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What Courses of Action Will Likely Result from Improved Diplomatic Relations Between the
Obama Administration and the Raúl Castro Regime?

“The fundamental goal of United States policy toward Cuba is to promote a peaceful transition to a stable, democratic form of government and respect for human rights” (U.S. State Department, 1999).

I. Introduction

“We have sent word to the U.S. government in private and in public that we are willing to discuss everything—human rights, freedom of the press, political prisoners, everything.” Cuban President Raúl Castro, April 17, 2009 (Associated Press).

The U.S embargo against Cuba was enacted in 1962 in response to the Communist government Fidel Castro established on the island. The embargo lead to a tit-for-tat exchange as the U.S. tightened sanctions while Cuba nationalized U.S. property on the island and turned to the Soviet Union for trade and economic assistance. This embargo was followed by the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, which prohibited foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies from entering trade and financing arrangements with Cuba (Malone, 1999).

Next in U.S. legislative attempts to isolate Cuba was the passage of the Helms-Burton Act in 1996. This act codified U.S. sanctions against Cuba (previously implemented by executive order only) and allowed U.S. citizens to sue foreign companies profiting from American property confiscated by the Cuban government. In addition to being the target of much international criticism, the Helms-Burton act limited U.S. flexibility in dealing with Cuba as changes to policy must now be approved by Congress (Ibid).

Malone (1999) outlines three major problems with current U.S. policy regarding Cuba:

1. Sanctions are inefficient and counterproductive. They produce domestic and international sympathy for Castro and provide an excuse for Cuba’s poor economy.
2. U.S. policy may cause Cubans to take a defensive stance if they perceive the U.S. attempting to destabilize Cuba and then dictating the country’s future.

3. The focus on Castro has hurt other U.S. interests such as engagement with future Cuban leaders, regional security, relations with allies, and humanitarian aid to Cuba.

In summary, U.S. policy toward Cuba is an ineffective and counterproductive means to bring about change in the Cuban government. Additionally, the U.S. embargo against Cuba has allowed other countries to establish a firm presence in Cuba to the detriment of U.S. business.

In February 2008, President Fidel Castro “retired” and passed leadership of Cuba to his brother, Raúl. In January 2009, president-elect Obama was sworn in as the new president of the United States. Each has made overtures to the other regarding improving relations between their respective countries. The majority of Americans (60 percent in early 2009) favor relaxing sanctions and improving relations with Cuba (Morales, 2009) and the average Cuban citizen favors a change in government to a democratic capitalist system (Betancourt and Guillermo, 1999). Now (2009) is an appropriate time to look at the future of the U.S. relationship with Cuba.

This paper attempts to determine the future of Cuban/U.S. relations and identify the most likely courses of action the governments of Cuba and the U.S. will take in the near future. To do so, this study will attempt to answer the following research questions: 1) Will relations between Cuba and the U.S. improve now that both countries have new leaders? and 2) What are the most likely courses of action of the Obama administration and the Raúl Castro regime will take vis-à-vis one another now that both countries have new leaders?

II. Literature Review

History

While the U.S. has a mission in Havana, it has had virtually no diplomatic relations with the Caribbean Island nation of Cuba since 1961 (Council on Foreign Relations, 2009). The U.S. initially recognized Fidel Castro's new government on January 7, 1959. Relations were strained through 1959 and 1960 however, as Cuba began leaning toward a one-party Marxist-Leninist government and started expropriating U.S. properties. As a result, the U.S. placed an embargo on Cuba in October 1960 and severed diplomatic ties in January 1961. The "Bay of Pigs" invasion in April 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crises in October 1962 effectively ended any chances of reconciliation between the two countries (U.S. State Department, 1999).

Cuba and the Soviet Union entered a trade pact in 1960 wherein Cuba would provide the Soviet Union with sugar and receive oil in return. This led to the U.S. State Department recommending U.S. oil firms in Cuba refuse to refine Soviet oil. As a result, Castro nationalized the refineries and the U.S. retaliated by canceling most sugar imports from Cuba. This tit-for-tat exchange continued with Castro expropriating all remaining U.S. assets on the island, worth approximately \$1 billion. Relations continued to deteriorate until the U.S. enacted a complete trade embargo in 1962 (Mitchell, 2000).

Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy expected to realize two goals through sanctions against Cuba: 1) destabilize the Castro government, leading to its overthrow, and 2) containment of Communism in the Western hemisphere. The objectives of containment, presented by then Under Secretary of State George Ball, included:

1. “Reduce the will and the ability of the present Cuban regime to export revolution and violence to the other American states” (Ibid).
2. “Make plain to the people of Cuba and to the elements of the power structure of the regime that the present regime cannot serve their interests” (Ibid).
3. “Demonstrate to the peoples of the American republics that communism has no future in the Western Hemisphere” (Ibid).
4. “Increase the cost to the Soviet Union of maintaining a communist outpost in the Western hemisphere” (Ibid).

Illegal immigration caused friction between the two countries during the 1980s and 1990s. In 1980, Cuba allowed 125,000 Cubans, including criminals and mentally ill persons, to depart for the U.S. from the port of Mariel (the incident came to be called the “Mariel Boatlift”). In 1994, another 30,000 Cubans were allowed to exit Cuba for the U.S. after massive protests over fuel shortages and electrical blackouts (U.S. State Department, 1999). Both of these exoduses created negative feelings toward Cubans among the American public and government.

On February 25, 1996, a Fuerza Aérea Cubana (Cuban air force) MiG-29 (Fulcrum) fighter intercepted and shot down two unarmed civilian U.S. aircraft being flown over international waters by volunteers from *Hermanos al Rescate* (Brothers to the Rescue). Three U.S. citizens and one U.S. resident died when their aircraft exploded and crashed into the Gulf of Mexico (Organization of American States, 1999). As a result, the U.S. passed the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (*Libertad*) Act, also known as the Helms-Burton Act, on March 12, 1996 (Dunning, 1998).

In spite of nearly 50 years of prolonged economic sanctions, being designated a state sponsor of terrorism, being the target of at least eight U.S.-sponsored assassination plots¹, and the loss of his Soviet benefactor, Fidel Castro remained in power in Cuba until 2006, when illness forced him to transfer some powers to his brother, Raúl. Fidel formally resigned from office in February 2008 (Council on Foreign Relations, 2009).

On April 16, 2009, less than 3 months after the Obama inauguration, Presidents Obama and Raúl Castro made public statements hinting at renewed relations between Cuba and the U.S. In a show of “good faith,” President Obama lifted some restrictions on Cuban-Americans sending money to their families on the island. Cuban President Raúl Castro replied hours later, stating, “We have sent word to the U.S. government in private and in public that we are willing to discuss everything—human rights, freedom of the press, political prisoners, everything” (Associated Press, 2009).

Days later however, Fidel Castro, while presumably no longer the Cuban leader, wrote an essay on a government website claiming Obama “... without a doubt misinterpreted Raúl’s declarations” (Associated Press, 2009). This begs the question, who actually is leading Cuba? Former President Jimmy Carter believes Fidel, not Raúl, “has the last word on the communist island” (Associated Press, 2009). Regardless, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who described the Cuban government as “... very difficult to move,” said the Obama administration should be ready to engage Cuba despite Fidel’s contradiction of his brother Raúl (Associated Press, 2009).

¹ In 1975, the Church Committee, led by Sen. Frank Church of Idaho, determined the CIA was involved in at least eight plots to assassinate Fidel Castro between 1960 and 1965 (Bohning, 2008).

Sanctions

The Cuban Assets Control Regulations, Title 31, Part 515 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations were enacted on 8 July 1963 and are still in effect. These regulations apply to “all U.S. citizens and permanent residents wherever they are located, all people and organizations physically in the United States, and all branches and subsidiaries of U.S. organizations throughout the world.” The U.S. implemented these regulations to economically isolate Cuba and to keep U.S. dollars out of its economy (U.S. Department of the Treasury). The embargo against Cuba is so comprehensive that, in 2004, the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control published a memo stating American citizens *living abroad* face fines of up to \$250,000 and 10 years in prison for buying Cuban cigars—or other Cuban goods—for even personal use or consumption (U.S. Department of the Treasury).

President Clinton signed the Helms-Burton Act on March 12, 1996, shortly after the Cuban Air Force shot down two Brothers to the Rescue aircraft over international waters with the loss of four lives. This act has generated much criticism, especially from Europe, as it allows U.S. citizens to sue and recover damages in U.S. courts from foreign entities owning or benefiting from nationalized American property in Cuba (Dunning, 1998, 213). According to Dunning, “... the Act has had a greater detrimental effect on the United States’ relations with its allies than it has had on the Cuban government” (214).

The goal of the U.S. government’s policy toward Cuba is crafted to cause a peaceful transition to a stable, democratic form of government (U.S. State Department, 1999) yet U.S. sanctions have had no such effect. During interviews with Cuban officials, dissidents, and private citizens, Clarke and Ratliff found U.S. sanctions are not the cause of Cuba’s poor

economy, contrary to claims by Castro, nor have sanctions led to the isolation of the Castro regime or a change in government (2001, 1). They go on to state “Current U.S. policy toward Cuba is based on historical inertia, domestic political calculations, and emotionalism. The embargo will continue to be ineffective—especially given dwindling support for the policy, the ease with which Cuba gets around sanctions, and the ways in which Cuba has been adapting to changing world conditions” (Ibid).

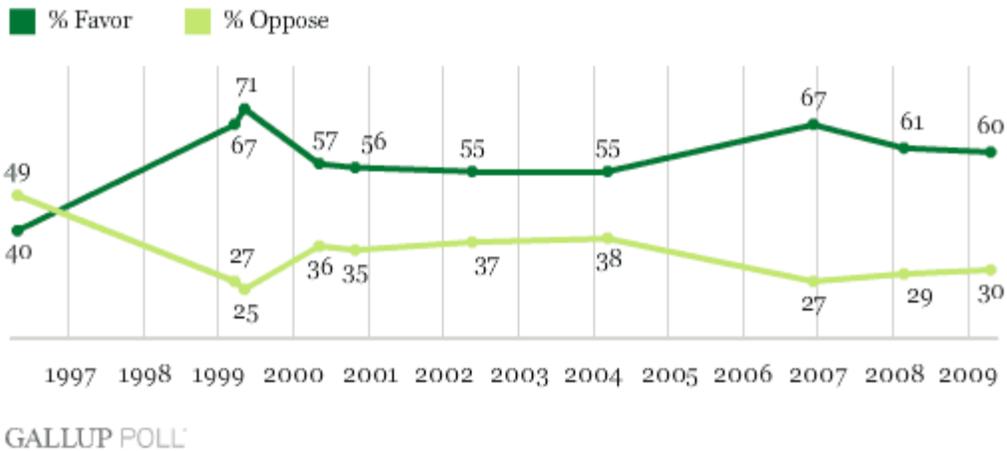
Twenty U.S. senators and supporters introduced a bill on March 31, 2009, with the intent of lifting the travel ban to Cuba. Supporters of the bill point out travel to China or Vietnam is not restricted, so why should the U.S. restrict travel to Cuba (Acosta, Hornick, 2009)? More important than travel is trade—many U.S. trading partners and competitors trade heavily, and profitably, with Cuba while U.S. business sits on the outside peering in (Ibid).

U.S. lawmakers are not the only Americans who feel the time has come to end the embargo against Cuba. “Since 1999, a majority of Americans have consistently said they favor re-establishing U.S. diplomatic relations with Cuba -- including 60% in a new Gallup Poll conducted after Obama's decision last week to relax some restrictions” (Morales, 2009).

The following graphic from Gallup.com (Ibid) shows the varying rate of American public opinion toward reestablishing diplomatic relations with Cuba. In 1996, shortly after the Brothers to the Rescue shoot downs, only 40 percent of Americans favored improved relations with Cuba. The rate soared to 71 percent just 3 years later, and then declined to 60 percent in early 2009. Forty-nine percent of the American public disapproved of reestablishing relations in 1996; the disapproval rate dropped to 25 percent in 1999 and climbed to 30 percent by 2009.

Do you favor or oppose re-establishing U.S. diplomatic relations with Cuba?

Gallup trend since 1996



The huge swing in American public opinion on relations with Cuba in 1999 was based on several influences (Fisk, 1999, 314-315):

1. The Pope traveled to Cuba in January 1998, generating media and public interest as well as policy debate in Congress regarding the sale of foodstuffs, agricultural, and medical supplies to Cuba (Ibid).
2. A bipartisan commission was created to review U.S. policy toward Cuba leading to President Clinton announcing a series of steps to promote “people-to-people” exchanges as allowed under the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 (Ibid).
3. The governments of Cuba and the U.S. approved a series of baseball games between the Cuban national team and the Baltimore Orioles, played in both Baltimore and Havana. This event came to be called “beisbol diplomacy” (Ibid).
4. Farmers, and their representatives in Congress, began to see the economic benefits of expanding food and agricultural sales to Cuba (Ibid).

Traditionally, Cuban exiles in the U.S. have been most vocal about maintaining sanctions but recently, some groups have shifted to favoring improved relations with their homeland. In April 2009, the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), the leading organization for Cuban exiles in the U.S., called for expanded relations with Cuba. Reversing the group's founding principles, the CANF now proposes the U.S. encourage cultural, academic, and humanitarian travel to Cuba and says American policy should stop focusing on sanctions and instead implement proactive policies that direct resources to Cuba (Cave, 2009).

The U.S. embargo against Cuba has not brought about the change in Cuban government envisioned by Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, nor has the Helms-Burton Act done anything other than limit opportunities for U.S. businesses in trading with Cuba while benefiting U.S. competitors. Given that a majority of Americans, a bipartisan group of 20 U.S. senators, and the largest Cuban exile group now want to modify sanctions against Cuba and expand U.S.-Cuba relations, will President Obama and his administration soften the U.S. stance toward Cuba?

III. Actors and Perceptions

LAMP Step 1: Define the issue for which you are trying to determine the most likely future.

This paper attempts to define the most likely courses of action to be implemented by Presidents Castro and Obama upon improved diplomatic relations and relaxed or eliminated sanctions between their respective countries.

LAMP Step 2: Specify the national “actors” involved.

This study will focus on three national actors: Cuba, the United States, and major countries currently trading with Cuba—Russia, China, the European Union, and Canada. While this last national actor represents a large group of countries, as a whole, they have similar interests and policies regarding Cuba and, for the purposes of this study, will be considered a single entity.

LAMP Step 3: Perform an in-depth study of how each national actor perceives the issue in question.

Cuba

Cuban President Raúl Castro has stated he is ready to begin discussions with the United States on matters such as human rights, freedom of the press, political prisoners, and more (Associated Press, 2009). While there is some question as to whether or not his brother, former Cuban President Fidel Castro, is calling the shots behind the scene (Associated Press, 2009), Fidel’s health is questionable and his power and influence over his brother—and the Cuban government—is waning. If Raúl Castro’s statements reflect his true intentions, the opportunity for change in, or at least dialog with, Cuba has never been better.

Jorge Luis Garcia Pérez Antúnez, one of Cuba's longest-serving political prisoners², outlined five internal measures the Cuban people must take to bring about change in their government (Antúnez, 2008, 62):

1. Cubans must eliminate the idea that Cuba's freedom depends on removing the Castro brothers from power. Removing the Castro brothers will not be enough, in itself, to bring about democratic change in Cuba. Antúnez maintains Cubans must fight more than just the system of government; they must fight for freedom and full justice (Ibid).
2. Cuba's change in government must come internally, not with overt assistance from the U.S. (Ibid). Some Cubans perceive a U.S. effort to overthrow Castro and then dictate how the new Cuban government will be run and who will lead the country (Malone, 1999). Such a perception will limit Cuban popular support for a change in regime.
3. While T.V. Martí has not had the influence over Cuba it was designed to produce, it could be an instrument of change with more time and effort (Ibid). Antúnez sees television as much more powerful than print or radio but does not give suggestions as to how to improve T.V. Martí.
4. The U.S. must establish and lead a coalition of nations to peacefully pressure the Cuban government to shift to a democratic form (Ibid). Instead, the U.S. has pushed other countries to follow U.S. sanctions against Cuba. The Helms-Burton Act created

² Jorge Luis Garcia Pérez Antúnez was released from prison in April 2008 after serving a 17-year sentence (Antúnez, 2008, 63).

more friction between the U.S. and many of her allies by allowing American citizens to sue foreign companies operating in or with Cuba. A cooperative coalition led—or at least supported—by the U.S. would present a united front to the Cuban government.

5. The U.S. Congress must continue to financially support political prisoners and democracy activists on the island (Ibid).

While assessing freedom of expression and repression in Cuba, the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (ASCE), in a 1999 survey, asked Cubans to rank a series of messages imparted by the Pope during his January 1998 visit to the island. The survey assessed Cubans’ opinions on whether or not these concepts will prevail in Cuba. The table below (Betancourt and Guillermo, 1999, 257) shows the results of the survey.

Message	Improbability of Lasting
Freedom of association	92
Freedom of assembly	92
Freedom of expression	91
Abandon the practice of abortion	81
You should tell the truth	76
You should not have fear	76
Children should be allowed to have a religious Education	70
The world should open to Cuba	58

Of importance, the three elements most threatening to the Cuban regime—freedom of association, freedom of assembly, and freedom of expression—are ranked as the most improbable to continue (Ibid). These are the types of freedoms Antúnez believes Cubans must fight for in order to bring about the end of their repressive government.

The ASCE also asked Cubans to rank a series of Cuban leaders and organizations. Ninety-three percent of respondents ranked Fidel Castro negatively while only four percent gave him a positive rating. Raúl Castro fared worse, with a 93 percent negative rating but only a 2 percent positive rating. The table below (Ibid, 262) shows the results of the survey.

Regime Leader	(-) Index	(+) Index	Unknown
Fidel Castro	93	04	01
Raúl Castro	93	02	01
Juan Escalona ³	82	03	07
Roberto Robaina ⁴	81	03	03
Ricardo Alarcón ⁵	78	10	03
Abelardo Colomé ⁶	76	03	12
Ulises Rosales del Toro ⁷	71	03	16
Osmany Cienfuegos ⁸	71	08	11
José Machado Ventura ⁹	66	04	20
Carlos Lage ¹⁰	64	19	07
Ramón Balaguer ¹¹	63	05	21
José Luis Rodríguez ¹²	57	09	22

³ Prosecutor in the Ochoa trial—a trial in which Fidel Castro purportedly betrayed two of his closest associates, one of whom was General Arnaldo Ochoa Sanchez, and sentenced them to death for drug trafficking (Uhlig, 1989).

⁴ Foreign Minister

⁵ President of the Legislature

⁶ General, Minister of the Interior

⁷ General, Sugar Minister, formerly Armed Forces Chief

⁸ Tourism Minister

⁹ Party Organization Secretary

¹⁰ Vice-President of the Council of State

¹¹ Responsible for Party ideology and propaganda

¹² Minister of Economy and Planning

Based on the exceptionally high negative ratings and corresponding low positive ratings, the Cuban population was, in 1999—and presumably still is—ready for a change in leadership and government style.

Most applicable to this study, the ASCE asked Cubans “whether they thought political and/or economic changes were the most necessary, how long it will take and who they thought could lead the change, as well as what they thought were the most important problems that will be faced.” Eighty-eight percent of respondents believed both economic and political changes are necessary. Fifty-eight percent believed necessary changes will take five years or longer to come about while thirty-five percent did not know and five percent believed change will never occur. Not surprisingly, 85 percent of the Cubans polled did not believe the present leaders are capable of leading the country through transition to democracy (Ibid, 266).

The final section of interest in ASCE’s survey is their poll regarding transition. Cubans were asked what kind of government they would most like to live under, what upsets them most about the present situation, if there are any elements of Castro’s revolution they would want to keep, and what events might trigger change in Cuba. Of the 1,023 Cubans polled, 68 percent stated they want to live under a democratic capitalist system, one percent supported a democratic socialism, and three percent favored a military dictatorship. The lack of liberty and fear of repression topped the list of 85 percent of the respondents regarding what currently upsets them most in Cuba. Fifty-five percent of Cubans were in favor of retaining some elements of the revolution in a future government system. Finally, 89 percent believed no changes are possible until after Castro’s death (presumably both Raúl and Fidel); 74 percent believed an international repudiation of the regime may cause change while 70 believed a revolt by the Cuban military could be the impetus for a new government.

The results of the ASCE survey are consistent across the board—the majority of the Cubans surveyed:

- want freedom of association, freedom of assembly, and freedom of expression.
- overwhelmingly give negative ratings to Fidel and Raúl Castro plus ten other Cuban leaders identified in the survey.
- believe economic and political changes are necessary.
- do not believe their present leaders are capable of leading the country through a governmental transition.
- want to live under a democratic capitalist government.
- want liberty and to be free from repression.
- want to retain some revolutionary elements introduced by Castro

The United States

President Obama took several concrete steps toward improving relations with Cuba in early 2009. At the Summit of the Americas in April 2009, Obama stated, “Let me be clear: I am not interested in talking for the sake of talking. But I do believe that we can move U.S.-Cuban relations in a new direction. I am prepared to have my administration engage with the Cuban government on a wide range of issues -- from human rights, free speech and democratic reform to drugs, migration and economic issues” (Acosta and Hornick, 2009).

In a break from U.S. policy dating back to 1962 during the Kennedy administration, Obama lifted some travel bans and remittance restrictions for Cuban-Americans. He also lifted

the ban on U.S. telecommunications companies doing business in Cuba (Shear and Kang, 2009). While Obama left the broad trade embargo in place, the new rules are expected to result in new charter flights from the U.S. to Cuba, possibly followed by direct commercial flights (Ibid).

Preceding the announcement of Obama's vision of improved relations with Cuba, a bipartisan group of 20 U.S. senators called for an end to the 47-year-old travel ban. Calling it a "failed policy," Senator Byron Dorgan, D-N.D. stated "Punishing the American people in our effort to somehow deal a blow to the Castro government has not made any sense at all" (Oinounou, 2009).

In addition to President Obama and the coalition of bipartisan senators who support his change in policy, the American public supports improved and increased diplomatic relations with Cuba. Gallop polls have shown that every year since 1997, the majority of American citizens support "friendlier U.S.-Cuba relations" (Morales, 2009). That the U.S. government has not taken more concrete steps toward improving relations with Cuba is a reflection of how poorly American politicians represent to the wishes of their constituency.

Other Nations Dealing with Cuba (Russia, China, the European Union, and Canada)

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Cuba imported \$1.16 billion worth of agricultural, fish, and forestry products from Canada in 1999 (the most recent year the author was able to find data). That same year, Cuba imported \$1.86 billion in the same products from the European Union and \$53 million from China (USDA website, 2000).

In 2004, there were eight Russian companies registered in Havana and seven Cuban companies in Moscow. Trade that year between the two increased by 23 percent over 2003 (Latina, 2005). In November 2008, Cuba and Russia signed a series of bilateral trade and

economic accords that cover automobiles, nickel, oil, and wheat to Cuba, highlighting efforts by both countries to improve their economic ties (BBC News, 2008). Russia is intent on expanding its influence in the Caribbean and Latin America via countries such as Venezuela and Cuba. Part of this effort included 200 tons of humanitarian aid Russia sent to Cuba in the wake of Hurricane Gustav (Stratfor, 2008). This is seen by Stratfor analysts as indicating Russia is spending money to acquire Cuba as an ally (Ibid).

Initially, China and Cuba had no economic ties because of Havana's dependence on the Soviet Union (a rival to China). However, the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 and Moscow no longer had the economic means to support Cuba. As a result, Cuba and China established tentative relations that grew to trade worth \$1.8 billion in 2006, double the amount in 2005. Cuba imported Chinese buses, locomotives, and farm equipment while and exported nickel, sugar, medicine, and biotechnological products to China (Associated Press, 2007). Cuba has two joint-venture pharmaceutical companies in China with plans to add more while China vowed to continue financing energy, transportation, and telecommunications equipment to Cuba and expand Cuban imports (Reuters, 2007). In 2008, Chinese President Jintao toured Havana as part of his country's efforts to expand political and investment ties with Cuba and to sign a set of trade accords. China was Cuba's second-largest trading partner in 2008 with \$2.7 billion flowing between the two countries (at about \$7 billion in 2008, Venezuela is Cuba's largest trading partner) (Associated Press, 2008).

In 1996, the European Union (EU) threatened a trade war with the U.S. over the Helms-Burton Act. The threats included retaliatory trade measures against the U.S., freezing U.S. assets in Europe, and the imposition of visas for U.S. business persons traveling to Europe (Helm,

1996). Clearly, the EU was displeased with the measures set forth in the Helms-Burton Act and U.S. attempts to regulate international trade with Cuba.

While Cuba had no formal trade agreement with the European Union (EU), nearly 40 percent of Cuba's foreign trade in 2001 was with the EU (EurActive.com, 2001). In 2003, EU imports from Cuba totaled €578 million while exports to Cuba were worth about €1.1 billion¹³. Those figures rose to €607 million and about €1.5 billion respectively in 2007 (DG Trade Statistics, 2008).

Canada has a long history of relations with Cuba dating back to the 18th century when Canadian vessels traded codfish and beer for sugar and rum. Cuba was also the first Caribbean nation selected for a Canadian diplomatic mission and Canada was one of only two nations to maintain uninterrupted diplomatic ties with Cuba after the Cuban Revolution in 1959 (Mexico was the second). Cuba is the fifth most popular overseas vacation destination for Canadians; in 2005, approximately 600,000 Canadians visit Cuba, traveling on about 125 flights per week between the two countries (Government of Canada, 2008).

¹³ €1 = \$1.3494 on May 19, 2009 (x-rates.com, 2009)

IV. Research Design

This paper will use the Lockwood Analytical Method for Prediction (LAMP) in an effort to determine the most likely courses of action to be undertaken by the Obama administration and Raúl Castro regime upon the resumption of formal diplomatic relations. LAMP provides the analyst a powerful method for organizing all available information based on the perceptions of the national actors and uses it to make relevant predictions as to which alternate future is most likely to occur at a given moment in time (LAMP-Method.com, 2008). LAMP is a predictive model that highlights the relative probability of alternate futures and looks at the consequences of each alternate future (Lockwood and Lockwood, 1994, 12).

The LAMP method is comprised of the following 12 steps (LAMP-Method.com, 2008):

1. Define the issue for which you are trying to determine the most likely future.
2. Specify the national actors involved.
3. Perform an in-depth study of how each national actor perceives the issue in question.
4. Specify all possible courses of action (COAs) for each actor.
5. Determine the major scenarios within which you compare the alternate futures.
6. Calculate the total number of permutations of possible “alternate futures” for each scenario.
 - a. The general formula for computing the number of alternate futures is $X^Y=Z$, where X equals the number of COAs open to each actor, Y equals the number

of national actors involved, and Z equals the number of alternate futures to be compared.

7. Perform a “pairwise comparison” of all alternate futures within the scenario to determine their relative probability.
 - a. The formula for the number of pairwise comparisons is $X = \frac{n(n-1)}{2}$, where n equals the number of alternate futures analyzed and X equals the number of pairwise comparisons.
8. Rank the alternate futures for each scenario from highest to lowest relative probability.
9. Assuming each future occurs, analyze each alternate future in terms of its consequences for the issue in question.
10. Determine the “focal events” that must occur in the present to bring about a given alternate future.
11. Develop indicators for the focal events.
12. State the potential of a given alternate future to “transpose” into another alternate future.

The future of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the U.S. under their new presidents is of concern to both countries as well as the numerous countries that trade with Cuba due to the trade restrictions imposed by the Helms-Burton Act. The LAMP method is applicable to this study due to its ability to organize available information based on the perceptions of the national

actors and use that information to make applicable predictions as to which alternate future is most likely to occur. Using the LAMP method will present to readers the most-likely future scenario given accurately analyzed, currently-available, information on the topic.

The author researched publicly available databases, news services, and the American Military University on-line library as well as the San Antonio Public Library for data used in this paper. Sources included U.S. and Canadian government websites, European Union websites, news services, academic theses, university studies, and national and international focus groups, some of which included surveys of Cuban-Americans living in the U.S.

Bias can be especially difficult to avoid in a study performed by one person, as is the case here. The author believes U.S. sanctions against Cuba are pointless, have had very little affect on the Cuban government (nor the elites) but have hurt the Cuban people and American business for over 40 years, and should have been discarded decades ago. As such, the author attempted to remain objective and perform pairwise comparisons strictly on the bases of information found during the literature review. However, the author's bias against Cuban sanctions undoubtedly affected some of his decisions as to which alternate future is more likely to occur.

A study such as this would have much less chance of containing bias were it co-authored—or at least reviewed—by peers or colleagues. In this case, reviewers with different perceptions, ideas, and backgrounds would reduce the possibility of the author's bias skewing the results of the study.

V. Case Study/Analysis/Findings

LAMP Method Step 4: Specify all possible courses of action for each actor.

Possible courses of action (COAs) for Cuba¹⁴ include:

1. Improve diplomatic relations with the U.S. in an effort to improve domestic financial and economic status.
2. Maintain the status quo with the U.S. and pursue financial and economic opportunities with other countries and regions such as Russia, China, Canada, and the European Union (EU).
3. Cease all diplomatic ties and relations with the U.S. and pursue relations with other countries and regions.

Possible COAs for the U.S. include:

1. Improve diplomatic relations with Cuba in an effort to bring about an end to the country's Communist regime, improve Cuba's financial and economic outlook, free her citizens from Communist oppression, and improve the Cuban standard of living.
2. Maintain status quo with Cuba
3. Cease all diplomatic efforts at ending the Communist regime on the island.

Possible COAs for other nations trading with Cuba (Russia, China, Canada, and the EU) include:

¹⁴ These courses of action are predicated on the condition Raúl Castro remains in power and there are no major changes in Cuba's government or the Cuban Communist Party.

1. Improve relations with Cuba and increase trade, taking advantage of the lack of competition from U.S. companies.
2. Maintain status quo with Cuba, skirting the provisions of the Helms-Burton Act or paying fines when found guilty of violations of the Act.
3. Cease ties with Cuba, thus acquiescing to U.S. policy toward Cuba.

LAMP Method Step 5: Determine the major scenarios within which you compare the alternate futures.

The two mostly-likely scenarios are 1) diplomatic relations between Cuba and the U.S. will improve or 2) each country will maintain status quo vis-à-vis the other.

The scenario depicting improved relations is supported by statements from both President Castro and President Obama, the sentiments of the majority of Americans and Cuba-Americans polled, and by a bipartisan coalition of U.S. senators.

The scenario depicting maintaining status quo is based on President Castro's determination to stay in power while slowly improving the lives of Cuban citizens by taking the minimum steps necessary to avoid being seen as a puppet of the U.S. government. By walking this tightrope, President Castro can appease both ordinary Cuban citizens who want more freedom as well as Communist Party hardliners who want to hold on to their revolutionary ideals and maintain their independence from U.S. influence.

The scenario depicting a cessation of all diplomatic relations is unlikely as it is not in the best interests of either country.

LAMP Method Step 6: Calculate the total number of permutations of possible “alternate futures” for each scenario.

The general formula for computing the number of alternate futures is $X^Y=Z$, where X equals the number of COAs open to each actor, Y equals the number of national actors involved, and Z equals the number of alternate futures to be compared (LAMP-Method.com, 2008). Each of the three actors (Cuba, the U.S., and “Other Nations) has three COAs available, resulting in 27 possible alternate futures ($3^3=27$).

The following table illustrates the 27 permutations possible for the three actors and three scenarios (**I** = improve relations, **M** = maintain status quo, and **C** = cease relations):

Alternate Future #	Cuba	U.S.	Others
1	I	I	I
2	I	I	M
3	I	I	C
4	I	M	I
5	I	M	M
6	I	M	C
7	I	C	I
8	I	C	M
9	I	C	C
10	M	I	I
11	M	I	M
12	M	I	C
13	M	M	I
14	M	M	M
15	M	M	C
16	M	C	I
17	M	C	M
18	M	C	C
19	C	I	I
20	C	I	M
21	C	I	C
22	C	M	I
23	C	M	M
24	C	M	C
25	C	C	I
26	C	C	M
27	C	C	C

LAMP Method Steps 7 and 8: Perform a “pairwise comparison” of all alternate futures within the scenario to determine their relative probability and rank the alternate futures for each scenario from highest relative probability to the lowest based on the number of “votes” received, respectively.

The pairwise comparison “analyzes the alternate futures two at a time, always assuming the two futures being compared at the moment are the only ones that exist” (LAMP-Method.com, 2008).

The formula for the number of pairwise comparisons is $X = \frac{n(n-1)}{2}$, where n equals the number of alternate futures analyzed and X equals the number of pairwise comparisons (LAMP-Method.com, 2008). Using the data from this study, the number of pairwise comparisons = $\frac{27(27-1)}{2} = \frac{27(26)}{2} = \frac{702}{2} = 351$.

To rank these 351 pairwise comparisons, the analyst compares each future against the others, one by one, and determines which is more likely to occur. In this study, future number 1 is compared against futures 2 through 27; future 2 is compared against futures 3 through 27, future 3 is compared to futures 4 through 27, et cetera, until the pairwise comparison ends when future 26 is compared to future 27. After the analyst finishes the pairwise comparison, he totals the votes for each future; the future with the highest score is the most probable.

Plugging in the data from the pairwise comparison for this study produces the following results (sorted on the “Votes” column from highest to lowest score):

Alternate Future #	Cuba	U.S.	Others	Votes
1	I	I	I	26
13	M	M	I	25
2	I	I	M	23
14	M	M	M	23
25	C	C	I	20
26	C	C	M	20
4	I	M	I	19
10	M	I	I	18
22	C	M	I	18
23	C	M	M	17
5	I	M	M	16
16	M	C	I	16
11	M	I	M	15
3	I	I	C	14
17	M	C	M	13
7	I	C	I	11
8	I	C	M	10
15	M	M	C	9
12	M	I	C	7
20	C	I	M	7
6	I	M	C	5
24	C	M	C	5
27	C	C	C	5
18	M	C	C	4
19	C	I	I	4
21	C	I	C	1
9	I	C	C	0
				351

LAMP Method Step 9: Assuming each future occurs, analyze each alternate future in terms of its consequences for the issue in question.

The table above readily shows alternate future number 1, with 26 votes, is the most likely to occur at some point in the future. In this scenario, diplomatic relations improve bilaterally between Cuba and the U.S. while simultaneously improving between Cuba and the other nations. This alternate future is realistic given the public statements of Presidents Castro and Obama and the current levels of trade between Cuba, Russia, China, Canada, and the European Union.

Alternate future number 13—with 25 votes—is the second most-likely scenario to occur in the future. In this scenario, Cuba and the U.S. maintain status quo vis-à-vis each other while diplomatic relations between Cuba and the other nations improve. This scenario is realistic as it is a continuation of the current relationship between these three national actors.

Alternate futures 2 and 14 are third most-likely scenarios to occur, tied with 23 votes each. Alternate future 2 depicts diplomatic relations between Cuba and the U.S. improving while relations between Cuba and the other nations remain at status quo. This scenario is realistic if, as Cuba and the U.S. normalize relations, Cuba withdraws somewhat from the other nations to more closely align herself with the U.S.

Alternate future 14 depicts all three national actors maintaining status quo toward each other. This scenario is less realistic as trade figures between Cuba and the other nations have risen each year (excluding 2008/2009 due to recent world-wide economic troubles), indicating, should relations between Cuba and the U.S. remain strained, Cuba will seek improved trade and financial ties with the other nations rather than maintain current levels. Because the author believes alternate future 14 to be less realistic than alternate future 2, it will be discarded and alternate future 2 will be labeled the third most-likely scenario to occur at some point in the future.

LAMP Method Step 10 and 11: Determine the “focal events” that must occur in our present in order to bring about a given alternate future and develop indicators for the focal events, respectively.

The following focal points and indicators are necessary to bring about alternate future number 1—the most-likely scenario to occur at some point in the future (diplomatic relations between the three national actors improve simultaneously):

1. The continued willingness of the Castro regime and the Obama administration to seek compromises to bring their countries closer. Indicators include further public statements, backed by tangible government action, illustrating each country desires a relationship with the other.
2. Cuban President Raúl Castro stays in power and is able to transition his government and relax the Communist grip over his country. To do this, he will have to appease the Communist hardliners and revolutionary cadre in his government and convince them of the benefits of transitioning to a democratic capitalistic government. Indicators include Cuban citizens receiving freedom of speech and assembly, elections (if only at a local level initially), freeing political prisoners, and an open market to reduce Cubans’ dependence on the black market.
3. Former Cuban President Fidel Castro, and his Communist-revolutionary demeanor, fades from the scene, either through his death or failing health, so Raúl can moderate the government. Indicators include official announcements of Fidel’s death or physical infirmity or a cessation of statements by Fidel countering or refuting his brother’s public statements.

4. The U.S. Congress lifts the embargo and sanctions against Cuba, step-by-step, as Cuba frees political prisoners, ceases oppressing her people, and transitions to a democratic government. Indicators include the U.S. Congress repealing, or at least modifying, the 1962 embargo, the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act, and the 1996 Helms-Burton Act to allow U.S. corporations and companies—as well as those of other nations—to trade with Cuba without fear of reprisals and the lifting of travel restrictions, allowing American citizens to visit Cuba freely.

The following focal points and indicators are necessary to bring about alternate future number 13—the second most-likely scenario to occur at some point in the future (Cuba and the U.S. maintain status quo while Cuba and the other nations improve diplomatic relations):

1. Neither the Cuban nor the U.S. governments significantly alter the status of their current relationship.
2. The U.S. government continues to overlook minor infractions of the Helms-Burton Act.
3. Cuba and the other nations slowly increase financial and trade agreements.

The following focal points and indicators are necessary to bring about alternate future number 2—the third most-likely scenario to occur at some point in the future (diplomatic relations between Cuba and the U.S. improve while relations between Cuba and the other nations remain at status quo):

1. All of the focal points and indicators necessary to bring about future number 1 apply to future number 2.

2. Cuba turns toward the U.S. as a trade and financial partner and decreases trade and financial ties with the other nations. Indicators include increased trade and finance negotiations between Cuba and the U.S. with a concomitant reduction in negotiations between Cuba and the other nations.

LAMP Method Step 12: State the potential of a given alternate future to “transpose” into another alternate future.

The top three alternate futures all have the potential to transpose due to the uncertainties of emerging diplomatic relations. Alternate future 1 (diplomatic relations improve between all three national actors) could easily transpose into alternate futures 13 (Cuba and the U.S. remain at status quo while relations between Cuba and the other nations improve) or 2 (relations improve between the Cuba and the U.S. while Cuba maintains status quo with the other nations) if one of the national actors believes it was slighted by the other(s).

Similarly, alternate future 13 could transpose into alternate future 1 with one or two small changes in attitude or stance by the Cuban and U.S. governments. Finally, alternate future 2 could transpose into alternate future 1 with small changes in Cuban and/or the other nations’ perceptions of each others’ policies.

VI. Conclusion

The U.S. enacted an embargo against Cuba in 1962 to punish President Fidel Castro for establishing a Communist government and in reaction to Cuba nationalizing American property on the island. The U.S. enacted the Cuban Democracy Act in 1992 in response to the Mariel Boatlift and the Helms-Burton Act in 1996 after the Cuban Air Force shot down two Brothers to the Rescue aircraft, with the loss of four lives, over international waters.

In hindsight, the U.S. embargo and sanctions against Cuba failed; Fidel Castro's regime endured until 2006 when illness forced him to delegate some authority to his brother, Raúl. Fidel then "officially" resign in 2008 and relinquished leadership of Cuba to his brother. Raúl Castro has, in his first year as president of Cuba, shown himself to be slightly more moderate than his brother by making overtures toward the U.S. History has shown, however, the Communist government of Cuba can survive despite U.S. sanctions.

Since 1997, the majority of Americans polled have supported increased diplomatic relations with Cuba (Morales, 2009). In 2009, a bipartisan group of 20 U.S. senators crafted and proposed a bill ending the travel ban to Cuba (Oinounou, 2009). The majority of Cubans polled in 1999 by Betancourt and Guillermo of the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy favored improved relations with the U.S. Finally, in April 2009, the Cuban American National Foundation, the leading organization for Cuban exiles in the U.S., reversed its founding principles and called for expanded relations with Cuba, encouraging cultural, academic, and humanitarian travel to Cuba (Cave, 2009).

This paper set out to answer two research questions: Will relations between Cuba and the U.S. improve now that both countries have new leaders? and 2) What are the most likely courses

of action of the Obama administration and the Raúl Castro regime will take vis-à-vis one another now that both countries have new leaders?

Public announcements by both President Castro and President Obama indicate each nation will seek closer ties with the other. Assuming neither country's government takes actions to preclude improved diplomatic ties, Cuba and the U.S. are on track to improve relations.

Utilizing the Lockwood Analytical Method for Prediction, the author identified 27 possible alternate futures for relations between three national actors, Cuba, the U.S., and others—Russia, China, Canada, and the European Union (EU). The author determined the three most-likely courses of action the three national actors will follow at some point in the future by performing a pairwise comparison of the 27 alternate futures and ranking them based on the number of votes each received during the comparison.

The most-likely alternate future was scenario number 1: diplomatic relations between Cuba and the U.S. improve bilaterally while Cuba also improves relations with the other nations. The second most-likely alternate future was number 13, where Cuba and the U.S. maintain status quo vis-à-vis one another while Cuba improves relations with the other countries (this is a continuation of the current situation). Alternate future number 2 was the third most-likely scenario to occur at some point in the future. This scenario depicts relations improving between Cuba and the U.S. while Cuba and the other nations maintain status quo. This scenario envisions Cuba moving closer to the U.S. at the expense of expanded ties with Russia, China, Canada, and the EU.

This study shows majorities in Cuba and the U.S. want expanded relations between their countries and presents evidence, via the first and third most-likely alternate futures, that Cuba and the U.S. will improve diplomatic relations at some point in the future.

The end of U.S. sanctions and the embargo against Cuba has immense implications for both countries. First and foremost, allowing Cubans and Cuban-Americans to freely travel between their respective countries will expose Cubans to the benefits of a democratic capitalist system of government. This enlightenment alone will probably have more effect on the Cuban government than the 47 years of sanctions Cubans have endured and could help push the Cuban government toward moderation.

Expanded trade between the two countries will benefit both, create a valuable American ally in the Caribbean, and help counter Russian and Chinese attempts to increase their political and economic influence in the Caribbean and Latin and South America. American business has been prohibited from trading with Cuba for decades; opening trade will allow American companies to compete for Cuban convertible pesos with other companies from around the world on an equal footing.

Normalized relations between the U.S. and Cuba would improve security in the Caribbean and would possibly result in a small savings in the U.S. defense budget as the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC) ceases collection against Cuba as a whole and concentrates collection assets against the Cuban drug trade. This could result in a decrease in the amount of illicit drugs being brought into the U.S. This freeing-up of IC assets once used for Cuba would allow the U.S. to shift or emphasize focus on other problem spots in the region.

While it is highly unlikely Cuban President Raúl Castro is going to take any dramatic steps to immediately moderate his Communist government, a coalition of nations led—or at least supported—by the U.S. will probably be able to entice Castro and the Cuban government slowly toward democracy and increased personal freedoms for the Cuban people.

VII. References

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