempt to sabotage the flow of strategic materials moving north to the United States. The real concern, however, was the second theme of the intelligence reports: that communist movements would take advantage of the social tensions and political instability in Latin America to threaten United States interests.<sup>144</sup> The problem was that to have an effective policy in Latin America the United States had to find an effective antidote to anti-Americanism and economic nationalism. As the overthrow of Arbenz indicated, the Eisenhower administration was willing to make the shift from military to covert actions to protect American interests in Latin America and to stem the tide of anti-Americanism. However, it was not willing to make concessions to economic nationalism continuing to

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<sup>143</sup>Ibid., 134.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 135.

discourage statist economics while encouraging regimes that protected American investments.

By the late 1950s, the rising tide of hemisphere economic nationalism and anti-American sentiment, the Soviet "economic offensive," and the domestic criticisms of coziness with dictators all combined to place the United States in an uncharacteristically defensive posture concerning developments in Latin America.<sup>145</sup> As a result, when threats mounted against the regime of Fulgencio Batista, the State Department worked to wrestle the United States from its entanglement with the dictator. This was no easy task because of the American belief that whatever Batista's difficulties with the Cuban people, he represented greater stability than would exist in his absence.

United States officials were able to see the opportunities as well as the dangers in Batista's decline. The restoration of constitutional law and civil liberties and the end of a military insurrection that by the fall of 1958 was having a devastating effect on United States economic interests were promising prospects.<sup>146</sup> Still, there remained the practical questions of how Batista might be removed and how the United States could influence the choice of his successor.

As Washington judgements of Castro ranged from moderately to decidedly negative, there was a growing consensus that he would most likely be Batista's successor unless the United States intervened and arranged for a more acceptable replacement. The attempt to create such an alternative and to prepare the way for Batista to step down was slow because there was opposition in some segments of the United States government - the Commerce and

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<sup>145</sup>Ibid., 141.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid., 153.

Treasury Departments - which thought in terms of protecting United States investments which Batista had defended. Batista was seen as a loyal and effective cold warrior who had defended the island against communism, maintained stability on the island and cooperated with the United States in its business endeavors.<sup>147</sup>

Only at the last minute, it seemed, did the United States recognize the seriousness of the Cuban problem and Castro's challenge to Batista's regime. As difficult as the situation appeared, no one in Washington seemed to have realized that the end was near. Batista's sudden departure on January 1, 1959 effectively ended the search for an acceptable third alternative to take over in Cuba. Although the end of the Batista era was disturbing to the United States government, still, the most fundamental North American belief - that the structure of the relationship with Cuba could not be broken - remained initially unshaken.<sup>148</sup> Certain that the United States economic presence in Cuba was both beneficial and essential and that each past government of the island had accepted this, nothing more serious than renewed bargaining over the protection of United States interests was expected.<sup>149</sup>

However, this was not the case, as much of Castro's support had come from segments of the anti-Batista movement that Washington had not favored and over which it did not have anything approaching its usual influence. Castro's removal of those opposed to the communists - President Manuel Urrutia and Huber Matos, a veteran and hero of the Sierra Maestra campaign and military governor of Camagüey Province - was seen in Washington as

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<sup>147</sup>Ibid., 156.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid., 157.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid., 167.

an increase in communist influence in Cuba. Eventually, Castro began to take the position that attacks on communists in Cuba were tantamount to attacks on the Revolution itself. Anti-communism became anti-nationalism - a connection facilitated by Batista's adoption of North American-style McCarthyism during the 1950s.<sup>150</sup> At this point it appears that Castro had already decided that an eventual showdown with the United States was inevitable and used the communist party as a vehicle for an opening with the Soviet Union, the only possible counterweight to the United States.

The most explicit definition of the strategic role of Cuba came in the 1962 missile crisis, but the continuing propensity for United States policy makers to see Cuba as a key player in the struggle between the great powers was also important.<sup>151</sup> The Cuban missile crisis developed in October 1962, when United States officials discovered that the Soviet Union was in the process of installing, in Cuba, medium- and long- range missiles with nuclear warheads. The Kennedy administration, deciding that the missiles had to be removed, imposed a naval blockade around Cuba and issued an ultimatum to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev that declared that any missiles fired from Cuba would be considered as having come directly from the Soviet Union. After thirteen days of tension in which the world was placed on the brink of nuclear war, Khrushchev agreed to dismantle and remove the missiles. In the deal reached by the two nations, the Soviet Union would remove the missiles if the United States would pledge neither to invade Cuba nor to allow others to attack. Castro was not pleased at the removal of the missiles nor at appearing as a pawn in great power politics,

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<sup>150</sup>Ibid., 185.

<sup>151</sup>Molineu, 170.

and at being left subject to the United States “no invasion” promise at a time when Cuban paranoia of an impending United States invasion was at its highest.

For the United States, the missile crisis provided an opportunity to discredit the Cuban revolution. Clearly, it was argued, Castro was in power only because of Soviet props. He had betrayed the revolution’s quest for independence. Cuba was no better in 1962 than it was in 1958. Castro was a Soviet puppet, Cuba, a Soviet satellite state. This was certainly no model for the rest of the hemisphere to follow. This argument may have had some short-term benefits, but Castro survived 1962, and his revolution still represented, in Latin America, an envied symbol of defiance.<sup>152</sup>

In that United States’ security was a function of politics around the globe, not confined to one region or country, Latin America was just another place, albeit a special one, where the battle was fought. Enemies in this hemisphere were a definite problem, but communist enemies in particular were not to be tolerated because (1) they were communist, and (2) communists were sympathetic to the Soviet Union.<sup>153</sup> These two foreign policy considerations left no room for challenge, yet that is exactly what Castro did by becoming a client state of the Soviet Union. The United States found itself faced with two major adversaries embodied in one Cuban government: (1) a Soviet client state and communist ally; and (2) a troublesome neighbor whose independence flouted United States hegemony.<sup>154</sup> Cuba breeched hemispheric limits in two important areas - embracing communism and

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<sup>152</sup>Ibid., 172.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid., 94.

<sup>154</sup>Ibid., 95.

becoming a Soviet client state - which combined hardened the United States' hostility toward the Cuban government under Castro.

Thus, despite the demise of the Soviet Union, there is still some life in the anti-communist project, demonstrating that anti-communism and anti-Sovietism are not completely synonymous. There may no longer be a need or justification for the latter, but anti-communism can still survive as a separate issue.<sup>155</sup> Since the "threat" from Cuba no longer exists, Castro's most strident opponents are rejuvenated and ready to deliver the *coup de grace* to his regime. Thus the anti-communist ideology maintains its legitimacy in this post-Cold War era in support of a previously marginalized goal: democracy and human rights.

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<sup>155</sup>Ibid., 97.





#### IV. COMPARISON OF COUNTRIES

This work examines Cuban communism in the post-Cold War era. The question to be answered is: how viable is communism in Cuba now that communism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has failed? The aim of this work thus far has been to test the four hypotheses to determine their effects on regime transition in Cuba, and comparatively in Poland and China. The hypotheses are as follows: (1) the greater the legitimacy of the regime, the greater the chance of regime survival; (2) the greater the ability of a regime to transform its economy, the greater the chance of regime survival; (3) the more developed the civil society, the greater the likelihood that civil society will oppose the regime; and (4) the more United States foreign policy (inadvertently) supports a communist regime, the greater the likelihood that communism will survive. This chapter will compare communism in Cuba with communism in Poland and China to try to isolate variables that contribute to the survival of communism in Cuba. The following table depicts the four variables that have been tested and the outcomes in the countries examined.

	Variables				Outcome
	Regime Legitimacy	Economic Performance	Autonomy of CS/PC	U.S. Foreign Policy	
Poland	-	-	+	-	Not Communist
China	+	+	-	+	Communist
Cuba	+	-/+	-	+	Communist

Table 1. Hypothesis Testing Matrix

## A. REGIME LEGITIMACY

East Europeans did not voluntarily adopt socialism after careful examination of its possible advantages and pitfalls. Stalin imposed his communist vision on Eastern Europe with deadly force, perhaps explaining the thoroughness with which the bulk of Eastern Europe changed in less than a decade from the end of World War II until Stalin's death. It is the communism of the Stalinist strain that could have created such a transformation in such a short time.

The new East European regimes swept aside private property, wiped out the middle class, collectivized agriculture, brought millions of country people to work in the city, dramatically increased the number of working women, brought entirely new people to power, reorganized and repopulated all levels of government, created new systems of education and scholarship, eliminated freedom of expression, turned East European trade away from its natural partnership with Western Europe toward the Soviet Union, propagated a new public ethic, built a strong military, and, in general, seized control of all aspects of public life.<sup>156</sup>

Also in Eastern Europe, particularly in the Soviet Union, Stalin developed the "cult of personality" after World War II, and for a short time his charisma unified the Soviet bloc. This short-lived period was soon replaced by Khrushchev's revelations about Stalin's murderous actions and his public denouncement of Stalin. This de-characterization of Stalin, among other things, led to a general de-legitimation of the Communist Party itself. An analogous process occurred in China, but the effects were much more dramatic than in

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<sup>156</sup>Byrnes, 8.

Eastern Europe. Mao Zedong had been a genuine charismatic leader who, in the minds of many Chinese, was deified. Therefore Mao's fall from grace was greater in scope than Stalin's. The Chinese Communist revolution under Mao Zedong achieved a tremendous victory in conquering the Chinese Nationalists (Guomindang) and taking control of one of the largest countries in the world. Mao came to symbolize the Chinese revolution and until his death legitimized the Communist regime.<sup>157</sup>

From a comparative perspective, what is striking about the histories of Cuban and Chinese communism is that a charismatic leader (like Lenin) fostering a cult of the personality (like Stalin) tried to industrialize the country through a form of state planning that denounced the market while mobilizing the agrarian sector (as in China), under the leadership of a single dictator whose control over the party was, for the most part, absolute. Unlike in Poland, China and Cuba each tried to create a "new socialist man" in the course of industrialization and relied on a highly ideological campaign of popular mobilization to do so.<sup>158</sup>

Here the differences with the Stalin model in Poland may perhaps be best explained by the Chinese Communist party's long and close connection with the rural population; by the lack of a powerful party in Cuba until 1975; and by the fact that Mao and Castro were not only the fathers of their country's revolutions but also the authors of the ambitious development plans that in Poland were the product of a leader far less secure in his authority

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<sup>157</sup>Lucien W. Pye, "Tiananmen and Chinese Political Culture," *Asian Survey*, 30, no. 4 (April 1990): 333.

<sup>158</sup>Smith, 186.

over the people.<sup>159</sup> Even today, after 37 years of rule, Castro's authority is essentially unopposed in Cuba despite severe economic conditions and tremendous external political pressures.

## **B. ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION**

In Poland, the communists' attempt at partial economic reforms taken in the final years of the communist regime dismantled much of the central planning apparatus and allowed a small private sector to begin to develop. The reforms failed, however, because they were too cautious in creating a real market environment, and because they were generally hostile to a real privatization of the economy.<sup>160</sup> The regime was also deeply illegitimate, and this represented a fundamental constraint on reforms. The government could not appeal to the public for restraint, patience, and trust - key elements in any successful reform program.<sup>161</sup>

China's present economic boom began with the reforms initiated in 1978, and since that time the Chinese economy has experienced real annual growth averaging about 9 percent. The sheer speed of the growth is staggering. According to economists, if China enjoys political stability, and if the global trading system remains open to its exports, China could experience 7 or 8 percent annual growth rates into the next century. Yet economists are also predicting that the economy will have to slow down as diminishing returns are likely to set in eventually as the economy becomes more efficient and sophisticated. One of the great uncertainties of China's economic "takeoff," if it can be sustained, is how will such economic

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<sup>159</sup>Ibid., 186.

<sup>160</sup>Sachs, 36.

<sup>161</sup>Ibid., 36.

growth affect the political realm? Because uneven development has dramatically widened the economic gap, the socioeconomic implications could threaten the stability of the regime. Further a strong economic sector relatively independent of the state has been established in China, one with its own laws and relative freedom from state intervention. According to Huntington, with the expansion of the middle class comes the demand for democratization. This does not mean that China's economy is slipping wholly out of the control of the current regime. The 1989 crackdown of the pro-democracy movement in Tiananmen Square speaks to this truth. The crackdown in 1989 notwithstanding, China's door once opened cannot be closed.

Cuba's economic reforms, on the other hand, have flirted around the margins of marketization because the current regime, mindful of the unintended adverse consequences of market reforms in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, is hesitant to make significant structural changes. There are some instances where Cuba has opened its economy to the private sector, but again Cuban leaders are wary of the destructive snowball effect as the private sector demands increasing inputs, accumulates wealth and presents a frontal challenge to the state. Further, a necessary condition for Cuba's reintegration into the capitalist market is export diversification. But the potential for significant expansion of exports is limited because of the United States embargo and natural and technical impediments - lack of advanced technology, poor quality of Cuban ore and fuel shortage.

Finally, the survival of communism as an economic and political system in either Cuba or China, is more promising in the former than the latter. In order for communism in Cuba and China to end, both countries must undergo three necessary (but not necessarily

complementary) processes: (1) the breakdown of the current communist totalitarian regime, (2) the introduction and installation of a democratic system, and (3) the consolidation of this new system. As Huntington has observed, however, one process of democratization does not necessarily lead to the next one. The breakdown of totalitarianism often leads to an authoritarian rather than a democratic regime. In setting itself free from the constraints of communist ideology, China has arguably already moved from totalitarianism to authoritarianism.

This work focused on the economic performance of the three countries as a causal factor leading to the *breakdown of the current Communist totalitarian regime*, recognizing that the economic performance can lead to favorable or unfavorable outcomes in either country. According to Robert Dahl in Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition,<sup>162</sup> as countries with hegemonic (or totalitarian) systems move to high levels of economic development a centrally dominated social order is increasingly difficult to maintain. Further, economic development itself generates the conditions of a pluralistic social order. The more a regime succeeds in transforming the economy (and with it, inevitably, the society) the more it is threatened with political failure. Thus because Cuba has not significantly transformed its economy as China has, communism is more likely to survive in Cuba than in China.

### C. CIVIL SOCIETY

Even the crudest totalitarian system requires a certain amount of societal participation. Such systems thrive on political passivity, but they also need a certain amount of participation,

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<sup>162</sup>Robert Dahl, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 1-11.

even in fictional forms such as voting in 'elections' designed to foster the appearance of democratic legitimacy. Moral resistance, though seemingly hopeless against systems that are based on political and military force, functions like a grain of sand in the cogwheels of a vast but vulnerable machine.<sup>163</sup> The reinvigoration of the civil society in Poland - even one that avoided overtly political activities in favor of participation in social activities, education, an underground press, the exchange of information and opinion - had enormous anti-totalitarian power.

The first step in the self-liberation of civil society in Poland was the successful implementation of an oppositional, rather than a dissident, resistance strategy in response to the crushing of the strike movement of 1976. The most important social actor in the creation of this opposition was the workers union which led to the foundation of other organizations that together contested state policy.<sup>164</sup> The workers' party foundation and practice was the linchpin that reinvigorated Polish civil society, inspiring others in Poland to not only to contest state policy but also to form organizations and to participate in society in any form. This move from dissent to opposition created the public space that civil society came to occupy.

For China, the 1989 Tiananmen Square student protest movement can be best understood as the expression of a fundamental conflict between an authoritarian state and an emerging civil society. Further, the diffusion of state power created considerable space for

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<sup>163</sup>Bronislaw Geremek, "Problems of Postcommunism: Civil Society Then and Now," Journal of Democracy, 3, no. 2 (April 1992): 4.

<sup>164</sup>Bernhard, 10.



a more autonomous civil society to emerge. The changing nature of the Chinese economy and society mean that the Chinese state must look for new ways to govern because as it stands now the three entities are moving toward another collision which may or may not be resolved with the authoritarian state at the helm.

The changes in the Cuban economy, civil society and the state are such that the latter remains in firm control of the two former entities. The actions of the students who organized and participated in the Tiananmen Square protest movement could not be duplicated in Cuba simply because the opportunity to meet, plan and organize at the mass level is small. The swift Cuban government response to the members and leaders of *Concilio Cubano* - an umbrella organization of small opposition groups in Cuba which had planned to hold its first convention the weekend (24 February 1996) that Cuban MiGs shot down unarmed civilian aircraft - speak to this truth.

The evolution of Cuban political culture and civil society under the strong and lingering impact of the Cuban Revolution has essentially drained much of the society's ability to fight to exercise participatory democracy and popular power in Cuba. The Cuban citizenry has a political culture born of the country's singular historical experience which has been manipulated and refined over the last three decades by the Cuban Revolution. In Cuba, small violent outbreaks of political protest do occur. But unlike the Tiananmen Square protest movement, they have been rapidly quelled. And this swift action by the state security forces seems to be enough to dissuade, at least for a time, further protests from occurring.

#### D. U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

U.S. foreign policy in Poland before 1956 was based upon the hope that nationalist breakaways from the Warsaw Pact on the model of Tito's Yugoslavia would undermine Soviet hegemony. After the Prague Spring in August of 1968 the emphasis shifted to change with the consent - however grudgingly - of the Soviet Union rather than against its will.<sup>165</sup> Within the broad framework of a policy of differentiation aimed at gradual transformation of Soviet imperial control, the short-term objectives of U.S. foreign policy was largely based upon economics and security. That is especially the case with economic concessions and sanctions. Between 1982 and 1987 the step-by-step lifting of economic sanctions against Poland was related to specific measures of domestic liberalization. The detailed programming of visits of high-ranking dignitaries was also a method of signaling support to regimes or peoples or both.<sup>166</sup> Currently, Poland is a critical element in U.S. calculations about post-Cold War order in Europe. As a state that wants to join the security alliance of the West or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Poland is a critical geographic bridge or bulwark in the security architecture of the new Europe. Thus NATO expansion to include Poland has become - at the U.S.' initiative - a question of "not if, but when."<sup>167</sup>

The highpoint in China's relations with the United States came in 1994 with President Clinton's decision to "de-link" China's most-favored-nation (MFN) trading status from its

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<sup>165</sup>Ibid., 78.

<sup>166</sup>Ibid., 91.

<sup>167</sup>Sherman W. Garnett, "Poland: Bulwark or Bridge?" *Foreign Policy*, no. 102 (Spring 1996): 66.

human rights conditions. On that basis there was a substantial improvement in U.S.-China relations. China made no major concessions at all on human rights. In fact, the U.S. State Department's 1994 annual human rights report painted a grim picture of human rights in China and the PRC deemed the report interference in its internal affairs. Notwithstanding the bleak prognosis on the improvement of human rights in China, the U.S. strategy toward China has been multifaceted, and while human rights remain important, it was one of a number of goals the United States has in its foreign policy with China. Engagement on a series of fronts from trade issues to the situation on the Korean and Taiwanese Peninsulas now dominate U.S.-China relations.

The United States has huge stakes in the political transition of China. By remaining engaged in the region and rejecting Cold War-style containment strategies toward China, the United States hopes to improve the odds that China's next generation of leaders will be more moderate and less ideologically driven. As the differences between Deng Xiaoping and Mao Zedong make clear, leadership matters, especially in nondemocratic countries.<sup>168</sup> The MFN decision reveals that economic interests now weigh more heavily in the balance of U.S. foreign policy decision-making. At the same time, China's economic and international power is growing and, as this occurs, China's effects on global economic, security, environmental and other systems will increase.<sup>169</sup> By engaging China and encouraging its participation in regional and international forums, over the long term the U.S. foreign policy seeks to affect

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<sup>168</sup>David M. Lampton, "America's China Policy in the Age of the Finance Minister: Clinton Ends Linkage," *The China Quarterly*, no. 139 (September 1994): 622.

<sup>169</sup>*Ibid.*, 626.

China's political transition which the United States hopes will occur as a result of the economic changes taking place.



## V. CONCLUSION

Those who continue to predict Castro's fall from power have a compelling moral reason for wishing for the collapse of a totalitarian regime: they regard it as oppressive and unjust. Analyzing why the communist regime in Cuba survives is helpful in that it draws attention to the interplay between the inner workings of the communism in Cuba and the effects of U.S. policy toward Cuba as it relates to Castro's ability to remain in power. By way of explanation, predictions regarding Castro's imminent fall have been less ardent in the last two years after the regime's survival of the 1992-1993 "special period in time of peace." The predictions have failed to materialize largely because they have relied on inexact interpretations of events in Eastern Europe and China and because they have failed to take into account certain aspects regarding the internal dynamics of the Cuban political system.<sup>170</sup>

One of those political realities is that, as the history of the modern state suggests, with few exceptions national political leaders overall have enormous staying power. Such power is magnified when leaders exercise an authoritarian style of leadership, more so when their style is accompanied by a totalitarian political system that reaches into the innermost aspects of people's social, economic and personal lives.<sup>171</sup> The following examples in history are instructive: the authoritarian models like Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua or the Duvalier regimes that remained in power for years in Haiti or Saddam Hussein, whose country's

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<sup>170</sup>J. Richard Planas, "Why Does Castro Survive?" World Affairs, 154, no. 3 (Winter 1992): 87.

<sup>171</sup>*Ibid.*, 87.

economy has experienced a greater economic decline and more political turmoil than Cuba.<sup>172</sup>

Castro's ability to remain in power through one of the most turbulent times in Cuban history when the Soviet Union collapsed and stopped the massive economic subsidies suggest that there are insufficient grounds to be too optimistic about the demise of the communist regime because Castro is not yet confronting any of these situations and because he is more clever at transforming his regime to meet the demands of the day.

Further, predictions about the collapse of unjust political regimes seem to indicate an overemphasis on the role of the masses who spontaneously rise up in protest to overthrow a tyrannical leader.<sup>173</sup> An understanding of why men rebel or conversely why men do not rebel has to be linked to an understanding of internal and external causes leading to such action. Historical popular uprisings, such as the one that led to the dethronement of Louis XVI, or the Bolshevik revolt against the czar, suggest that a minimum degree of freedom of expression, communication, and association are needed for the masses to be able to spearhead a revolution or a counterrevolution. Otherwise, the spontaneous convergence of thousands of unorganized, driven-to-despair individuals into a unified force of opposition at a specific point in time, and strong enough to topple a totalitarian regime, is not a social phenomenon that occurs easily. This act requires the coalescing of various elements - not the least of which is overcoming fear - within people totally unrelated and without previous communication and planning.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup>Ibid., 87.

<sup>173</sup>Ibid., 87.

<sup>174</sup>Ibid., 88.

The demise of communism in Eastern Europe is instructional. In these countries neither the masses nor the military brought down communism, and none of the regimes, with the possible exception of the Soviet Union, collapsed due to military or economic pressure. In all cases, including Romania, the civilian leadership failed to prevent the spread of public demonstrations at the outset, something that was perceived by the masses as a sign of weakness on the part of the regimes. The masses took only the space that was *conceded* to them by weakened and tired bureaucratic leaders who lacked enough determination to do what the Chinese did in order to safeguard their system.<sup>175</sup>

Thus by relying on a historically weak thesis that expects too much of the spontaneous capability of the masses, some people misinterpret the lessons of Eastern Europe. On that basis they recommend measures or make statements hoping to see the events that took place in Eastern Europe duplicated in Cuba. Unfortunately, in Cuba the possibility to meet, plan, and organize at the mass level is very small. And when a heroic political dissident comes along and tries to gain political space within the regime, Castro's resorting to "spontaneous" acts of repudiation by the masses or swift action by the state security tends to be enough to dissuade others from joining the protests.<sup>176</sup>

In explaining why the communist regime remains in Cuba, nowhere is Castro's political ability demonstrated better than in how he presently manages the regime. The regime's frontline defense - that which makes the system an efficient one in preventing the discontent from coalescing into an effective opposition force - is not the state security, or the

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<sup>175</sup>Ibid., 88.

<sup>176</sup>Ibid., 88.



armed forces, or the party, or any of the mass organizations. Its first line of defense is a by-product of the system itself and is that which provides Castro with its legitimacy: the individual's belief in the revolution which translates into their corresponding need to stimulate; that is, her or his need to feign loyalty and adherence to the revolution's policies as a means of survival. Simulation makes it difficult for any meaningful latent opposition to organize because, to a large extent, it is not easy for those who silently oppose the regime to identify with each other. Thus while the system may have failed at fostering the attitudes of the new man, insofar as fear prevails, it does what Castro wants it to do: it fosters conformity amongst the masses; it fosters external acquiescence to revolutionary behavior.<sup>177</sup>

After the Soviet subsidies stopped, Cuba was on the brink of economic collapse in 1992 and 1993. During "the special period in time of peace," there were power outages in Havana because the regime could not come up with the money to buy emergency fuel supplies.<sup>178</sup> At this point there was no serious prospect of economic improvement unless major changes were made. Castro demonstrated that he is not so rigid and dogmatic that he would forgo change when change was necessary to save his regime. When backed into a corner Castro decided to transform the Cuban economy toward freer markets. This ability to adjust to circumstances helps explain the regime's durability. Although some of the transition to freer markets has occurred within the framework of the formal economy, a significant cornerstone of this transition is the regime's welcoming of private foreign investment.

One of Castro's first steps in refashioning the Cuban economy was the vast expansion

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<sup>177</sup>Ibid., 89.

<sup>178</sup>Rieff, 64.

of the tourism industry. Tourism has replaced sugar as the island's principal hard currency earner. In 1993, Castro permitted Cubans to own and spend dollars and hold dollar-denominated bank accounts. He also authorized self-employment in some 100 occupations. The next step, in September 1994, was the reestablishment of farmers' markets. After meeting their contracts with state enterprises, farmers now may sell their surplus production for whatever the market will bear. Since December 1994 citizens have been allowed to sell handicrafts and a variety of light manufactures in artisan markets.<sup>179</sup>

Foreign investment has also been key to Cuba's economic transformation. The new influx of capital has been augmented by the foreign investment law enacted in mid-1995 which makes it possible for foreign investors to own Cuban enterprises outright, not just in tourism but in virtually every area of the economy.<sup>180</sup> Figures are difficult to come by but an estimate by the U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council places foreign investment to date at over \$5 billion and growing. This is a respectable amount, but not nearly enough to complete the economic transformation Cuba needs.<sup>181</sup> Thus the economic transformation in Cuba continues along the same model as in China but on a smaller, less successful scale. Cuba is still not out of the economic woods, but the regime has demonstrated its ability to transform the economy enough to survive.

Political change often accompanies economic reforms. Cubans are mindful of the

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<sup>179</sup>Wayne S. Smith "Cuba's Long Reform," Foreign Affairs, 75, no.2 (March/April 1996): 101.

<sup>180</sup>*Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>181</sup>*Ibid.*, 102.

socioeconomic changes taking place in Eastern Europe and Russia, and have vowed that Cuba will not allow the economic transformation process to get out of hand. Cuban officials argue that the midst of an economic crisis is not the time for political experimentation. Some go even further and see Cuba following a Chinese model of reform, which allows significant economic liberalization but minimal political change.<sup>182</sup> Such a model may be appropriate for Cuba's situation today, but it is not likely to remain so over the long run. China is a huge country with oil, coal, and other natural resources and a domestic market so large it is almost irresistible to international business.

Further, China can be self-sufficient to a degree that Cuba cannot, and is therefore less vulnerable to external pressures. To reinsert itself into the international economic community, Cuba must make more concessions and adjustments than China. China has little pressure for political liberalization from its Asian neighbors, the United States, or Europe. This is not the case for Cuba.<sup>183</sup> For example, a U.S. law, Helms-Burton, seeks to punish third party nations that trade with Cuba, while another U.S. provision, Most-Favored Nation status, significantly encourages U.S. trade with China while not punishing other nations that do likewise.

In spite of his enthusiastic comments about what he saw on his November 1995 visit to China, Castro's heart is not in economic liberalization, let alone political reform. The regime has simply done what it must to survive, and increasingly, survival is its only discernible goal. If evidence were needed that the revolution is over, the obsession with dollars provides it. Cuba, while still free of American political control, grows more dependent

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<sup>182</sup>Ibid., 104.

<sup>183</sup>Ibid., 104.

every day on the U.S. currency and the world economic system in which the United States is dominant. Without American backing for loans from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, Cuba's economic destiny is likely to resemble that of its Caribbean neighbors. But the Castro regime is locked in the world that existed when Fidel and Che were in the Sierra Maestra, a world in which the economy was not yet global and geopolitics, rather than geoeconomics, was the essence of international relations.<sup>184</sup>

As stated earlier, in 1992, during the deep economic crisis of "the special period in time of peace," the U.S. Congress approved the Cuban Democracy Act. A familiar idea behind the law was the concept of civil society in which economic reforms by a totalitarian state lead ineluctably to political reforms and, eventually, a market democracy. The measure declared that "the fall of Communism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe... provides the United States and the international democratic community with an unprecedented opportunity to promote a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba."<sup>185</sup>

Passage of the measure coincided with the recognition in Havana that even successful macroeconomic development would not deliver soon enough to provide for people's basic material needs. Hence the decision to legalize the dollar, but by last year the regime sensed that that trend was getting out of hand. Dissidence, while still relatively minor, was on the rise. In addition, Castro, forced to grant the Roman Catholic Church in Cuba some freedom of action after 1993, has responded to the overtures of the Pope and has been deeply anxious

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<sup>184</sup>Reiff, 71.

<sup>185</sup>Ibid., 72.

about its reinvigoration.<sup>186</sup> Although the bill was promoted as a tightening of the 1961 embargo, some of the bill's provisions liberalized telecommunications links and called for "assistance, through appropriate nongovernmental organizations, for the support of individuals and organizations to promote nonviolent democratic change in Cuba."<sup>187</sup> This line, taken up by Richard A. Nuccio, the former special advisor to the president on Cuban matters, aimed at encouraging humanitarian relief organizations and human rights groups to step up their activities in Cuba and was seen as a major change in governmental policy.<sup>188</sup>

The Clinton administration's emphasis on what was called a Track II approach alarmed the Castro regime more than the original passage of the measure. If the U.S. government turned its attention from supporting the heroic but largely impotent dissident movement to overtly or covertly sponsoring or even just actively encouraging the activities of nongovernmental humanitarian organizations, the regime might find itself faced with powerful opposing forces.<sup>189</sup> The Cuban leader's reaction to this new treatment of Cuba was the dramatic 24 February 1996 shootdown of the two civilian Cessnas of U.S. registry that had allegedly violated Cuban airspace.

The Brothers to the Rescue planes had overflown Havana in July 1995 and dropped leaflets over the capital in January 1996. Cuba's attack on the two planes the following month, just outside Cuban airspace, could have been the means the regime chose to freeze the

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<sup>186</sup>Ibid., 73.

<sup>187</sup>Ibid., 73.

<sup>188</sup>Ibid., 73.

<sup>189</sup>Ibid., 73.

situation with the United States for a while. Or, in National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcón's phrase, the exile group might have delivered a rationale for a new government campaign of ideological mobilization "on a silver platter."<sup>190</sup> Whatever the case, using what it termed as aggression against Cuba as a pretext, the regime intensified a crackdown against not only dissidents but also advocates of political and economic liberalization thereby closing off the minuscule space for an opposition to form.<sup>191</sup>

Two weeks after the planes were shot down, Congress approved the Helms-Burton bill, which further tightened the embargo against Cuba. Whatever its merits, the measure had the *unintended* effect of halting Track II initiatives under way or in the planning stages. While the revolution is arguably over, the Castro regime is not on the verge of collapse. Unlike Helms-Burton, the Cuban Democracy measure took Castro's durability into account: Track II was about building pressure for reform. The current law will severely restrict the freedom of maneuver for groups or institutions that want to oppose the Castro regime. And Helms-Burton gives the power to lift the sanctions against Cuba to a Congress with nothing to gain and much to lose from changing a single provision, taking it away from a president who, at least in a second term, might have dared to modify it or go to Havana as Nixon did in China and Poland in 1972.

The economic transformation in Cuba has allowed the regime to survive the fall of the Soviet Union and with it the ending of the economic subsidies. Despite the changes taking place in Cuba, the current regime is not committed to making a complete transformation from

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<sup>190</sup>Ibid., 74.

<sup>191</sup>Ibid., 74.

state to market mechanisms, and it is even less committed to political reform. Rather, the Cuban regime is doing what it must to survive, and increasingly, survival is its only discernible goal.<sup>192</sup>

Cuban civil society is underdeveloped, but changes are more promising now than ever before since the Catholic Church has begun to call for liberalization. According to Alfred Stepan, liberalization refers fundamentally to civil society.<sup>193</sup> With the elevation to cardinal of Havana Archbishop Jaime Ortega in November 1994, the Catholic Church has taken on a more aggressive role in Cuban society and is showing clear signs of a slow, but steadfast resurgence on the island. Cuba's economic turmoil during "the special period in time of peace" (1992-1993) has changed the church's standing, providing it with a niche the government has failed to fill: Hope and the promise of better days ahead.<sup>194</sup>

Pope John Paul II, who helped bring about the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, accepted an invitation on November 19, 1996 to visit Cuba in 1997. A papal visit would put the Cuban regime's tolerance to a test, since the Pope has indicated that he will make the trip only under the condition that he have access to the Catholics and the freedom to travel and to be heard without interference.<sup>195</sup> In this way, the Pope will be able to do what the U.S. government will not do: engage the Cuban people.

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<sup>192</sup>Ibid., 71.

<sup>193</sup>Stepan, 6.

<sup>194</sup>Lizette Alvarez, Miami Herald reprinted in Information Services Latin America vol #50 issue #5 (May 1995).

<sup>195</sup>Celestine Bohlen, "Pope Meets Castro at Vatican and Agrees to Visit Cuba," New York Times, 20 November 1996, C8.

Finally, after more than three decades of an economic embargo designed to destroy the Cuban economy and bring down the Castro regime, Castro still remains defiant. The collapse of Cuba's traditional trading markets in the Eastern bloc significantly hurt the Cuban economy, but Castro is transforming it enough to keep it alive. The question remains as to how long.

As long as the United States continues its current foreign policy of "squeeze," Castro will continue to be able to control civil society with his anti-American rhetoric and nationalism. The "us" against "them" strategy he employs is only successful to the extent that United States policy allows it to be. The United States has nothing to lose and everything to gain from implementing a communication strategy. The most important thing for the United States to do is to stop playing to Castro's strengths and start playing to his weaknesses. Each new United States threat gives Castro another opportunity to wrap himself in the Cuban flag and appeal to Cubans to do the same in the name of country. Castro has played the "us" against "them" confrontation game well. He may not know how to play the communication game. He is not accustomed to an informed population with detailed, up-to-date information on the benefits of liberal democracy and free-market economy. The sooner the United States shifts the game from one Castro plays so well - confrontation - to one he is unaccustomed to playing - communication - the more effective the United States foreign policy in Cuba will be.

The sense that Fidel Castro's days may be numbered focuses its attention on the demise of the Soviet Union and on United States foreign policy toward Cuba. The issue is not whether the United States should normalize relations with Cuba, but whether it should maintain the current policy or modify it. Supporters of the current policy and those who want



to toughen it rejected the notion that Castro's communism was a reaction to United States policy and are vindicated by international developments, particularly the February 1996 Cuban shoot-down of two civilian Cessnas. Supporters of a more open and less confrontational policy place the onus for democratization in the hands of the Cuban people and note that a communication strategy hinted at in the 1994 Cuban Democracy Act is most likely to facilitate that end. This strategy facilitates contact with the American people and refrains from provoking repression that will retard the growth of the Cuban opposition. This work supports the "communication" strategy as the best approach to create a political opening in Cuba.

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