Chapter I

CUBA'S RELATIONS WITH UNITED STATES: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW
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Relations between Cuba and the United States have been both predictable and paradoxical. Situated barely ninety miles off the coast of Florida, Cuba predictably shared close political and economic ties with its powerful northern neighbour. Paradoxically, the very nature of its proximity with the US provoked a revolution in Cuba in 1959 which not only repudiated its long-standing political and economic ties with the US, but also completely restructured the pattern of its external relations. Thenceforward divergence in the perceived national interests, ideological polarizations, recalcitrant national egos as well as the compulsions of the international strategic environment have caused relations between Cuba and the United States to be in a state of mutual hostility.

Many scholars have tried to explain the mutual hostility pattern of relations between the two countries after 1959, in terms of Fidel Castro's conversion into the communist faith. Undoubtedly, Cuban alignment with the Soviet bloc is a significant element in Cuban-US relations. But undue focus on the communist-versus-capitalist dimension of the Cuban revolution to explain Cuban-US relations would amount to overlooking

1. From a position of being merely an appendage of the United States since the Spanish-American war of 1898, Cuba became a close ally of the Soviet Union, if not a bonafide member of the Soviet bloc.

2. According to this view, Castro was basically anti-American and even his earliest policies were designed to enlist Soviet support and provoke American hostility. See Daniel James, Cuba—The First Soviet Satellite in Latin America (New York, 1961) and Theodore Draper, Castro's Revolution: Myths and Realities (New York, 1962).
many of the more unique and basic factors in the Cuban experience. Explanations for the particular pattern of relations that Cuba developed with the US subsequent to the revolution must be sought in the island's historical antecedents. Specifically, the nationalistic aspirations of Cuba and the manner in which US policy towards the island resulted in impeding the full blossoming of Cuban nationalism played an important role in determining the anti-US character of the Cuban revolution. While emphasizing this aspect, the chapter dwells at some length on Castro's early political career to examine to what extent his early political influences and experiences accounted for his subsequent political beliefs. Against the setting of the Cuban revolution of 1959, the chapter also delineates the policies and postures of both Cuba and the US toward each other during the period between 1960-1968 highlighting the domestic and foreign circumstances which made hostility between the two countries inevitable.

Cuba's Attitude, Policies and Postures towards the US prior to the Revolution, 1898-1958

Years of Spanish and North American influence shaped the Cuban polity and economy as also the thinking of the Cuban patriots. The latter's stream of thinking eventually crystallised into a powerful nationalist movement in Cuba towards the latter half of the nineteenth century. Even so, the development of the nationalist movement was greatly hampered by the strains and rivalries between various groups advocating either autonomy, independence or merger with the United States. Such divisions accounted


4. While the rest of the Spanish colonies in Latin America had become independent by the 1820s, Cuba and Puerto Rico were the last remnants of Spanish empire in the Western Hemisphere, freed only in 1898.

5. One of the principal causes of disunity among Cuban patriots was the fear of what might happen once independence was achieved. There was fear of a slave revolt as it had happened in Haiti in 1791, a fear that the Spanish were only too happy to encourage. See, C. Stanley Urban, "The Africanization of Cuba Scare, 1853-1855", Hispanic-American Historical Review, (Durham, N.C.), vol. 37, no. 1, February 1957, pp. 29-45.
for the failure of the Ten Years War (1868-1878) in achieving the goal of independence. The war, however, ended on an ambiguous note. Although peace was made with Spain, many rebel leaders like General Antonio Maceo refused to accept the terms of armistice and went into exile.

In the meantime, as Spain's hold over Cuba gradually weakened, US interests in Cuba expanded dramatically.\(^6\) Profiting from the bankruptcy of many Spanish and Cuban capitalists during the war and taking advantage of a general fear for the future of the island, American money now moved in and began to acquire land, sugar and mining interests. By 1896, the value of US investments in Cuba was $50 million, and US exports to Cuba in 1897 were valued at $27 million, reinforcing what a Cuban consul general in the US once candidly stated that "Cuba was an economic colony of the United States even though it was governed by Spain".\(^7\) As the US stake in Cuba increased, however, a powerful lobby emerged in that country advocating annexationist designs on Cuba.\(^8\)

Developing against such a backdrop the struggle for independence in Cuba acquired a distinct anti-American aspect when it was renewed under the leadership of José Martí (1853-1895).\(^9\) Having lived in the US for over a

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8. The developments of such designs in its early stages is succinctly described by an American historian. "It was no wonder the Spaniards expected the United States to annex Cuba. Jefferson had included it as part of his dream of expansion; John Quincy Adams considered it indispensable to the continuance and integrity of the Union; the South coveted it; Polk tried to purchase it; and the Ostend manifesto decided to steal it." Charles S. Olcott, The Life of William McKinley (Boston, Mass., 1916), vol. 2, p. 195. See also David Healy, US Expansionism: The Imperialist Urge in the 1890s (Madison, Wis., 1970), pp. 130-36.

decade, Martí was well aware of the American expansionist designs on Cuba.\textsuperscript{10} Time and again, therefore, he warned his compatriots against the strong annexationist desire, particularly on the part of the American states to the West and South. The revival of American interest in the purchase of Cuba from Spain about this time only reinforced his conviction that the US as a country was becoming increasingly intent upon extending its dominion over Latin America.\textsuperscript{11} Accordingly, he realized that to win political independence for the patria, Cuba needed not only to defeat the Spanish forces but also to keep the growing expansion of American imperialism firmly at bay. The independence of the island had to block capitalist expansionism throughout Latin America. One day before he was killed in battle, he wrote:

At last I am daily risking my life for my country—since I understand it so and have the spirit to carry it out—for my duty of preventing in time, by securing the independence of Cuba, the spread of the United States across the Antilles, and of stopping it from pouncing with this added impetus upon our American lands.\textsuperscript{12}

Martí's hope for Cuba as a model and perhaps leader became a principal inspiration for Cuban nationalism and would emerge again in its most virulent form under the aegis of Fidel Castro.

Subsequent developments proved Martí right. For, the United States used its rather belated intervention in the conflict between Spain and Cuba, resulting in the Spanish-American War of 1898 to transform the character of the drive for Cuban independence. American intervention, while it hastened the defeat of Spain, also foreclosed a final victory by the Cubans. The American command withdrew the Cuban Liberating Army from major


\textsuperscript{11} The best explanation of Martí's anti-imperialism is found in Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, Martí antimperialista (Havana, 1961).

\textsuperscript{12} José Martí, Obras Completas (Havana, 1963-1965), pp. 167-8.
operations and limited Cuban participation to ancillary contributions. So much so, Cuba's role in the post-war planning was to a great extent usurped by the US. The Cuban war of liberation thus was transformed into an American war of conquest. For Cubans the result was "peace without victory" since the American intervention was followed by three years of US military occupation.\textsuperscript{13} Thus, "the coincidence of national independence with a new phase of American imperialism made for an easy transference of national antagonism from Spain to the United States".\textsuperscript{14} In other words, for most Cubans the US replaced Spain as the major foreign impediment to full nationhood.

Once the war was over, the US skilfully exploited the contradictions and divisions within the Cuban independence movement for its own ends. Although most Cubans did not view American intervention kindly, a section of the Cuban elite had joined the Spaniards in the island in appealing for US protection. With the help of this compliant political elite who relied on the US to help them maintain their privileges, the US proceeded to create a national system designed to promote Cuban dependence. In order to bypass the Teller and Foraker Amendments and deflate Cuban and American opposition that obstructed such a design, a clever strategy was worked out.\textsuperscript{15} Cuba would be made nominally independent under a President sympathetic to the United States and with severe limitations of its sovereignty. The Platt Amendment provided these limitations and made Cuba safe for US capital.\textsuperscript{16}

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\item As a result of its victory in the war, the US annexed Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines and some other small islands in the West Indies. However, keeping in view the opposition in Cuba to any American designs of annexation as also the Teller Amendment to a Congress resolution of 1898 which disclaimed any US intention "to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction and control" over Cuba, President McKinley promised "to leave the government and control of the island to its people".\textsuperscript{13}
\item See C.A.M. Hennessy, "The Roots of Cuban Nationalism", \textit{International Affairs} (London), vol. 39, no. 3, July 1963, pp. 345-59.\textsuperscript{14}
\item While the Teller Amendment disclaimed any US intention to annex Cuba, the Foraker Amendment forbade the military government in Cuba from granting concessions to American business.\textsuperscript{15}
\item The Platt Amendment which was appended to the 1902 Cuban Constitution stipulated among other things that Cuba should allow American intervention for the preservation
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The Cuban Reciprocity Treaty insured US economic domination.¹⁷ In fact, from being a colony of Spain, Cuba was transformed into a protectorate of the United States.

The protectorate thus established, however, neither helped the Cubans learn how to govern, nor did it improve their sense of self esteem. The US soon became a kind of moral arbiter, the effective supreme court of the island. When factions struggled for power through a corrupt electoral system, the losers immediately cried fraud and demanded some sort of US intervention, and the Americans often complied. Thus, three US military interventions and an equal number of US proconsuls punctuated Cuban history between 1901 and 1934 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt finally abrogated the Platt Amendment as part of his Good Neighbour Policy toward Latin America.¹⁸

Unfortunately, the new US policy benefited the Cubans little. Its positive impact on Cuban-US relations was also marginalized since by this time US investments and a trade treaty which bound Cuba to the US market had substantially reduced Cuba's sovereignty.¹⁹ By 1940 Cuba became "politically

of Cuban independence and for the maintenance of government committed to the preservation of life, property and individual liberty. It also required Cuba to sell or lease to the US land necessary for coaling or naval stations, and limited Cuba's treaty-making power as also its capacity to contract debts. See Federico G. Gil, Latin American-United States Relations (New York, 1971), p. 91.

17. The 1903 Treaty of Reciprocity extended to Cuban sugar a twenty per cent tariff preference in American ports in return for a 25 to 40 per cent reduction on American products entering Cuba. For the impact of this treaty on the US investment profile in Cuba see Smith, n. 7.


19. After the "dance of the millions" in 1920, when sugar prices reached unprecedented heights, American investment poured into the island. After the boom collapsed, an even larger share of the Cuban sugar industry was purchased by American banks foreclosing on bankrupt mills. Whereas in 1920 American owned sugar mills produced about 48.4 per cent of the Cuban sugar crop, by 1928 the figure had risen to 70 per cent.
and economically an adjunct of the United States."20 Far from representing a change, Roosevelt's "hands-off" policy was interpreted as a mere change in tactics whereby assured of its dominance of Cuba, the US abandoned the straight-forward exercise of 'gun-boat diplomacy' in favour of more tactful methods.21 Instead, the US failure to intervene against the brutal and corrupt dictatorship of Gerardo Machado (1925-1933) had by this time convinced the Cubans that the US was only concerned with safeguarding its economic interests.

In the light of such US attitude, it is hardly surprising that a strong current of anti-Yankeeism had begun to emerge in the 1920s.22 Intellectuals like Enrique José Varona and Fernando Ortíz as well as students and honest labour leaders formed part of a rising nationalist force committed to reviving Marti's ideals and cleansing the political culture through a national regeneration programme. Framing their charges in nationalist slogans and anti-imperialist doctrines, critics spoke of the commercialization of politics and warned of the rising level of US assets in Cuba and their destructive effects. Organizations such as the Cuban Committee of National and Civil Renovation, the University Students Federation and leftist factions took up the cause of revolutionary politics and popular agitation, articulating public challenges to the ineptitude of the regime and the economic dominance of the US.

The revolutionary government headed by Ramón Grau San Martín which eventually replaced Machado regime in 1933, soon became the symbol


21. For an assessment of Roosevelt's Cuba policy see Bryce Wood, The Making of the Good Neighbour Policy (New York, 1961), in which it is held that in reaction to Nicaraguan and Cuban crises of 1927 and 1933 respectively, the US incorporated the three principles of non-intervention, non-interference and reciprocity in its policy towards Latin America. For a contrasting view that the Good Neighbour Policy was only a guise for advancing US economic domination, see David Green, The Containment of Latin America (Chicago, Ill., 1971).

22. For a comprehensive account of the background to the 1933 crisis see Luis E. Aguilar, Cuba, 1933: Prologue to Revolution (Ithaca, N.Y., 1972), pp. 68-84.
of Cuba's social, economic and nationalistic aspirations. During its brief
tenure it even initiated a few radical reforms such as placing limits on
foreigners' land purchases. The US failure to recognize Grau's government
which partly accounted for its demise, served to strengthen Cuban nationalist
aspirations and harden its hostility towards the US. It left a profound
impact on the following generations' psychological make-up, social agenda
and political tactics. The truncated revolution of 1933 was the genesis of the
intensely nationalistic and rabidly anti-American revolution that totally
transformed Cuba some fifteen years later.

Thus, the US high profile in Cuba during the latter's evolution from
colonial status to nominal independence contains the key to the causes of the
radical upheavals that made conflict with the US inevitable. Cuban
nationalists never forgave the US for its emasculation of the independence
movement. Recurring US interventions generated a fierce but impotent anti-
Yankee sentiment within the Cuban political culture. What was especially
piquant was the overtness of the overall US economic presence in Cuba
which exacerbated the feeling of frustration and instilled a degrading
psychological subordination to the US. Cubans believed that their country
could never truly be free until it shook off the yoke of US imperialism. At the
same time, the seductive appeal of American affluence had led Cuban
culture, habits and life-styles to be largely imitative of American society. The
result was a form of "cultural dependence" sometimes described as the "coca-
colarization" of Cuba which was equally loathsome to sensitive nationalists.
A rabid anti-Americanism was thus ingrained in the Cuban nationalist ethos.
Not surprisingly, therefore, the US became an easy target as well as Cuban
revolutionaries' principal enemy in 1959.

23. The US opposed Grau's government which had come to power in September 1933. The
American warships cruised off Cuban waters in a show of force while Sumner Welles,
the US ambassador urged his government to intervene militarily. Though intervention
was ruled out, the Roosevelt administration withheld diplomatic recognition to, the
very end. Grau resigned on 15 January 1934, after the Cuban army withdrew its support,
thanks to the manoeuvre of the US ambassador Jefferson Caffrey through Sergeant
Fulgencio Batista. The new Batista-sponsored government that took over received
The revival of a popular movement in the 1950s was facilitated by the oppressive regime of Fulgencio Batista who was the strongman in Cuban politics from 1934 to 1958, with only a brief interruption during 1944-1952. The anti-Batista movement acquired a distinct anti-imperialist aspect owing to the close identification of the US government with his regime. The democratic forces against Batista's dictatorship united in the Cuban Revolutionary Party (PRC) or the Auténtico whose programme was organized around the principles of "nationalism, socialism and anti-imperialism." Unfortunately, the brief constitutional period that followed under the two successive Auténtico administrations of Ramón Grau San Martín (1944-48) and Carlos Prío Socarrás (1948-52) failed to satisfy the popular political aspirations and economic and social expectations. In fact, plagued by extensive official corruption and embezzlement, the Auténtico governments served to erode the legitimacy of democratic politics and heighten popular frustrations.

It was in such a political milieu that Fidel Castro began his political career. Since much is made of Castro's political origins by scholars who seek to explain his anti-Americanism in terms of his early association with


25. See Ramón Grau San Martín, "La Definición de la Política Auténtica", in La Revolución Cubana Ante América (Mexico, 1936), pp. 101-6. It may be noted that socialism as referred to in the Auténtico political programme meant only a more humane updated version of capitalism. In fact, the Auténtico movement did not in any way pose the threat of a working class dictatorship. Rather, it defined communism as a threat to the nation which had to be repressed. See Nelson P. Valdés, "Ideological Roots of the Cuban Revolutionary Movement", Occasional Papers no. 15, 1975, Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Glasgow.

the Communists, it is essential at this point to briefly discuss Castro's political career in the years prior to the revolution.  

In a situation where the traditional bourgeois opposition was totally discredited in the eyes of the most Cubans and the radical option was not well represented by the Communist Party, political violence, gangsterism and urban terrorism carried out by the assorted revolutionary bands and 'action groups' had become rampant in Havana during the 1940s. It is in one such group--the Revolutionary Insurrectional Union (UIR)--that Castro began his political career when he came to study law at the University of Havana in 1945. Having become increasingly disenchanted with the violent competition between rival groups, Castro soon joined the Cuban People's Party (PPC), better known as the Ortodoxo Party.  

It was only after Batista's coup in 1952 foreclosed the possibility of democratic politics in Cuba that a revolutionary movement emerged under the leadership of Castro. Drawn mostly from within the ranks of the Ortodoxo, the Movement as it was called, consisted mainly of young men and women of the lower middle and working class with diverse political beliefs.
who were united in their opposition to Batista. It was with this group that Castro led the famous attack on the Moncada barracks on 26 July 1953 in an attempt to overthrow the government.\footnote{31} Although a disastrous failure, the daring nature of the attack, the repression which followed as well as Castro's arrest, trial and brilliant personal defence during the trial, thrust him into national prominence and helped to make his organization a potential political contender.\footnote{32} Granted amnesty in 1955, Castro went to Mexico where he broke off from the Ordoñoxos and formed his own movement called the 26 July Movement—after the famous Moncada attack. During his stay in Mexico, Castro made efforts to elicit support for his movement from every possible quarter.\footnote{13} Eventually, with a band of 81 men, of diverse political backgrounds, including some non-Cubans, Castro set forth on the Granma for Cuba in November 1956 and launched his heroic guerrilla struggle against the Batista regime from the mountains of Sierra Maestra.\footnote{34}

What emerges, therefore, from a review of Castro's early political career is that he was in no way a Marxist during this period. In fact, the Communist Party which had earlier supported Batista, remained opposed to Castro's movement until mid-1958. It had even decried Castro's attack on Moncada as a "putschist attempt, a desperate form of adventurism, typical of petty bourgeoisie circles and implicated in gangsterism". As Castro's movement gathered momentum, however, the Communist Party finally lent support to the idea of "armed struggle" and some of the younger cadre went to Sierra in 1957. Nevertheless, there was as yet no explicit alliance between the

\footnote{31. See Ramon L. Bonachea and Marta San Martín, The Cuban Insurrection, 1952-1959 (New Brunswick, 1974).}

\footnote{32. A revised version of Castro's defence plea was subsequently disseminated as a famous pamphlet containing his views on Cuba's political and economic problems. See Fidel Castro, La Historia me Absolvera (Havana, 1961).}

\footnote{33. While on one hand he held conversations with some Cuban Communists in Mexico, he also signed a pact with Directorio Revolucionario, a group that was decidedly anti-Communist. See Thomas, n. 3, pp. 876-93.}

\footnote{34. Important among those who joined Castro's movement in Mexico was an Argentine doctor, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, who many allege was "Fidel's evil Communist genius".}
Communist Party and the 26 July Movement. It was only in July 1958 that Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, on behalf of the Communist Central Committee, visited Castro in the Sierra and thereupon a labour unity was worked out between the two organizations. But such tactical arrangements did not amount to much and the Communist Party, pessimistic about the chances of Batista's overthrow and a rebel victory, continued to hope for a "democratic coalition government" of all progressive parties as late as November 1958.

The argument, therefore, that Castro's sympathy with Communism is what led him to adopt anti-US policies in the post-1959 period does not hold. Despite the divergence of opinion among scholars, the 26 July Movement during these years appears to have been ideologically vague and uncertain of its direction. Rather than a movement motivated by orthodox Marxism-Leninism, it was instead a group inspired by Cuban history. A historical continuity was perceived with Martí and the Moncada militants identified themselves with all heroic and frustrated attempts in Cuban history to bring about the changes Martí deemed necessary.

Castro's near ideological neutrality was also evident from the fact that he calculatedly refrained from taking sides in the ideological disputes that periodically arose among his compañeros. Aware that attacking the US might amount to be a tactical disaster, Castro studiously avoided directly attacking the US in any of his public discourses. Instead, while in Sierra he made numerous efforts, through interviews with the American journalists, to woo American public opinion by emphasizing his moderation and denying his...
alleged Communist credentials. He did, of course, denounce the foreign monopolies operating in Cuba on more than one occasion. Yet the movement's political programme was kept sufficiently liberal to attract broad sectors of public opinion.

Though ideologically immature, however, Castro and his 26 July Movement definitely had a backlog of grievances against the US which were further exacerbated by the latter's attitude towards the anti-Batista struggle. If the misuse of US arms supply to Batista was offensive to the nationalists, the last minute efforts by the United States to promote a third force as an alternative to both Batista and Castro further engendered an atmosphere of distrust and tension between the Cuban resistance and the US. Such attempts only served to heighten Castro's suspicions of US intervention in Cuba just as in Guatemala in 1954. Thus, even before Castro marched triumphantly into Havana, a mistrust of the intentions and purposes of the United States government was already sown in his mind.

To conclude, it can be said that it was the vocal anti-Americanism that had shaped the character and direction of the Cuban revolution of 1959 rather than the ideological predilections of Castro and his 26 July Movement that made Cuban confrontation with the US a reasonable probability. Castro's passion for a historic role wherein he imagined himself as the "rebel of all

37. For instance, see Castro's interview with Herbert Matthews in New York Times, 24-26 February 1957.

38. In his political programme from the Sierra Maestra published in 1957, without mentioning the US, Castro called for the nationalization of power and telephone companies. See Fidel Castro, "What the Rebels Want", The Nation (New York), 30 November 1957.


America" who would bring about the long desired liberation of Latin America from the "imperialist yoke" only heightened such a possibility. For, though ambiguous about the ideological tenor of the revolution, Castro envisaged the realization of the dreams of Martí. Unlike earlier occasions, however, he vowed that this time there would be no compromise. The disillusions of 1898 and 1933, perhaps caused Castro to be more radical. Therefore, he proclaimed that Cuba would be free for the first time in four centuries. "In 1898 we were not free because the Platt Amendment was imposed upon us, nor in 1933 because the revolution was betrayed. Now for the first time we are free, complete masters of our destiny".

In other words, the revolution of 1959 was a climax of the struggles that began with the anti-slavery movement in 1868, and continued through the fight against imperial Spain and the unfinished conflict with neo-colonialism of the US in the 1930s. Posited against this backdrop of Cuban predicament, it was obvious that the revolution of 1959 would certainly bring about a fundamental restructuring of Cuba's relations with the United States.

Consummation of the Revolution and the Ensuing Differences between Cuba and United States, 1959-1961

Although the triumph of Castro's revolution portended ill for Cuban-American relations, interaction between the two countries continued normally during the first year of the revolution. Unsure of his own political survival, Castro appeared anxious to avoid any conflict with the powerful neighbour. It was towards that end that Castro painstakingly downplayed any radical tendencies within his regime and went out of his way to emphasize his moderation. The revolutionary government was thus

41. Revolución (Havana), 3 January 1959.

42. Useful works on Cuban-US relations during this period are Mesa-Lago ed., n. 35; Philip W. Bonsal, Cuba, Castro and the United States (Pittsburgh, Pa., 1971); Wayne Smith, The Closest of Enemies : A Personal and Diplomatic Account of US-Cuban Relations Since 1957 (New York, 1987), and; Lucinda Garza C., "Causas y Desarrollo de Conflicto Cubano Norteamericano de Enero de 1959 a Julio de 1960", Foro Internacional (Mexico City), vol. 9, n°. 4, April-June 1969, pp. 354-86.
made up of essentially moderate elements. At the same time, Castro committed himself to the implementation of the Cuban constitution of 1940, denied any plans for expropriating property and said little for or against the United States. The press and the trade unions were allowed to operate free of government interference and elections were promised within fifteen months. Such moderate policies facilitated the comparatively rapid US recognition of the new Cuban government and allayed fears within the US business circles about the Cuban revolution. It is doubtful therefore, as is often alleged, if Castro initially had any grand anti-American domestic or foreign policy strategy. In fact, with the benefit of hindsight, it can be said that Castro developed his strategy incrementally during 1959. Having won power with the help of an effective, though relatively small guerrilla force, Castro realized that to consolidate the revolution he needed both to expand his popular base as also fulfill the popular aspirations that had brought him to power. In carrying out these measures, however, Castro was soon to incur both the opposition of Cuba's upper classes as also the hostility of the US.

The earliest of such measures was the summary war criminal trials of Batistians in Havana in 1959. The hostile reaction in the US to these trials greatly incensed Castro, particularly since US concern with civil liberties seemed hypocritical in view of its long silence about the atrocities of the Batista regime. US acceptance of many of the Batistians as emigres and its refusal to heed to the Cuban government's repeated requests for their extradition soon became an additional sore point in Cuban-US relations.

43. For the first several weeks Castro himself had no official position in the government being only the commander-in-chief of the rebel army. For details on the composition of the first cabinet see Thomas, n. 3, pp. 1065-7.

44. See Fidel Castro, Discursos para la Historia (Havana, 1959).


46. For the negative attitude of the American press towards Castro, see Robert Scheer and Maurice Zeithin, Cuba: An American Tragedy (Middlesex, 1964).
Despite growing mutual suspicion and the emergence of a series of irritants between Cuba and the US, the formality of a normal relationship was maintained. The revolutionary government had taken a few progressive steps but these were not viewed with alarm in the US.\textsuperscript{47} In fact, the new US ambassador in Havana, Philip Bonsal, having met Castro in March appeared hopeful of being able to establish "a working relationship" with the latter.\textsuperscript{48} Faced with serious economic difficulties at home, Castro, too, appeared anxious to continue "business as usual" with the US.\textsuperscript{49} He was well aware of the fact that political relations with the US, a sine-qua non of extensive economic assistance, was important for the survival of the revolution. From an economic point of view, besides the need for critical US economic aid, Cuba also had a probable 1,500,000 ton sugar surplus for which the country had no markets.\textsuperscript{50} Castro was also aware that a significant section of Cubans hoped that he would be able to work out a relationship with the US rather than break with it.\textsuperscript{51} Besides, liberal public opinion within the US believed that the US could deal with Castro.\textsuperscript{52} This might have led Castro to believe that he could perhaps work out a restructuring of Cuban-US relations through negotiations. Possibly it was for these reasons that when the American Society of Newspaper Editors invited Castro to come to the US on a goodwill tour, he willingly obliged. With a large contingent of high-ranking


\textsuperscript{48} Philip Bonsal, n. 42, p. 53.

\textsuperscript{49} Andrés Suárez recalls Castro's remark on television about the "cordial and friendly conversation" with the new US ambassador. Suárez, n. 28, p. 47.

\textsuperscript{50} The new regime faced a dismal economic situation. The treasury had been depleted by Batista regime, a large unemployed population was restive and employed workers were striking or threatening to strike for higher wages.

\textsuperscript{51} Within Cuba, individuals subscribing to this view were found in the urban wing of the 26 July movement, in some unions and in sectors of the Catholic Church.

\textsuperscript{52} See Juan M. del Aguila, \textit{Cuba: Dilemmas of a Revolution} (Boulder, Colo., 1984), pp. 54-55, for different perceptions about Castro prevalent in the US.
officials, particularly those concerned with financial and economic matters, Castro visited the US in April 1959.53

There was much speculation in Cuba about whether the visit would result in a US programme of economic assistance, since the issue would serve as an indicator of future relations between the two countries. Castro was definitely hopeful of such assistance although he was also cautious about not giving the impression of having sold out to the US.54 In the US, Castro appeared at his most democratic and moderate self. He maintained a strong neutralist position in foreign policy and said Cuba would be independent and not vote with any bloc. He repeatedly said that his heart lay with the West and that he was anti-Communist. "We are against all kinds of dictatorships whether of a man, or a country or a class, or an oligarchy or of the military. That is why we are against Communism."55 He expressed a desire for good relations with the US and said he had no intentions of either abrogating the Guantanamo treaty or withdrawing from the mutual defence treaty of the Organization of American States (OAS). He also stated that he would welcome private foreign investment and reiterated that he had no plans of nationalization.

It appears, therefore, that apart from the restoration of any legal system that would be incompatible with his own virtually absolute power, Castro during this time was willing to consider every possible option, and that


54. Rufo López-Fresquet, the then Cuban Minister of Finance, who later went into exile recalled Castro telling him "Look Rufo, I don't want this trip to be like that of other new Latin American leaders who always come to the US to ask for money. I want this to be a goodwill trip. Besides, the Americans will be surprised. And when we go back to Cuba, they will offer us aid without our asking for it. Consequently we'll be in a better bargaining position." Rufo López Fresquet, My Fourteen Months with Castro (Cleveland, Ohio., 1966), p. 106.

among the motives for his visit to Washington might have been the hope of receiving some economic aid.\textsuperscript{56} Perhaps what Castro most likely wanted in 1959 was, "peace with honour--that is an accommodation with the US but an arrangement that paid proper deference to Cuban nationalism."\textsuperscript{57} It is for this reason that the failure of the US government to respond positively to Castro during this trip has been criticized by some as the factor responsible for bringing Castro's moderate phase to a close, precipitating his conflict with the US.\textsuperscript{58}

Subsequent to the trip, some time between May and October 1959, Castro progressively steered the revolution towards a radical course through such measures as the promulgation of the Agrarian Reform Law, the systematic phasing out of liberals from the government and a growing accommodation with the Communists, making a confrontation with the US inevitable. This is not to suggest that the American refusal to grant aid impelled Castro to embark on an intensely anti-American course as also to collaborate more closely with the radicals. For, immediately after his US trip, Castro showed signs of wanting to distance himself from the Communists.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{56} Addressing the "Committee of 21" of the OAS at Buenos Aires on his way back from the US, Castro proposed a US economic assistance plan of $30 billion for all of Latin America, including Cuba. This may have been to signal the US to resume its bidding toward Cuba in a way that would not compromise Cuban economic independence. The proposal was rejected by the US although shortly thereafter, President John Kennedy spoke of $20 billion being needed by Latin America under the Alliance for Progress programme.

\textsuperscript{57} Halperin, n. 55, pp. 48-52.

\textsuperscript{58} John F. Kennedy, who was a Senator those days, wondered whether "Castro would have taken a less radical course" had the US "given the young rebel a warmer welcome in his tour of triumph especially during his trip to this country". As quoted in Thomas, n. 3, p. 1,209.

\textsuperscript{59} The Cuban Communists as also some of Castro's close associates--Raúl Castro and Che Guevara--had expressed alarm about Castro's anti-Communist remarks in the US. Instead of allaying their fears, Castro, upon returning from the US not only defended his trip, maintaining that he had fulfilled his "revolutionary duty" by strengthening Cuba's case in the US and Latin America, but perturbed by Che Guevara and Raúl Castro's moves during his absence to forge a unity with the Communists, Castro also sent Che on a long trip abroad and publicly criticized the Communists. See Revolución, 9 May 1959 and 22 May 1959.
Instead, exigencies of the political situation within Cuba is what led Castro to radicalize his revolution. The spectre of opposition had begun to emerge. The Batista supporters abroad, encouraged by Castro's vacillating policies, were beginning to raise their heads. Uncertainty was growing among the propertied classes, worsening the economic situation. Besides, a struggle within the 26 July Movement between the fidelistas and Marxist elements close to Guevara and Raul Castro had deepened the split between the moderates and radicals. Castro, therefore, realized the need to shore up his popular support by delivering on needed reforms.

The first step in this direction was the enactment of the Agrarian Reform Law in May 1959 that established the powerful National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA). Although it was still uncertain as to how the provisions of the Law would affect US corporations, it was viewed with general alarm among the US business circles. Fear of probable expropriations prompted many American companies to convey their anxieties about the future to the State Department. Allegations of communism against the Castro regime began to appear increasingly in the US press. Besides, the US government's insistence on the need for "prompt, adequate and effective" compensation for expropriations only served to confirm Castro's suspicions that the American government was exclusively concerned with its business interests and was therefore bound to oppose any political and economic structural reforms in Cuba.

Meanwhile, in Cuba too, opposition to the revolutionary regime grew in response to the Agrarian Reform. There was increasing alarm among the moderates by this trend towards radicalization. As many as five essentially

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61. Philip Bonsal records Castro's comment to Herbert Matthews that "the American reaction to the agrarian reform on May 1959 made me realize that there was no chance of an accommodation with the United States". Bonsal, n. 42, p. 75.
moderate members of Castro's cabinet resigned.\textsuperscript{62} This was followed by the defection of the head of the Cuban Air Force, Major Díaz Lanz to the US. Fearing that such dissenting voices might find ready support in the US, Castro turned more radical. Any opposition to the regime was now dubbed as being counter-revolutionary. Though, Castro still maintained his calculated ambivalence regarding the role of the Communists in his regime, henceforth he reserved his criticism for those who were anti-Communists.

Meanwhile, numerous other points of tension arose between the US and Cuba in 1959. Alleged Cuban support of attempts to overthrow other governments in Latin America and pin-prick air attacks on Cuba originating in the US hardened mutual suspicions. More important was the refusal by the US to sell arms to Cuba as well as the effort made by the US to persuade European sources to withhold munitions from Castro.\textsuperscript{63} Thus as the year drew to a close, mutual suspicions became acute.

It was the phenomena of growing opposition to his regime both within Cuba and from the US that drove Castro to seek a compromise with the Cuban Communists, a move which in turn led to a complete realignment of Cuba's internal and international postures.\textsuperscript{64} Castro's desire to limit the damage inflicted on the regime by the progressive defection of proven but non-Communist revolutionaries as well as the necessity of finding an international patron willing to partially meet Cuba's economic and defence needs convinced Castro of the utility of the PSP to his regime. He realized

\textsuperscript{62} Among the Cabinet ministers who resigned were Robert Agramonte, Minister of External Affairs; Humberto Sorí Marín, Minister of Agriculture and Luis Orlando Rodríguez, Minister of Interior.

\textsuperscript{63} In a speech on 5 March 1960, the day after the French merchant ship, La Coubre, blew up at a Havana dock, Castro complained bitterly about US efforts to prevent Cuba from buying arms in Western Europe. He warned that Cuba would buy arms where it thought best, perhaps an allusion to Soviet arms deliveries that followed soon after. Revolución, 7 March 1960.

that an accommodation with the PSP would not only provide him with an organizational network based on discipline, unity and command but also solid contacts with Moscow. Thus, tactical reasons rather than ideological affinity to revolutionary comradeship led to the alliance between Castro and the Cuban Communists some time during mid-1959. Reflected as early as in July in the replacement of Manuel Urrutia as President by Osvaldo Dorticós, an ex-member of the Cuban Communist Party, moves towards such an alliance received a considerable fillip by two incidents in October—bombing of Havana by Florida-based planes and the resignation of Huber Matos, military governor of Camaguey province on grounds of Communist infiltration of the revolution. The flights, in particular caused a furore in Cuba since they represented the first real effort by anti-Castro Cubans using military equipment. They must have reminded Castro of the Guatemalan affair. Seizing upon this opportunity, he now turned his revolution full force against the US by redirecting it along pro-Communist line internally and towards the Soviet Union externally.

Another issue that contributed to the hardening of antagonism between US and Cuba was the visit to Cuba of the Soviet First Deputy Premier, Anastas Mikoyan, who on 15 February 1960 signed a trade agreement with the revolutionary government. This represented the first in a series of political, economic and military understandings that progressively tied the destiny of the small Caribbean island to a great power rival of the US. It began the basic orientation of Cuba away from its traditional US friendship. Henceforth, the stages of Castro’s conflict with the US, gradually building up to the severance of relations at the beginning of 1961, became closely intertwined with the stages of Soviet entry into the Cuban scene.

The development of Cuban-Soviet ties, however, was neither sudden nor prompted purely by ideological reasons as it is often alleged. Instead, it was not until the latter half of 1959 that Castro, alarmed by the growing US hostility towards his regime, opened contacts with the Soviet Union, convinced of the need to reorient his foreign policy. What essentially drove Castro towards such a move were growing US support for counter-revolutionary activities; US efforts to stall Cuban acquisition of arms, and
increasing talk in the US of a possible cut in the Cuban sugar quota. Anxious to reduce Cuban vulnerability, Castro began to look for economic and military aid elsewhere. Cuban efforts to reorient its foreign policy, however, involved not only the search for support with the socialist bloc but also efforts to explore possibilities of alternative arrangements within the Third World or China.

In fact, Castro's initial contacts with the Soviets were none too promising. Unsure of the economic, military and political viability of the Cuban regime, Soviet support for Cuba for over a year was limited to moral encouragement and vague declarations of solidarity. However, as serious tensions began to emerge between Cuba and the US, Soviet interest in Cuba increased, as it now saw opportunities which it could exploit for propaganda benefits against the US in the context of Cold War. The cancellation of the Paris summit by Khrushchev and the sudden deterioration in the super power relations, following the U2 incident in May 1960, provided the initial stimulus for firming up Cuban-Soviet relations. The Soviet Union abandoned its earlier support of the 'spirit of Camp David' and instead settled for exploiting the Cuban situation to its maximum advantage. It may be recalled that the discovery of a missile gap in favour of the Soviet Union and the psychological shock it had on the US had given the Soviet Union an edge over the US in their Cold War rivalry. It is in this respect that Khrushchev saw an opportunity to use Cuba to feel the pulse of the United States.

65. Khrushchev, during this period was promoting peaceful co-existence with the US and did not wish to antagonize the US by rushing to Castro's support. For a comprehensive treatment of Soviet attitude toward the Cuban revolution see Jacques Lévesque, The USSR and the Cuban Revolution: Soviet Ideological and Strategical Perspectives, 1959-1977 (New York, 1978), and Edward Gonzalez, "Castro's Revolution, Cuban Communist Appeals and the Soviet Response", World Politics, vol. 21, no. 1, October 1968, pp. 39-68.

66. On 1 May 1960, two weeks before the opening of the Paris Conference, an American spy plane, U2, was shot down by the Soviet Union near Sverdlovsk in the heart of the continental Russia and its pilot was taken prisoner. For a change in the Soviet attitude towards Cuba following the U2 incident, see K.S. Karol, n. 35, pp. 200-5.

67. The Soviet leader also saw in Cuba an opportunity to score over China in the emerging Sino-Soviet debate. By supporting Cuba he hoped to silence Chinese criticism that the Soviet Union was sacrificing the interests of the international revolutionary movement to the imperatives of peaceful co-existence. On the benefits to the USSR in supporting
Henceforth, Cuba encouraged by the Soviet support adopted a more anti-American line. Thus, when in late June, prompted by the US government pressure, American and British owned oil refineries in Cuba refused to process crude oil sent from the Soviet Union, Castro, most certainly encouraged by the Soviets, proceeded to nationalize the oil companies. Likewise, when in July, President Eisenhower announced suspension of the remainder of Cuban sugar quota for 1960, Khrushchev let the Cuban government know that his country would pick up the 750,000 tons of sugar from the US quota. On the same occasion, the Soviet leader, in very ambiguous terms, also offered military support to Cuba against possible US invasion.68

If Soviet proddings pushed Cuba increasingly against the US, the latter's responses fared no better in stemming the progressive decline in relations. Even before the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two, Cuban ties with the Soviet Union had been used by the Eisenhower administration to make overthrow of Castro regime its official policy.69 But the actual Presidential approval of a CIA plan to train a Cuban exile group for possible invasion was given in March 1960. This was followed by the American suspension of the balance of Cuba's 1960 sugar quota in July. Next, the US tried to isolate Cuba within the OAS at the Foreign Minister’s Conference at San Jose in August 1960. The US failure to deal effectively with Castro's Cuba became a major issue in the Nixon-Kennedy Presidential campaign in the same year, unleashing the most vitriolic attacks on Cuba and


68. Khrushchev carefully hedged his pledge by making it conditional. "Figuratively speaking, in case of need Soviet artillery men can support the Cuban people with their rocket fire if the aggressive forces in the Pentagon dare to launch an intervention against Cuba." Pravda, 9 July 1960, as translated by the Current Digest of Soviet Press (Ann Arbor, Mich.), 10 August 1960, p. 5.

69. "The new American policy—not announced as such but implicit in the actions of the United States government—was one of overthrowing Castro by all the means available to the United States short of the open employment of American armed forces in Cuba." Bonsal, n. 57, pp. 134-5.
forcing the Eisenhower administration to impose a partial economic embargo on Cuba in October.\(^70\)

By the year end, therefore, a break in Cuban-US relations appeared inevitable. That step was finally taken when on 2 January 1961 Castro demanded that US embassy personnel in Havana be reduced to eleven, the same as in the Cuban embassy in Washington. The following day, President Eisenhower responded by announcing the severance of diplomatic relations. The die has thus been cast in Cuban-US relations.

Bay of Pigs and After

Having defied the powerful neighbour, Castro was also cautious enough to complement his defiance with strategies that would enable him to succeed. Still unsure of the reliability of his Soviet ally—especially on the vital question of military support—and aware that a large scale US invasion was in the offing, Castro began exploring different options that would ensure the survival of his regime. Firstly, he set out to attract as much international attention on Cuba as possible, hoping that the incoming Kennedy administration might have reservations about ordering the invasion of an island enjoying frequent and usually sympathetic headlines in the world's news media. A massive mobilization of the army and the entire civilian population was also undertaken to reinforce Cuba's defence forces.

Nonetheless, Castro did not rule out the possibility of reaching of some sort of an accommodation with the incoming Kennedy administration. Hoping that a softening of the Cuban stance might dissuade President Kennedy from carrying out the invasion plans, Castro called off the mobilization campaign on the day of the former's inauguration.\(^71\) In March,


\(^71\) Reacting to President Kennedy's inaugural speech in which he urged US adversaries to "begin anew the quest for peace", Castro said, "The President who has just taken over speaks of a new beginning. Good. We also say let us begin anew. We are waiting for facts." *Revolución*, 22 January 1961.
Castro even made a tentative offer for negotiations, going so far as to raise the possibility of compensation for expropriated US property.\textsuperscript{72}

Alongside, efforts were also made to integrate Cuba more fully into the socialist bloc with a view to remove the ambiguity from Soviet Union's commitment to Cuba. This was essential both for Cuban defence against an impending US invasion as also for pressing economic reasons. Most importantly, having lost the US market, Cuba needed to find an alternate market for its sugar in the socialist bloc.

The Soviet Union, however, appeared reluctant to increase its commitments to Cuba. Not only had Khrushchev backed down on his earlier promise to provide Cuba with Soviet "missile support", but there is also evidence to suggest that weapons of a more conventional type were not supplied to Cuba in any significant amounts until the following year.\textsuperscript{73} Soviet economic help too remained modest. Castro may have therefore calculated that the only way to extract concessions from the Soviets was to force Cuba into the socialist camp by claiming the revolution's socialist credentials. This might also help him solicit Chinese support by exploiting the "contradictions" of the socialist camp from within. Whilst it is unlikely that Castro ever thought such ties would be an effective substitute for Soviet support, he nevertheless realized that such explorations gave him a certain, albeit limited, leverage with the Soviet leadership. In this respect Che Guevara's trip to China towards the end of 1960 served as a useful precedent.\textsuperscript{74} With a view to secure maximum Soviet military protection

\textsuperscript{72} See \textit{New York Times}, 8 March 1961 where Castro is reported to have said, "If some day the United States wishes again to buy sugar from Cuba, then we can discuss some type of indemnification; this depends on the mutual advantages that can be gained from the discussion of these problems."


\textsuperscript{74} In November 1960, Cuba concluded an agreement with China whereby the latter agreed to buy one million tons of Cuban sugar in 1961 and to grant a credit of $60 million for equipment and technical aid. Not wishing to be outdone by the Chinese, the Soviet Union soon concluded a more generous agreement with Cuba whereby it agreed to buy 2.5 million tons of Cuban sugar in 1961 at 4 cents a pound.
Castro, therefore, calculatedly timed the US invasion of Cuba, better known as the Bay of Pigs invasion, as the moment to declare the socialist character of the Cuban revolution.75

The need to test Soviet commitment to Cuba, however, did not arise. For, the invasion was successfully crushed by the Cuban militias and armed forces, resulting in a military, but more important, political victory for the revolutionary regime.76 The defeat of the US invasion cemented Castro’s domestic standing, demoralized the remnants of internal opposition, substantiated Castro’s charges about “imperialist aggression” as also greatly enhanced his prestige in the region. Additionally, having demonstrated the survivability of the Castro regime and the unlikelihood of direct US armed aggression, it also helped in consolidating Cuba’s relations with the Soviet Union.

Although elated by victory, Castro realized the extreme vulnerability of his position. His forces had performed creditably during the invasion but they were now even more badly equipped than before. The Soviet Union, whose support during the invasion had remained limited to ambiguous declarations of solidarity, continued to prevaricate on the pressing matter of military aid. In fact, the Soviet leadership appeared reluctant even to recognize the Cuban revolution’s socialist credentials.77

75. On 16 April 1961, one day before the invasion, Castro for the first time described the Cuban revolution as socialist. Speaking at a massive funeral gathering for seven Cubans killed in the preceding days bombing, he said: “...[the imperialists] cannot forgive our being right here under their very noses or to see how we have made a revolution, a socialist revolution right here under the very nose of the United States.” As quoted in Jane Franklin, Cuban Foreign Relations: A Chronology, 1959-1982 (New York, 1984), p. 6.

76. Organized and directed by the CIA, the invasion had originally been conceived as a guerrilla undertaking by Cuban exiles, with training camps being set up in Guatemala for that purpose in August 1960. In early November, however, the CIA changed the plans to a larger invasion operation by the newly organized Brigade 2506 under the command of Manuel Artime, an exile who had briefly fought with the Rebel Army in the closing days of the Batista regime. For an account of the entire operation, see Haynes Johnson, The Bay of Pigs (New York, 1969).

77. See Lévesque, n. 65, pp. 30-38 for the reasons for Soviet misgivings about recognizing Cuba’s socialist credentials.
At the same time, the fear of an all-out American attack remained. The failure of the Bay of Pigs had not diminished US hostility towards the Castro regime. Instead, having failed to overthrow Castro by force, the Kennedy administration abandoned unilateral action against Castro in favour of more respectable multilateral measures supplemented by the "Alliance for Progress". Although ostensibly designed to stop the spread of Castro contagion in Latin America, it held out hopes—at least during the initial stage—of actually choking off the Castro regime through political and economic suffocation.78

Faced with such a situation Castro once again began to look for support wherever he could find it. With a view to garner support from the Third World countries, Cuba joined the Non-aligned movement. Attempts were also made to gain recognition of Cuba's socialism by the two big nations of the socialist bloc; it was hoped that this recognition would spell an increase in economic aid. For this purpose President Dorticos, after attending the Belgrade Conference of the Non-aligned nations in September 1961, visited both Moscow and Peking. Unfortunately, apart from the usual rhetorical support, these visits produced negligible results.

What was more significant, however, was Castro's attempts at this time not to lose all contact with Washington. Already in May he had proposed trading the Bay of Pigs prisoners for tractors, a deal that was finally concluded in December 1962. Castro perhaps also aspired to benefit from the funds of the Alliance for Progress for which purpose Che Guevara attended the inter-American economic conference at Punta del Este, Uruguay, in August 1961.79 In an uncharacteristically accommodating stance towards the US, Che

78. The Alliance for Progress was a programme for the internal reform of Latin American economies with extensive US support, based on the belief that rapid capitalist development was the best hedge against future "Cubas".

79. According to one version, it was the Soviet Union which encouraged Cuba to negotiate with the US since Khrushchev was interested in renewing talks with the US. Lévesque, n. 65, p. 30. Such a move on Cuba's part might also have been prompted by the fact that in view of his heightened prestige in the region, Castro hoped he might rally the support of Latin American countries to prevent punitive action against Cuba by the US.
declared that Cuba was not interested in the failure of the Alliance and promised that the revolution would not be exported.80

A Cuban-American reconciliation, however, did not appear to be in the offing. The US remained anxious to isolate Castro in the hemisphere. The ratification of the Alliance for Progress in August had by then given the US government an effective means with which to persuade the Latin American governments to close ranks against Castroism. One by one, the Latin American governments, following the American lead, proceeded to break relations with Cuba.

Together with increasing regional isolation, Castro was confronted with a dismal situation on the domestic front. The declaration of the socialist nature of the revolution together with the shortage of supplies appeared to have nullified the favourable effects of the Bay of Pigs victory within just a few months. As internal discontent grew, so did acts of sabotage and conspiracy. Disaffection within the revolutionary ranks had also emerged, as the fidelistas found themselves being increasingly dominated by the communist "old guard", particularly since the creation of the Integrated Revolutionary Organization (ORI) in July.

Feeling threatened, unsure of Soviet commitments, unable to move against the US directly but seeking to fend off some of the pressure, Castro calculated that in order to survive, the revolution had to become more and not less radical. Accordingly, in a television appearance on 1 December 1961, he disclosed that he had always intuitively been a Marxist-Leninist, pledged that he would continue to be one until he died, and tried to dispel any doubts or reservations that might remain concerning his real ideological position. This he evidently did to overcome the resistance of the socialist bloc, to establish himself as leader of the communist movement in Latin America, to

maintain the initiative against the US and incidentally, to obtain from the Soviet Union the consumer goods he needed so desperately.

Such a move, however, while it did not bring for Cuba any immediate socialist bloc support, it provided the US and Latin governments reason enough to suspend Cuba from the OAS in January 1962. In response, but more so with an intent to exploit the Sino-Soviet differences to goad the socialist bloc into admitting Cuba into their camp, Castro delivered a stinging speech against imperialism.81 Internally too, Castro moved against old guard communists in an attempt to force the Soviet Union into greater commitment to the Cuban revolution. The "old communists" in Cuba, because of their disreputable history and close ties with Moscow were often used by Castro as convenient scapegoats in times of domestic discontent and as targets for blackmailing the Soviets whenever the latter's commitment to Cuba appeared to be slackening. Both purposes seem to have been at work in the purge of Aníbal Escalante in March 1962.82 Apprehensive about Cuba's growing relations with China and fearful that the above mentioned developments might only help China wean Cuba away, the Soviet Union

81. The call was praised by the Chinese, already champions of guerrilla war. This naturally disconcerted the Soviets who were busy promoting coexistence with a number of Latin American governments. For an excerpt of this speech, see Fidel Castro, "Second Declaration of Havana", in James Nelson Goodsell, ed., Fidel Castro's Personal Revolution in Cuba: 1959-1973 (New York, 1973), pp. 263-68. It is in this speech that Castro coined his most revolutionary phrase: "The duty of every revolutionary is to engage in revolution." For an account of Chinese and Soviet reactions to the Second Declaration of Havana, see Halperin, n. 55, pp. 145-48.

82. In early 1961, Aníbal Escalante, former PSP Secretary had been assigned responsibility for organizing the ORI as a first step towards the creation of a single party. In organizing the party, however, Escalante, appointed only ex-PSP members to leadership positions, thereby overshadowing members of the 26 July Movement. Castro responded to this threat to his power by attacking Escalante of "sectarianism" and ousting him from the organization. This was followed by the purge of the other Communist militants from bureaucratic and political positions, a move that strengthened the hands of Castroite loyalists and indicated that Castro would interpret Marxist-Leninist ideology in line with his own preferences and inclinations. See Suárez, n. 28, pp. 146-53. On the effect of the Escalante affair in forcing Moscow to grant economic as well as ideological concessions to Cuba, see Edward González, Cuba Under Castro: The Limits of Charisma (Boston, Mass., 1974), p. 105.
finally acknowledged that Cuba had embarked upon the path of building socialism in April 1962.

The decision to send missiles to Cuba, which led to the famous Missile Crisis in the fall of 1962, was made very shortly after Cuba had been recognized as socialist. A great deal of controversy has centered around the origins of the agreement to place medium and intermediate range Soviet missiles in Cuba. In the light of the recent material available on the crisis, it can be safely concluded that sometime in the summer of 1960 it was the Soviet Union that advised Cuba of its intention to take concrete steps towards Cuba’s defence which, in turn, motivated Raul Castro’s departure for Moscow in July to discuss and finalize an agreement. In fact, if the initiative had come from the Soviets, so did all arrangements for installation remain completely in their hands.

Whatever may have been Soviet or Cuban motives, the introduction of nuclear missiles in Cuba led to the famous "eyeball to eyeball" confrontation between Khrushchev and Kennedy that brought the world almost to the brink of a nuclear war. The Missile Crisis ended in November 1962 after the Soviets agreed to withdraw their missiles and long range bombers from the island in return for a US pledge that it would not invade Cuba. Subsequently, the two countries supported a UN inspection to verify that the missiles had in fact been dismantled and shipped back to the Soviet Union. Throughout these moves towards a settlement of the crisis, Cuba was not even consulted.

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83. Although ostensibly undertaken to strengthen Cuba’s defence, the principal purpose behind the installation of the missiles was to shore up the Soviet geo-strategic position at a time when the US had a growing missile gap in its favour and the USSR lacked sufficient inter-continental missiles to offset American advantage. For, further details see Raymond L. Garthoff, "Cuban Missile Crisis : The Soviet Story", Foreign Policy (New York), no. 72, fall 1988, pp. 61-80.

Greatly incensed, Castro refused to permit UN observation and in turn stated his own more elaborate terms for ending the crisis: they included an end not only of the blockade but of all harassments, raids by exiles and overflights as well as a US withdrawal from Guantanamo. These conditions, however, were never accepted by the US.85

The Missile Crisis proved to be an important turning point in Cuban foreign policy. On one hand, the final Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement in effect granted Cuba immunity from direct US armed aggression as long as the island did not again become a staging base for Soviet strategic weapons. However, the manner in which the agreement was reached—with minimal Cuban participation also demonstrated the limits of Soviet support to Cuba. If the defence of Cuba involved a threat to the Soviets most immediate security interests, then Cuba could and would be sacrificed. This gave increasing credibility in Cuba to the Chinese accusation that USSR settled its problems with the United States at other people's expense. Not wishing to become a pawn in the super power conflict, Castro decided that henceforth pragmatic considerations not ideological bonds would be the basis of Cuban security.

Subsequent to the crisis, Castro displayed such pragmatism in his attitude towards the United States. While keeping up the propaganda offensive against the US, Castro now decided to initiate contact with the US in order to forestall another Soviet-American deal on Cuba without his being a party to it. This would be a plausible explanation for what took place towards the close of 1963 when important signals were exchanged between Cuba and the US with a view to open talks. The initiative seems to have come from Cuba when Castro, in a televised report to the Cuban people on his trip to the Soviet Union in June 1963, called for a fresh look at relations with the US: "As we declared on many occasions and at the meeting in the Lenin stadium, we are ready to normalize relations, if they want to...if they don't want to, we

85. The Soviet Union perfunctorily endorsed the Cuban leader's five points on 1 November 1962, but by then the missiles were already being dismantled. On Cuban position regarding the Missile Crisis and ensuing difficulties see Suárez, n. 28, pp. 154-64 and 167-85.
can wait indefinitely, we are not in a hurry".86 This was perhaps, what prompted President Kennedy in late October 1963 to send feelers to Castro through Jean Daniels, a well-known French journalist, who was to visit Cuba. According to Daniel's report, the Cuban leader reacted enthusiastically to President Kennedy's overture, expressing his readiness to enter into a "dialogue" with Washington.87 Before that could take place, however, President Kennedy was assassinated. Despite this setback, in January 1964, Castro once again publicly expressed a willingness to adjust mutual misunderstandings with the US. He said that he would do everything necessary to re-establish good relations with the US except abandon socialism. In July, he talked of ending his support for Latin American revolutionaries if the US would cease its material support for anti-Cuban subversion. The resumption of relations could begin with discussions about the confiscated American business, and later talks might go on to such topics as the release of political prisoners and the establishment of a constitutional government in Cuba by mid-1969.88 Despite a US rebuff of this overture as also the imposition of economic sanctions against Cuba by the OAS on 26 July, Castro chose the same day to broadcast another proposal for an accommodation with the US in a speech at Santiago.

Admitting for the first time that both countries had been responsible for the break in relations, Castro expressed his readiness to abandon the Latin American revolution in exchange for normal relations. "If there is to be peace", he declared, "if nations are to live in a civilized manner, they must comply with the norms of international law. This is necessary no matter how great our sympathy for revolutions...In a word, if we want to help a revolutionary movement, we are limited by existing international norms, that is to say, we have no right to meddle in the internal affairs of another

86. As quoted in Halperin, n. 55, p. 243.


country..." Similarly, expressing a desire for a modus vivendi with the US, President Dorticos noted at the Non-aligned conference in Cairo in October, that Cuba was unaligned and was a member of no military bloc, and that Cuban conflict with the US did not have its origins in the Cold War. None of these overtures, however, evoked a positive response from the US.

Castro, also adopted a pragmatic approach vis-a-vis the Soviet Union in the immediate post-Missile Crisis period. Although the Soviet role in the crisis had led to a distinct cooling of relations, Castro was quick to realize that Cuba could ill-afford to antagonize the Soviet Union especially in view of Cuba's pressing economic needs. In the months following the crisis, therefore, Castro sought to bargain with Moscow by diverging from the Soviet Union on several issues. Firstly, he maintained a publicly critical posture towards Khrushchev's withdrawal of the missiles. Secondly, he exploited the deepening Sino-Soviet schism by openly courting the Chinese. He also castigated the Moscow-oriented Latin American Communist Parties. The demonstration of independence by Castro had its desired effect. The Soviet Union, already concerned about its international image, could not afford to have Cuba taking the Chinese side in the Sino-Soviet rift. Therefore, it soon responded with key concessions. In February 1963, the Soviet Union promised to defend Castro against aggression. At about the same time a favourable economic agreement was signed. Castro then made his first and much publicized visit to the Soviet Union in May 1963 where he was acknowledged as a bonafide Communist leader.

89. Ibid., p. 103.

90. Revolución, 12 October 1964. From Cairo, Dorticós went to Algeria where he once again confirmed that Cuba wanted "honourable negotiations" with the US. Ibid., 14 October 1964.

91. While admitting that "certain discrepancies" had appeared between Cuban and Soviet governments, Castro nevertheless added that "first and foremost" Cubans were "Marxist Leninists and friends of the Soviet Union. No rift must appear between Soviet Union and Cuba." Revolución, 2 November 1962.

92. Castro's successful employment of confrontation tactics to bargain with the Soviet Union is discussed in Edward González, "Relationship with the Soviet Union" in Mesa-Lago, ed., n. 35, pp. 81-104.
Castro's support for armed struggle in Latin America, which he resumed after the Missile Crisis to maintain an independent stance vis-a-vis the Soviets, however, estranged him further from the Latin American countries. Taking advantage of this, the US orchestrated Cuba's expulsion from the OAS in 1964. On the basis of a complaint filed by Venezuela, the Ninth meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the OAS held in Washington in July, resolved to sever diplomatic and commercial relations with Cuba, cease trade except in food and medicines and impose restrictions on travel to Cuba.

**Heightening of Hostilities between Cuba and the US, 1965-1968**

Cuba's relations with the US during this period were characterized by considerable tension. Inspite of the US no-invasion pledge, Cuba's threat perception from the US persisted. In fact, Cuba's conflict with the US had by this time acquired regional dimensions and was responsible for a period of deep hostility between Havana and most Latin American governments. In addition to increasing US hostility and ever deepening isolation in the Western Hemisphere, Castro's difficulties were compounded by other factors as well. Cuba's relations with China, for instance, had deteriorated since 1964, reaching its nadir in 1966 when Castro criticized China for cutting back its rice shipments.

Worsening Sino-Cuban relations meant that Castro could no longer use the China card to bargain with the Soviets. At the same time, Cuba's relations with the Soviet Union still remained tenuous and ill-defined. For, despite public pledges, Cuba had not obtained any comprehensive security guarantees from the Soviets either in the form of a bilateral defence treaty or membership of Warsaw Pact. Instead, the 1964 trade agreement with the

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93. US policy towards Cuba under the Johnson administration remained committed to employing "all available instruments of power less than acts of war to limit or reduce the ability of the Cuban government to advance the Communist cause in Latin America through propaganda, sabotage and subversion." See *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 53, pp. 738-42.

94. See Karol, n. 35, pp. 304-6. At one point in the dispute, Castro called Mao a "senile idiot" and invited his compatriots not to put up with leaders who had passed the sixty mark.
Soviet Union had further reinforced Cuba's state of economic dependence by redirecting the island's economic efforts away from experiments with industrialization and export diversification towards increasing sugar production.\textsuperscript{95} Such Soviet demands were not only unpopular within the revolutionary leadership but had also led to a certain anti-Soviet resentment.\textsuperscript{96} Above all, after Khrushchev's ouster in the fall of 1964, Castro was apprehensive whether the new Soviet leadership of Leonid Brezhnev and Alexei Kosygin might have the same stake in Cuba as their more impulsive predecessor.

Faced with such a situation, Castro began to look for an alternative strategy to secure the survival of his regime. For some time Castro had toyed with the idea of building alliances between Cuba and the Third World countries. Such alliances, although unlikely to be economically significant, were tempting because they enhanced his international reputation, therefore making the feared US invasion less likely. At the same time, they increased his bargaining power with the Soviet Union. A major role within the Third World, however, was unlikely to be achieved if Cuba was regarded as a quiescent Soviet satellite. Castro, therefore, needed to demonstrate his independence. This he did by rejecting both Soviet model for the construction of socialism domestically and the Soviet "peaceful co-existence" policy internationally. Cuba undertook the parallel—as opposed to staged—construction of socialism and communism through development of conciencia or true communist morality among the masses. Moral incentives

\textsuperscript{95} According to this agreement, the Soviet Union agreed to buy a total of 24.1 million metric tons of Cuban sugar between 1965-1970 at the fixed price of $0.0611 cents a pound. However, only 20 per cent of the Soviet purchases were to be payable in dollars and the balance in barter transactions. The low yield in convertible currency obtained under the treaty naturally restricted Cuba's international trade options. See Eric N. Baklanoff, "International Economic Relations", in Mesa-Lago, ed., n. 35, pp. 262.

\textsuperscript{96} In February 1965, while speaking in Algiers, Che Guevara had delivered a scathing attack on the Soviet approach to commercial relations among socialist countries and on Soviet ideas about aid to the Third World, saying that "the [rich] socialist countries are, to some extent, accomplices in the crime of imperialist exploitation". See Ronald E. Bonachea and Nelson P. Valdés, ed., Che : Selected Works of Ernesto Guevara (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), pp. 350-59.
replaced material ones in a full scale effort to create a "new socialist man" to contrast with Soviet economic reforms based on limited market relations during this period.97

It was Soviet foreign policy, however, that was of greater concern to Cuba. Soviet response to two US actions in particular seemed to have increased Cuba’s vulnerability. The first of these was the minimal Soviet response to the landing of American marines in the Dominican Republic in April 1965, which raised doubts about the reliability of Soviet support to Cuba in the face of similar American invasion. Following the success of the invasion as also the effectiveness of counterinsurgency in other countries, the Soviet Union began to discard its revolutionary objectives in Latin America and to soft-pedal the Castro-line of armed struggle.98 Returning to their traditional strategy, the Soviets began to disassociate themselves from insurgent guerrilla movements in order to work with established Latin American governments. Between 1965 and 1968, therefore, the Soviets reestablished diplomatic relations with anti-Castro governments in Chile, Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela, even though the latter two were targets of guerrilla activity. In short, the Soviets appeared not only to be abandoning Cuba's revolutionary interests but also to be directly subverting these interests.

The second disturbing development was the Soviet pursuit of peaceful co-existence despite the American offensive in Vietnam. The Soviet Union had neither deterred "imperialist aggression" in Vietnam nor actively responded to the US bombing of a bona fide communist state as demanded by the Cuban leadership.99 This raised the important question of whether the Soviet


99. At the twenty-third Congress of the CPSU in March 1966, the head of the Cuban delegation, Armando Hart had stated that it was "the right and duty of progressive
Union could be relied upon to defend Cuba at the expense of peaceful co-existence. In fact, in view of Cuba's searing memories of the Missile Crisis, the Soviet low-key response to American offensive in Vietnam as also its failure to assist the Arabs in 1967 Arab-Israeli war only reinforced the Cuban regime's fears that the Soviet Union was capable of sacrificing its allies.

It is in this context that Fidel Castro and the Cuban leaders became more convinced than ever that the survival of the Cuban revolution could be guaranteed only by extending the revolution to the entire Latin American continent. Accordingly, Castro abandoned the policy of co-operation with the traditional "gradualist" communist parties of Latin America and stepped up his call for a pan-continental revolution against "local oligarchies" and American "imperialism". In a message to the Tricontinental Conference in Havana in January 1966, Che Guevara spoke of the necessity to take advantage of US involvement in Vietnam to "create two, three, several Vietnams". Similarly, Castro, while addressing the conference, spoke of the necessity for the Latin American peoples not to confront imperialism separately and to see to it that imperialism was forced to "fight against each oppressed people and at the same time, all oppressed people united". Such a strategy, in Cuba's calculations, not only offered the possibility of revolutionary movements gaining power but it could also force concessions from Latin American governments and the United States itself. Restoring relations with Cuba, for example, might induce the latter to cease "exporting revolution". Additionally, if revolutionary situations were to develop simultaneously in different countries, the US would not be able to focus its forces in a single country as it had done in the Dominican Republic. The triggering off of a continent-wide revolution would also force China and the

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and socialist governments to repulse the bombings and criminal actions of imperialism in Vietnam by all means at their disposal". As quoted in Lévesque, n. 65, p. 120.

100. Castro used the Tricontinental Conference to form a third force within the socialist camp composed of Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea, both to promote militant socialist solidarity in face of US aggressions as also to reduce the probability of Soviet sanction against any defiance. See ibid., pp. 115-20.
Soviet Union to help their supporters or be discredited in the socialist movement.

Thus in open defiance of the Soviet Union, during 1966-1967, Castro sought to revitalize the moribund continental revolution in an effort, not so much to take cudgels against the US as to improve his international position. Castro's rhetorical bid for Third World prominence was quickly backed up by organizational ploys such as the establishment of Latin American Solidarity Organization (LASO) and the Continental Organization of Latin American Students (OCLAE). At the same time, material support was given to Che Guevara's efforts to establish a guerrilla foco in Bolivia in late 1966. New doctrinal support for the strategy of armed revolution was also provided through Cuban publication in early 1967 of Régis Debray's Revolution in the Revolution. Another step was to supply arms and men to the guerrilla contingent of Douglas Bravo in Venezuela in an effort to bolster the group's struggle against both the Venezuelan Communist Party and the Raúl Leoni government. In fact, in response to Venezuelan accusations of subversion, the PCC Central Committee issued a defiant statement:

We are accused of helping the revolutionary movement and it is true, we are helping and will help, whenever we are asked to do so, all the revolutionary movements that fight imperialism anywhere in the world.

Such a militant proclamation, was perhaps a reminder to Moscow of its internationalist obligations to the fidelista regime.

Castro's efforts, however, failed with the death of Che Guevara in Bolivia in October 1967. Che's death along with the collapse of the Bolivian foco, ended Cuba's most serious attempt to build a viable guerrilla movement in the hemisphere and led to a major reassessment of the strategy. Importantly, the demise of the guerrilla movement deprived the Castro regime of its

102. See Jackson, n. 98, pp. 40-119.
principal leverage in dealing with Moscow precisely at a time when Cuban-Soviet relations were severely strained. The delays in the delivery of Soviet oil in the winter of 1967-1968 had already brought home to the Cuban leadership the harsh facts of their dependence upon the Soviets for economic survival.\textsuperscript{104} Castro also realized that Cuba's vulnerability to this sort of pressure would be increased as the year progressed. The country was faced with pressing economic problems. A drought had cut sugar production to four million tons (one million tons less than the previous year), thereby reducing the island's export capability and threatening its plans for industrialization. It was clear that in the forthcoming negotiations over the new Soviet trade agreement, Cuba would be in a weak bargaining position. It needed further extensions of credit and could expect to have to make concessions in return.

All these factors convinced Castro of the need to press for accommodation with Moscow. In an attempt to bargain, several defiant acts that would be embarrassing to the Soviets were undertaken during 1968. For instance, to signal Cuban displeasure with increasing Soviet influence over Cuban affairs the "micro-faction" affair was exposed in January 1968 whereby 35 members of the dissolved PSP led by Aníbal Escalante were arrested, tried and sentenced to varying prison terms.\textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{104} During this period the Soviet Union while increasing its petroleum exports to Brazil and Chile, two of Cuba's sworn enemies, refused to increase its deliveries beyond two per cent as against eight per cent demanded by Cuba. In March 1968, Castro spoke of the political vulnerability of economic dependence: "We have known the bitterness of having to depend to a considerable degree on things which come from the outside and how that can become a weapon and at least create the temptation to use it against our country". As quoted in Carla Anne Robbins, \textit{The Cuban Threat} (New York, 1983), p. 165.

\textsuperscript{105} The group was accused of forming a "micro-faction" within the PCC and attempting to promote Soviet methods in Cuban politics in collusion with Soviet and East European communists. It was blamed for having established unauthorized relations with the staff of the Soviet embassy in Havana and having urged the withdrawal of Soviet bloc support to Cuba in a bid to destabilize Castro's government. For other acts of Cuban defiance, see Edward González, \textit{Relationship with Soviet Union} in Mesa-Lago, ed., n. 35, p. 94.
However, it was the Soviet bloc occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 that gave Castro the opportunity to recover his bargaining advantage with the Soviets. Castro used the Czech crisis both to air Cuban grievances against the Soviet Union and to demand a redefinition of Cuban-Soviet ties in exchange for his endorsement of the Warsaw Pact invasion. The fact that Cuba's support came at a time when the Soviets were facing increasing opposition within as well as outside the international communist movement, no doubt helped Castro to achieve the desired trade off with the Soviets. By 1969, the tense relations between the two countries gave way to a new accommodation marked by mutual concessions and new bonds of solidarity. Cuban endorsement of the Czech invasion proved to be the turning point not only in Cuban-Soviet relations but in Cuban foreign policy as a whole.

Thus, explanations for the hostility pattern of relations that developed between Cuba and the US since 1959 must be sought in the island's historical experience. Specifically, the overwhelming influence of the US in the Cuban affairs during the latter's evolution from colonial status to nominal independence had added a strong anti-Yankee element to the Cuban nationalist sentiment. The close identification of US economic interests with successive brutal and corrupt dictatorships in Cuba between 1920-1950 only served to strengthen Cuba's nationalist aspirations and harden its hostility towards the US. Developing against such a backdrop, the revolution led by Castro was directed as much against the ineptitude of the political regime as against the economic dominance of the US.

The restoration of Cuba's image as a nation in control of its destiny naturally called for a fundamental restructuring of the island's relationship with the US. Such a task entailed not only the elimination of US influence from Cuba, but given the island's physical proximity to the US, also a careful avoidance of any premature provocation of the US that might precipitate a violent end of the revolution.

106. The Soviet invasion was criticized by a number of communist parties considered pro-Soviet, including that of the France and Italy.
The hostility Cuba encountered from the US, however, soon made it clear that any declaration of diplomatic independence from the US had to be guaranteed by a compensatory set of relations with another superpower. Particularly so, in view of Cuba's economic and military vulnerability. It was to meet with such a situation that Cuba throughout the 1960s courted the Soviet Union. The latter, in turn, saw opportunities in Cuba which it could exploit for propaganda benefits against the US in the context of the Cold War.

With the Soviet entry on to the Cuban scene, Cuba's relations with the US deteriorated rapidly as Cold War politics soon altered the strictly bilateral configuration of the Cuban-US relations. Henceforth, the stages of Cuba's conflict with the US, gradually building up to the severance of relations in 1961 became closely intertwined with the phases of growing Cuban-Soviet friendship.

No matter how fraternal the relationship with the Soviets, the Cubans, given their history, were well aware of the dangers of placing their well-being in the hands of a single state. This fact was made explicit by the Cuban experience during the Missile Crisis, which demonstrated the limits of Soviet support for Cuba. Never again would Cuba place unlimited faith in Soviet support.

Consequently, Castro next moved to ensure his survival by evolving prudent foreign policy postures. Thus even while attempting to integrate Cuba more firmly into the socialist camp, Castro took great pains to preserve an independent position on a number of issues, including the Sino-Soviet dispute and the proper revolutionary path in Latin America, in order to retain his bargaining leverage with the Soviets. At the same time, Cuba assumed an extremely active role in the Third World. More importantly, Cuba also moved to reduce the US threat directly by trying to ease tensions with it.

Cuban efforts to seek rapprochement with the US, however, came to naught as US policy continued to remain hinged on the "denial policy" with the expectation that it would bring about the elimination of the Castro regime. Meanwhile, Cuba's growing dependence on the Soviet Union for
economic and technical assistance forced Castro to moderate his radical policies and draw closer to Moscow. As the 1960s drew to a close, therefore, survival continued to remain a major preoccupation of Cuban foreign policy. The threat from the US, though reduced, had not been completely eliminated. The latest accommodation with the Soviet Union, on the other hand, had placed new limitations on Castro's manoeuvrability. Given such a situation, the 1970s were bound to witness a major reassessment of Cuban foreign policy strategy—a subject that is the focus of the following chapter.