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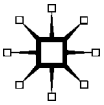

THE CUBAN REVOLUTION (1959–2009)

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To Julianna Sofia,
For good fortune in her first fifty years, and beyond

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Preface

Fifty years after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution and the establishment of a Marxist-Leninist regime in Cuba, the two fundamental dimensions of this historical phenomenon are the survival of the system created by Fidel Castro and the policy of the United States to terminate it. Less known is the relationship of Cuba with other international actors. Literature dedicated to the link between Cuba and Europe is especially lacking, specifically with some prominent European states, and above all Spain. And the same time, even less studied is Cuba's connection with the collective body known as the European Union (EU). This complex relationship, not limited to the half century of the regime, has been interpreted in a rather controversial manner, especially when compared with the attitude of the United States toward Cuba. Explanations and justifications for the development and maintenance of the Europe-Cuba relation are varied and conflicting. They include a pragmatic commercial policy, an alleged backing of the Cuban regime, an attempt to counter the power of the United States, and an intention to engage its society and prepare it for a transition to democracy.

From the point of view of lineal historical evolution, the relationship between Europe and Cuba could be simply divided into three basic chronological blocs. The analysis could also be centered on the role of actors. Taking the chronological option and keeping in mind the central focus of this study (the Cuban Revolution at 50), the time-related breakdown into three parts is justified considering Cuba's changes in political status in a period of just over 500 years. The first stage encompasses four centuries from the landing of Columbus on the shores of Cuba in December 1492 until the December 1898 signing of the Treaty of Paris by which Spain ceded control of the colony to the United States. The second should comprise the development and end of Republican Cuba from the official birth of the independent country in 1902 to the end of the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship on December 31, 1958. The third would then extend from January 1, 1959, with the arrival of Fidel Castro in Havana

until December 31, 2008, marking 50 years of the Cuban Revolution. However, these huge divisions should be further subdivided into several chronological periods and into two fundamental protagonist-linked developments.

Right after the arrival of the Columbus expedition and the early Spanish colonization of the Caribbean and most of today's Latin America, other European powers saw the strategic importance of the wide area around Cuba. Several European actors then decided to challenge Spain by infiltrating the region with the establishment of competing colonies located on small islands. This steady trend attracted the attention of the nascent republic founded in the North. The United States, early in its development, detected a vulnerable spot for its security in the sea passages extending from the edge of the Atlantic Ocean to the coasts of Yucatán and Central America. Once the political system of the United States became consolidated, Washington decided to send a clear message to other powers regarding its special geographical interpretation of "Manifest Destiny."

The United States confronted the European mingling in the Caribbean with a stern warning that history knows as the Monroe Doctrine of 1823. In essence, this unilateral declaration prohibited future colonial ventures in the Western Hemisphere. As a sign of false magnanimity, Washington offered the rest of the continent a reciprocal service in the form of a promise that the United States would not intervene in the established European colonies and would not constitute a threat against the newly founded republics. However, this decree extended its set of prohibitions to include the insertion of any other European political systems in the hemisphere, a clear message against the European monarchical states. Moreover, the so-called Polk Corollary of 1845 banned diplomatic moves in any direction that would violate this Washington-inspired doctrine. It also sent a serious order to the Latin American republics in the event that they would voluntarily welcome the reintroduction of European powers in their territories—self-determination was not in sight. Teddy Roosevelt went even further. In 1904, he envisioned plans or intentions to sideline the doctrine as an unfriendly act deserving a "preventive strike." The position was then a novelty, but a clear predecessor of today's U.S. strategy for fighting international terrorism.

It is not surprising that the United States, equipped with all these guarantees and quasi-juridical justifications, sent the marines all over the area, creating countries, displacing governments, installing puppet dictators, and producing a climate of weird stability. In the early 1930s, Franklin

Delano Roosevelt rectified this trend by issuing the Good Neighbor policy. The Platt Amendment that conditioned Cuban independence was abolished. However, just in case, if Latin American governments should fail to govern effectively the United States kept the option of intervening. Cuba then consolidated its own political shape while it became more "Americanized" by virtue of the incorporation of U.S. customs, social inclinations, and political system. This trend of Americanization would be exploited by the Cuban Revolution to consolidate a different system on the basis of a policy of nationalism.

After the entrenchment of Castro's revolutionary structure under the Soviet model and the development of the U.S. policy to confront it, the scenario offered Europeans new options. The European states designed a strategy commensurate with their own possibilities, aims, and ambitions. Most were simply compelled to follow a special overall policy depending on individual historical or political profiles. In this setting, the new relationship between Europe and Cuba, in the shadow of the United States, took shape.

In addition to any chronological study of the European-Cuban relationship, the most productive and simplified approach is dividing it according to the individual role played by major actors. Following this logic, the first obvious subdivision regards the historical actions, perceptions, and attitudes of Spain, whose "special relationship" is based on historical links and the Spanish migration to Cuba. Consideration of the relationship between Spain and Cuba during the first part of the twentieth century should be followed by an analysis of the drastic political changes experienced by Spain in the last two-thirds of the twentieth century, along with the fundamental change of regime that took place in Cuba in 1959. The study should carefully focus on the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) and its consequence, the Franco regime (1939–75), and the rebirth of Spanish democracy in 1976. At all times, as a systematic review of history shows, the relationship between the "official" Spain and the "official Cuba" was not broken because the "real" Spain (the people) had always maintained the link with the "real" Cuba. Frictions and disagreements were the exception.

A second bloc should be composed of the relationship between Cuba and the different European states (other than Spain). France, Italy, Germany, and the United Kingdom should be the object of special individual consideration. The countries once under Soviet control should then be considered, contrasting their attitude from 1959 to 1989 with their policies since the end of the Cold War. The Czech Republic and Poland are examples of this change. Their policies differ from the attitude

of most of the countries previously called Western Europe. This contrast has been one of the causes for the lack of consensus on a joint strategy to deal with Havana beyond the EU's Common Position of 1996, as explained in the analytical section dedicated to the EU and Cuba.

The third bloc of actor-oriented study should deal with the presence of the United States. It includes the relationship of Washington with Cuba, the European states, and the organization founded as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The imposition of the embargo and later its codifying legislation caused disputes between Washington and Europe, resulting in a formidable obstacle to an alliance between European and U.S. interests regarding the evolution of Cuba toward democracy.

A fourth thematic bloc has to revolve around Cuba's relationship with Europe as a collective entity. First consideration should be given to its evolution from the early stages of the Cuban Revolution to the establishment of official relations between Brussels and Havana in 1988. This would complete the overall framework of this special relationship between one of the most fundamental cultural groupings in history (Europe) along with one of its most distinguishable nations (Spain) and one of the most influential political experiments in Latin American history (Cuba). A final consideration should then be given to the relations between the EU since then and now.

Finally, a roundup consideration should return to the foundation of the European-Cuban relationship by analyzing the role of Spain in recent years and today. This analysis would stress the initiative taken by the Spanish government in leading the EU toward suspending the measures imposed in 2003 and considering the Common Position. All this would be set within the new scenario posed by Castro's illness, his temporary leave in 2006, and his resignation in 2008 to regain power.

Taking into account the two dimensions set forth above, the present book is organized in five chapters. Although a basic chronological order is respected, the criteria for these subdivisions are actor oriented. As in a modern film or avant-garde novel, some actions are seen from a different angle, according to the perspective of the main characters. The successive chapters are organized following historical development as in "traveling technique" in film or through the attention given by the narrator. The first is dedicated to the role of Spain from colonial times to the end of the Franco regime in 1975. It includes Cuba's relationship with Spain during the first 15 years of the Castro regime. The second chapter then overlaps with the introduction to this Spanish relationship by considering the presence of the United States. It includes the period before the Revolution (1898–1959) and then the era when Washington confronted the Castro

revolution, with the result of clashing with European interests that persisted in their relationship with Cuba, regardless of the change of political regime. The third chapter then focuses on the asymmetrical relationship between Castro's Cuba and the regional bloc known as the European Union. Chapter 4 returns to the Spanish relationship by focusing on the role and attitude of the reborn democratic system of Spain. The final chapter is dedicated to developments in the present decade, with special attention to the situation created by the announcement of Castro's illnesses in 2006 and his withdrawal from power on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Revolution. In a conclusion, a reflection on future perspectives completes this study.

The text reflects, expands, and summarizes a substantial number of previous publications enumerated in the bibliography. For the convenience of readers wishing to have direct access to some of the official documents (mostly issued by the European Union and the Cuban government), a collection is easily available as an appendix paper (http://www.miami.edu/eucenter/publications/roy-appendixFinal.pdf) located in the series developed by the University of Miami European Union Center/Jean Monnet Chair (www.miami.edu/eucenter, publications, papers). Individual references to each one of the documents are made in notes in the corresponding sections of this book.

Most of the aspects and dimensions studied were presented in a succession of symposia, conferences, seminars, and lectures that extends over two decades. For the development of this work, the author is grateful to a number of institutions and individuals too long to be included in this introduction. Although avoiding repetition, I would like to confirm my gratitude expressed in the prefaces or notes of these writings for help given while preparing them. Institutionally, the previous publications and this volume would not have been possible without the contributions of colleagues and staff of the University of Miami. Recognition is owed to the Computer Support Services team of the College of Arts and Sciences (especially Luis Vidal and James Aggrey), who would always find solutions for my frequent consultations. For the final stages of the preparation of the manuscript, special gratitude should be given to Astrid Boening, Maxime Larivé, Maria Lorca, Alberto Lozano, and Eloisa Vladescu. Because they elected to remain anonymous, individual mention cannot be given for the assistance of a number of key officers and parliamentarians of the European Union, and a selected group of functionaries and staff of the successive Spanish governments. While there are too many to list, thanks are also due to editors of newspapers that have generously accepted my columns.This newspaper exposure made the subject of study relevant

according to the timely circumstances. At the personal level, as is customary, but this time most sincerely, I must recognize the infinite *paciencia* of my wife and children for not reacting to my absences of mind and attention by starting a Spanish-American War II and a parallel Miami Revolution.

Barcelona, Miami, Havana, Brussels (April–December 2008)

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABC	Abc (not acronym)
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific group
AECT	Asociación Española para Cuba en Transición
AFP	Agence France Press
ALALC	Asociación Latinoamericana de Libre Comercio; Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA)
AOD	Ayuda Oficial para el Desarrollo-Official Development Aid
AP	Associated Press
ASCE	Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy
CANF	Cuban-American National Foundation
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CARIFORUM	Caribbean Forum
CDA	Cuba Democracy Act—'Torricelli law'
CEDEAL	Centro de Estudios de América Latina
CEI	Centro de Estudios Internacionales
CERI	Centro Español de Relaciones Internacionales
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIP	Center for International Policy
CMEA or COMECON	Council of Mutual Economic Assistance
CMQ	Cuban Radio-Television station (selected by international agreement)
CNN	Cable News Network
CNT	Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores
COI	Comité Olimpico Internacional—International Olympic Committee
COLAT	Comité Latinoamericano—Latin American Committee, EU Council

COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CP	Common Position
CRS	Congressional Research Service
DG VIII	Directorate General of Development, European Commission
EC	European Community
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
ECHO	European Communities Humanitarian Office
ECU	European Currency Unit
EDF	European Development Fund
EFE	Spanish News Agency
EP	European Parliament
EPC	European Political Cooperation
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna—Basque Homeland and Freedom
EU	European Union
FAD	Fondo de Ayuda para el Desarrollo—Development Aid Fund
FAES	Fundación para el Análisis y los Estudios Sociales
FAI	Federación Anarquista Ibérica
FBIS-LAT	Foreign Broadcast Information Service—Latin America
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FIU	Florida International University
FOCAL	Canadian Foundation for the Americas
GAERC	General Affairs—External Relations Council
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDR	German Democratic Republic
H-B	Helms-Burton Act
HCF	Hispano-Cuban Foundation
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILSA	Iran Libya Sanctions Acct
INTEL	Integrated Electronics
IRELA	Instituto de Relaciones Europeo-Latinoamericanas
IU-ICV	Izquierda Unida—Iniciativa Verds
LIBERTAD	Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act
MAI	Multilateral Agreement of Investment
MS	Member States
NACLA	North American Congress on Latin America
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NY	New York
OAS	Organization of American States
PP	Partido Popular
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español—Spanish Socialist Worker's Party.
RELEX	Relaciones Exteriores—External Relations
REPER	Representation Permanent (Permanent Representation)
REPSOL	Spanish Conglomerate Oil Company
R-NV	Republican-Nevada
STET-ITT	Societa Finanziaria Telefonica—International Telegraph and Telephone
TVE	Televisión Española
UCD	Union of the Democratic Center
UE	European Union
UE-EE.UU.	Union Europea-Estados Unidos
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCHR	United Nations Commission for Human Rights
UNCLAC	United Nations Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL)
UPI	United Press International
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
US	United States
USC	United States Congress
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II
YPF	Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales

CHAPTER 1

SPAIN AND CUBA
A VERY SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

The most beautiful land that human eyes ever saw
Christopher Columbus, 1492, off the coast of Cuba

The ever faithful island
Official label for Cuba in royal coat of arms

Until the last man and the last peseta
Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, Prime Minister of Spain, 1988

More was lost in Cuba
Spanish popular saying, ca. 1900

With Cuba, anything, except breaking up
Generalissimo Francisco Franco, 1960

THE EVER-FAITHFUL ISLAND

On the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution, the Spanish government led European efforts to bring the Cuban authorities and society in a more cooperative mood in an effort to influence their evolution toward a political transition. This explicit obsession stands in clear contrast to the steady and stubborn policy of the United States, whose objective in encountering the Cuban government is to provoke its demise. Nonetheless, Cuba's search for survival has also been facing in recent times the opposition or ambivalence of other European states that are skeptical about the possibility for rapprochement.

Essentially, this book is centered around this basic theme and its collateral dimensions. First, the study deals with the European, especially Spanish, presence in Cuba over the years, most specifically in the

recent times of the Cuban Revolutionary process, prioritizing the moves made with the political transition in sight. Two other factors are part of the study: the role of the United States in opposing a European rapprochement with Castro's Cuba, and the disagreements within Europe (specifically European Union institutions) and Spain over the proper policy to be implemented.

Selected historical facts perceived as isolated anecdotes may offer a way to explain complex phenomena. In this study, on the one hand, records and popular expressions show that the Spanish authorities officially bestowed on Cuba in colonial times the title of "The Ever Faithful Island." And yet, even after the violent end of the colonial administration in 1898, faithfulness has worked both ways. Cuba has been one of the most popular destinations for Spanish immigrants in Latin America. In a sense, it looks like the colonial linkage has continued in spite of the drastic political changes. This is, however, not the only oddity in the Spain-Cuba relationship.

Observers have argued over the question, which European country, since the beginning of the twentieth century, has maintained the closest political and economic relations with Castro's Marxist Cuba? The consensus answer may be surprising: Spain—previously under authoritarian, anticommunist rule and linked by military treaty to the United States. Experts have argued that this news-grabbing detail is linked to the close historical relationship between Spain and its former colony.

However, historical data also show that Cuba remains the only Latin American country that King Juan Carlos I of Spain has never visited officially. He has only managed to attend one of the series of Ibero-American Summits, which was held in Havana, accompanying, according to protocol, Prime Minister José María Aznar. In fact, Castro will most probably die without accomplishing his dream of a state visit to Spain, the land of his father. But he has actually visited Spain on three occasions, although all were for international government gatherings or refueling stopovers (in the Canary Islands). He attended the Barcelona Olympics in 1992 and another Ibero-American Summit, and briefly met with Prime Minister Aznar in Madrid as an extension of a trip to Oporto for another summit.

History also shows that no Spanish monarch before Juan Carlos I had ever bothered to visit Cuba, in spite of the colonial administration that spanned over four centuries. No president of Cuba went to Spain while in office, although Fulgencio Batista, when toppled by Castro's revolution, ended up there in exile. This entire historical vacuum was somewhat softened by the visits of prime ministers Adolfo Suárez (unofficial) and Felipe González (during a trip to South America). This state-level shortcoming

contrasts with the spectacular trend of migration from Spain to Cuba, before and after the end of the colonial link.

At the diplomatic level, the recent history of both nations deserves special scrutiny. Perhaps the most captivating episode took place when Juan Pablo de Lojendio, the Spanish ambassador in Havana in 1960, called Fidel Castro a liar, live in front of television cameras, for denouncing Spain's activities in Cuba. As we will analyze in great detail later in the text, Lojendio was expelled, but when he arrived in Madrid, Franco lectured him and he was isolated in the ranks of the diplomatic service. Consequently, Spain and Cuba did not have full ambassadorial-level contact for more than a decade. In 1990 the Spanish embassy in Havana was occupied by a group of Cuban asylum seekers. The Cuban government's reaction prompted Madrid to cancel most bilateral aid to the island. In a later episode, José Antonio San Gil became the first Spanish ambassador to Cuba to resign his post since the Spanish Civil War. When the new Spanish ambassador, Josep Coderch, was appointed, he declared that the doors of the embassy were going to be open to all sectors of Cuban society. Castro withdrew his *placet*.

In spite of the generally respectful and cordial relations between high dignitaries of both nations, recent history has also been riddled with confrontations and harsh opinions. For example, with the approach of the commemoration of Columbus's arrival in America (not by coincidence, it is the national holiday of Spain), Fidel Castro labeled October 12, 1492, an *infausto y nefasto* (unfortunate and ill-fated) event, causing government officials in Madrid to place their hands on their heads in despair. This was not, however, an obstacle for him; he proceeded to attend three commemorative events in 1992 and was subsequently honored in Galicia, his father's birthplace.

Spain has had an array of senators, congresspeople, journalists, and common tourists expelled from Cuba. Castro once called the president of the Spanish Chamber of Deputies "a fascist crook." The president of the Spanish Senate, however, subsequently gave the Cuban leader a commemorative medal. Years later, Castro called Spanish president Aznar a "fuehrer with a little moustache," an upgrade of *caballerito* (little gentleman, in a derogative way).

Nonetheless, in spite of their drastic differences in economic structure and the pressure caused by the U.S. embargo, Spain and Cuba have maintained mutually beneficial trade and investment relations. Spain became the largest donor of development aid to Cuba.

Cuba has become a "domestic issue" for Spain, sparking lively discussions in the proceedings of Congress and during press conferences, and becoming the subject of newspaper polemics, controversial columns,

and editorials. Yet there is no evidence that a perceptible number of the Spanish electorate have modified their voting pattern because of the government's policy toward Cuba. All of this has frequently surprised foreign officials, especially Americans, who do not quite understand this sort of on-and-off family quarrel that periodically erupts. In fact, a tentative analysis of the Spain-Cuba relationship is always complicated, to say the least.

In the first place, one has to readily accept that Spain is indeed a European state. It is, however, a very peculiar one, with a strange, paradoxical, and unusual foreign policy.[1] Cuba, in its own right, is a Latin American nation, but it is also unique. The island nation has been under Marxist rule since 1959. In fact, Cuba is the only Latin American country where a Communist regime has been established. Havana has had its own distinctive foreign policy, which has eluded the understanding of the academic community and caused deep confusion and incorrect interpretations by other governments, especially the United States.[2]

Yet, in reality Cuba has never been for Spain, even at the height of the Cold War, a sort of "Caribbean Poland." For Madrid, Havana was never like what Bucharest was during the Soviet dominance. Spain has never considered Castro to be like a distant Eastern European communist leader. After all, he is the son of a *gallego* (meaning in Latin America both a Galician and a Spaniard, in general). Spanish-Cuban relations function on two levels, where high-level politics is intertwined with "low-level relations" (*relaciones de bajo nivel*) or "an underground dialogue."[3] Interpersonal relationships have always been present in the background. After all, Cuba was (along with Puerto Rico) the last Spanish colony in the Americas and in a short period of time, as mentioned above, received one of the largest waves of Spanish immigration in history.

The relationship between Spain and Cuba is by all accounts atypical. In a way, is is similar to the island's relationship with the United States. Those countries are the sources of two of the most important cultural and social legacies in the history of Cuba. The other two important sources are Africa and the Soviet Union. The legacy of the forced importation of slaves has left the indelible reality of Cuba as a society that has always had a majority of black or mulatto populations. The religious imprint of this background is visible in the syncretizing of beliefs and practices, mixing African customs and Catholic dogma. In contrast, the remains of the alliance with the Soviet Union (inherited by Russia) have mostly vanished, although they have been revived recently by the strengthening of political and economic ties and high-level diplomatic visits.

The steady presence of U.S. values and mores remains highly influential. The survival of American customs is still visible in sports, led by

the Cuban passion for baseball. But the neocolonial heavy-handedness is a latent force, ready to be resurrected. In essence, the U.S. legacy parallels the deeper Spanish presence. However, in political terms, while the United States took the Cuban Revolution as an affront to its hemispheric dominance, Spain maintained an intriguing link with Cuba at both the political and economic levels. There were few obstacles; neither drastic ideological changes in the case of Cuba nor the equally notable shifts in Spain's political structure were an excuse for causing distance, disdain, or confrontation. One needs to keep in mind that for half a century, Cuba has been governed by a regime that at times has been even more hard-line than the Soviet Union's system after the Stalin era. Spain, on the other hand, during the Castro regime (around 1975) changed from a paternalistic dictatorship to a parliamentary democracy guaranteeing an unsurpassed level of personal liberties—even by European standards.

Spain's current relationship with Cuba is, by definition, asymmetrical, for two reasons. On the one hand, Spain is a full member of the European Union and, therefore, a sovereign partner in one of the world's great political powers and economic blocs. On the other hand, Cuba has found itself in a very precarious situation ever since the democratic reform process began in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union subsequently disintegrated. This asymmetry (and the gradual decline of Cuba's relationship with the former Soviet empire) has marked the evolution of the two countries' relationship since the end of the Franco era in Spain. Asymmetry, however, has been a constant in the history of this relationship—first when Cuba was a colony and then later when the United States was the dominant power in the Caribbean nation and Spain was an international pariah in search of respect. This current era is distinct in the sense that Spain has been fully anchored in Europe, while Cuba has felt at times isolated and harassed, both globally and hemispherically.

Historical Stages

Spain's relationship with Cuba can be roughly divided into three distinct periods.[4] First is the colonial era, when Cuba was part of Spain's administrative structure in the Americas, with a special period after the Crown's mainland empire had collapsed and Spain was left with only Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and its African and Pacific possessions. (The brief British occupation of Havana in 1762 should be seen as an exception, with barely any impact on Cuba's dependence.) The second period lasted from 1898 to 1959, that is to say from the culmination of the fight for independence to the triumph of Castro's revolution. The period can be subdivided into the initial American intervention (1898–1902) and

the pre-Castro republican era, and was marked by the United States' dominance, which affected Spanish action on the island in every respect, except for immigration. The third period from 1959 to the present can also be subdivided into two subperiods: before and after the arrival of democracy in Spain, insofar as that has affected relations with Havana. Historians will someday decide whether the 1990s were the beginning of a fourth phase, marked by a political transition already beginning in Cuba in one form or another since the democratic movements erupted in Eastern Europe.

In the colonial era, Spain's link with Cuba shared many of the characteristics of Spain's relationship with her other overseas colonies, except that Havana became one of the largest trading links in the colonial chain after the establishment of the Fleet of the Indies. A change in colonial ideology regarding the use of indigenous labor—brought about by Bartolomé de Las Casas but also, in certain areas, by shortages (which on numerous Caribbean islands were widespread because the Indians had been annihiliated)—led Cuba to become the destination for great numbers of African slaves. They were mainly used in developing Cuba's sugar industry and later contributed to the formation of one of the most racially mixed societies in the Americas.

With this idea in mind, the first step in analyzing Europe's perception of revolutionary Cuba is to examine the period of the Spanish colonial administration. The origin of the fascination may be illustrated by one of the first exclamations converted into a notation by Columbus in his diary: "La tierra más hermosa que ojos humanos vieron" ("the most beautiful land human eyes ever saw"). The loss of this ideal land must have produced a lasting injury to the Spanish soul.

Cuba did not capture the same attention as the regions controlled by the indigenous Aztec and Inca empires that, later in history, would become today's Mexico and Perú. Cuba was lacking in natural resources (gold, silver). This Caribbean territory gained importance because of its strategic location on the route of merchandise transfers over the ocean. Like San Juan de Puerto Rico and Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), Havana became central in the maintenance of Spanish control over a large part of the Western Hemisphere. It was a pivotal observation center early on, similar to what modern naval strategy would refer to as "choke points." This is why other European powers systematically sought to challenge Spanish control, the same way that England and France managed to snatch most of the other Caribbean islands, establishing their own colonies. On rare occasions (11 months in 1762), a portion of Cuba around Havana was even briefly occupied by the British. But the Spanish endurance in Cuba was further reinforced by transferring entrepreneurs

and refugees from the other former Spanish colonies that became independent after the struggles of the 1880s. Many Frenchmen also joined the Spaniards, fleeing their own slave revolution in Haiti.

The independence movement in the mainland colonies turned Cuba into a refuge for loyalist groups who saw the island as their last hope in the Americas to live under absolutism. At the same time, there began to occur what can be more accurately described as emigration from Spain, as opposed to the people who came on behalf of the Crown. It was precisely during the 1840s that simple, anonymous immigrants began arriving. They were not just officials, military officers, priests, or other religious workers: they were from all social classes. Among them were adventurers, capitalists looking for new markets, and merchants seeking to capitalize on Cuba's strategic trading location with the Americas and Europe.

All this occurred against an important backdrop of Cuba becoming a magnet for Spanish emigrants, above and beyond political interests. Cuba was being transformed, more than during the classical colonial period, into an extension of Spain, similar to the Canary Islands. Curiously enough, this process was taking place as the independence process was beginning to strengthen with the participation of the native-born Spaniards. The well-known cases of the Catalan-born Ramon Pintó i Lliràs (executed for his participation in one of the first conspiratorial skirmishes) and Josep Miró i Argenter (who rose to the rank of general in the rebel army and was the father of José Miró Cardona, first prime minister under Castro and later Cuban ambassador in Madrid) were not exceptions. The long list included the children of nineteenth-century immigrants from the Iberian Peninsula, among them the leader of Cuban independence José Martí, who became known as the "mentor of the Cuban nation" and the Apostle of Cuban national identity.[5] Numerous Spaniards showed clear signs of their intention to make Cuba their permanent home. This included wealthy people who even built tombs and family mausoleums with their accumulated fortunes. One does not build an elaborate final resting place if one has no intention of staying in the country.

Cuba imported at that time the products and commodities it did not produce (manufactured goods, textiles, vegetable oil, wine) and exported sugar, rum, and tobacco back to the Peninsula. In fact, through the twentieth century a considerable number of the most important companies in the key sectors of rum (based on sugar supply) and tobacco were of Spanish origin (some specifically Catalan, such as Bacardí, Gener, and Partagàs) and they still function today. In addition, many of the wealthiest families of the nineteenth century in Cuba built their economic power on the slave trade. Legal or morally questionable revenues were in

part repatriated to Spain, where the enriched elite built mansions called "indianos" that were admired by their compatriots.

The Spanish Crown then decided to concentrate its energy on maintaining control over the island that was to be "ever faithful." Along with Puerto Rico and the Philippines, Cuba contributed to the survival of the mirage of the Spanish empire. Almost half a million Spanish soldiers and officials were transported in a huge maritime operation, a gigantic enterprise that would not be surpassed until the transatlantic transfer of war resources from the United States to Britain, leading to the invasion of Normandy. This dream was destined to end abruptly in 1898 as a result of the Spanish-American War. Cubans knew this epoch-making event as the conclusion of the War of Independence (although later it was also rebaptized the "Cuban-Spanish-American War"). Spanish historiography has labeled its dramatic end "The Disaster," becoming the inspiration of a whole intellectual movement known as "The Generation of '98," a must-read in Spanish literature curricula and historical research.

The result of the 1898 defeat crafted one of the most enduring Spanish popular expressions: "Más se perdió en Cuba" ("More was lost in Cuba"). In this dramatic way, Spaniards still describe, in relative terms, important personal, family, or business losses as less painful than the end of the presence in Cuba, not only in its colonial dimension but also in its deep personal links. But Spain would not disappear that easily from the Cuban landscape, in the same way that the rest of Europe maintained its varied presence on the island and all over the Caribbean.

UNTIL THE LAST MAN AND THE LAST PESETA: THE LEGACY OF '98

Thousands of Spaniards arrived in Cuba for the first time as military recruits in 1895. They had been preceded by scores of colonial administrators, slaves, regular immigrants, and the latest wave of drafted youth who fought in the "Guerra Chiquita" of 1868–78. The majority of this collective military migration possessed physical strength but suffered irreparable mental scars. They returned to Spain safely, vanquished and humiliated at the end of 1898 with the signing of the conditions for the termination of the Spanish-American War. Paradoxically, as mentioned above, many of those decided on their own to return to Cuba during the first two decades of the new century to establish their new residency. They adopted a fresh nationality, without rejecting the one they originally had.

The pivotal event that impacted a whole generation of Spaniards took place in 1895 when the final war of independence began. This was a conflict to which the Spanish government sent inexpert soldiers who were

ill equipped, demoralized, and badly led. They were all victims of the Spanish colonial blindness that did not want to see and accept the end of the vast empire, frozen since 1824 in the mirage provided by the political link with Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. On February 24, 1895, the so-called Grito de Baire exploded. The Revolución Libertadora abandoned the superficial truce that had lasted since the Peace of Zanjón (February 11, 1878), which ended the War of the Ten Years. That early conflict had begun on October 10, 1868, with the "Grito de Yara," an independence-seeking demand drafted by Carlos Manuel de Céspedes at La Demajagua, his hacienda in the province of Oriente. The new insurrection was destined to erase the pretension of the Spanish Empire and ultimately to provoke the intervention of the United States in 1898.

Thousands of draftees, who were temporarily protected by their status as *excedente de cupo* [surplus number over the draft quota], were called upon to occupy the places left in Spain by the ranks that were sent to Cuba. Provisionally on reserve, similar to the U.S. National Guard soldiers who were commissioned to Iraq, the Spanish draftees were later transferred to the expeditionary forces destined for Cuba. Some were "freed" at the time by paying a fee to the government, so less fortunate and poorer draftees took their places.

The figures of recruits, volunteers, and officers destined for Cuba are still unclear. The late Cuban historian Manuel Moreno Fraginals, synthesizing and interpreting diverse sources for his magnificent book on the relationship between Cuba and Spain, calculated that, between 1895 and 1898, there were 220,285 soldiers transported to Cuba, in addition to the troops activated in the island.[6] In 1895 alone, 112,921 soldiers and officers were sent to Cuba. In 1896, some 80,000 more arrived. Between 1887 and 1899, Moreno accounted for 345,698 military troops used in the successive wars and insurrections. Records show the return of only 146,683.

With this evidence, a number around 200,000 cannot correspond to the dead, missing, and deserters. According to documentation, only 782 died in combat and 8,627 more died later as a result of their injuries. The rest were simply considered unofficial deserters that elected to stay in Cuba, a new country that they did not perceive as foreign. In sum, in the last 30 years of the colony, Cuba assimilated 700,000 Spanish immigrants of all classes and backgrounds.

The economic cost of the war was astronomical. Between 1895 and 1898, Spain spent almost two billion pesetas to retain Cuba, but only 165 million to keep the Philippines. This way, Spain fulfilled the tragic promise of Premier Antonio Cánovas del Castillo: "hasta el último

hombre y la última peseta" (until the last man and the last peseta). The literature published in Spain for the 1998 centennial commemoration of the "Disaster" provided a revision of the popular sentiment, worthy of constant study.

However, the sudden replacement of one administration (Spain) by another (the United States) was to leave a substantial imprint throughout the new century. The end of '98 imposed on Cuba a long stage of economic and political dependency. This subjugation would be drastically altered in 1959. Eventually, Cuba would align itself with the Soviet Union, in opposition to the United States.

The year 1898 is a fascinating date that hides, like a set of Russian nested dolls, numerous keys for understanding the recent history of several nations. In the Spanish context, the risk is to reduce the date to the intellectual soul searching by the "Generation of '98." From the U.S. point of view, the date may be seen as a monographic military subject. But '98 cannot be considered only the end of colonial domination; '98 is, in reality, a polysemic object of deep meditation and serious study. "Remember the Maine" has a good-sounding reverberation that is not enough to comprehend the whole picture. The same event means different things to different people. For the Castro revolutionaries, '98 is not a date to celebrate. It was the beginning of an imperfect republic subjected to U.S. imperialism. Consequently, it is not surprising that Castro had reverent words for Spanish Admiral Cervera on the 100th commemoration of his defeat in Santiago de Cuba in July 1898, when the U.S. Navy sank his fleet.

The "Disaster" in Spain was a sudden and cruel end of the remains of the empire. Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines had kept up the appearance of parts of an overseas empire without a solid social base. After experiencing defeat and humiliation, intellectuals dedicated their efforts to diagnosing the ills affecting the essence of Castille and Spain.

Some Spanish leaders with good intentions (called *regeneracionistas*), who coexisted with '98 intellectuals, planned the drastic reconstruction of the Spanish political fiber. Some military figures, more resentful, searched for the culprits of the disaster and engaged in redressing the political and social mistakes. Some were to be known as *africanistas*. They planned to replace the fallen empire in the Caribbean and the Pacific with another one located in Morocco. Spain had to be "rehabilitated" in a new colonial war. The unfortunate result of this lunacy was a military disaster, dramatized by the massacre of more than 10,000 Spanish troops by Moroccan guerrillas near the small town of Annual in 1927. This event was the tragic icing on the cake for the strategy developed by General Primo de Rivera and King Alfonso XIII. The king had apparently not learned anything

from the experience of his mother, Regent María Cristina, who presided over the disaster of 1898.

One of the most famous officers in this neocolonial war was a major named Francisco Franco, who, through a fast promotion, became the youngest general in Europe. As we will see later in this study, this episode came to the surface in relation to Cuba, closely linked to the guerrilla tactic (a Spanish invention in the uprising of 1808 against the Napoleonic occupation) that became the nightmare of the Spanish military. Meanwhile, as a result of shoddy military policy, thousands of Spaniards had deserted and migrated to Cuba during the first two decades of the new century to escape the new pseudoimperial adventure and the hunger generated by the exhaustion of the colonial system.

The first three decades of the twentieth century in Cuba, from 1898 to 1930, should be studied in three stages. The first was the direct U.S. administration (barely two years). The second was known as the "Platt Republic" (for the condition imposed on the constitutional structure of Cuba). The third consisted of the search for a cleansing of the original sin of birth under the U.S. flag. Since 1898, the United States has not only had the ambition of adding the lyrics to the music of the Monroe Doctrine, but it also self-imposed the obligation of exporting democracy to the rest of the hemisphere and the planet.

The ambivalence of the United States between its intervention in World War I and its isolation from the Wilsonian project of the League of Nations would later disappear when it encountered natural enemies, first represented by Hitler and later by the Soviet Union and its satellites. (The imperial vocation has survived the twentieth century and the disappearance of the enemy.) One result was Castro's Cuba, a revolutionary political product with its roots in 1898. The insertion of U.S. soldiers into a colonial conflict practically won by the *mambises* had tragic consequences, not only for Spain but also for Cuba. The humiliation suffered by the Cuban independence seekers, disarmed and marginalized by the negotiations, incubated a dangerous resentment that would attract revolutionary influences. The mortgage imposed by the Platt Amendment, which would permit the intervention of the United States in emergency cases, contributed to desires for nationalism and gave rise to the revolutionary storms that would develop in the 1950s.

Spanish Comeback with Soft Power

After the signing of the Treaty of Paris (1898), by which Spain ceded control not to the Cuban rebels but to the United States, the new Republic was established in 1902. The new state would remain, however, under

the scrutiny of the U.S.-imposed Platt Amendment (imposed by a U.S. senator on the Cuban constitution, as a condition for full independence). In this way, Washington reserved its right to intervene in Cuban internal affairs if necessary, due to the incapacity of the Cuban authorities to effectively rule themselves. In this setting, one of the most dramatic migration events took place for over a quarter of a century. It was unmatched in the history of the modern world. In the 1910s and 1920s a huge number of Spanish emigrants made Cuba their new home, contributing to the strengthening of the Spanish fabric in the Cuban culture in the island.

Researchers have shown that this phenomenon was impelled by the combination of four complementary forces and trends. The first was a case of special "illegal" migration. It was composed of thousands of Spanish soldiers, as mentioned above, who elected to stay during and after the war. In addition, many former soldiers who were actually repatriated to Spain later went back to Cuba as regular emigrants. Among them, the father of Fidel and Raúl Castro was the best known.

The second factor was the urge ("push," in sociological terms) for Spaniards to migrate to America generally in search of better social and economic opportunities. This was directed toward specific countries where a Spanish presence was already well established (Argentina is the other obvious example). The third factor was the "pull" effect by which domestic conditions and Cuban government policies made immigration easy. The new authorities in Cuba sought to fill the economic sectors where labor was needed. Moreover, at one point they perceived the need to balance the racial picture of Cuba. Spaniards then contributed to the *blanqueamiento* (whitening) of the Cuban landscape dominated by the descendants of African slaves and the new imports from Jamaica and Haiti who went to work in the sugar industries that were still important at the time. Finally, as fourth factor, in the late 1920s and early 1930s the Cuban authorities tried to reduce the overwhelming role of foreign labor by forcing industries to have a labor force of at least 50 percent Cuban workers. Spaniards (over 250,000 of whom still had Spanish passports) took Cuban citizenship en masse.

It has to be noted that in each of these trends, the pivotal role was played by what Spanish historiography and national identity literature calls "the real Spain," a label that contrasts with "the official Spain." That governmental entity became discredited as a result of the shameful defeat of 1898. The military refused to take responsibility for the disaster. They blamed the politicians for the futility of carrying out the promise of conservative Prime Minister Antonio Cánovas del Castillo.

In sum, the close relationship with Cuba has been maintained by Spaniards migrating to or staying in Cuba, where they met contingents

present since the end of the fight. One such group was composed of the Spanish residents who elected to stay in Cuba because of family ties, business purposes, and simply personal decisions. All were protected by the terms of the Treaty of Paris that guaranteed the safety of Spanish citizens in the new Cuba and respect for their property. It is for all these sociological reasons that the "official Spain" did not have any other choice but to recognize the "official Cuba" in spite of the governmental changes in both countries. History shows that the end of Queen María Cristina's regency (1885–1902), the turbulent monarchy of Alfonso XIII (1902–31), the Primo de Rivera dictatorship (1922–29), the Second Spanish Republic (1931–36), the Civil War (1936–39), and the Franco regime (1939–76) were not cause enough for breaking Spain's relationship with the successive Cuban governments and regimes, from the U.S. occupation to the current chapter of the revolutionary era. During most of this postcolonial time, the successive Spanish governments extended to Cuba their strategy of *Hispanidad* (with a deep touch of neo-imperialism) promoted in Latin America.

As we have seen, those who migrated permanently to Cuba knew that they had not gone to a foreign land with open wounds caused by a colonial war. The Spanish migration to Cuba *after* the disaster of 1898 illustrates not only the progressive introduction of a Spanish way of life to the Cuban nationality. It was also a positive contribution as a counterbalance for the unstoppable conversion of the island to part of the U.S. orbit. When the Treaty of Paris was signed, an estimated 300,000 original Spanish citizens remained in Cuba, although their citizenship status was varied. The "Registro General de Españoles" of 1900 reveals only the figure 66,834, of whom 23 percent were Asturians, 28 percent Galicians, 15 percent Canarians, and 5 percent Catalans. In the first years of the U.S. occupation, thousands arrived officially in Cuba. They represented 8.2 percent of the total population of Cuba and 91 percent of white foreigners. In the first two decades of the century, Spaniards occupied 20 percent of jobs. The percentage of the Spanish as part of the country's total immigration was always very high, but it decreased over the years, from 84 percent between 1902 and 1906, to 31 percent in 1927–31. The level of employment also decreased over the years (from 1.08 percent of professionals in 1907 to 0.11 percent in 1924). Through the years, however, single men between 14 and 45 predominated in the makeup of the immigrant population. Spaniards benefited from the policy of "whitening" that resulted in priming the immigration of Europeans.

Prior trends were reinforced. Family structures that supported migration with the aim of improving economic conditions (a pull) functioned on an existing base, continuing in the development of trade enterprises

that were strengthened by another type of migration. As mentioned above, since 1898 one of the motivations for the emigration of single men (a push) was to avoid the military draft to serve in Morocco. Ironically, Cuba became the destination that others had tried to avoid *before* 1898.

Cuba became very Spanish between 1900 and 1930. The associations founded under restrictive colonial laws continued to operate in the Republican era. These were not only mutual aid organizations (to make up for limited public welfare services), but also kinds of chambers of commerce, the activities of which began to rival the influence of business groups that had developed under the aegis of the United States. Cuba had become Spanish dominated at the sociological level as well.

This concept of presence has to be understood in a nonscientific sense as a reflection of both the popular culture and of the perception of the Spanish government in different times. Spanish consular officials, in a generous interpretation of the *ius sanguinis* link, often include in the category of "Spaniards" those born in Spain, Cubans born of Spanish parents, and the grandchildren of Spaniards, and their families. It is estimated that with the new law granting Spanish citizenship to the grandchildren of Spanish citizens, over one million Cubans could claim it. This is a prospect that Spanish consular officials in Havana and Miami have feared, because the sheer volume of applications would cause the registering and processing system to collapse. By January 2009, about 20,000 Cubans had applied for Spanish citizenship. It was estimated that by the end of 2010, the number who had opted for the dual status would be 400,000.

Spanish immigrants found fertile terrain, enriching diverse societies and organizations. Many Spaniards worked in U.S. business subsidiaries. U.S. interests that considered them effective intermediaries and modern entrepreneurs endorsed the Spanish presence and comparative success. Until World War I, Spanish merchant ships maintained the necessary trade links between Cuba and the rest of the world. However, with time Cuba's dependence on the United States became overwhelming. Cuba continued, however, to be an important market for Spain. At the beginning of the century, only 5 percent of Latin American imports were Spanish products, but a third of these were destined for Cuba. This contrast has lasted for a century. Spain's trade with Latin America a hundred years after the defeat of 1898 represented only 5.5 percent (Spanish exports) and 4.2 percent (imports) of its total, but between 13 percent and 20 percent of Spanish exports to Latin America went to Cuba.

Spanish arrivals in Cuba avoided living through the turmoil taking place in their native land (dictatorships and civil war included), but Cuba was not a paradise either. The end of the 1920s was dominated by the Machado dictatorship, with the result of generating opposition

and revolutionary movements in the 1930s. As a result of U.S. pressure, Machado left in 1933. After several provisional changes, Ramón Grau San Martín was named provisional president. This symbolized the rise to power of the Generation of '30 and of first- and second-generation Cubans, many of Spanish descent. For example, Grau San Martín's father was born in Catalonia. Nonetheless, as a result of the economic difficulties of the 1930s, he drafted the "50 percent law" that required companies to have a minimum of half of the employees holding Cuban citizenship. This did not have a noticeable impact on working conditions because most Spaniards acquired the new citizenship. That was not a problem for their integration into Cuban politics, either.

The Spanish immigrants, in one way or another, had a "soft power" influence on Republican Cuba, using the term felicitously coined by Joseph Nye.[7] Applied mostly to the role played by governments and beyond the "hard" power that characterized the military impact and economic presence, it can be easily adapted to describe the indirect imprint that a country like Spain could make during the twentieth century. Impoverished, humiliated, isolated internationally, controlled by a variety of dictatorships and weak monarchical families, Spain nonetheless managed to enjoy this brand of "power" and play an influential role in her former colonies. Ironically, without economic resources to build an incipient program of development aid (similar to the Peace Corps or the modern EU's ACP schemes), Spain benefited from the natural presence of immigrants and their descendents.

It is important to note that the essence of this "policy" functioned in diverse stages: during the 1902–39 period, thoughout the Franco regime, and during the democratic period after 1976. It is also worth investigating the notion that this permanent trend is most especially shown in the leadership executed by Spain in Latin America, for the edification of the United States and the rest of Europe. Nothing of this vision than the leadership executed by Spain in the difficult evolution of its relationship with diverse Cuban governments. What is significant is the fact that this leadership and recognition are most effective when they are the result of nongovernmental trends and mores. Spain's influence works better when the justification for a certain action is based on family linkages. Sometimes, when a period of friction develops and harsh words cross the thin line to blame whole societies (the Spanish in this case) and to border on personal insults toward all Spaniards, a cautionary flag is raised among the official ranks.

The Spanish presence has remained, throughout Cuban history, not only as a familiar reality but also as an ingredient of Cuban nationality. And there has never been any strong resentment toward the colonial

era, nor any disdain for immigrants, with the understandable exception of some harmless mockery in popular theater, radio, and TV comedies, where a character with a Galician accent was omnipresent. As in most of Latin America, the term *gallego* has been used to refer to all Spaniards and was even the name of a strange sugar-processing contraption that allegedly could be operated only by immigrants. Likewise, a Cuban water bird similar to the seagull is also called *gallego*, probably in allusion to its migratory habits. It is not surprising that one of the most famous native-born *gallegos*, Manuel Fraga Iribarne (a traditional conservative who was president of the Galician Autonomous Community, previously minister of information and tourism under Franco) made an unprecedented trip to Havana in September 1991. He received honors normally reserved for a head of state and showed, before and after the visit, an independent attitude that contradicted the critical perception of Cuba within his own party, the Partido Popular (of which he was founder and president).[8]

Cuba's image in Spain was always clouded by stereotypes surrounding the emigrants; not only by those who succeeded, but also by those who failed and could not accept that their experience had been a negative one. The stereotypes and skewed perceptions have continued to this day. Ever since the ascent of Franco to power, many Cubans—including many now in Miami—proceeded, almost unconsciously, to build a mythic post-war Spain as a sequel to their ancestors' idealization of Spain. Many in Miami identify Franco's political regime as the antithesis, if not the perfect antidote, to Castro's. The Spain remembered (or invented) in Miami opened itself to urbanization and tourism (with its great environmental costs), had clean streets (not necessarily a reality), and public order (only in their imagination), with everything cushioned by the availability of an omnipotent dollar (legal tender in Havana) with which one could work real wonders in the Madrid of the 1950s.

Spanish immigrants were nonetheless affected by the economic difficulties of the late 1920s and early 1930s and, as a consequence, many elected to return to Spain, joining the ranks of the ones who had bad luck and did not manage to climb the social ladder. When they confronted the political and social upheavals of the Second Spanish Republic and the Civil War, however, many went back to Cuba in search of a second chance. Different political affinities caused Spaniards to transfer their ideological inclinations to the Cuban scene. In spite of the impressive Spanish migration during the first three decades of the century, when Spaniards became political refugees they found that other Latin American countries (Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, and especially Mexico) were more generous than Cuba in accepting this new wave of Spanish immigration caused by political dissent and not solely based on economic or social needs. With notable exceptions, the new

Cuban society of the 1940s was more conservative than the expectations that it would incorporate leftist and liberal intellectuals and professionals defeated by Franco. Under these circumstances the "official Spain" fell under the control of the Franco regime. His right-wing dictatorial system witnessed the conversion of Cuba from a rather conservative or moderately liberal society and government, to a de facto dictatorship (Batista), to a Marxist-Leninist regime under the rule of Castro after the triumph of his revolution. Composed of Franco and Castro that in normal historical settings would not offer prospects of cooperation.

When the Great Depression hit in 1929, Cuba's commercial sector highly resented its link with the United States and, by extension, any foreign influence, and social tensions began to rise to the surface. A large proportion of Cuba's population of Spanish descent, even into the second and third generations, kept their Spanish citizenship. As a solution, in 1933 President Ramón Grau San Martín proposed legislation that restricted the employment of foreigners (forced repatriation was never contemplated). This became the Law of the 50 percent, referred to in this way because all businesses were ordered to employ at least that percentage of Cuban citizens. Thousands of Spaniards adopted Cuban citizenship as a convenience, but their children were able to recover their Spanish citizenship whenever circumstances required it, as for instance when Castro came to power. In the 1930s and again in the 1960s, getting a different passport was never seen as an act of treason or disloyalty but rather a switching of documents within the same family.

During the crisis coinciding with the Second Republic in Spain, a significant number of immigrants returned to the peninsula and were soon replaced by those fleeing the Spanish Civil War. In contrast to other Latin American countries that took in political exiles after the war, however, Cuba closed its doors to them. This occurred for a number of reasons: first, the economic crisis had not yet subsided; second, uncertainty over an impending global conflict loomed on the horizon; and third, the Spanish sector in the Cuban economy was dominated by interests supportive of Franco's cause, more for its conservatism than its ideology. Thus, most of the Republican exiles gravitated toward Mexico, Argentina, Chile, and Venezuela (with a temporary stopover in Trujillo's Dominican Republic). Not too many ended up in Cuba, and those who did went there mostly for family reasons.

Spain in Turnmoil and Dictatorship

The Spanish immigrant societies and centers in the 1930s suffered the impact of political and economic convulsions. During the first part of the decade, their membership experienced many hardships as a result

of the internal economic crisis of Cuba, affected by the financial problems in the United States. Spain's political uncertainty during the Second Republic was the prelude to the Civil War. The result was the return of many Spanish emigrants who had attempted to go back to Spain to rebuild their lives with their savings. Meanwhile, the political scene in Cuba, dominated by the shadow of Fulgencio Batista, was officially neutral over the Spanish conflict, but social pressure from conservative Spanish residents forced the recognition of Franco. Republican activitism was channeled through the foundation of new societies. Franco's ideological penetration was accomplished by the establishment of branches of the fascist party Falange and the development of other organizations, mostly composed of upper-class citizens of Spanish descent.

Many Cuban citizens, both native and naturalized, fought in the Spanish Civil War. They were usually inserted in the ranks of the International Brigades, backing the Republican side. Some were even incorporated into the regular army. After the fratricidal conflict, a number of Spaniards took refuge in Cuba and were part of the opposition to Batista. Eventually, they became members of Castro's movement. One of the most notorious cases was that of Alberto Bayo, a distinguished military officer in the Republican Army, who later trained Castro's guerrillas in Mexico. Another important case was that of a hero of the Revolution, Spanish-born Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo, whose brother died in the Civil War. He was a leading member of Castro's movement, but later would oppose Fidel. He was sentenced to many years in prison and was eventually released through the mediation process carried out by Spanish premier Felipe González during his visit to Cuba.

The attitude of the Cuban government during the Spanish Civil War was ambiguous, contradictory, and opportunistic. As mentioned earlier, Cuba was officially neutral but it actually favored Franco by tolerating the activities of his agents. At the same time, the government harassed Republicans under the pretense that Cuba could not interfere in "foreign wars." After 1939, Cuba did not recognize the Franco regime, but it also did not accept the existence of the Republic in exile either. In this way, the situation was left under the control of the Spanish conservative sectors that had enough social and economic clout. In economic terms, the pact signed in the 1920s with the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera was resurrected as a result of the pressure of the Spanish lobby, expecting the recognition of the Franco regime.

These sectors, courted by Franco's diplomats, were visibly uncomfortable when the United States entered World War II. Spanish diplomatic activity prudently diminished during World War II. After 1945, as a result of Franco's alliance with the United States during the Cold War,

the political atmosphere in Cuba was increasingly more favorable toward the Spanish dictator. During the brief period of isolation experienced by Spain at the United Nations, Cuba abstained in the condemnation vote. While President Prío Socarrás dragged his feet in reestablishing full relations with Franco, Batista renewed diplomatic links in 1952 and signed the most complete trade agreement between Spain and any Latin American country.

Anti-Franco sentiment then took refuge in the Spanish regional societies still supportive of the Republican cause. This trend did not, however, reach a level of political activism in exile as prevalent as that in Mexico, Argentina, or Chile. Cuba actually limited Spanish immigration, especially from the intellectual and professional cadres, because of the fear of competition with the native elite. Among the strict regulations was the requirement that, in order to teach Cuban literature at the universities, candidates had to be native-born citizens. The government was very prudent about accepting other European refugees during World War II. The most active private Spanish societies in Cuba tried to incorporate the work of those exiles who wanted to reside in Cuba, but results were mixed.

During the 1950s, the bulk of the Spanish influence in Cuba expressed the traditional *Hispanidad* doctrine. With the exception of a leftist minority, the image of Spain in the immigrant community was frozen in time, based on stereotype and romanticism. Undoubtedly, as mentioned above, one of the most intriguing dimensions not only of the European-Spanish-Cuban relationship but also of the confrontation between Castro and the United States has been the fact that Cuba and Spain have maintained diplomatic and economic relations since the triumph of Castro's revolution. As we have seen, this was no different from the situation during the first half of the century. The continued relationship after 1959, however, is a dimension worthy of close examination, taking into account that for the first decade and a half the Cuban Marxist-Leninist regime had to deal with the staunch anti-Marxist Francisco Franco. Moreover, since the demise of the Franco regime in 1976, Spain has been governed by a well-established and efficient democracy. It is a well-established member of the European Union and NATO, a model defender of human rights and the state of law, and a fully functioning market economy. As in the first part of Cuba's independent existence, there have been no motives for breaking this relationship. In democracy as in dictatorship, Spain has managed to fulfill Cuban requirements.

When focusing closely on the Castro-Franco relationship, it is tempting to simply offer single explanations for the continuation of the political and economic links. Pragmatists were inclined to interpret the continuation of the relationship as being based solely on the maintenance of

trade terms. Cynics and admirers of authoritarian figures claimed that Franco and Castro professed a mutual admiration. Liberals justified the relationship as a way for Franco to diminish the overwhelming pressure of the United States upon his regime. There is a certain degree of truth in all these perspectives. The real answer lies in a combination of these interpretations and the predominance of some specific angles.

PERCEPTION OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION: THE CASE OF AMBASSADOR LOJENDIO

In principle, taking into account the ideological gap between the two regimes, it would seem surprising that Castro's rise to power would not damage the relationship between Spain and Cuba. Castro had to remember at the time of his triumph that dictators Fulgencio Batista and Franco had upgraded the relationship between the two countries in terms of trade and mutual political support. The logical reaction of the winner of the revolutionary struggle that began at Sierra Maestra was to get even with any supporters of the fallen government. In reality, there was no notable political disagreement and the trade relationship was maintained and even improved.

Ultimately, in terms of an international political agenda, the most convincing explanation was that Cuba, at the time, represented for Franco a perfect example for the so-called foreign policy of substitution. First, the Spanish regime managed to successfully pass the dangerous period of international survival, especially after being considered an international pariah for having sided with Hitler and Mussolini, who helped in the victory of the Civil War. At that time, Franco was left with few strategic alternatives other than subjugation to the protection of the United States.

This was based solely on the convenient physical location of Spain during the Cold War, halfway between the U.S. bases of aircraft carrying nuclear bombs and their targets in the Soviet Union. Simultaneously, Spain could not freely maneuver in a Europe that was under a drastic rebuilding process coupled with the development of the European Community and the implementation of the Marshall Plan. Both were out of Franco's reach for political reasons. From the wide southern arch of the Middle East to the Atlantic, Franco courted the favors of the rich oil-producing nations with mixed results. Nonrecognition of Israel did not deliver as expected. Morocco was always a point of uncertainty, a perennial claimant of the remaining Spanish possessions in Ceuta, Melilla, Ifni, and the Western Sahara. In addition, there was the colony of Equatorial Guinea conveniently converted at the end of the process into a province. Spain was left then with other scenarios for developing a foreign policy.

Unsure of the Middle East–Arab situation and with Asia too far away to buy Spanish products, Franco concentrated on building an alternate "foreign policy" in a safer realm. Latin America presented itself as the ideal solution.

The strategy was sound and feasible. In essence, the plan was no different than the attempts made in the first part of the century through the doctrine of the *Hispanidad*. Building on the modest policy established by the Spanish monarchy and the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera, the Franco regime did not play with cards hidden in its sleeves. As mentioned above, this was the "good," real Spain coming back to the Americas, riding the waves of new migration, fleeing hunger and political oppression. Careful not to irritate liberal and quasi-revolutionary regimes that periodically appeared on the Latin American scene, Franco nonetheless felt more comfortable with conservative, right-wing governments, and especially with personality-driven dictatorships.

This was not an easy task in light of the oscillating political tendencies on the continent and the ever-present commitment to reformism, progressive policies, and social programs with a touch of populism, at least externally. Spain had to deal with a contemporary Latin America exposing conflicting positions. It was conservative and authoritarian inside, while maintaining a liberal outside. Some countries were more notorious than others in this respect. It is for this reason that, without any agreement with the European Community in sight, Franco elected to try to participate in inter-American networks, such as the United Nations Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL), and the Organization of American States (OAS), and later in the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Spain even tried to join or was invited to become a member of the original regional system of integration, the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA, better known by the Spanish acronym ALALC). Sometimes, the status of observer served the central purpose of being recognized.

Overall, the flair of a certain latent anti-American approach expressed in maintaining the relationship with Castro earned Franco some political points during the periods of leftist temptation in the Latin American capitals. The aura of the *Hispanidad* "faith" helped to reinforce the general picture. In fact, Spain was an uninvited leader of the Latin American countries that slowly began to reestablish relations with Cuba after its expulsion from the OAS. In fact, Franco's practice was not alien to Latin America. He enthusiastically endorsed the Estrada Doctrine, a sort of religious faith consisting of respect for the political regimes of each one of the states, prohibiting interference as a capital sin. Designed as a liberal protection from foreign influence, the Estrada Doctrine was also used by

dictators for self-protection, free from outside pressures. This respect was what Franco expected (and got) in Europe, following the example of the United States' support, to the dismay of the opposition.

The United States did not seem to consider this Spain-Cuba link a notable threat to its security, even at the height of the Cold War. It was more a nuisance than a cause for concern. Initial pressures to curtail trade relations did not deliver sufficient results. Eventually both Spain and Cuba fell victim to a double discourse. While the U.S. government was vocally critical of the Madrid-Havana relationship, diplomats behind the scenes actually advocated preserving open official channels, among other reasons because they provided badly needed information to Washington that would complement the standard intelligence sources.

Within the Cuban policy of nation building, the Castro revolution primed the confrontation with the United States by rejecting its values. In contrast, the Cuban regime favored Latin American – style nationalism. Consequently, the traditional positive perception of Spain and the imprint of Spanish immigration, established in Cuba and professing conservative inclinations, presented a challenge for the Castro government. At the end of the day, however, both Franco's Spain and Fidel's Cuba apparently had a solution, not difficult to craft within a family, among close cousins.

Initially, Castro's rise to power alarmed certain prudent ranks of Spanish diplomacy. Nonetheless, the high professional level of some of the ambassadors serving in Latin American contributed to the maintenance of the official links. Thanks to the impeccable pioneer works of historian Manuel De Paz-Sánchez, especially his book *Zona Rebelde*, researchers have been able to get a glimpse of what went through the minds of Franco and his diplomats. Based on a systematic inspection of the records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, De Paz exposes an intriguing story developed at the time of the birth of the Cuban Revolution, seen from the Spanish viewpoint.[9]

Ambassador Alfredo Sánchez Bella, an influential member of the diplomatic corps for decades, provided an important commentary early on. From his point of view while serving in the Dominican Republic, he offered a preliminary analysis of the whole relationship between the Franco regime and the Cuban Revolution. Generalizing about and reflecting on a comparative vision of recent Spanish history, Sánchez Bella considered Castro's movement a "tropical version of the anarchist CNT or the FAI."[10] Castro was judged to be a sort of "Durruti [anarchist leader who distinguished himself at the beginning of the Civil War] with better principles: Christian and tropical."[11] Sánchez Bella pointed out some of Fidel's subtle characteristics and offered some predictions regarding

the future of his regime. Fidel, in his opinion, was "without a match" among his contemporaries. He had a "fanatical perseverance" to maintain directives. He exercised "unquestioned authority" over the country, was supported by the youth, and had become "a myth extremely difficult to topple." Castro, in sum, was leading a revolution "with a marked social aim of the kind that do not stop."[12]

In Havana, his colleague Juan Pablo de Lojendio was an exceptional witness to the evolution of the revolutionary phenomenon. Conservative and temperamental (although extremely well educated and courteous), Lojendio was a committed agent of the *Hispanidad* policy. He was very well regarded by the Spanish residents and descendants of Spaniards. He also enjoyed the respect of his colleagues accredited in Havana and was considered an official dean of the diplomatic corps. In essence, he was the kind of ambassador that Franco needed in Cuba. Lojendio had warned of the exhaustion of the Batista regime, which had "all the inconveniencies of a dictatorship and no advantage."[13] In his view, Batista's fall was produced by "the brutality of police action, the low moral of the army, government corruption, facing vigor, audacity and high moral of the revolutionary movement."[14]

In his numerous reports, Lojendio expressed extreme fascination for the new leader. Castro was in control of all Cuba, a land that was "captured by his oratory." Fidel boasted that he was able to deal "with all topics." He would use a "conversational tone," revealing "a clear intelligence." He possessed a "high cultural level, lucidity and efficiency."[15] Lacking an opportune touch, Lojendio fell under the temptation to confront a person whom he really admired. This may explain the most famous of Lojendio's recorded actions in Cuba.

In January 1960 the Cuban government had initiated an energetic campaign against the embassy of Spain, using the defection of a military officer to the United States as pretext. At midnight on January 21, in a live television program transmitted also to dozens of radio stations, Castro accused the Spanish embassy of conspiracy. Lojendio, convalescent in bed with a cold, was stunned and became enraged. He called his driver, rushed to his car, and went directly to the television station (then CMQ, located in the center of the El Vedado neighborhood) to deny the accusation. In essence, he directly called Castro a liar: "I am the ambassador of Spain. I demand rectification of the calumnies expressed here." Castro was initially shocked by Lojendio's reaction. After the first verbal exchanges and a near physical confrontation, the television signal was turned off, but the sound recording continued to broadcast to people's homes, impacting Cubans and Spaniards and becoming the talk of the town the following morning. Old-timers still remember the event.[16]

Lojendio was summarily expelled from the country and harassed at the airport by a mass of Cubans, while the U.S. ambassador accompanied him to the plane.[17] (He was also to leave the country, when Washington and Havana later broke relations.) When Lojendio arrived in Madrid, however, Franco, instead of patting him on the back and giving him an award and a promotion, kept Lojendio waiting for days. The dictator eventually sent him on an administrative exile for months. In a rare series of declarations issued by Franco himself, it was said that Lojendio had "compromised the Spanish interests at stake." He also "endangered the safety of the Spanish religious communities residing in Cuba."[18] According to witnesses, Franco told the humiliated Lojendio: "With Cuba, anything, except the breaking of relations." This is a phrase that can be applied to any of the chapters of the relationship between Spain and Cuba.

Officially, the crisis was closed by an exchange of written understandings (there was never a public declaration from either of the two governments). The *Boletín Oficial del Estado* published only the termination of Lojendio's commission in Cuba. A deal between Madrid and Havana to bury the Lojendio affair consisted of three items: recognizing the existence of the traditional relations between the two countries, the conviction of the Cuban government that Spain was not carrying on any counterrevolutionary activity in Cuba, and the promise of the Spanish government to fill the vacancy left by Lojendio. Spain named diplomat Eduardo Groizard as chargé d'affaires, a diplomatic status that would be maintained until 1974, into the twilight of the Franco regime. Internal reports reveal that Castro personally agreed to respect those terms.[19]

The interpretation of this episode has been systematically manipulated. The Cuban government, of course, has used it as a sign of strength and a summary response to harassment. The Cuban exile community has consistently presented the audacity of Lojendio as a heroic gesture in confronting Castro, claiming this attitude to be in contrast with the prudent policy of the successive democratic governments of Spain (Suárez, González, Aznar, Zapatero) in dealing with the Cuban regime. But the negative reaction of Franco, his pragmatic behavior, and the punishment suffered by Lojendio have been consistently covered up.

Franco and Castro

As previously discussed, several factors have contributed to the close relationship between Spain and Cuba over the centuries. This permanent link between the two countries reappears constantly when a temporary crisis develops or a long trend sets in. The surge of the Cuban Revolution coinciding with the height of the Franco regime is one epoch that

helps to explain why both nations traditionally have maintained friendly and pragmatic relations. Franco's reasons for continuing to communicate with Castro even while confronting serious cases of tension, such as the expulsion of Lojendio, have been explained according to the inclinations and motives of different observers. A collective portrait composed of those simplistic explanations and a more objective analysis based on evidence will paint an accurate picture, applicable to the times that would follow, especially when Spain's democratic institutions were recovered.

There are four major factors that explain the maintenance of the Spain-Cuba relationship: historical, economic, personal, and strategic. As expressed earlier in this chapter, the human factor and the impressive immigration from Spain have contributed greatly as a force that frequently helps to counteract political confrontations (such as the diplomatic fiasco involving Lojendio) or the danger of distance produced by the cutting of the colonial umbilical cord. The "real Spain" in close contact with the "real Cuba" usually acts as a balancing force, pressuring the political "official Spain" to make a deal with the "official Cuba." The role played by the presence of the Spanish religious orders in Cuba has added considerable weight.

A second group of explanations is based on the role played by leadership and the intimate knowledge of personal actors. For some observers, the key element for the continuation of the official link should rest in a sort of mutual admiration of the two leaders in question. While the cultural and personal arguments appear to be rather romantic and subjective, other analysts demand a resort to more realistic views for an accurate diagnosis. In this line of thought, the economic and strategic motivations that affected Franco and Castro at the time should be considered as factors in the preservation of what appeared to be a mutually beneficial relationship. The ambivalent attitude of the United States combined vocal opposition to Spain's relationship with Castro's challenging the embargo in combination with inaction or behind-the-scenes connivance.

The argument about the personal affinity between the two leaders deserves careful and unbiased consideration. In the first place, direct references by one about the other are scarce and of secondary record, based on the recollections of other people and mostly with no direct access for meetings and interviews, especially Castro, who has demonstrated an allergy to writing or publishing his memoirs. This vacuum has been recently supplemented by a long series of interviews granted to Spanish-born Ignacio Ramonet, editor of *Le Monde*.[20]

In any event, there is no evidence that the two leaders ever talked directly and even less evidence that they met in person. Franco's resistance to traveling supports this conclusion. He only crossed the Spanish border

to meet briefly with Benito Mussolini at the Italian-French frontier, held an interview with Hitler on the Spanish side of the border between Spain and France in the Basque country, and briefly visited Portuguese strongman Oliveira Salazar.[21]

Lacking the opportunity for a face-to-face meeting, communications at the time were not as fluid and diverse as they would be later (no red phones, fax, Internet, etc.). Only scant rumors and isolated statements made by U.S. officers point out the possibility of an exchange of letters between the two leaders, beyond the customary mutual congratulations for historical anniversaries and national holidays. Every January 1 Castro received a letter from Franco in recognition of the triumph of the Revolution. There is no exact information about the date Castro chose to reciprocate Franco's gestures, but it lay somewhere between the historical October 12 and the politically loaded July 18, the day of the uprising against the Spanish Republic in 1936 that marked the beginning of the bloody fratricidal Civil War.

In terms of a mutual personal admiration, according to available records, Castro very rarely professed any explicit opinions about Franco. He did, however, speak about his counterpart and generously recognized the Spanish strongman's position vis-à-vis the Americans. In one of the rare, in-depth studies of the relationship between Franco's Spain and Castro's Cuba, George Lambie states that "apparently the two leaders shared an empathy which transcended politics."[22] He adds that, in 1985, Castro acknowledged Cuba's debt to Franco. "Don't touch Cuba," were his terse instructions . . . the *gallego* acted very well, *caramba*.[23] U.S. ambassador Robert White, who served in different diplomatic posts in Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s, recalled a meeting he had with Fidel Castro in 1984. As a reaction to an unkind comment that White had made about Franco, the Cuban leader responded "firmly and with conviction": "You can criticize the old *gallego* but it was he who kept us alive during the most difficult days of the U.S. embargo. I must admit to a certain admiration for the old fox." White added that, like all *gallegos*, "Castro was stubborn and opinionated but he never let ideology get in the way of Spanish-Cuban relations."[24] It is also a fact that on the occasion of visits of Spanish Socialist parliamentarians during the same period, when they tried to be friendly and made the customary jokes about Franco, a staple in Spanish humor, the Cuban leader would express blunt dissatisfaction, causing the embarrassment of the visitors.

When Franco died on November 20, 1975, a glimpse of Castro's respect or admiration for him was detected. The daily *Granma*, the official publication of the Cuban Communist Party, fully controlled by Castro, published a whole page on the cover entitled "Franco has died." In the

following days, a series of reports covered the details of the death and the funeral. Not a single word or reference to the profile of his regime was included. Castro declared a whole week of mourning. Subsequently, biographers with indirect access to the Cuban leader claimed, for example, that Castro was somewhat envious of the fact that Franco had died on his own bed. Moreover, unconfirmed reports claim that one of the main reasons for the recognition professed by Castro was that the Franco regime had possessed intelligence information that provided, at all times, the exact location of Castro's guerrillas in the mountains. Franco never leaked this information to Batista.[25]

One of Franco's virtually unknown inclinations, sensed only by a handful of assistants and diplomats, reveals an additional explanation for Franco's fascination with Castro. The Spanish dictator, who was not an intellectual or a scholar and would prefer to watch popular films and soccer matches instead of reading, used to intrigue aides with requests for biographies of some twentieth-century leaders. This preference was understandable in the mind of one who, by his own merit, must be judged as possibly the most influential political leader of Spanish history, rivaled only by the power of Charles V and Philip II. What is surprising, however, was his obsession with three of his contemporaries: Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, and . . . Fidel Castro.[26] Uninformed observers may wonder what is so special about this trio. Political strategists and military experts have a simple answer for this enigma: The three leaders share an impressive mastery of guerrilla warfare, the means by which they obtained power by defeating regular armies. Ironically, this strategy was a Spanish invention in the war against Napoleon. Significantly, as we have seen in the history of Spain's foreign adventures, this type of warfare became a traumatic experience for the Spanish military, first in Cuba and then in Morocco, where Franco began to build his fast-paced career.

The personal link also reveals a specific sentimental root. Castro directly traces his origins to his father's birthplace and then long residence in Cuba. Angel Castro y Argiz was born in 1874 in Láncara, a village near Lugo, the capital of the Galician province with the same name. Drafted during the Cuban independence war and later repatriated, he returned to Cuba as a regular immigrant, became a salesman, and eventually turned into a wealthy land-owning partner of the United Fruit Company. Direct references to his father have been scarce in his declarations and very limited in his interviews. Castro apparently revealed sincere, deep emotions when visiting his father's birthplace on the occasion of the private trip taken after attending the 1992 events referred to above. Family quarrels, harsh discipline, and the fact that Fidel was an illegimate son before his father divorced his first wife have been the subject of often-unkind

analyses. One common reference to him in the exile community has been "a bastard son of a corporal of Wyler [the Spanish military commander in Cuba]." In any event, in essence, Castro has invested considerable energy and authority in keeping his private life (considerably rich in terms of sentimental unions) a sort of state secret.

Born in 1926, Fidel was educated briefly at home. He was later schooled by the Jesuits in Santiago de Cuba, eventually transferring to the famous Colegio Belén of Havana, the cradle of the leading political and economic class. He has frequently recalled that the majority of his teachers were Spanish priests (some of whom ended up residing in Miami), "well prepared scientists, versed in literature, but badly inclined in politics."[27] By this Castro meant that their ideology was opposed to the Second Spanish Republic, the loser of the war. This was, in his opinion and in political terms, "one of the worst periods of his life."[28]

Vague rumors have indicated that Castro became attracted to fascist ideologies and became interested in the works of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the founder of the Spanish Falange and son of the military dictator General Miguel Primo de Rivera. In this context, some of his teachers could have been influential in infusing certain authoritarian tendencies in his thoughts. There is no precise evidence that Castro had a well-formed attitude toward Spain's political thought and leading thinkers, beyond what was part of his education. Biographers recall that Alberto de Castro, one of his Jesuit teachers, impressed him with his defense of the thesis of *Hispanidad*, advocating an alleged historical superiority of Spain over U.S. hegemony. Castro was probably attracted to this Spanish line of thought that matched the profile of *arielismo*, a Latin American intellectual reaction to the 1898 war.[29] *Hispanidad* backers advocated the preservation of classical Spanish values in contrast with the influence of what appeared then to be the nascent "U.S. way of life."

The Mexican Syndrome

The United States played a complex role in the Franco-Castro relationship. As we have seen, Castro appreciated Franco's resistance to U.S. demands to comply with the embargo. However, confidential revelations show that Washington at times sent signals to the Spanish government to keep the diplomatic posts in Cuba open. In this situation, the United States was in good company: the Vatican was of the same opinion. Both had some common stakes: with the eventual disappearance of the official Spanish presence in Cuba, they would be deprived of a rich source of information. In these different but parallel circumstances, the U.S. government conserved its latent influence on Cuba, while the Vatican

enjoyed the double linkage through both its remaining independent churches and parishes, which had been allowed to function under Castro's rule, and the role played by the religious orders of Spanish extraction.

This pragmatic and ambivalent attitude of the United States toward Franco and his relationship with Castro is only one dimension of a much wider situation that has, as its epicenter, the location of Spain in the strategy of the Cold War. Let's recall that Franco consolidated the survival of his regime by huddling under the protection of the United States. He let Washington use Spanish soil for the establishment of air and naval bases in the strategy of containment of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, Fidel Castro rose to power with the support of a wide range of Cubans, but he later converted his political system into a rigorous Communist regime, aligning it with the Soviet Union. As a result, Havana clashed directly with the United States.

Washington did not, however, collide with Franco, although at times the United States applied pressure. The key to this apparent contradiction was that tolerating Franco's link with Castro was less important than keeping the guarantee of the U.S. naval and air bases in Spain. On several occasions, when the renewal terms of the military bases were approaching, some difficulties arose for Washington in keeping Franco on the safe side, allowing him to enjoy minor victories (the relationship with Cuba). For example, the most important incident that put U.S.-Spanish military relations to the test was when, in 1966, a refueling tanker collided with a strategic B-52 bomber near the town of Palomares, on the southern coast of Spain. Fearing demonstrations and protests from critical sectors against the Franco establishment, both governments took extraordinary measures to avoid the spillover of the crisis to other areas. Cuba was one of them, expendable for the overall national interest of Washington. Global security was more important than a "regional" nuisance. This tactic was no different than what would eventually be found in the relationship of the United States with much wider interests than the limited terrain offered by Spain. As we will see later, Cuba was not worth a trade or political confrontation with one of the most important economic blocs, the European Union. Chapter 2 will demonstrate that when Europe and Spain energetically contested the scope of the U.S. embargo against Cuba, Washington finally compromised.

For Franco, in relative terms, maintaining Spain's commercial relationship with Cuba was more important than risking the U.S. wrath. Castro did not have any additional moves, because his estrangement from the U.S. sources of trade had already been consolidated by Washington. Fidel found in Spain a portion of the products he needed. Franco, in turn, discovered an alternative outlet for the manufactured goods that were

difficult to sell in markets dominated by the United States. It is interesting to note that this exchange took place when the United States was the main actor in the transformation of Spain from an autarchic economy into a more liberalized and investment-oriented society. The key year of 1959, when Spain approved its stabilization plan and Franco began to put the economy in the hands of technocrats, coincides with the foundation of the Castro regime. While Castro and the United States suffered a sudden divorce because of the expropriations of U.S. companies and the embargo imposed by Washington, Spain in 1962 received $1.2 billion in U.S. aid, a result of their decade-long pact. Tourism and remittances from over a million workers in Europe added the necessary diversification to the Spanish economy. U.S. investment represented 40 percent of the total figure, and trade with the United States was 18 percent of Spain's total foreign commercial operations.[30]

When the Revolution exploded, other European countries witnessed a reduction in their trade with Cuba, but Spain stood firm, becoming Cuba's most important commercial partner in Europe. Comparatively, Spain's benefit from Cuban trade was greater than the one enjoyed by Britain and France because, proportionally, the Spanish-Cuban connection was more significant in the global panorama of the Spanish economy and foreign trade. It also compared very favorably in the context of overall Spanish trade with the rest of Latin America. In 1966, Cuba received 24 percent of all Spanish exports to Latin America. The most revealing angle of this Spanish-Cuban trade link is that in the second part of the 1950s, before the triumph of the Revolution, Spain's main exports to Cuba were olive oil, wine, and books, among other goods of no significant industrial use. During the first decade after the Revolution, Spanish exports to Cuba not only increased in volume but began to vary in the nature of the products. Now Spain was selling Castro trucks, engines, medicines, and of course the customary olive oil, fruit, and books. In terms of Spanish acquisitions of Cuban products, sugar became, as in the old colonial times, the centerpiece of Castro's penetration of the Spanish market, in spite of the fact that Spain could survive with its own beet sugar.

Franco also had to deal with the initial activities of pro-Castro residents in Madrid, who were celebrating victory, and later with the exile sectors that pressured the Spanish government to sever relations with Cuba. Castro also faced his share of inconvenience when Spanish Republicans, some with strong military credentials, took up residence in Havana. The fact that some became military advisers of Castro displeased Franco.[31]

Both governments also had to face violent attacks made by Cuban exiles against Spanish merchant ships on their way to Cuba. Prompted

by the outcome of the Bay of Pigs invasion and later by the death of President John F. Kennedy (who had signed a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union), extremist Cuban exile groups took specific actions to erode Castro's economic linkages with Spain. The targets were the *Sierra de Aranzazu*, attacked on September 13, 1964, and the *Satrústegui*, raided on October 9, 1965. On several occasions, other vessels of the same Trans-Atlantic Company received requests from the CIA to house agents during their trips to Cuba, which the Spanish government refused. The *Sierra de Aranzazu* was attacked by two speedboats that fired upon the merchant ship, resulting in several crew casualties and injured, as well as considerable damage to the ship, which was dangerously in flames. Cuban tugboats rescued the ship and it eventually was repaired in Spain. Castro sent monetary aid to the families of the victims.[32] For its part, the *Satrústegui* was sabotaged while anchored in San Juan de Puerto Rico (a U.S. territory). A magnetic bomb was attached to its side, causing serious damage.

In spite of these problems, occasions on which Franco showed an unconditional endorsement of Castro, or at least concern for the general interests of Cuba, were frequent. One of the oddest episodes was during the dangerous missile crisis of 1962. When the world was at the brink of self-destruction, Franco's Ministry of Foreign Affairs made the centerpiece of a historical declaration a deep preoccupation with "the fate of the Cuban people and the suffering that may have derived from this situation, which directly reach the hearts of all Spaniards." The declaration added that "peace, freedom and respect for juridical order are indivisible." As a consequence, the declaration judged that there was a need to maintain "the same alert order and the same defense spirit against aggression in other parts of the world that are equally threatened." Historian De Paz-Sánchez accurately stresses the evidence of this document that expresses the concern of the Spanish government for the suffering of the Cuban people, not caused by itself or the hand of the Soviet Union, the culprit of the revolutionary activity of Cuba. Secondary to Franco were the threats posed against the United States, his ally.[33]

All the above theories, justifications, and explanations about the maintenance of the Spain-Cuba relationship during the last 15 years of the Franco regime are individually credible but more logically understood when examined in combination. One dimension that has to be considered as paramount is the strategic priority that Franco faced at the time, while Castro reciprocated in the interests of his own system. What was the ultimate objective of the Franco regime? It was an attempt to maintain power over Spain and to ensure the survival of the system in an ever-changing world. After succeeding in overcoming the reprisals from of World War II

and enjoying an alliance with the United States that guaranteed his strategic safety, Franco was forced to find reasonable outlets and scenarios to claim a foreign presence beyond the limitations of the U.S. alliance. As we have seen above, economic arguments partly explain keeping the link with Castro. More ample and strategic considerations must be added to the equation.

To interpret the continuation of Franco's relationship with the *castrista* regime, one needs to consult the diplomatic records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain, as few historians have done. Evidence provided by De Paz-Sánchez reveals the strategy developed by the Spanish dictator for his diplomats.[34] They worked diligently and successfully for the survival of the regime by providing Franco with a touch of liberalism in the Latin American context. In this way they managed to avoid a potential "domino effect" generated by the Mexican diplomatic boycott that refused, for over four decades, to recognize the Franco government. This was a precedent greatly feared by the *franquismo* in the regional setting where Madrid implemented a "foreign policy of substitution." As we have seen above, this was intended to make up for the shortcomings of an ineffective strategy in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

Franco combined very comfortably the courting of dictators in the area (Trujillo, Stroessner), populists (Perón), and liberals of all sorts (in Venezuela at times, Costa Rica, Chile before Allende). He had to be very careful, however, with the aura displayed by the Mexican government established by the Lázaro Cárdenas administration that provided the "institutionalization" of the Revolution. This is what the name of his party, the Partido Revolutionario Institutional (PRI), claimed to have as its main function. While revealing authoritarian and right-wing tendencies, combining the support of the unions and the economic powers, the PRI loved to project a liberal, if not leftist-leaning, foreign policy. This represented another way to distance itself from the overwhelming presence of the United States in Latin America. Washington reciprocated, by allowing the PRI to execute a quasi-dictatorial domestic policy, guaranteeing order in a potentially explosive society of over a hundred million inhabitants. The price that was eventually paid was the leftist and nonaligned foreign policy of Mexico.

In any event, one of the mechanisms by which Mexico reinforced its image of liberalism and its role as protector of leftist causes was the recognition of the Spanish Republic after the defeat of 1939 and the rejection of diplomatic relations with Franco. At the same time, Cárdenas opened Mexico's doors to the best of the Spanish intellectuals and professionals, who were well trained and who, with no local investment or cost, contributed much to the development of society in the way of expertise. The

price to be paid by the government was its opposition to Franco. The dictator became aware of the potential danger that the Mexican example would set in Latin America in an era of transition during the Cold War. The United States and Spain were in clear coalition: Washington (from Truman to the current president, Johnson) did not want a second Cuba and Franco would not welcome a second Mexico. Preserving the relationship with Castro provided Madrid with a much-needed touch of liberalism, which was well received in Latin American circles that appreciated periodic signs of independence from Washington.

Conclusion

Although differences have existed over time and in the profile of the leading characters in this quadrilateral relationship composed of Spain, Europe, Cuba, and the United States, a review of history shows the steady presence of Spain as a beachhead for wider European action. Taking its place as a hegemon, the United States challenged, in clear terms (even through wars and direct intervention), the Spanish monopoly over Cuba. But Spain refused to relinquish this sphere of influence to Washington and proceeded to execute a comeback through massive immigration. This phenomenon represented, along with cultural factors, the resistance of the Franco regime to severing ties with Castro. Dissatisfied with this scenario, Washington complained and applied pressure in an effort to limit this relationship because it violated the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine and the letter of the embargo. The same stubborn attitude shown by predemocratic Spain would be replicated by the new democratic regime once it was fully involved in the European integration process.

CHAPTER 2

WASHINGTON, HAVANA, BRUSSELS

COLLATERAL DAMAGE OF A NEW MONROE DOCTRINE

The American continents are not to be considered a subject for future colonization by any European power.

James Monroe, 1823

We will oppose, with all our means, the forcible interposition of any power, as auxiliary, stipendiary, or under any other form or pretext, and most especially, [Cuba's] transfer to any power by conquest, cession, or acquisition in any other way.

Thomas Jefferson, 1823

The policy of the United States towards Cuba has been just waiting for my death. I am not willing to cooperate.

Fidel Castro to a representative of President Jimmy Carter, 1977

All we are saying to these countries is, obey our law.

Senator Jesse Helms, CNN, March 12, 1996

The United States has enacted laws that purport to regulate activities of persons under the jurisdiction of member states of the European Union; this extra-territorial application violates international law and has the adverse effects on the interest of the European Union.

European Union Regulation, November 1996

It is none of your business.

Popular expression, applicable to the European attitude toward U.S. demands on Cuban legislation and foreign investment

THE EVOLUTION OF THE U.S. EMBARGO

Spanish and other European interests reaffirmed their presence in Cuba after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution. They aimed to maintain the economic relations as well as the political links they had built in the past. But now they encountered a scene that was dominated by a direct confrontation between Castro and the United States. Up to that time, Europeans had learned how to coexist with the overwhelming economic and political hegemony of the United States. Now they were witnessing a standoff with unknown and unpredictable consequences.

This new situation had a very clear historical background linked to the dependency of Cuba on U.S. political control. The fact was that the United States did not fully abandon Cuba after the founding of the Cuban Republic on May 20, 1902: Washington ended only the military occupation that had been in place since the defeat of Spain. Nonetheless, the U.S. military came back to control Cuba from 1906 to 1909, and again for a few months in 1912. This pattern would be repeated from 1917 to 1922. In 1933 the indirect political control of Cuba was officially terminated by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt with the proclamation of the "Good Neighbor Policy." Meanwhile, since 1898 Cuba's dependency had continued to be, by all accounts, overwhelming. The "special economic relationship," dutifully labeled "neocolonial," was impressive. With the coming of Castro's Revolution, this intimate relationship would be slashed. Within a few months, with a stunning speed that surprised Cubans and U.S. businesses, the trade and political relationship between Washington and Havana became progressively limited and ended in total termination.

In October 1960, the United States imposed an economic embargo limited to U.S. goods, with exemptions for food and medicines. The U.S. government's response to Cuban economic and political actions culminated with the breaking of diplomatic relations on January 3, 1961. Not to be surpassed in the implementation of retaliation measures, on April 16, 1961, Castro officially declared Cuba to be a socialist state. By coincidence, on the following day the Bay of Pigs operation exploded, resulting in the defeat and imprisonment of the Cuban exile force backed by President John F. Kennedy, who at the last minute withdrew the direct involvement of the U.S. Air Force. He eventually had to recognize this strategic mistake, probably attributable to misinterpreting the predictions of Cuban exiles regarding the eventual support of the resistance in the country. Castro's power and support were much stronger than Washington and the growing exile community wanted to believe.

Maintaining the policy of harassment and isolation, the United States pressured the Organization of American States (OAS) to suspend the

government of Cuba on January 22, 1962. On February 3, 1962, President Kennedy used two laws, the Trading with the Enemy Act (passed in 1917 in the context of World War I) and the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, to establish a total embargo on trade with Cuba by virtue of Presidential Proclamation 3447. In reaction to this move, on March 19, 1962, food rationing was implemented in Cuba. Then the most serious crisis in the fateful triangle formed by the United States, Cuba, and the Soviet Union erupted.

Responding to the placement of Soviet nuclear-armed missiles in Cuba, Kennedy demanded their withdrawal and imposed a naval blockade. On the brink of nuclear war, Moscow and Washington reached a compromise by which the Soviet Union agreed to take the weapons away in exchange for the promise of the United States not to invade Cuba. To this day, there is still debate regarding the role Castro played in increasing the tension.

Subsequently, on July 8, 1963, the Treasury Department announced the Cuban Assets Control Regulations Act, by which U.S. citizens were forbidden to engage in any commercial or financial relations with Cuba, with the exception of activities undertaken through subsidiaries. After the discovery of Cuban-sponsored political and guerrilla activities throughout Latin America, diplomatic relations between all the Latin American states (except Mexico) and Cuba were terminated in 1964. In March 1968 the Cuban government nationalized most of the remaining private businesses. In July 1972 Cuba became a member of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA or COMECON), the Soviet economic bloc.

Joining the European countries that had maintained full relations with Castro, many Latin American governments began to reestablish diplomatic relations with Havana in the aftermath of an OAS meeting of foreign ministers held in 1975, where a majority voted to lift the multilateral sanctions. The OAS then decided that each member state could choose whether it wished to have diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba. The United States voted with the majority to lift the sanctions, though it did not rescind its own embargo or reestablish relations. However, secret discussions took place with a view to engagement: this and other developments generated an appearance of normalcy, at least for a time.

In the fall of 1975, the Cuban decision to participate in the Angolan civil war ended the ongoing dialogue between the United States and Cuba.[1] In spite of these difficulties, President Carter in 1977 lifted travel restrictions so that U.S. citizens could visit Cuba. Interest sections (two steps below full ambassadorial level) were established in Havana and Washington. But then the Mariel boatlift of 1980 became a major cause for a new deterioration of U.S.-Cuban relations.

However, the 1980s were laced with serious incidents, actions, and reactions of all actors. After the new U.S. administration took office, President Reagan reimposed travel restrictions in 1982. The Republican administrations of Reagan and Bush were inclined to exert pressure on U.S. companies to eliminate their indirect links with Cuba. The imposition of obstacles to the sending of donations and goods by Cuban exiles to their relatives on the island was also in the works. However, trade links between U.S. subsidiaries and Cuba would not be banned until the passage of the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 (the Torricelli law)—ironically, after the end of the Cold War. Cuba's economic moves were present in the background. The certain ambivalence and a degree of impotence by the U.S. government over the European, and especially Spanish, activity in Cuba after the triumph of the Castro Revolution was in a way justified as a consequence of the above-mentioned compromise made by Kennedy. That unwritten rule was to last until the era when Mikhail Gorbachev put in motion the political machinery that propelled the Marxist giant to collapse. One by one, most of Moscow's satellites went the way of the Soviet empire, transforming themselves into fragile democracies, but at least not representing a threat to Washington's new status as the only superpower.

The victory facilitated by Ronald Reagan's policy of pressuring the Soviet into an arms race that was impossible to win had indeed left some exceptional surviving examples of the old system, most significantly in Vietnam and China, where the centralized political structure that remained in place would coexist with a capitalist economy. North Korea represented an extreme example of old times but was geographically limited. In the Western Hemisphere, after the United States crushed minor attempts to build a "second Cuba" (the Chilean experiment was never replicated), the rest of the Southern Cone and most of Latin America fell under the control of the right-wing military in the 1960s and 1970s. A swift warning in the Caribbean island of Granada sufficed to send the clear message that Cuba was to be the exception to the general rule.

However, patience was to be the best tactic, as political observers pointed out, in comparison with the U.S. leadership's attitude at the end of the nineteenth century when, according to a popular saying in the U.S. capital, Cuba fell into the hands of Washington like a ripened fruit. This time, almost a century later, it was supposed to be just a matter of time until the Castro regime would fall once the Soviet subsidies began to disappear. The fact that this prediction was not confirmed is due to two complementary factors. One was the stubborn decision of the Castro regime to circle the wagons, declaring the beginning of a "special period" and hoping the crisis would subside during the rest of the 1990s. It was not going to be an easy task because just between 1990 and 1993 Cuba's

gross domestic product decreased by an alarming 30 percent. The second reason for the miraculous survival of Castro's system was, according to Washington's analysis, the replacement of Soviet aid with increased trade and investment from the rest of the world, especially Western Europe. This was too much for the powerful in the U.S. capital, under the pressure of the active Cuban exile community that saw its moment of glory to come.

AFTER THE COLD WAR: THE REBIRTH OF A DOCTRINE

Well ahead of the changes that were to take place as a result of the end of the Cold War, Cuba began to execute economic reforms and to foster foreign investment. In 1982 the Castro government approved a law to regulate the development of business consortia.[2] At the same time, long-term leases of properties were contemplated. Regulations to control the status of labor were modified in 1990 to facilitate the establishment of a novelty in the economic panorama: industries related to tourism. Then in December 1991, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, aid and trade ended, resulting in a substantial loss to the economy.

The Castro government then made one of the most spectacular decisions in the evolution of the Cuban Revolution. To dramatize the important changes it would implement, the government declared a "Special Period in Times of Peace." This was the code word (and a euphemism) for belt-tightening and subtle, but important, modification in the political philosophy of the Revolution by violating apparently immovable doctrine and taboos. On the political front, in 1992 some parts of the Cuban Constitution (Articles 14, 15, and 18) were adapted to soften the prevailing Marxist-Leninist intransigence against private enterprise. Accordingly, a series of measures that are the basis of capitalist markets were taken, producing a modest opening to economic activities. One by one, in never-ending legislative activity, the legal system concerning economic activity was substantially modified. Despite Fidel Castro's reluctance, Cuba took another ideological and economic U-turn when it began to prioritize the tourist industry, knowing that the risk of "cultural contamination" was part of the deal. The sugar industry was to be the sector that had to pay the price for attracting tourists and opening parts of the economy to foreign investment. By 2002 half of the Cuban mills were gone.

In June 1995, to the satisfaction and intrigue of foreign observers and tourists, Resolution No. 4 of the Ministry of Labor allowed the opening of private enterprises for the preparation and sale of food and drinks (among them the *paladares*, private restaurants established in homes), with certain limitations (like the number of tables allowed, a measure

that was consistently violated). In July 1995, university graduates were allowed to work in trades other than those they were trained for, according to Resolution No. 10 of the Ministry of Labor. Finally, and most importantly, in September 1995, Law No. 77 was issued to regulate foreign investment, in place of Law No. 50 of 1992. In the same month, Cuban citizens were authorized to have savings accounts in domestic or convertible funds.

The Cuban government perceived noticeable changes resulting fromthese and other complementary measures. However, expert analysis found that results were rather slow to arrive and actual investments were comparatively very modest. Cuba was not one of the most favored recipients of foreign investment in developing countries. It was not a competitive magnet in the Caribbean and Latin American context. For example, figures show that FDI (foreign direct investment) in Cuba from 1993 to 1996 equaled the amounts received by Dominica (*not* the Dominican Republic, which received $160 million in 1996 compared to only $12 million invested in Cuba). Regarding investments from the European Union (EU) in Latin America, flows to Cuba were only 0.2 percent of the total European investment in Latin America.[3] Still, foreign business activity in Cuba experienced growth. At the end of 1994, the government reported that about 140 joint ventures were operating in Cuba. In the second part of the decade, total of foreign investment topped $2 billion.

For over three decades, the United States did not seem to be excessively concerned about the status of the properties that were nationalized by the Cuban Revolution. Washington and Havana never came to terms in negotiating a mutually convenient settlement, as other countries had done (although the terms of the agreements never met the expectations of the former owners). In the case of the U.S. properties, while the United States insisted on full compensation, the Cuban government responded that it should also be reimbursed for the damage caused by the U.S. embargo. The figure consistently quoted by the Cuban government was astronomical even in the mid-1990s: $60 billion.[4] While some other nations quietly negotiated modest settlements of lump sums, the claims of the former U.S. owners remained in a legal limbo.

The overall relationship between Europe and Cuba needs to be subdivided into two complementary and intertwined tracks. One is composed of the perceptions and actions of individual states; the second pertains to the role played by the collective entity that has evolved from the original European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), founded in 1951, into the current EU. Regarding the first track, some observers of the European-Cuban relationship have said that had the Europeans joined the

embargo, the Revolution might have collapsed. Although details differ, the realism and pragmatism that are the trademark of the British have been shared by the rest of the Western European states in their attitude toward Cuba since 1959. Since the start they have resisted obeying the U.S. directives. They recognized the change in Cuba as a political and legal development. In addition to the interest raised in intellectual ranks, European governments at large took the view that the transformation of Cuba was a fact to deal with and that the U.S. policy seemed to be counterproductive and even damaging to the national interests of the different states and their historical and economic linkages with the island.[5]

The Revolution attracted many European intellectuals and students in the 1960s because it promised the construction of the "New Man" and appealed to their sense of obligation to the social and political struggles in the Third World. While a sort of apolitical constituency was also enticed to participate in the Cuban experience, artists and writers discovered in the Castro Revolution an enterprise whose novelty captured their interest. This fascination, however, ended with the explosion of the Heberto Padilla case in 1971. When this Cuban poet was awarded a coveted Casa de las Americas prize for his collection entitled *Fuera del juego* (Off Side), it was judged "antirevolutionary" by the Marxist establishment. Padilla was then arrested and interrogated. When days later he was released, he issued an apology and promised to repent. Dozens of European and Latin American intellectuals denounced this Stalinist approach and broke relations with Castro. He responded that Cuba did not need them.

From the mid 1990s the U.S. measures reinforcing the embargo against Cuba had inflicted considerable damage on transatlantic relations at a time when any trade disagreement could unleash a serious confrontation during the restructuring of economic blocs. Between the end of the Cold War and the crisis of September 11, Europeans had come to terms with accepting U.S. leadership in difficult scenarios such as the Persian Gulf War and the pacification of the former Yugoslavia. France had shown willingness to reinsert itself into the European security network, especially in the context of NATO. A consensus had been reached regarding economic and military cooperation with Russia. A future North Atlantic free trade agreement was always feasible because of the similarities between the U.S. and European economies. In contrast, the dispute over Cuba has been an anomaly.

The United States adopted a double strategy composed of increasing the pressure on the Cuban regime and discouraging foreign investment and trade. Innovative legislation was proposed to Congress; it was aimed at the heart of foreign activities in Cubawhile it converted the embargo,

until then simply subject to presidential control, into legislation. Over this panorama, a unique law passed by Congress would attract world attention: the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act, a.k.a. the Helms-Burton law.

The impact of this piece is impressive in the first place because of the notable degree of disagreement between the United States and the rest of the globe as to how to deal with the regime of Fidel Castro. The evolution of the law and its consequences revealed the U.S. Congress to be obsessed with imposing on trade partners a format for having (or better, not having) relations with Cuba. In sum, Title III of the bill threatened legal suits in U.S. courts against foreign investors "trafficking" in expropriated properties in Cuba, while Title IV warned these investors they would be denied visas to visit the United States. Although Title III has been suspended every six months by the U.S. president, the consequence of this legal measure has been "to turn a bilateral dispute into an international wrangle with many of Washington's staunchest traditional allies."[6]

At the same time, U.S. legislators' insistence on political conditions for suspending the embargo was especially perturbing. As far as Cuba is concerned, the law is still fully operational. A careful reading of Title II of the Helms-Burton law reveals that fact. This important portion, which at one point in the legislative history of the bill would have been the sole text, illustrates that the U.S. Congress had surpassed conditions previously imposed on Cuba, not only since Castro's rise to power but since the end of Spanish rule in Havana. The most distinct precedent for the conditions injected by Helms-Burton is the Platt Amendment.

A Radical Transformation

The Helms-Burton law is not a document fashioned by one single legislator. Although it may be the product of a small group of drafters, it was the result of a long give-and-take procedure—a series of amendments, corrections, and insertions. The final format reflected an impressive contrast not only of objectives but also of styles. While some sections of Title III seem to follow the logic and the discourse of convoluted legal minds requiring interpretation of the fine print, Title II is strikingly candid in language and purpose. It does not outline conditions to slow down the process of foreign investment in Cuba (as Title IV does) or to set a system of compensation for "trafficking" with expropriated properties (as Title III mandates). While from a foreign perspective it is possible to interpret the law as being neutered by the combination of the presidential suspension and the agreements reached in 1997 and 1998 between the United States and the European Union, the reality is that the text is still fully

active regarding the relationship between Washington and Havana. The potential lifting of the embargo is still codified and subject to compliance with a precise condition: the termination of the Cuban regime.

Congress wanted to reaffirm its interpretation of what may constitute an acceptable change of regime, "demonstrably in transition from a communist totalitarian dictatorship to representative democracy . . . effectively guaranteeing the rights of free speech and freedom of the press, including granting permits to privately owned media and telecommunications companies to operate in Cuba." While these self-evident rights are reasonable for any society that claims to be democratic, what is highly unusual is this additional imposition: "permitting the reinstatement of citizenship to Cuban-born persons returning to Cuba."

Private international comparative law shows that different states and governments have different ways of recognizing the rights of former citizens to recover their original citizenship. Some also seek to bestow a new status on the descendants of citizens, by a generous application of the *ius sanguinis* tradition, like Spain and Italy. However, in this case recovery of citizenship is *imposed* by virtue of a *foreign* law. This dimension was not lost on Cuban officials, who managed to exploit it for domestic political purposes. Ricardo Alarcón, in a long television and radio interview, portrayed the situation as follows: "We would have to return their Cuban citizenship to them." The new citizenship would have to be given to them "because of a law issued by a foreign congress." Alarcón rightly reminded his audience that "never before a legislature anywhere in the world dared to make laws regarding the citizenship of another."[7]

The law not only demands "the right to private property," but also requires that the new Cuban leadership take "appropriate steps to return to United States citizens (and entities which are 50 percent or more beneficially owned by United States citizens) property taken by the Cuban Government from such citizens and entities on or after January 1, 1959, or to provide equitable compensation to such citizens and entities for such property." This scenario was subjected to keen and sarcastic commentary by Ricardo Alarcón. He noted that the prescribed date (January 1, 1959) was imposed to cover any actions taken in Cuba after the collapse of the Batista regime. Agrarian reform measures did not start until May 1959 and the nationalization process was executed first under the decree of October 1960.[8] He also countered the populist rationale of the law, raising concern for the millions of Cubans who since the triumph of the Revolution have acquired ownership of residences that had been rented to them and were subsequently confiscated.[9] On the return of citizenship, Alarcón pointed out that "because they are Yankees, they would take over the control of this country and in addition, they would demand the poor

country to return their Cuban citizenship . . . every owner of everything on this island would be from the U.S." Alarcón exaggerated: "They are talking about returning the last house." It is not surprising that Cubans got his message: "They will take this over my body," a Cuban woman said. In a typical fashion, she inherited the property from her parents who, after renting the property for years, purchased the house under the urban reform laws in the 1960s after the former owners left the country. Unfair as it may be, according to the Cuban authorities, the law allowed the former expropriated owners to receive monthly payments, a life annuity. But for leaving the country they were punished by losing this right. Now, Helms-Burton wanted to correct the situation.[10]

Still, in view of the dubious process of expropriation, the requirement of returning properties to their former owners may seem just and fair. A closer examination of this request reveals two additional disturbing aspects. First is the fact that the act in its closing clarifications recited an exception for certain properties that would not be subject to potential lawsuits under Title III. Houses used as primary residences were to be exempted. The text specifies that the law does not apply to "transactions and uses of property by a person who is both a citizen of Cuba and a resident of Cuba," unless this is "an official of the Cuban Government or the ruling political party in Cuba." That means that government officials would be evicted. However, this apparently contradicts the mandate of Title II, which insists on returning *all* properties *to the former owners* as a precondition for ending the U.S. embargo. In other words, Cuban-Americans may not sue the current users of their former properties, but the same properties should be returned to the original owners in order to "certify" the new Cuban government as democratic and free market oriented.

In any event, when studied from a more moderate and objective perspective, the burden on the new government regarding properties would be monumental. Unless the new transitional or fully democratic government of Cuba planned for a massive *restitution* of properties from the current occupiers to the former owners, with considerable social disruption if not outright mass conflict, there would be no reasonable room to expect that the condition would ever be met. The current and future government of Cuba will never have the necessary resources to "equitably" compensate the former owners of the expropriated properties. If the intention of the legislators was to send a populist message to their backers, the goal was met. However, delivery of the promised compensation is impossible, even considering that a portion of the estimated aid packages for the rebuilding of the Cuban economy could be diverted to compensation

for the properties taken in the early 1960s. The burden is so monumental that simple common sense should have been enough to exclude this condition from the text, as Cuban-American economists had established before the law was enacted.[11]

It is not surprising that when Castro became ill in 2006 and expectations about the future of Cuba were raised in the exile community, as we will see later in the corresponding chapter, sensible voices pointed out that restitution was not going to be a priority for either the U.S government or the moderate exile groups. In their study of dealing with the thorny issue of the confiscations, Rolando Castañeda and Plinio Montalván (more level-headed than the drafters of the Helms-Burton law) outlined some of the alternatives for the return of the properties to the former owners. They reasoned that "since the government of Cuba does not have (and will not soon have) the means to compensate promptly, adequately and fairly, restitution is the best (only) workable alternative." However, they stressed that "fortunately, most Cuban expatriate groups have recognized that restitution of dwellings or residential property is not advisable." Then they immediately turned to the solution that "the discussion can then be restricted to non-residential property." If all this seems logical and fair, and speaks well for the patriotic and altruistic aims of the authors, they also are very keen to point out that the restitution of nonresidential property would not contribute greatly to the rebuilding of a nation, because *a substantial amount* of the best nonresidential property would be returned to non-Cubans (as Alarcón had pointed out, we might add), and therefore would put the economy back to the situation of the 1950s. Just taking into account the approved list of claims, the authors wisely conclude that returning these properties "would be tantamount to insisting that nationalistic feelings in Cuba due to foreign ownership of the country's principal assets never had a basis in fact."[12] While they recommend that "all nonresidential property in Cuba belongs to the state," other experts conclude that the "present possessors are owners of the property they possess," by adherence to the tradition of *usucapio*.[13]

The EU Resists

Simultaneously with drastic and painful economic reforms that were taking place in Cuba after the end of the Cold War, the former Cuban dependency on the Soviet bloc began to shift to a sort of normalization of relations with members of the European Union. Cuba had to find alternatives for the vanished Soviet subsidies. Anything was contemplated during the "special period." The history of relations between revolutionary Cuba and what was called Western Europe during the Cold War provides some

clues to the lack of agreement between the United States and Europe in the 1990s. Although in the 1960s and 1970s there was nothing to compare with today's incipient Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU, a pattern of similarities was revealed in the manner that different European states were dealing with Cuba, as mentioned earlier.

Each country maintained a link, with clear disdain for U.S. pressures and admonitions. While Federal Germany's moderate linkage with Cuba contrasted with the intimate relationship between Cuba and the Communist German Democratic Republic (GDR), Britain (under conservative and labor governments) and France (under de Gaulle) provided Cuba with the necessary industrial products to keep part of its economy afloat. However, in global terms the figures for trade between Western Europe and Cuba were modest in comparison to Cuba's dependency on the Soviet bloc.

European trade and economic relations with Cuba have been developing at a pace separate from the collective EU attitude toward the Cuban regime. They also have arisen independent of the constraints imposed by the United States and, more importantly, as a reaction to U.S. measures. In Europe, while different governments have revealed an impressive unity in their opposition to the Helms-Burton law, individual countries such as the UK and Spain have shown distinctive attitudes according to their special relationships with the United States and Cuba respectively. In this setting, the European Union is the institutional framework that has been the most reactive and has provided the most effective answer to the U.S. law. At the same time, Brussels coordinated the machinery for a compromise with the United States to avert a trade war with serious consequences.

Ironically, what was originally a U.S.-Cuban conflict that had escalated into a wider confrontation of transatlantic consequences gave way to an isolated compromise issued from Washington regarding the Cuban revolutionary process. Significantly, while the Monroe Doctrine was prompted initially in the nineteenth century by the insertion of Russia into the Western Hemisphere, the most energetic reaction from Washington was developed when the Soviet Union *disappeared* and Cuba lost its most important supporter and the cause of its conflict with the United States.

As outlined in the preceding pages, this effort took the form of two successive and complementary pieces of legislation: the Torricelli and Helms-Burton "laws." Let's recall that the first aimed at curtailing the activities of U.S. subsidiaries with Cuba. The result was that European investments were affected. The second tried to target European investments in Cuba involving former U.S. interests that were expropriated by

the Cuban Revolution. Moreover, the act (Title III) gave the option to former Cuban citizens to sue foreign investors in U.S. courts for the losses they suffered before becoming U.S. citizens. The Europeans considered both measures to be violations of international law. Early actions were taken both by the individual countries and by the EU collectively through blocking statutes and protective measures of compulsory implementation. The official EU attitude is still enshrined in multiple statements that can be aptly summarized by a declaration issued in the UN setting as early as 1994: "The European Union condemns the repeated violations of human rights in Cuba, in particular in the political field. The EU believes that the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba is primarily a matter that has to be resolved bilaterally."[14]

The EU and the U.S. administrations engaged in a long and intense series of discussions, with Brussels insisting on the above terms, while Washington persisted in dragging its feet. After much acrimony and European threats of appealing to the WTO, an under-the-table compromise between the EU and the United States started to take shape. Washington was asking for a gesture from the EU in order to delay the execution of Titles III and IV of Helms-Burton to allow President Clinton to concentrate on the electoral campaign of 1996 and to help him suspend the application of the law. Among the conditions of this "gesture" were that investments should benefit the whole of Cuban society and that companies should not be forced to deal directly and exclusively with the Cuban government. Even though it was not exactly what may have been expected, the suspension of negotiations for the cooperation and aid agreement between Brussels and Havana certainly seemed to fit the bill as the awaited "gesture," as treated in the following section.

Still, under the threat of the Helms-Burton law, the EU decided to denounce it in the WTO, stating that the procedure would not wait until after the U.S. elections of November when Clinton was to be given a second term. During the second half of 1996, the U.S. government made a considerable effort to convince the EU to find an elegant face-saving solution. However, the European governments had their hands tied by a new measure adopted by the EU Council in November. They could not afford to appear to be negotiating under the threat of retaliation. The Parliament and the Commission had already issued sufficient signs of protest.[15] It was now the turn (by Spanish initiative) of the Council to counteract the consequences derived from the U.S. law.

The Council's Regulation against the application of the law was finally issued on November 22, 1996.[16] It is significant that the mechanism chosen was the highest-ranking form of EU legislation. In contrast, when regulations are issued by the Commission they are mostly administrative

and technical in detail. These regulations given by the Council are concerned with important, broader, controversial matters. Regulations are binding on all member states and do not need to be translated or interpreted into national law. This specific Regulation contained protective measures against the extraterritorial effects of the Helms-Burton law.

First, the EU Council established its justification for opposing this and other laws. The EU recalled that it has had (since the foundation of the European Community, its predecessor) as one of its objectives the contribution to "the harmonious development of world trade and to the progressive abolition of restrictions on international trade." Moreover, the EU "endeavors to achieve to the greatest extent possible the objective of free movement of capital between Member States and third countries, including the removal of any restrictions on direct investment—including investment in real estate, the provision of financial services, or the admission of securities to capital markets." In accordance with these goals, the EU Council Regulation's main objectives were set:

> The United States has enacted laws [the Torricelli and Helms-Burton laws[17]] that purport to regulate activities of persons under the jurisdiction of the member states of the European Union; this extra-territorial application violates international law and has adverse effects on the interest of the European Union; . . . Therefore, the Regulation provides protection against the extra-territorial application of these laws and binds the persons and interests affected to inform the Commission; . . . No judgment of a court outside the European Union regarding the effects of these U.S. laws will be recognized and no person shall comply with any requirement or prohibition derived from them; [in consequence] Any person affected shall be entitled to recover any damages caused by the application of these laws.[18]

With the measures taken by the European institutions, especially the Commission and the Council of Ministers, the EU aimed to concentrate on removing what was perceived to be the most adverse effects of Titles III and IV of the Helms-Burton law. As a result of successive warnings demanding a U.S. rectification that never materialized, the path taken by the actions and reactions of Brussels and Washington led to a dead-end street.[19] On February 3, 1997, a definitive legal initiative against the United States was intended to be debated within the framework of the WTO. The EU already had warned that the temporary suspension of Title III was not a sufficient gesture. The rest of the law was still considered a violation of the principles of commercial exchange guaranteed by the WTO. As a first action, therefore, the trade organization had to form a panel charged with producing an opinion within six months. In sum, the United States countered that the Helms-Burton law was actually not an issue of concern to the WTO, since the limitations imposed on trade

with Cuba were a matter of national security. Ironically, this amounted to an explicit admission that the law has a *political* objective, as its most ardent advocates had made abundantly clear all along.

THE "UNDERSTANDING"

In an effort to diffuse tensions and as an apparent counter gesture to the European concessions, as expressed by the EU's actions on Cuba (among them, the Common Position, as detailed in the following chapter), on January 3, 1997, President Clinton sent an amicable signal to the EU. He suspended Title III of the Helms-Burton law for the second time. The first suspension was the previous June, right after the law's passage in March. In both cases, he used the presidential "escape hatch" provided by the legislation.[20] This second step taken by Clinton, coupled with renewed talks emphasizing support for a democratic transition in Cuba, diffused tensions with the European Union and mildly changed perceptions of the United States in the international arena. Welcoming the move, the U.S. media commented that the change shifted the blame from the United States to Castro, as "a democracy and human rights laggard."[21] A temporary truce ("Understanding") was set.

On May 18, 1998, at the conclusion of the EU-U.S. Summit held in London under the chairmanship of UK prime minister Tony Blair (as EU president), the EU and the United States announced a new agreement. Both parties declared that they had reached a new Understanding that in essence would freeze the application of the controversial Helms-Burton and D'Amato acts in reference to investment in Cuba, Libya, and Iran.[22] The agreement was a confirmation and an expansion of the spirit and the letter of the previous 1997 Understanding.[23]

The 1998 agreement marked a major milestone in the evolution of EU-U.S. relations. It confirmed the 1997 promise by the EU not to pursue retaliatory measures against the United States in the WTO. Surprisingly, the EU accepted the U.S. assessment that some of Cuba's past expropriations might have been executed in violation of international law. (This position resulted in protests by numerous observers and governments.) The White House, in exchange, promised to pressure the U.S. Congress to further neutralize the application of the Helms-Burton legislation. The United States and the European Union agreed to establish a Registry of Claims and to work jointly in the negotiation of the Multilateral Agreement of Investment (MAI), a negotiation that appeared at that time to be on track to yield a successful agreement. The United States also agreed to respect the current status of foreign investment in Cuba and not to make pre-May 1998 expropriations the target of legal suits under

Title III. In fact, future expropriations and subsequent investment in such properties would be mutually scrutinized. Moreover, in a most controversial move, the EU promised to discourage post-1998 investments in properties whose ownership was questionable by denying the customary diplomatic protection, insurance, commercial and tax incentives, and other support. Investment in properties illegally expropriated after May 18, 1998, would be prohibited. In sum, the agreement confirmed the approach laid out a year earlier. EU insiders branded this agreement an example of "creative conflict management."[24]

A combination of time restrictions and the need to adopt language pleasing to all parties generated a very confusing document. The EU position stressed the "political" nature of the agreement, denying legally binding status, explicitly stating that the implementation of the Understanding was void until evidence of a waiver on Title IV was in hand. Finally, the EU Commission advised its diplomatic representations to highlight that the accord rested on the good faith of the U.S. Congress waiving Titles III and IV; only if the latter occurred would the deal be effective.[25] The agreement was reluctantly accepted by EU and U.S. sources. Understandably, Cuba opposed the arrangement.[26] Moreover, its implementation was conditioned on usually hard-to-get congressional cooperation.[27] The deal was linked to the overall development of policies regarding sensitive European interests in Libya and Iran.[28]

The Understanding was immediately criticized by several governments. Belgium explicitly claimed that Article 73C of the Maastricht Treaty prohibits limitations on capital movement and investment. The French representatives insisted that the "ball is in the U.S. court," and that the EU simply had to wait for the U.S. legal modifications and waivers.[29] Legal commentators pointed out the apparent contradiction between the new political Understanding and the strict legality of the previous measures taken by the EU, especially the Council Regulation and the Joint Action of November 1996.[30] On the political level, critical voices stressed that the new Understanding violated the spirit of the Regulation because it recognized the political aim of the Helms-Burton law in implementing restrictive economic measures with the objective of producing a change in the Cuban regime.[31] A contrast became evident between the explicit declarations of the European Union's Regulation (against interference in the internal affairs of Cuba) and the explicit aim of the Helms-Burton law (conditioning the end of the embargo on the termination of the current regime). Regarding EU constitutional matters, observers questioned the competence of the sole EU negotiator, Commission vice president Leon Brittan, to sign agreements that transcend the commercial boundaries of the explicitly pooled sovereignty (the first

pillar of the EU Treaty) and, in contrast, pertain to the foreign policy and security sector (the second pillar) that is still the prerogative of the member states.[32]

Spanish negotiators in Brussels admitted that the agreement was imperfect. In particular, they stressed that the new Understanding had only political value and lacked juridical force. On the one hand, they pointed out that the Helms-Burton law had acted as a deterrent to Spanish investments in Cuba. The Understanding extended the freeze of U.S. retaliation from the six-month presidential waiver to an indefinite term. They also were pleased by the fact that no investors in "illegally" expropriated properties would be under the threat of U.S. penalties and that only official incentives would be denied. With the new deal, only certain investments would be subject to discussion. In sum, the new pact created a climate of lessened tensions; a potential environment of permanent conflict with the United States had disappeared.

On the other hand, adding arguments to the other member state (MS) concerns, Spain's diplomats alleged that Commissioner Brittan had acted not only as representative of the Commission but also on behalf of the European Union, in matters that exceeded the strictly commercial boundaries. Second, they expressed concern about the fact that the final text apparently granted former Cuban citizens the right to have access to a future register of illegal expropriations under the setting of the MAI, a major contention point of Helms-Burton. And third, the Understanding added confusion to the obscured concept of covered transactions.[33]

The absence of an additional agreement with a more convincing legal status reduced the Understanding to a temporary truce between Washington and Brussels, though hopefully becoming permanent in practical terms. In fact, from the U.S. point of view, the only decision that still matters today is the execution of the "escape hatch" waiver provision granted to the president in the U.S. legislation for the suspension of Title III. Title IV could still potentially be activated, as demonstrated by Senator Helms's frequent demands pressuring the State Department to deny visas to executives of "traffickers" (most noticeably, Sol Meliá of Spain). This threat has been looming over the heads of foreign companies' officials since then. It is known to insiders and experts that some Spanish companies with interests in Cuba and the United States are careful not to reveal links between their territorial operations. It is also known that important legal firms are retained by some of these companies to advise them on the procedure to use.[34]

The ambivalent atmosphere of the agreement was not lost on Spanish critics, who disagreed with the Spanish government regarding its claim that current and future investments in Cuba were better protected

than before the Understanding. The legal validity of the agreement was endorsed by a pro forma report of scholars hired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, during the parliamentary debate, Congressman Ignasi Guardans graphically described the prospects of Spanish investment in Cuba as a higher risk than "opening a hotel in Rwanda."[35] Sharing the views of most of his colleagues, he protested that Commissioner Brittan had entered into agreements involving issues of national sovereignty (diplomatic protection) that were not within the realm of the Commission. The fact that this parliamentarian was the spokesman for the center-right Catalan party, which had ensured the survival of the Spanish government with its congressional backing since the election of 1996, exemplifies the use of the Helms-Burton law in the internal politics of Spain and confirms that a political lineup is not a guaranteed boundary when Cuba is the subject.

The language in the congressional debate over the Understanding was colorful and full of expressions that were normally not present in the tame vocabulary of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. For example, he said that displeased backers of the D'Amato law (sanctioning investment in Libya and Iran) had stated that the U.S. negotiators had caved under pressure from the EU, and—using an expression that today is empty of its original connotation—"se han bajado los pantalones." [drop one's pants or to loose dignity]. He also added that U.S. Republican leader Gingrich expressed himself in similar terms.[36] Both claims have been impossible to retrace in U.S. official documents. Both D'Amato and Gingrich have since vanished from the congressional scene.

The EU-U.S. Understanding earned itsplace as an example of diplomatic negotiation. The agreement can be considered successful (regardless of the negative labels), among other reasons because it fulfilled the main objective sought by its parties: it averted a serious confrontation. In other words, the EU has refrained from initiating a process against the United States in the WTO, and Washington maintained the partial freezing of the Helms-Burton law. Many observers agreed that in effect the Understanding confirmed the death of the Helms-Burton law, although the deal by itself has not been the only cause for its virtual termination.

There are some factors that may explain the agreement and the subsequent neutering of the most damaging aspects of the Helms-Burton law. For example, the Understanding was possible mainly because Cuba is not worth a commercial war between the two major world economies. The Helms-Burton law was, in effect, stillborn with the inclusion of the clause that allowed the president of the United States to suspend Title III, its most internationally controversial ingredient. In any event, from

the point of view of the theory of negotiations, the Understanding was a model because it granted both parties a sense of success. The more time passes without conflict, the more successful the parties feel.

For the continued success of the agreement, Brussels recommended a policy plan for the European front. However, while maintaining in force all the previously approved measures, a cautious attitude (on both Cuba and U.S. policies) continued through inertia. The 1996 Council Regulation, giving legal guarantees and protections to European companies that invest in Cuba while prohibiting the acceptance of the U.S. demands, should be seen to need full implementation. The EU Common Position and Joint Action of 1996 (as described in the next chapter), imposed on Cuba as conditions for better political and aid relations, have remained, but in reality the member states did not adhere to them consistently.

Coordination of policies (especially within the EU structure) should be a priority to avoid letting U.S. and Cuban protagonists take advantage of divisions on the European side. When possible, contradictions or violations of EU mandates should be avoided, as was the case in the STET-ITT deal, by which the Italian company compensated the U.S. communication conglomerate for the use of the previously owned Cuban phone system. But this is not an easy task. It is impaired by the fragile EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the tenuous Common Position on Cuba. As we will see later, the latter is described by cynics as one that is neither "common" (unified and shared) nor a "position" (in means and ends).[37]

The Reshaping of the Embargo Legislation

The global strategy of the U.S. government toward Cuba received a new and invigorated shape with the presentation of the new report drafted in 2006 by the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba. It was the result of the work of more than one hundred officials in 17 different agencies. The document of only 90 pages claimed a budget of $80 million destined to "support civil society," "academic exchanges," "projects to break the Castro government information blockade," broadcasting operations (Radio and TV Martí), and aid to the opposition.[38] In fact, the report reiterates the proposal of the previous, more voluminous (400 pages) document of 2004, then under the sole authorship of Secretary of State Colin Powell. The new document enjoyed a sudden thrust into the media limelight when on August 1, 2006, the alarming news of the illness and temporary withdrawal of Fidel Castro was announced, an event that is the subject of Chapter 5. The initial scant statements coming from Washington focused on the report. Under the co-authorship

of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and her colleague in Commerce, Cuban-American Carlos Gutiérrez, it is simply a series of recommendations for President Bush in support of Cuba's transition to democracy. It looks like an honest offer for a future government, but while the present government is in place, this invitation is unlikely to be well received in Havana.

The sudden stardom of the document in the context of Castro's temporary trouble confirmed a subtle tactic of the White House and the Department of State to upgrade the status of this declaration of intentions to the level of law. Although the Commission was established a year earlier under cochair Mel Martinez, a Cuban-American member of the Bush cabinet, he ceased to serve when he became a U.S. senator. However, the new document still had the background inspiration of the main advocate of the most important legislation on the U.S. embargo, Cuban-American senator from New Jersey Bob Menéndez.[39] Filled with technical details, but laden with political content, the report was to be interpreted as one of the Washington fateful mistakes that led to the approval of the Helms-Burton act, universally received with irritation and lament. Accepting this fact, the result of this new development was that Helms-Burton was put in mothballs since then.

While the coordinator of the Commission, Caleb McCarry, praised the report and representatives of the Cuban exile community lauded its release,[40] the Cuban government unleashed its wrath with a new round of harsh epithets against the U.S. policy,[41] and the opposition showed new signs of split regarding the measures and scope of the new policy. The hardest criticism came from prominent members of the dissident movement, who pointed out that the content of the report for assistance would only benefit Fidel Castro.[42]

An exploration of the Web site of the U.S. Commission (www.cafc.gov) in the digital space of the State Department strangely reveals that Helms-Burton is not mentioned at all as part of the legislation on the U.S. embargo (www.cafc.gov/leg/). In contrast, it explicitly includes the Cuban Adjustment Act and the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 (better known as the Torricelli law). This absence is significant, since H-B is the codification of the historical embargo.

This neutralization would seem to be a gesture to the EU, reaffirming the understanding of 1998 to freeze the threat against investments in Cuba. But the true reason may be to hide the darker aspects of its Title II. As outlined above, in contrast with Title III, which is addressed to foreign investors daring to "traffic" with expropriated properties, Title II was designed for a future Cuban government to be dutifully certified in good transition to democracy. It demands the return of all confiscated

properties to their original owners, in a plan that is economically and socially infeasible for any government. But, as a federal law, it is still in place and guarantees the continuation of the embargo. Ironically designed as a shackle for President Clinton, whose loyalty to Cuban exile causes was dubious, it hovered over Bush's head in uncertain times. In order to supersede it with different measures and decisions on the embargo, it has to be officially and procedurally repealed.

The parallel reading of Title II and the recommendations of the report show that the direct and harsh language of H-B has been softened considerably. Title II prescribes that, in order for a new Cuban government to be in good standing to enjoy the lifting of the embargo, it must be "taking appropriate steps to return to United States citizens property taken by the Cuban Government from such citizens and entities on or after January 1, 1959, or to provide equitable compensation to such citizens and entities for such property." In the preface of the first report, Colin Powell outlined the conditions for an acceptable government: legalize all political activity, free political prisoners, call for free elections, and ban Fidel and Raúl Castro. There is not a single word on the property issue, a delicate item that reappears later inside the text. The new report included advice at the end "to reassure the Cuban people that the U.S. Government will not support any arbitrary effort to evict them from their homes." Then it warned that "action on confiscated property is best postponed until a fully legitimate democratic government is elected." In other words, it reversed the order of priority given in Title II of H-B, where the condition of restitution is placed *before* the new government is recognized as democratic and worthy of the lifting of the U.S. embargo.

However, just in case, facing the prospects of a renewed effort by the U.S. congressional sector that has been pressing to end the embargo, a further plan to recodify the recommendation enshrined in the reports of the Commission took the shape of the so-called Cuba Transition Act. Introduced by Senator John Ensign (R-NV) and co-sponsored by Senator Mel Martínez and others, it was not considered by Congress before adjournment for the August recess.[43] Senator Martínez held a press conference as soon as Castro's illness was announced in which he stated that Helms-Burton "does not speak as to a person, but speaks as to an attitude of the Cuban government." He added that once "the Cuban government begins the process of transitioning . . . the conditions are also in Helms-Burton to begin a process for us to reciprocate in kind." Close readers of Helms-Burton would detect a contradiction in this statement, because the text explicitly prohibits the presence of Fidel or Raúl Castro in any future Cuban government. Martínez further ventured that the United

States "should not feel constrained by Helms-Burton, which is now a decade-old piece of legislation . . . we could act at any moment to enact new legislation."[44]

Similar contradiction could be detected when Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Shannon reiterated in a press conference held on August 23 the offer made by President Bush to lift the embargo: "free political prisoners, respect human rights—especially those rights most important for the effective exercise of democracy— . . . permit the creation of independent organizations such as political parties, trade unions, civic associations that were dominated by the state, . . . to create a mechanism and a pathway towards elections." Having met these conditions, "we would look in consultation with our Congress for ways to lift the embargo and begin a deeper engagement with the Cuban state."[45] In other words, the United States could consider lifting the embargo without Cuba meeting one of the key conditions of Title II of Helms-Burton, that any future government in transition should not include either Fidel or Raúl Castro. However, regarding the details of the embargo, any analysis has to take into account the special measures mandated by President Bush in 2004 to limit the amount of funds Cuban exiles can send to their families and the frequency of travel to visit the country.[46] The issue would receive increased attention in the wake of the damage caused by hurricanes Gustav and Ike in September 2008.

Legal experts may comment that for a new piece of legislation to be in place, the old one does not have to be repealed. The latest would supersede the old one. But it would be odd if Helms-Burton, as a codification of the embargo, is then contradicted by fragments of new legislation dealing with specific items. In any event, and in spite of all optimistic hope, prospects of an energized life for Martínez's new bill in the fall, close to elections, were slim, in addition to the uncertainty created by the Castro crisis. The same could be said of Shannon's offer while midterm legislative elections were approaching. These moves only dramatize further that the legal maze of the embargo measures is closely linked with not only the political aims of different interests but also the economic objectives of others.

In consequence, with Title III frozen, Title IV simply a theoretical threat to deny visas, and Title II demoted (Title I is a simple introductory declaration), what has been left of the codification of the embargo? Seasoned observers and scholars had an answer: nothing. That is why it may seem that Helms-Burton has vanished from the Commission's Web site. Meanwhile, as soon as the news of Castro's illness was announced, numerous editorials and columns calling for the end of the embargo appeared in newspapers of Europe and the United States, authored not only by the

usual critics in the cradle of the Cuban exile community,[47] but by writers from a wide spectrum of ideological inclinations that even included, among other U.S. media, the *Wall Street Journal*,[48] and internationally, London's *Financial Times*.[49]

During the first days of Castro's crisis, President Bush had a golden opportunity to end the embargo and to challenge Raúl with an offer he could not refuse. However, after advising the Cuban leadership to act fast toward democracy, he warned that the United States would take note of whoever had placed obstacles on the path to a democratic transition. But the message was also dressed with moderation considering the circumstances, inviting the Cuban people to work together for a democratic change, words that were echoed by Secretary of State Rice. In addition, he later advised the Cuban exiles to put off the question of restitution of property until a fully democratic government is in place. The most explicit decisions made by the U.S. government were clear signs that Washington was priming the national interest and the security of the country, keeping the plans of the exile community on the back burner. Confirming this cautious and realistic attitude, Senator Mel Martínez had an unusual presentation for a gathering of his colleagues in the Peter Pan operation (children who came to the United States escaping from Cuba's communism in the early 1960s); he advised these representatives of the exiles to have extreme "patience" in dealing with the stalemate created by Castro's illness, to wait for a clear outcome that might take months.[50] Simultaneously, Alfredo Durán, a former president of the association of veterans of the Bay of Pigs invasion force, and a leader of the moderate centrist sector of the exile community, considered a U.S. policy of refusing to have a dialogue with Raúl Castro to be erroneous.[51]

As the first measure taken after the crisis erupted, the White House announced the confirmation of immigration policy within the legal framework and numbers (about 21,000 per year), emphasizing family ties, and stressing that illegal migration was not going to be tolerated.[52] As a collateral message and a threat directed to Venezuela's Chávez, the plan included an expansion of asylum spots reserved for Cuban doctors working as volunteers in Latin America. Several sectors of the exile community did not receive this news well, labeling the new reformatted strategy as opportunist and an offering of an escape valve to Raúl Castro.[53] In addition, confidential reports indicated that military plans were in place to use the sheer force of the U.S. Navy to stop a remake of the Mariel boatlift or the 1994 boat migration, while ground forces would occupy some keys off the Cuban mainland to convert them into transitory detention centers.

Conclusion

Taking into account the international reactions against Helms-Burton and the political benefits harvested by the Cuban regime in showing itself to be the victim of a systematic codification of the conditions of the embargo, on balance this resurrection of the Monroe Doctrine and the Platt Amendment was clearly negative. The good disposition of the U.S. government in reaching a compromise with its trading partners regarding the neutering of Title III, in contrast with the rigidity in maintaining Title II regarding the nature of a future Cuban regime, outlines more clearly the historical and ideological forces that have shaped the development of the U.S. embargo. In essence, Washington accomplished both: maintaining good relations with Europe and not alienating its constituency in South Florida. Cuba's reactions to these arrangements were clearly secondary for the U.S. government.

The EU-U.S. Understanding is an example of successful diplomatic negotiation because among other reasons it fulfilled the main objective sought by its parties: it averted a serious confrontation. The EU refrained from initiating a process against the United States in the WTO, and the United States continued the partial freezing of the Helms-Burton law. Many observers agree that in effect the Understanding confirmed the death of the Helms-Burton law, although by itself the deal has not been the only cause for its virtual termination.

As detailed above in this chapter, the EU institutions confirmed that a certain degree of coordination of efforts will result in an effective success in dealing with difficult challenges. This policy is not always easy because actions are impaired by the weakness of the infant Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). In essence, the happy ending compromise between the EU and the United States was made possibly because both actors in the potential confrontation saw they were going to loose in an issue that was minor for their global interests. Cuba was not worth the trouble. At the end all parties had the feeling that were winners.

CHAPTER 3

BRUSSELS AND HAVANA
PERSUASION, FRUSTRATION, RESIGNATION

> The European Union considers that full cooperation with Cuba will depend upon improvements in human rights and political freedom.
> European Council Common Position, 1996

> Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn.
> Rhett Butler, in *Gone with the Wind*, 1939

> Well, nobody's perfect.
> Adaptation of U.S. popular saying quoted in Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot*, to illustrate the European attitude toward Cuba

> Too big of a nuisance for so little money.
> Fidel Castro, comment on the development assistance offered by the EU

AN ASYMMETRIC RELATIONSHIP

The recognition of Cuba in the institutional framework of the European Union (EU) has been a recent phenomenon because of several complementary reasons. First, the initial membership and the original aims of the EU since the 1950s have to be taken into account. In its early years, the European Community concentrated its efforts in the development of its common commercial policy. In contrast, the European Political Cooperation (EPC), the predecessor of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), was very modest in its reach. The fact that an approach to Cuba had a political connotation, because of the confrontation between

Havana and Washington, made it advisable for the leadership of the EU to be prudent. Second, from the historical point of view, Latin America was not even mentioned in the Schuman Declaration that propelled the formation of the original European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC); it referred only to Africa as an additional beneficiary of the aims and purposes of European integration. This apparent discrimination was due to the overwhelming role played by France, the only European Community power that at the time had colonies, with the exception of Belgium's colonial control over the Congo. The EU did not consider the Caribbean a secondary geographic priority until the UK joined the European Community.

The Latin American region at last received the full attention of Brussels when in 1986 Portugal and, most significantly, Spain became members. Nonetheless, this change was implemented slowly and had to wait for better circumstances derived from the end of the Cold War and the elimination of the COMECON bloc of which Cuba had been a member. Finally, in 1988, after long negotiations the Community and Cuba established full relations with the exchange of diplomatic representations, although the European office was accredited to Havana through Venezuela and later through Mexico and Santo Domingo (as of March 2005) at nonresident ambassadorial level. When the disappearance of the Soviet bloc forced Cuba to find its own political and economic linkage, Europe became the preferred solution.[1]

The official European attitude toward Cuba and its problems with the United States is well illustrated by two complementary documents issued by the European Union. On the one hand, as shown in Chapter 2, the EU stated that "the U.S. has enacted laws that purport to regulate activities of persons under the jurisdiction of the member states of the European Union; this extra-territorial application violates international law and has adverse effects on the interest of the European Union."[2] And on the other hand, it sent a message to Cuba: to receive favorable treatment through a cooperation agreement, Cuba had to show progress in adopting the democratic process.[3]

In sum, the EU has been conditioning the establishment of a close program of development aid for Cuba on the reform of certain political and juridical fields and the respect of human rights. This critical attitude has been reinforced in recent years by the actions of some of the new member states that were previously under Soviet control. In each one of these reforms some smember states have distinguished themselves as leaders in different approaches. However, individual moves and policies have not noticeably changed the overall picture of maintaining standard

diplomatic relations with Cuba. In some cases, European states have built a close trade and investment relationship that has consistently irritated the U.S. government.

European and U.S. policies coincide in wishing Cuba to become democratic. Europe has been mirroring Spain's tactic, as described earlier, of a combination of incentives, persuasion, pressure, and conditional aid. The United States has consistently maintained the embargo imposed in the early 1960s with the triple negative results of reinforcing the intransigence of the Cuban regime, justifying its own shortcomings, and clashing with European commercial and investment interests. This general picture does not mean that the relationship between Cuba and Europe has been excellent and free from problems, even in comparison with the U.S. relationship. Brussels and some of the European governments, as illustrated by the sometimes stormy Spanish experience, have had their own load of conflict and lack of communication with the Cuban government.

The Failure of the Cooperation Agreement

The initial abrupt ending of negotiations for the cooperation aid agreement revealed the preceding arduous and difficult path that was doomed to failure. Following the recommendation of the European Commission made on June 28, 1995, a delegation of the Troika (France, Spain, and Italy, and the representatives of the EU Commission) traveled to Havana on November 6–10, 1995, for exploratory conversations. The European Council summit held in Madrid on December 15, 1995 (then under the Spanish presidency), gave the Commission the duty of presenting a draft of a cooperation agreement with Cuba, to be ready during the following semester. To this end, Manuel Marín, the senior Spanish commissioner and a vice president of the European Commission, visited Havana on February 8–10, 1996, when he met with Fidel Castro and other Cuban leaders. The discussions were tortuous and the offer of cooperation in exchange for reform was not to the liking of Castro, who suspected that Brussels was in alliance with Washington. Wishing to send a blunt message to the EU, while Marín was leaving Havana with no results in hand the Cuban government arrested additional leading dissidents, confirming a rejection of the call to reform human rights policies. Moreover, to make matters even worse, just a few days later, on February 23, Cuban Air Force MiGs shattered all plans by shooting down two Brothers to the Rescue planes.

While protesting the approval of the Helms-Burton legislation, the European institutions condemned the violent act against the unarmed planes. The incident received a double answer. First, the U.S. government

reinforced the embargo with presidential approval of Helms-Burton. Second, the EU slammed the brakes on the cooperation agreement, in view of Castro's lack of interest. In any event, the possibilities of an EU-Cuba agreement based on the conditions set by Brussels were already slim, considering just the fragile internal political circumstances at the time. Reform of the Cuban penal code and recognition of the internal opposition were the basic requirements for the cooperation package. This was a serious obstacle to Cuban approval.[4] Castro considered it a humiliation and in turn elected (as usual) to take advantage of the situation, claiming to be the target of harassment and international conspiracy.

This lack of understanding between the EU and Cuba has been the subject of deep debate and contrasting views. According to one line of interpretation Havana's disdain was the straw that broke the camel's back for the EU. Manuel Marín, a seasoned EU leader, stated that he tried until the last minute and finally (in the words of insiders) "threw in the towel." Another interpretation (considered by EU insiders as minoritarian) is that Marín, in reality, had set the bar too high on purpose.[5] Knowing that the Cuban leader would become increasingly reluctant and would show even more resistance to change, the European conditions were placed at a higher level. What actually happened was that the European Commission overestimated the role the EU could play in dealing with Castro and at the same time underestimated the significance of the U.S.-Cuba dispute. The EU leadership also misinterpreted Fidel Castro's capacity to stay fully independent of the U.S. and EU pressure. In strategic terms, the pact failed because it was interpreted as an offer made by Europe in a coalition with the United States, something that Castro was not ready to allow.[6] From a Cuban perspective, a plausible interpretation is that the EU plan was considered to aim at "regime change," although it was supposed to be a more subtle and softer road than the one sought by the United States. But in any event, it meant to change the political regime with the policy of "transparency" set in motion by the Soviet government. But Castro was not ready to run the risk of ending as Gorbachev. Moreover, the imminent change of government in Madrid, as a result of the March 1996 elections, coincided with the change of leadership in Paris, in both cases from a Socialist government to a conservative one.

Although the meeting of the minds between Brussels and Washington at that time was impressive, and frequent consultations between U.S.-Cuba policy protagonists and Spanish, Italian, and French counterparts were carefully undertaken, a pact between Europe and the United States on Cuba was not explicitly and publicly known. However, the Cuban government suspected that some sort of cooperation was in the works. Finally, on a personal level, the bold move failed because of a lack of calculation

on the part of Manuel Marín, contrary to the usually impressive, skillful tactics of the expert vice president of the European Commission. In any event, it is hard to believe that the attempt to win an agreement with Castro was executed without close consultation with the rest of the Commission and influential sectors in Spain, especially in his own political party, the PSOE, then still led by Felipe González. Propelled by a high degree of good intentions and a sense of historic opportunity, Marín was convinced that he could obtain what others had not. At the end he felt that he was taken in by Castro's apparent willingness to negotiate. This experience left a traumatic, indelible mark in the mind of Manuel Marín, who decided to maintain a distance from direct negotiations with Cuba.[7]

Slapping Cuba: The "Common Position"

The deterioration of the situation caused by the Brothers to the Rescue event, coupled with the election of José María Aznar in Spain, led to the decision of Spain to present the initial proposal of the Common Position on November 14. The text was scrutinized by the Political Committee of the EU Council on November 25. Some members considered the wording too close to the U.S. thesis and demands. While the UK sided with Spain, most of the influential members (Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, and the Netherlands) asked for changes. Several other measures were rejected, among them the project to name one representative in each embassy in Havana to contact dissidents, cooperation with the UN Rapporteur for Cuba, and the demand that all Cubans be allowed to travel.[8] The final document included some fundamental items.[9]

First, the EU Council stated that it was encouraging Cuba's peaceful transition to a pluralist democracy. The EU insisted that this evolution should come from the initiative of the Cuban government, not by coercion from outside. Second, the EU clarified that if Cuba wished to receive favorable treatment through a development cooperation agreement, it had to show progress in the democratic process. This progress was to be recorded in the Commission's periodic semester reports to the Council. The reports should include compliance with the respect for human rights, the release of political prisoners, a reform of the criminal code, and the end of the harassment of dissidents. Third, the EU wanted to maintain dialogue not only with the Cuban government but with all sectors of Cuban society. Fourth, the EU recognized the progress already made in economic reforms and would be willing to offer economic cooperation through the member states. And finally, humanitarian aid would continue to be delivered through appropriate NGOs.[10]

In this format, the Common Position would have a place in the annals of the EU's incipient foreign policy.[11] The spirit and the letter of the Common Position were maintained (even when the 2003 measures were lifted in 2008), with the expected protests of the Cuban government. Havana claimed that the Common Position was intimately connected to a bundle of interrelated details. First, there was the May 25, 1996, visit by U.S. vice president Al Gore to Madrid, during which the Aznar government made a point of forming an alliance to forge a common policy on Cuba. Second, Spain announced the termination of its humanitarian aid to Cuba. Third, Cuba denounced the alleged links between Aznar and the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), in addition to the establishment of the Hispano-Cuban Foundation (under the inspiration of the CANF) in Madrid.[12] In any event, the EU's conditions loomed for some time in the background of the negotiations for Cuba's membership in the Lomé Convention, resulting in the Cuban government abandoning the negotiations in April 2000. According to most observers (EU institutions, ACP structure, individual governments[13]), Havana's view was that the high political price to be paid (political requirements, especially in the human rights area) was not worth the economic benefits to be gained by an uncertain cooperation aid program.

Understandably, all these requirements were not well received by the Cuban regime. Havana claimed that the conditions imposed by the EU contrasted with the lack of similar impositions in other cases, such as Morocco, Israel, and Guatemala. In reality, the Human Rights clause is intrinsic to all the cooperation agreements with those and other countries. This is an argument that Cuba has been skillfully exploiting. Havana also pointed out that the EU was "implementing a customs union agreement with Turkey and signed four cooperation agreements with China, both accused of human rights violations."[14] In reality, the EU has no clause on Human Rights with China, but it has a structured Human Rights dialogue. The Cuban government has been claiming since then that this example of double standards was a gesture to the United States. However, the EU has consistently required in this type of cooperation agreement in the Western Hemisphere the precondition of the existence of a formal system of liberal democracy and then the addition of the democratic clause, accepted by all the signatories, by which, if a government falls under autocratic rule, the benefits accorded under the agreement are terminated. All this aptly explains why, in revenge for the public humiliation of being subject to conditions, the Cuban government insisted that the political conduct of the regime would not be subordinated to the terms of the EU report. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, Spain became the object of retaliation when Cuba withdrew the *placet* for its new ambassador, unleashing

one of the most serious diplomatic crises between the two countries just months before the commemoration of the 1898 war of independence. Also understandably, the Common Position was very much appreciated by the State Department.[15] As promised, as a reward for the European gesture, a more concrete and positive U.S. response was forthcoming from the White House.

In spite of all the friction, and in compliance with the terms of the Common Position, the EU has kept a door open and has maintained its humanitarian aid to Cuba through programs administered by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO). From 1993 to 2000 the EU granted over $100 million in humanitarian aid to cover damage by storms and flooding, and for diverse medical programs. Funds were channeled through European NGOs benefiting Cuban government entities, notably the Ministry of Health. As an added sign of willingness to cooperate, Cuba welcomed the euro, the European common currency, to be mandated in different operations on the island as announced by the president of Cuba's Central Bank, Francisco Soberón.[16] Cuban authorities declared themselves in favor of the new European money "because it threatens to reduce the power of the dollar, and that is good for the world and it is good for Cuba."[17] Among the financial reasons were listed the end of the dependency on the monetary system of one country, and the fact that more than 50 percent of Cuba's tourism is of European origin and 44 percent of Cuba's trade is with the European Union.

In sum, both parties seemed to maintain a minimum of willingness to cooperate. The European Union, for its part, insisted on trying to contribute to the transition of Cuba by offering a reasonable and natural anchor in its proper context, the Caribbean. Rejected by Havana and suspected in Washington, Brussels always seems to have sighed with the popular U.S. expression: "don't blame me for trying."

Although partial dependence on EU subsidies and favors would never represent the long-range solution that Cuba needs, the logic of the Cuban inclusion in the special geographical setting of the overall African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) group is perfectly valid for immediate implementation once the transition machinery is set in motion. This Caribbean anchor would soften the exhaustive dependence on the U.S. that led to the confrontation of the 1950s. At the same time, it would respect cultural, racial, demographic, and political peculiarities.

But, as we will see later, it is extremely significant that the Castro government, unwilling to accept conditions, has stubbornly resisted a scheme for it to benefit from the Cotonou Agreement. At the end of the day, the conditions are "a nuisance for little money." At the same time, Washington has been skeptical of the EU offer, perceiving it as a violation

of the remains of the Monroe Doctrine. Europeans are considered a nuisance in the United States' natural backyard.

Cuba may be 90 miles from Key West, and it might be closer to Miami when political transition sets in, but this dependency would be better confronted with an implacable reality of a Cuba exhausted, without viable infrastructure, but well anchored in its natural Caribbean and Latin American setting. Then Cuba will have its most precious asset—its people. Cuban citizens are comparatively for Latin standards well educated. They are used to surviving hardship. And they are eager to find solutions in their own environment.

Europe may face this moment with its own resources under pressure, dealing with the cost of enlargement, the prospects of Turkey's membership, and urgent needs in the immediate neighborhood. But the United States will also be facing daunting challenges in the rest of the world. Cuba will then have to tackle its own problems, and the most natural manner will be in its Caribbean and Latin American context. It is for this reason that the EU has insisted on its "constructive engagement" policy toward Cuba, encouraging it to start the needed preparation for a successful transition. Facing this unquestionable argument, Castro has been resisting the EU offer—he has simply resisted the implacable future of Cuba in the Caribbean. Meanwhile, a specific national profile of the cooperation aim and actions needs to be examined.

Through the Back Door of the ACP

No matter how we see the apparently close relationship between Cuba and the European countries, the stark reality is that Cuba remained the only Latin American country that did not enjoy a bilateral cooperation agreement with the EU. Searches through the official EU Web pages could generate a sense of confusion and frustration because Cuba does not have a place like any other Latin American country in the External Relations structure of the Commission. Until very recently Cuba did not occupy a specific place in the framework of the Directorate General of Development (formerly DG VIII).[18] With the derailment in the year 2000 of the process toward the signing of the post-Lomé agreements, EU officers dealing with the Cuba dossier used to joke that they were commissioned to take care of the ACP . . . and Cuba. With no solid documents on Cuba, while all the files were frozen in the Directorate General of External Relations (formerly DG Ib), and the EU Commission Delegation in Mexico was in theory accredited to Havana to cover Cuba. Since 2000 relations with Cuba have been managed through DG Development.

This anomaly was further complicated when Cuba became a member of the ACP countries in December 2000 without being a signatory of the Cotonou Agreement, successor of Lomé. Nonetheless, Europe as a whole has been Cuba's most important trade and investment source, replacing the Soviet Union as Havana's main commercial partner. With the vanishing of the Soviet bloc, Europe has been able to afford to accept Cuban exceptionalism and has developed what can be labeled "conditioned constructive compromise" based more on the carrot than the stick. But Brussels has never used its potential economic leverage to pressure Cuba on a political level. The peculiar political structure of the EU has helped reinforce this weakness. European persuasion has been reduced to the spirit and the content of the Common Position of 1996, which in turn owes its development to the aftermath of the confrontation over the Helms-Burton law.[19] The Common Position, renewed every six months, is a conditional requirement for a bilateral agreement between the EU and Cuba, a clause that has been explicitly rejected by Havana.[20] It calls for a pacific transition to a pluralist democracy, preferably led from the top, with the benefit of development aid being channeled through European and Cuban NGOs.

The Common Position (CP) does not restrict trade, but Spain and other member states of the EU approved development cooperation projects in Cuba outside the narrow margins of the CP. That led observers to note that this Common Position is void in view of the volume of bilateral relations with the majority of the most important European countries. Conservative governments point out that the CP has been basically violated by Cuba's most important partner, Spain, in terms of both trade and aid, under both socialist and conservative governments. Only the Nordic countries seemed to respect the terms of the Position. The result of this mixed message is that Cuba sometimes does not take seriously the tough attitude emanating from the EU common institutions.

A rough picture of the attitudes toward Cuba of the different member states (before the 2004 enlargement) has shown a southern bloc composed of Spain, Portugal, Italy, and France acting as main political and economic allies. In contrast Germany, the UK, and Sweden seem to distance themselves in the political dimension. Less influential in world affairs, Austria, Belgium, and Finland do not have much at stake in the Caribbean and Latin America. A group of "blockers" (Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK) seem to slow down the process of the post-Lomé arrangement, while "openers" (France, Portugal, Spain, and Italy) favor a positive approach. Austria, Belgium, and Germany remain ready to serve as "mediators."[21] However, this lineup has been modified since 2000, with roles changing according to the circumstances of the moment.

It is also a fact that institutional relations have been difficult for two kinds of reasons. First are uncomfortable personal linkages and references, not by chance implicating Spanish officials. When a deal seemed to be close, Commissioner Manuel Marín's insistence on the human rights issues became an insurmountable obstacle.[22] The cloudy atmosphere has worsened since the new Commission was established; the new High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, was insulted by the Cuban leadership, and there appeared to be friction between the EU officers and Cuban ministers during the Lomé negotiations. The second kind of difficulties seemed to derive from external crises. One was the shooting down of the Brothers to the Rescue planes; another was the Elián González crisis.

In any event, a post-Lomé deal was on a sure path, initiated in Brussels in September 1998 and culminating in the signing of the new agreement on June 23, 2000, in Cotonou.[23] Havana was dealing now not with one office in Brussels but with a multilateral group of 77 countries. In essence, the switch of Cuba's position in the EU structure from the Latin American context to the post-Lomé cooperation framework was dictated by a political decision to send a message to Cuba that inclusion in the Cotonou setting was the best option and that the political dimensions were downsized. However, Castro rejected the procedure, claiming the resolution issued by the Commission on Human Rights was one-sided, and suspended the scheduled visit of the Troika.[24] Ironically, the climate for Cuban membership in Lomé was positive, shifting toward a normalization of the EU-Cuba relationship, this time anchored in the ACP multilateral context.[25] Only a few European governments seemed to oppose, led by the UK, the Netherlands, and Sweden. According to insiders, the UK apparently threatened to veto the arrangement once it came to the Council. Cuba then branded the EU conditions "arrogant," "unacceptable," and dependent on the "U.S. policy."[26]

Supporters of Cuba's membership and most neutral observers considered the Cuban reaction unexpected and violent. In fact, the decision was a slap in the face of ACP members that advocated Cuba's membership. ACP diplomats in Brussels confessed on the record to being surprised, although off the record, seasoned ambassadors had suspected the outcome and were not caught off guard.[27] EU Commission officers expressed tongue-in-cheek satisfaction for what they feared was the result of hard work by their part with high expectations. Evidence shows that the decision was made after a complete internal debate on the cost and benefits. The Cuban government figured that the economic benefits were not an adequate compensation for the loss of political independence and involvement in a multilateral dialogue of unforeseeable consequences when

dealing with democracy and human rights. In a gathering of high government officials of the Caribbean and Central America, off the record, Castro called the deal "demasiado fastidio para tan poca plata" (too big of a nuisance for so little money).[28] This euphemistic expression, an apparently innocent incident, became an omen of a more serious incident to come, confirming the worst suspicions about the priorities of the Cuban regime regarding the European linkages.

In the sequel to this minidrama, some months later on December 14, 2000, and to the surprise of many observers, Cuba became the 78th member of the ACP group. The novelty of the event is that Cuba joined the ACP without signing the Cotonou Agreement. To the confusion of experts and casual observers, this anomaly led some to believe that Cuba had in fact obtained the same benefits. The charter of this organization (in essence an informal international organization, not comparable to the African Union or CARICOM) had to be amended to provide for a new member that will not use the only service of the organization: the trade and cooperation benefits from EU member states. Cuba's membership in the ACP is like belonging to an exclusive golf club without being able to play golf, only watching others play and walking around the facilities.[29] Seasoned observers may point out that this is another example of an EU compromise to accommodate difficult circumstances and give the impression to the three parties (the EU member states, the ACP countries, and Cuba) that they have won something in preparation for Cuba becoming a full member someday. Unguarded critics of this overall picture may claim that this reveals only a certain degree of absurdity with no substantial results. However, this odd solution merely shows that the ACP is a group of sovereign states that endorsed Cuba's membership. Although some member states expressed reluctance, the EU accepted the ACP's wishes and pointed out the need to follow the Cotonou procedure. The result is the current split solution.

While Brussels had believed that Cuba was still interested in joining Cotonou, according to signals received from Havana the Cuban government would not take the initiative in submitting an official request for admission without having received a prior "green light" from the Council that the EU supported such an application. The EU acknowledged that if Cuba were to submit a formal request for membership, such a request could be assessed only on the basis of the relevant article of the Cotonou Agreement (Article 94). Cuba-specific conditions may not be applied when the EU at large or any particular member state has to decide on a request made by Havana. Cuba, if accepted by the EU-ACP Council of Ministers as a new member, would however not be able to enjoy the financial benefits under the Agreement since Article 94 also mandates

that its accession "would not infringe on the benefits enjoyed by the ACP States signatory to this Agreement under the provisions on development co-operation." Since the allocations for the 77 ACP Cotonou members had already been distributed on an indicative basis, Cuba could not receive funds from the 9th EDF. However, if the EU were to accept Cuba as a new Cotonou member and agree to set up a separate Cuba-specific budget line, possibly along the lines already decided for South Africa, Cuba would be able to enjoy development assistance under the Agreement.

The decision on whether Cuba would enjoy any financial or commercial benefits under Cotonou, for example, preferential trade arrangements or economic partnership agreements, is a separate process and can be dealt with only once Cuba's request for membership has been endorsed by the Council of Ministers. Only then would Cuba, like any other Cotonou member, have to meet the full Cotonou *acquis*, in particular Article 9 (democracy, human rights, rule of law). EU officials point out that failure to meet Article 9 would immediately trigger the procedure foreseen under Article 96 (launching of consultations to suspend financial assistance or commercial benefits as long as the EU is convinced that Article 9 is violated). As mentioned above, it is therefore important to underline that as far as the Cotonou Agreement is concerned, one has to distinguish between an eventual accession to Cotonou and the granting of financial and/or commercial benefits under the Agreement. The latter can be discussed and decided only once a State has actually become a member.

Chronic Symptoms

In spite of the obstacles encountered, the EU has continued the policy of persuading Cuba toward a political reform. As the preceding pages have demonstrated, Brussels also maintained a limited profile of diplomatic normalcy with Havana, stressing that the door of opportunity regarding the ACP deal has remained open. In any event, European actions will always be cautious about a potential novel U.S. response and the subsequent, highly expected, Cuban reactions.

As a sample of the obvious contradiction between bilateral engagement and supranational conditioning, the EU has demonstrated impressive coherence on two fronts in the context of the United Nations. The EU bloc has opposed the embargo and Helms-Burton. This is a sign of the slow but steady buildup of an incipient EU common foreign policy. Europe can muster much greater solidarity than Latin America. Moreover, in the annual conference of the Commission on Human Rights, Europe has been highly unified. In contrast, the Latin American countries seem

to go their separate ways; although there was an improvement in the 2002 vote, the split reappeared in 2003, further confused in part by the opposition of most Latin American governments to the war in Iraq. Since 1996, the year of the approval of Helms-Burton and the subsequent passage of the Common Position on Cuba, the European states have maintained a solid, coordinated attitude on both items. Not only have the EU members voted in unison, but they tried to do so in conjunction with the candidate countries that expected to join the Union in 2004. This is in compliance with the rule of coherence in foreign policy, although this requirement is actually not legally binding, with the result of certain exceptions. In any event, it would be a bad sign if candidates for initiation had voted differently in international settings than the EU member states. In contrast, Latin American governments seem to have at least three fronts regarding Cuba. Some vote for, some abstain, and some others oppose, according to circumstances or changes in the executives.

The exception made for this line of conditioned assistance was based on the seriousness of Hurricane Michelle's destruction, estimated at $1.8 billion and considered the worst natural calamity in Cuba in 50 years; it justified the use of €0.5 million earmarked to provide medical and other emergency supplies for affected persons. As far as disaster prevention is concerned, the Commission, in December 2001, approved funding for Cuba in the amount of €0.92 million in the context of a regional program for the Caribbean.

The EU Commission and other EU entities have been aware of the seriousness of the Cuban economic situation. In addition to the damage caused by natural disasters, the Cuban government saw a severe drop in fiscal revenues and foreign exchange following the September 11 attack. Tourism decreased by 13 percent and 20 percent in September and October 2001 respectively. U.S. remittances were reduced by 60 percent. On top of that, Russia's decision to close its Cuban "spy station" represented an annual loss of some $200 million. In this dark setting, Cuba must look to its natural geographical habitat. In consequence, the EU Commission has clearly favored promoting the regional integration of Cuba in the Caribbean, Latin American, and ACP context. In this connection the opportunities provided by the follow-up to the first EU–Latin America–Caribbean Summit held in Rio in 1999 in terms of support measures and partnerships were to be fully exploited. The Commission has also been willing to facilitate Cuba's participation in regional measures under the auspices of CARIFORUM (of which Cuba has been a member since October 2001) through relevant budget lines. For example, a financial proposal set under the 2002 budget foresaw Cuba's participation in a regional Caribbean project to fight swine fever.

A more complex pending issue was presented by the impasse regarding the application for the Cotonou Agreement. Following the 9th Evaluation of the Common Position, the Council concluded on June 25, 2001, that the EU would welcome a constructive dialogue with Cuba on a future cooperation framework based on respect for democratic principles, human rights, and the rule of law. This conclusion was reiterated by the Council in its 10th Evaluation of the Common Position issued on December 10, 2001. It was doubly ratified in June and December of 2002, with the 11th and 12th evaluations.[30] The Council deliberately chose this formulation as an implicit reference to Cotonou, since the same text is contained in Article 9 of the Agreement. Cuba has so far not submitted a request for membership, even though Castro announced his intention to do so on December 12, 2002.

The commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of the Cuban Republic, on May 20, 2002, provided an opportunity to review not only the survival of the Cuban regime but the whole history of the Cuban nation.[31] A Cuban soul-searching was the method for obtaining some explanations, beyond incidental and periodic trends, for the extraordinary change the country made with the Castro Revolution. Talks of reconciliation advocated by liberal sectors of the exile community as a need for a peaceful transition were a new development.[32] However, the new events seemed to repeat known patterns.

For example, this centennial event coincided with the historic visit of former president Jimmy Carter to Havana.[33] Years earlier, from 1976 to 1980, he had presided over a period of rapprochement between the two countries, resulting in the opening of interest sections in both capitals as unofficial embassies and ending a complete shutdown of diplomatic relations since 1960. Regrettably, this sort of truce was terminated when Cuba embarked on a policy of intervention in the liberation wars in Africa. In any event, the United States did not send any positive signals about ending the embargo on Cuba, as expressed years later in 2002 by President George W. Bush in an unprecedented speech in Washington and a trip to Miami.[34] At the same time, there has since been increased friction between Cuba and some influential Latin American countries, such as the special case of Mexico. The tension generated in the aftermath of the vote taken in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva in April 2002 revealed a definite crack in the comfortable linkage Castro enjoyed with most of the hemisphere (with the notable exception of the United States).

On October 23, 2002, the European Parliament (EP) awarded the Sakharov Prize to Cuban dissident Oswaldo Payá for his record in the defense of human rights, and especially for his leadership in the Varela

project, a plan to hold a referendum on the democratization of Cuba. With this move the European Union's relations with Cuba acquired a new profile. And at the same time confirmed a long pattern of the EU's perception and policy toward Cuba.[35] Cuba's decision to allow Payá to travel to Strasbourg to receive the award coincided with the EU's announcement of the opening of a Delegation in Cuba,[36] while Castro surprisingly declared that Cuba would reapply to become a member of the ACP Cotonou Agreement, reversing the 2000 decision to withdraw following the initial application in 1998. The prospects of another temporary European-Cuban honeymoon were rosier than ever before. Castro seemed to express a certain relief, having survived the worst years of the long "special period." The EU was again paying positive attention to Cuba.

The confrontation of 2003 over the arrest of dissidents was very symbolic and representative of the oscillation in the general relationship between the European Union and Cuba—for a decade that extended from 1995 to 2005 (coinciding with the administration of Prime Minister José María Aznar in Spain, from 1996 to 2004), Brussels and Havana had a roller-coaster relationship. Periods with positive upward acceleration were followed by sinking into an uncertain dimension. At times, Cuba took the initiative, most frequently in a negative approach to the EU's actions. Castro loved to equate the offers or conditions from Brussels to the demands imposed by the United States. On other occasions, the EU expressed dissatisfaction and despair with Cuba's behavior. Both parties, though, always tended to reach a fragile but practical compromise.

As will be explained in detail later in the book, in 1996, as a result of the shooting down of the Brothers to the Rescue planes over the international waters off Cuba and the subsequent discontinuation of the plans of the European Commission to offer a development cooperation deal to Castro, the EU approved a Common Position as a sort of sanction. Brussels had left a door open for Cuba to receive the benefits enjoyed by the ACP group. But the serious incidents of 2003 sent the negotiations back to square one with the imposition of restrictive measures interpreted by Havana as unacceptable sanctions and meddling in internal affairs. In 2004, with the change of government in Spain, the EU prepared to lift the measures, although temporarily, as a new sign of its willingness to give the relationship one more try. Let's observe that the key events of 2003 (actions and reactions) were going to remain the centerpiece of the overall relationship between Cuba and the European Union. Nothing has been left out of this oscillation in attempts to reach a mutually beneficial deal (to replicate the one that is the norm between most of the member states of the EU and Cuba). Attempts to reach a compromise have typically been followed by rejection and wrath; irritation has been

followed by hope; punitive measures have been replaced by promises of rewards. The EU-Cuba relation has been unique and special. Perhaps all this can be traced back to the lateness of the official relationship between the EU, as a collective entity, and Cuba, a link not to be confused with the individual, bilateral deals of each of the member states with Havana.

On the Roller Coaster

The year 2002 ended with two important developments in EU-Cuba relations. On the one hand, on December 8 Fidel Castro surprisingly announced that Cuba would reapply for accession to the Cotonou Agreement.[37] On the other, the European Commission made official the opening of a full Delegation in Havana. Inaugurated by EU commissioner Poul Nielson, it was entrusted to an experienced staff led by former Cuba desk chief in Brussels, Sven Kühn von Burgsdorff, with direct knowledge of Cuba, in the expectation of positive, substantial developments.[38] The background to these twin details is a combination of interlaced developments involving more than the two fundamental actors.

As outlined above, after a six-year period of frosty relations caused by the Common Position of 1996, the Belgian presidency led the first modest Troika approach in December 2001. However, the Spanish presidency during the first semester of 2002 did not take any initiative to further the dialogue with Havana (in spite of a wide consensus recommending consultations). The Danish presidency during the second part of 2002 decided to insert the dialogue with Cuba into a wider EU–Latin America setting. Several member states expressed renewed interest in furthering bilateral commercial relations. A majority in both the Council and the European Parliament considered the Common Position a limiting factor that conditioned political, economic, and development cooperation on progress in respecting civil and political rights in Cuba.

As a first move from the ACP Group, a request was made on September 26, 2002, to grant Cuba the status of an observer for the Economic Partnership Agreement negotiation process. Although the member states were divided, a clear majority were in favor of the request advocating Cuba's regional political and economic integration. On November 4, 2002, the EU Troika met with Cuba in Copenhagen, with the Commission represented by Poul Nielson. Both parties were frank but not aggressive in their positions. Disagreement continued on the EU Common Position and cooperation in the area of human rights, while Cuba committed to pursue reforms to establish a more market-oriented economy. Cuba then hinted at probable candidature for membership in the Cotonou Agreement, a thought that was strongly encouraged by the Commission. Cuba

then agreed to the Commission proposal to set up an EU-Cuba task force to identify solutions in the field of investment and trade. As a result of sensitive negotiations, a potential compromise solution, suggested by the Commission and supported by the member states, was contemplated. Cuba would be given an "informal" observer status during the "all-ACP" phase of the Economic Partnership negotiations.

Following the 12th Evaluation of the EU Common Position, all member states, for the first time, were willing to reconsider the instruments available, with a view to making them more effective in pursuing the objectives of the Common Position. Following a Commission proposal, the Council adopted on December 10, 2002, the Conclusions that reconfirmed the Common Position. However, they introduced two important modifications: On the one hand, there were no limitations for development cooperation measures anymore as long as they contributed to the objectives of the Common Position (respect of human rights and democracy, improvement of living standards of the Cuban population, and promotion of sustainable economic growth). On the other hand, they extended the term for periodic reviews of the Common Position from 6 to 12 months, with the intention of giving both parties a longer term for pursuing a political dialogue.[39]

Almost simultaneously, on December 8 Castro met in Havana with all CARICOM heads of government. It was the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the opening of diplomatic relations between Cuba and four Caribbean states in frontal challenge of the U.S. embargo. Castro used the occasion to announce that Cuba intended to join the Cotonou Agreement. However, there were then two fundamental questions: How would the EU react to this? What were the Cuban expectations and real intentions?

Cuba understandably wanted to receive an answer *before* it submitted its application. The problem was that the EU does not reveal its decisions a priori. It must be understood that it is not EU policy to take an official position on a matter such as the admission of a new member to Cotonou (or any other agreement for that matter) unless the interested third party has formally introduced a membership request. The EU would therefore not be in a position to make a pronouncement on Cuba's eventual membership in Cotonou before being in possession of the Cuban request. In consequence, if Cuba were to approach the ACP-EU Council of Ministers with a new request for accession to Cotonou, the competent EU institutional bodies would have to assess the matter on the basis of the relevant part of the Cotonou Agreement (Article 94) as with any other third-party request.

However, Cuba, if accepted by the ACP-EU Council of Ministers as a new member and subject to the conclusion of the ratification process in

the member states, would not automatically be in a position to enjoy the financial benefits under the Agreement.

It is equally important to recall in this connection that Cuba, once a member, would have to meet the essential elements of the Cotonou *acquis* (as in the case of EU membership) in order to enjoy the eventual financial and commercial benefits deriving from the Agreement. In the course of 2002 the EU Commission conducted in-depth briefings with the Cuban authorities in Brussels and Havana to convince the Cuban government of the feasibility of the eventual accession to the Cotonou Agreement.

An intriguing subject related to this complex membership procedure was the attitude of some individual member states. It is a fact, never confirmed in public, that some EU member states continued to object to accession to Cotonou at that stage because, in their judgment, Cuba had not made progress in human rights improvements. EU officials were careful to differentiate among some issues. They pointed out that Article 94 sets out the formal requirements for membership in Cotonou. Any "independent State whose structural characteristics and economic and social situation are comparable to those in the ACP States" is eligible. It is interesting to note that no other conditions are mentioned. If Cuba submits a request for accession, this request will be assessed on no other grounds than the ones contained in the Cotonou Agreement.

However, the question if and to what extent Cuba met the democracy and human rights criteria, as defined in Article 9, would be discussed only once Cuba became a member of the Agreement. The award of financial and commercial benefits under the Agreement is subject to fully respecting the stipulations of Article 9. This, however, is not an issue while Cuba is not a Cotonou member state. It has to be understood that while the Common Position is a unilateral foreign policy statement of the EU, Cotonou is a multilateral partnership agreement constituting mutual rights and obligations under international law. This is separate from the annual UN Geneva evaluation of human rights, although it would look inconsistent if the EU member states and candidates voted solidly to censure Cuba, and at the same time approved Cuba's credentials for Cotonou. However, it has to be recalled that the EU has consistently supported motions in the UN criticizing the human rights situation in countries with cooperation agreements, including Lomé and Cotonou signatories.

The decision to reapply for membership and its consequences need to be considered in a wider and more complex scenario. First, Cuba was financially exhausted by an accumulation of external shocks in 2001 (Hurricane Michelle, September 11 attacks, closing the Russian military intelligence station, global economic slowdown, oil price increases), with

the result that Cuba faced in 2002 a shortage of foreign hard currency, estimated at around $500 million. As a remedy, the Cuban government made special efforts to attract more tourism and foreign direct investment as well as to agree with debtors on rescheduling the payment arrangements. However, some estimates questioned the internal benefits of tourism revenues, since as high as 60 percent are dedicated to importing foreign products to be consumed by tourists.

On the home front, measures to further liberalize the domestic economic environment, especially for the local entrepreneurial sector, had not improved accordingly. The economic gap between Cubans with access to U.S. dollars and those without that privilege was increasing, along with internal political dissidence. The crime rate was obviously on the rise, but tight police and law-and-order control have clearly succeeded in reducing its more visible effects. Police forces were harassing political dissidents (especially the organizers of the Varela project) and independent journalists.

HEAD-ON COLLISION

Fidel Castro was going to dramatically use the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of his failed attack against the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba on July 26, 1953. He then rejected any kind of humanitarian assistance, economic cooperation, and political dialogue with the EU and its member states (associated with the ACP group, through the Cotonou Agreement, successor of the Lomé Convention), signaling one of the lowest points in European-Cuban relations.[40] Just days before the anniversary of the prelude to the Cuban Revolution, the EU had issued a harsh criticism of the regime's latest policies and personal insults against some European leaders (notably, Spain's José María Aznar), in essence freezing all prospects of closer relations. Having survived the end of the Cold War and the perennial U.S. harassment, the Castro regime seemed to have lost its most precious alternative source of international political cooperation, if not economic support. The following year, subtle signals of a rapprochement in 2004 as a result of the change of government in Spain after the March elections and a review of the EU collective attitude had not confirmed a substantial shift in either the European or the Cuban positions, leaving Cuba at the same apparent disadvantageous situation.

This serious setback was the result of the harshness of the reprisals against a high number of dissidents and the death sentences imposed on three hijackers of a ferry in April 2003. The Cuban government justified its actions in view of the perceived threat presented by the increased

activity of the internal opposition and the alleged backing provided by the U.S. government to the dissidents. In spite of that, the bluntness of the response (disproportionate imprisonment and summary executions by firing squad) was too much to swallow for Brussels.

The decisions made by Cuba generated an unprecedented worldwide protest not limited to the usual conservative sectors in the United States and the Cuban exile community. Traditionally tame governments in Europe made explicit complaints. Important individual backers of the Cuban regime abandoned their endorsement, changing it to a straight denunciation. In sum, and reflected by public opinion, from a policy of persuasion the EU had first expressed frustration in expecting signs of reform from Cuba and finally issued unequivocal signs of irritation. In its essence, all these EU decisions mirrored its frequent pattern of reactions when a cycle of patience was exhausted. EU observers and representatives of member states compiled a bleak picture in reports submitted to the different institutions for their subsequent actions.

Against this background, on the eve of the May 1 celebration, as important in Cuba as it is in most of the world with the exception of the United States, the European Commission in its weekly meeting considered the thorny topic of Cuba and decided to file away the still-pending petition of Cuba to become a member of the Cotonou Agreement.[41] The Commission issued a statement indicating that the situation in Cuba "has strongly deteriorated in such a very serious manner that the Commission did not want to remain silent."[42] Commissioner Poul Nielson, whose portfolio included development and humanitarian aid, directly overseeing the Cuban ACP project, recommended delaying the process some months while waiting for a change made by the Cuban government. Other members of the Commission (led by Spain's Loyola de Palacio and UK's Chris Patten, in charge of external relations) pressed for an indefinite ban on membership. Moreover, Patten put the burden on Cuban authorities. "The ball is in their court" until they "repair the damage done to the most basic human rights." Nielson declared that the reason for this drastic decision was that the cooperative agreement is not limited to commercial benefits, but it also includes the area of respect for human rights.[43] He later emphasized that Cuba knows very well what to do in order to improve its international status regarding human rights. While the Commission did not set a specific date to consider Cuba's petition for membership in the Cotonou Agreement, Nielson announced that the periodic evaluation of the Common Position would return to the semiannual pattern.[44] The Commission also contemplated questioning the renewal of Cuba's membership in the UN Commission on Human Rights.[45]

These moves were the coordinated results of decisions made by the other EU institutions. When the first arrests were announced, the Greek presidency of the EU issued a critical declaration.[46] On April 10, the European Parliament approved a resolution expressing concern, criticizing the lack of due process, demanding the release of the detainees, calling on Cuba to stop "hampering human rights," and asking the Council to "display firm resolve in tackling the issue of human rights in Cuba, and to monitor the situation very closely."[47] For its part, the EU Council acted with a speedy condemnation.[48] The Latin American Group of the Council decided to endorse an unsuccessful Nicaraguan censure motion against Cuba presented at the Organization of American States (OAS), to issue instructions to governments to limit contacts and participation in programs to be held in Havana, and to carry out a special evaluation of the Common Position on Cuba in place since 1996.

These decisions were the expected official result of a series of European reactions. Right after the announcement of the imprisonment of 76 dissidents, their organizations, with leaders such as Elizardo Sánchez, Gustavo Arcos and Osvaldo Payá, sought the help of the European Union institutions in their release.[49] European newspapers, especially those in Spain (and not limited to the conservative press, a trend that has been evident since the mid-1990s), stepped up critical commentaries against the Cuban government, while intellectuals signed declarations of condemnation on both sides of the Atlantic.[50] The op-ed pages of Spanish newspapers of all political inclinations have published frequent pieces by Cuban anti-Castro exiles.[51] Some notable deserters from backing the Cuban government, like Nobel winner and Portuguese writer Jose Saramago,[52] reminded observers of the spectacular alarm created by the Heberto Padilla "confession" in 1970.[53]

The scandalized reaction reached an unprecedented level when executions were announced.[54] In Spain, the alarm had reached unusual levels of censure in press reports, editorials, and columns published by leading opinion makers of all sorts of political inclinations.[55] Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) leaders described the executions as "savage," while Izquierda Unida branded them a "political mistake of great magnitude."[56] Former Spanish prime minister Felipe González used harsh language on live TV interviews, referring to Castro "in the last stages of a decrepit regime." The Spanish government and the leadership of the Partido Popular (PP) were especially noted for their blistering remarks.[57] They also used the occasion to create confrontation with the opposition,[58] reviving the Cuban issue as an internal theme to be manipulated for electoral purposes. The Spanish Senate passed a motion to "withdraw" a medal given to Fidel Castro in 1987 on the occasion of a visit by its president.[59]

A former president and current PSOE spokesman in the Senate lamented the lack of Spanish consensus on Cuba and potential loss of Spain's influence in the Cuban transition.[60] A who's who of Spanish artists signed protest manifestos along with worldwide figures, with the result that only Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez remained isolated in the group of famous writers siding with Castro.[61] In spite of the internal controversies, a survey revealed that an overwhelming majority—90 percent—of Spaniards believed that Castro should leave power, while 78 percent condemned the executions, figures similar to the popular opposition to the war in Iraq and to the U.S. embargo against Cuba.[62]

Meanwhile, protests in Europe and Latin America degenerated into serious confrontations, with aggression inflicted on press members by Cuban diplomatic staff.[63] The EU Commission warned that the repressive measures could have a "devastating effect" on relations with the EU.[64] Several European countries cancelled or considerably downsized the level of scheduled participation in programs and activities to be held in Cuba.[65] In the expectation of a lasting impasse and Cuba's rejection of positive moves, in addition to not attending Cuba's May 1 celebrations, EU member states' embassies were invited to establish a new report on the situation of human rights in Cuba for an evaluation by the Council.[66] On June 5, the EU Greek presidency issued a harsh declaration, following a decision by the Council of Ministers, the president labeled as "deplorable" the recent Cuban actions, "aiming not only at violating fundamental freedom, but also at depriving civilians of the ultimate human right, that of life." In consequence, the EU called Cuban authorities "to release immediately all political prisoners," and decided on the following collective measures: limit the bilateral high-level government visits; reduce the profile of member states' participation in cultural events; invite Cuban dissidents to national day celebrations; and proceed to the reevaluation of the EU Common Position.[67] In fact, this policy was dramatically inaugurated when on July 14 the French embassy invited Cuban dissidents to the reception for the anniversary of the French Revolution. The Cuban government responded with a nonattendance policy and put on a parallel function to celebrate its admiration for the 1789 historical event.

These four concrete guidelines would be the cause of one of the most serious diplomatic crises between Cuba and the European Union, with special effects on the relations with some specific countries, notably Spain. In the EU diplomatic language one can call for "restrictive measures" or also "sanctions." However, the EU deliberately dubbed the action "diplomatic measures." Cuba's reactions were blunt and fast. Havana

authorities replied to the EU criticism by using such hard expressions as "blackmail" and "soft" [on the United States] for the actions and attitudes of Europeans.[68] The Cuban ambassador in Madrid branded Spanish politicians "opportunists" seeking electoral gains.[69] Cuban foreign minister Felipe Pérez Roque responded to EU's criticism in a three-hour press conference held on April 9, transmitted on Cuban television. He lamented that the EU was not making similar condemning statements on the imprisonment and trial of the Cuban security agents arrested in Miami. (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also claimed that the EU has never condemned the United States for a much higher annual number of executions, an alleged example of double standard.) Pérez Roque also stated that the recent sentencing of dissidents as well as executions were performed strictly according to Cuban law and were "a sad but absolute necessity for defending the vital right to national independence and sovereignty," as the United States "is looking for a pretext for an armed intervention" in the island, by "creating the conditions for a new massive exodus from Cuba," the same arguments consistently reflected in other official declarations in the Cuban media. Most of these arguments were reiterated in Fidel Castro's address on May 1.

On Friday, May 16, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba summoned the newly appointed chargé d'affaires of the European Commission in Havana and announced the withdrawal of Cuba's application for membership in the Cotonou Agreement of the Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries.[70] In a blistering note published in *Granma*, the official newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party, the government blamed the EU Commission for exerting undue pressure, alleged its alignment with the policies of the United States, and rejected EU's censure for the measures taken by Cuba during the previous weeks.[71] In reality, Cuba avoided an embarrassing flat rejection of its application. This was the anticlimactic ending for a long process that can be traced back to the end of the Cold War, in a context where Cuba has been testing alternative grounds to substitute for the overwhelming protection of the Soviet Union.

Cuba's foreign minister Pérez Roque then described the EU measures as the result of a "superficial analysis" of Cuba, the "victim of an agreement between the United States and the EU," showing "European incapacity for maintaining an autonomous policy."[72] He also refused to receive the members of the EU Troika (Italy, Greece, and Spain, plus the Commission), while Cuban officials skipped attending receptions at EU member states' diplomatic functions. In an adaptation of a common epithet bestowed on Cuban exiles in Miami, Fidel Castro indirectly referred to the EU as a "little gang" and "a mafia allied with fascist

imperialists."[73] The U.S. secretary of state, Colin Powell, received the latest EU measures with satisfaction, indicating that the United States might join the Europeans in a common strategy toward Cuba.[74]

This apparent U.S. invitation for a coalition added fuel to the ongoing fire. The Cuban government increased the level of the confrontation with the EU to an unprecedented level.[75] Fidel Castro and Foreign Minister Pérez Roque targeted Italy and, most especially, Spain as the leaders of the EU measures imposed on Cuba.[76] The Italian government announced the termination of development programs estimated at about $40 million, and then rejected Cuban personal insults against Premier Silvio Berlusconi (called "Nero" and "Benito Berlusconi"); congressional sources subsequently demanded the withdrawal of the ambassador.[77] France announced the termination of some cooperation programs. The Spanish government initially exercised extreme restraint when challenged by a government-led demonstration in front of the Spanish embassy, presided over by Castro himself.[78] Spain's premier José María Aznar, accused as the main author of the "treacherous escalation against Cuba," was labeled by Castro on live television as a "*caballerito*," "coward," "fascist," and a "little Fuhrer," depicted in posters as wearing a Hitler-looking moustache and a swastika. While the Spanish press reiterated critical commentaries on the Cuban reactions, former Spanish prime minister Felipe González branded Castro's actions "pathetic," expressing doubts about the internal security of Cuba in view of the rash of aircraft and boat hijackings.[79]

Then, accusing Spain of improperly using its facilities, the Cuban government announced the cancellation of the binational agreement for the Spanish Cultural Center, a unique institution funded by Madrid since 1997 at an initial cost of over $3 million for the remodeling of a beautiful and centrally located building in front of the Malecón waterfront.[80] In an effort to divide the EU and Spanish leadership, the Cuban government indicated that the alleged Spanish and Italian influence on European decisions dictated its measures. With kind references to King Juan Carlos (in contrast to the attitude toward President Aznar) and to former Spanish anticommunist dictator Francisco Franco, Castro reiterated his personal inclinations. Ironically, commentators insisted on the similarities between the current Cuban situation and the last stages of the Franco regime.[81] Behind the scenes, Cuban officials confidentially expressed concern about the international isolation of the regime and the erratic and counterproductive result of the actions and declarations implemented and issued by the top leadership.[82]

The EU Foreign Affairs Council rejected as "unacceptable" the insults from Havana and confirmed the sanctions. Italy pressed for the

termination of cooperation funding still enjoyed by Cuba,[83] but Javier Solana, High Representative for Foreign Policy of the EU, did not endorse the ending of humanitarian aid.[84] While the Spanish government reaction was prudent, vowing not to engage in a "verbal spiral of mutual disqualifications," the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned Isabel Allende, Cuba's ambassador to Madrid, to give her its displeasure with the general situation, the threats on the Cultural Center, and the presence of Castro in the lead at the demonstrations, an activity considered "outside the margins of normal diplomatic usage."[85] Allende, in turn, blamed Spain for the diplomatic conflict.[86]

In an exchange of declarations and opinions issued by Cuban and Spanish officials, the already cloudier context of relations between the two countries became even more confusing if not contradictory. On the one hand, Spain's minister of foreign affairs, Ana Palacio, in a symposium organized by the Partido Popular – controlled FAES foundation, publicly stated that the Cuban regime was "exhausted" and "will not survive its founder," because of its "*caudillista*" character. Moreover, she noted that "the Cuban transition has already started," and that "the Cuban Suárez [as a parallel to the Spanish political process] is already present in the island."[87] Coincidentally, a sector the Spanish press has frequently mentioned Oswaldo Payá as the "Cuban Suárez."[88] In addition, while business delegations decided to postpone scheduled visits to Cuba, waiting for a better climate, reports emanating from the governing Partido Popular signaled the intention of the prime minister to convene the Spanish companies dealing with tourism in Cuba for his recommendation "not to benefit the Castro regime."[89] On the other hand, in contrast to the acrimony of official relations between Havana and Madrid, Cuban minister of foreign affairs Pérez Roque assured more than a hundred Spanish and Italian companies that they would not be affected, thus reducing the conflict to a personal feud.[90]

In an apparent cohesive policy of avoiding further controversies, the Spanish government elected a wait-and-see attitude expecting the Cuban government to make the next move regarding its announced plans for the intervention in the Cultural Center. While the Castro government could legally use the contractual clauses to renounce the agreement with a 90-day notice, the Spanish government could litigate on the grounds of expenses incurred in the delivery of furniture and the over $3 million contributed for the remodeling of the building. Meanwhile, the official posture of Madrid was revealed in the collective demands and expectations inserted in the EU General Affairs Council conclusions of July 21. In Cuba, the government was about to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada barracks.

As an answer to the conditional message of assistance and the political demands given by the EU, Castro dramatically ended half a century of Cuban history confronting the United States by electing to target a new enemy—the European Union. Calculating the effective EU assistance at an average of $4.2 million in recent years, reduced to less than $1 million in 2002, of which no funds had arrived yet, Castro pointed out that Cuba had imported European goods valued at $1.5 million, while EU's imports of Cuban products amounted to only $571 million. He not only blamed Spain's Prime Minister Aznar for being the main instigator of the EU measures, but labeled Spanish education a "banana republic disaster, a shame for Europe." In an apparent deviation from his previous selective critiques and kind references to different EU commissioners, Castro also accused the professional staff of the EU institutions ("a small group of bureaucrats") of drafting a resolution (a "cowardly and repugnant act"), allegedly without consulting their ministers. Claiming the EU was endorsing "the hostility, threats, and dangers for Cuba" of the "aggressive policy of the hegemonic superpower," he stated that Cuba "does not need the European Union to survive," and vowed that "neither Europe nor the United States will say the last word about the destiny of humanity."[91] Subsequently, the Cuban government sent a three-paragraph letter to the European Commission confirming the terms of Castro's speech. The EU Commission answered this address by confirming the spirit and the content of the conditional conclusions and declarations, lamenting the "extreme attitude of the Cuban government," accepting its decision, and pledging to maintain its willingness for a political dialogue with Cuba.[92]

The second part of 2003 confirmed the trend of the stormy EU-Cuba relationship. Then 2004 presented the expected combined scenario, composed of the continuation of the stalemate, a repeat of personal verbal confrontations between leaders and formal officials, a subtle expectation for an improvement in the friction, and the confirmation of the terms of the Common Position. The annual UN gathering of its Commission on Human Rights in Geneva harvested the usual admonition imposed on Cuba with the explicit endorsement of all EU member states. The EU maintained the Common Position conditions, with the result that the Cuban government reiterated its rejection of a change in the treatment of dissidents.[93]

On the Spanish front, the clash between Castro and Aznar continued after the Spanish prime minister's departure from power and his party's dramatic loss in March 2004 in the aftermath of the Madrid terrorist attacks. Reacting against Aznar's speech to the U.S. Congress, Castro called him a "repugnant character," a "Mussolini-like acolyte," and a "go-between for Bush," as retribution for labeling the Cuban

regime "a historical anomaly."[94] Resisting a fading away from the public limelight, Aznar reappeared as the target for Cuban animosity when he participated in conferences and symposia held in Madrid and Prague in support of Cuban dissidents.[95] In the expectation of reaping the benefits, Castro publicly welcomed the election of PSOE candidate José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero as new prime minister of Spain. Considering the disastrous state of political relations between the two countries, any sign of a mild improvement, as well as a customary succession of diplomatic staff (such is the case with the new Spanish ambassador, Carlos Alonso Zaldívar), was received with anticipation.[96] At the same time, Spanish economic interests renewed their critical view of the embargo measures imposed by the U.S. government, combined with the discouraging and confusing policies implemented by the Aznar government, advocating a more practical attitude toward investments in Cuba on the eve of an expected political transition.[97] This apparent new trend was highlighted by the announcement of the prospective work done by the Spanish oil conglomerate REPSOL in Cuban waters.[98]

Finally, the EU contextual dimension once again revealed the expected Spanish protagonist role. While Madrid confirmed Spain's commitment to the protection of human rights and the endorsement of measures contributing to the future democratization of Cuba, the new government led an effort to review the terms of the EU Common Position and specific measures regarding the Cuban dissidents. In more concrete details, Madrid and Brussels were asking if the invitations of dissidents to official functions had the expected results. Based on the conclusion that the Cuban regime did not change its policy and actually had elected a more isolated stance, and taking into account the degree of distance and lack of direct communication with the high levels of the Cuban government, a revision of the conditions was in order when national interests were at stake.

Reviewing a Failed Policy

Judging from experience, any drastic or noticeable change in an EU policy was going to need some time to be set and then subsequently implemented.[99] The transition process in the EU institutions, while facing the twin challenges posed by the approval and ratification of the new Constitution and the enlargement by incorporating formerly Soviet-dominated countries, was also going to contribute to slowing down a rapprochement process. The outcome of the U.S. 2004 presidential election had certainly added a dimension to what might be a new European position toward Cuba. This entire complex panorama coalesced to make a rushed and noticeable change in the collective EU policy doubtful.

This fragile situation explains in part the hesitation and contradictory announcements around the most polemical and conflict-prone of the measures the EU crafted in 2003 as a reprisal for the Cuban government's harsh actions against the dissidents. In spite of the fact that 7 of the 75 dissidents jailed had been recently released, the Cuban government had maintained a hard-line attitude toward the overall movement. Meanwhile, the whole EU diplomatic corps found all lines of communication toward the high levels of the Castro regime cut.

Then the October 12 date was approaching and the test for the Spanish government had to be faced.[100] If the Spanish embassy wanted to show a shift in policy, it would have to violate the agreement to be implemented under the umbrella of the Common Position. By not inviting the dissidents, the Spanish government would take a strong lead in dismantling the thorny policy so detested by the Castro government. This dilemma developed amid a climate of media pressure, leaks of the projected shift in policy, and direct questioning of the Spanish leadership that made EU and Spanish officials extremely uncomfortable.[101] In the end, because the Cuban government was not to release the new expected number of important dissidents as a notable gesture, the Spanish embassy decided to honor the policy and finally invited the dissidents. However, the tone and the content of the speech offered by the Spanish ambassador was interpreted by the political opposition in Cuba as an announcement of the end of an arrangement that has not, to date, delivered the expected results.[102]

What was destined to be a fractious semipermanent situation, a sort of continuation of the status quo, was further exacerbated by the arrival in Havana of Jorge Moragas, a PP deputy, accompanied by two members of the Netherlands Parliament (and two representatives of European NGOs). Detained at the airport, the three were summarily placed on an Air France return flight, with no chances of meeting with dissidents and offering their support. The Cuban government claimed that the Europeans came on tourist visas but publicly announced the main political purpose of their trip, and it labeled Moragas "an enemy of the Cuban Revolution."[103] He had recently traveled incognito to Havana to personally deliver to Oswaldo Payá the EU Parliament's Sakharov Prize that the dissident leader actually had already been given in an official ceremony held in Strasbourg.[104] Payá was warned that this procedure was a provocation and that he had exhausted the patience of the Cuban government. Apparently, Moragas had planned his second trip in the expectation that the Spanish embassy would decide not to invite the dissidents to the October 12 reception. In view of the late decision, he nonetheless confirmed the original plan.[105]

The Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs then summoned the Cuban ambassador in Madrid to protest the expulsion of the Spanish parliamentarian, while the Dutch government demanded an apology. The PSOE and the PP entangled themselves in a verbal confrontation, the conservatives blaming the government for the fiasco, and the socialists considering the PP congressman's activities an attempt to derail Spain's foreign policy. In more concrete terms, the office of the spokesman for the prime minister admonished the PP opposition for not acting "responsibly," using instead a "parallel diplomacy geared to torpedo the government's actions."[106] The bulk of the Spanish press censured the decision made by the Cuban government, casting serious doubts on the future evolution of the Castro regime and any expectations of reforms.

The overall result of the twin actions (reception at the Spanish embassy and the Havana airport incident) was that the prospects of revising the EU measures were cloudier than ever.[107] Conscious of this fact, the Spanish government confirmed its commitment to channeling any intention of change in the Cuba policy through the institutional framework of the EU. At the same time, Madrid stated in clear terms that any change in Spain's policy toward Cuba would have to be preceded by "significant steps" taken by the Castro government "indicating to be interested in a political opening."[108] At the same time the Latin American Committee of the EU Council had instructed the EU ambassadors in Havana to draft a report on the Cuban situation to serve as a basis for the revision of the Common Position.[109]

In this uncertain and confrontational environment, on October 20 after the closing of his speech given at the site of the Che Guevara Mausoleum in the city of Santa Clara, Fidel Castro took a misstep, slipped, and fell, fracturing his left knee and suffering a bone fissure in his arm.[110] After sitting on a chair and reassuring the audience that he was basically fine, he was rushed to Havana where he underwent a skillful surgical operation, which he himself described in a personal written report.[111] Speculation by Cubans,[112] the exile community,[113] the U.S. government (reacting with sarcasm, duly protested by the Cuban diplomats),[114] and those overseas took on a high degree of urgency, in view of his age (78) and the fact that two years earlier he had fainted at another event. Rumors were that he suffered from several undisclosed illnesses. The Spanish press of all political leanings used the opportunity to confirm its generally critical attitude toward the immobility of the Cuban regime, making the accidental fall of Castro a metaphor of another hypothetical "fall" in the near future.[115] In an isolated case, the vice president of the European Commission, Loyola de Palacio, issued a polemical off-the-record remark "wishing Castro to be dead," a commentary received

with criticism in the media.[116] In any event, the fact that he would have to go through a long period of movement rehabilitation would make his public appearances rare. While he was in this physical state, all bets were off as to how many urgent political measures would be delegated and what kind of action enemies and opponents might elect to take.

Before this incident, an assessment of the results of the verbal confrontations and frustrated changes in the EU policy toward Cuba reveals a paradoxical picture, which was, ironically, expected according to seasoned observers. On the one hand, the winner once more was the Cuban government, self-portrayed as the victim of the EU measures. Brussels was depicted as neo-imperialist, on the level of the demands historically made by the United States. On the other hand, the hard-line attitude of the Cuban government was the root for the timely, opportunistic move made by representatives of the PP at the worst moment for the Spanish government's ambivalent, controversial, and risky testing of the waters. The tentative loser was the Spanish socialist government for choosing such a risky portion of foreign policy at which to draw a line of demarcation from the previous policy of the Aznar-led PP in Latin America. Avoided at all costs during the previous PSOE mandate (1982–96), the Cuban issue had been reinserted as a "domestic" topic in the foreign agenda. The difference now was that a confrontation between the PSOE and the PP over Cuba was doubly installed in a complex world scene. The friction had the backdrop of the sensitive conflict in Iraq. The attention of strategic thinkers more preoccupied with solving the Middle East crisis simultaneously with the U.S. election process. Seasoned cynics also would point out that the "October 12 canapé crisis" seemed to be of the same category in the U.S.-Cuba relationship. As on numerous occasions, a relatively calm period was succeeded by a tumultuous incident provoked by one of the sides.

The global picture of EU-Cuba relations also reminded observers that the profile of confrontation was still ostensibly verbal, disproportionate to a certain normalcy in bilateral trade. Inertia and a business-as-usual mode pervaded the investment and tourism sector, subject only to the laws of economics and the limitations of the Cuban market and political system. The business interests that are the main social backing of the PP applied pressure not to discontinue the investment relationship with Cuba.[117] This had become evident when the Helms-Burton scandal exploded and the EU simultaneously took a hard-line attitude on the eve of the Brothers to the Rescue massacre in 1996. Business lobbies and trade interests pressured the Aznar government for a return to a certain degree of normalcy. This same sector has been a primary source that questions the effectiveness of the EU's measures, resulting in a climate of uncertainty and lack of communication.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the balance sheet of relations between Cuba and the European Union shows a mixed picture. It is composed of a coherent script of EU measures intended first to keep the communication lines open, and second to facilitate the conditions for a "soft landing" in the terrain of democracy and market economy in the event of a peaceful transition. This strategy has not come free of charge, as demonstrated by the persistent negative vote on Cuba in the UN Commission on Human Rights, and by the maintenance of the Common Position imposed in 1996, conditioning a full-fledged, comprehensive cooperation and aid package on the implementation of political reforms.

This institutional framework contrasts, on the one hand, with the apparently uncoordinated policies of the member states that trade and invest in Cuba according to their individual interests. This made the Common Position "neither common, nor a policy," in the words of sarcastic EU insiders.[118] On the other hand, the EU collective strategy has contrasted with the U.S. policy of confrontations and harassment. While the United States has been pursuing a path composed of the embargo and extraterritorial laws such as Helms-Burton, the EU has opted for a "constructive engagement." While the European pattern has been geared toward preparing for the transition, the U.S. policy has concentrated on regime change.[119] Both, however, share one dimension in common—Cuba's policy has not changed or reformed as expected. The European strategy can be labeled in its initial stages after the end of the Cold War as one based on good intentions and reasonable (if not high) expectations. But at the end of any serious attempt to condition an offer of a special status in the EU structure (bilateral agreement, Lomé, Cotonou), the result has been a high degree of frustration. This sentiment has been later upgraded to the level of irritation.

From the European viewpoint, Castro's priorities place a conditioned relationship with the EU at a lower level than the urgency to maintain a line of internal discipline. At the end of the day, as mentioned earlier, EU's favors are "demasiado fastidio para tan poca plata" (too big of a nuisance for so little money). The soft power exerted by the EU and some influential member states in other settings has apparently not succeeded in seducing the Cuban regime. Moreover, the Cuban regime considers the confrontation with the United States the ultimate raison d'être to justify the continuation of the system and the refusal to modify it, or even less to change the regime altogether. This ever-present theme has been obsessively included in all communications and declarations of the Cuban government when dealing in public and in private

with EU officials. Cuba has consistently alleged "aggressive," "subversive," irresponsible," and "provocative" behavior of U.S. officials in Havana supporting "mercenaries, created, organized, trained and financed"[120] by Washington.

Questioning the policy of opposing this pattern, or espousing similar pressure measures in reforming Cuba's policies, equals to EU's collaboration with the U.S. purposes. Rejecting pressure and conditions, as Castro's speech of July 26, 2003, explicitly did, has resulted in making any formal cooperation agreement and ACP benefits virtually impossible to obtain. It remains to be seen if new carrot-like proposals from Brussels and Madrid will in the near future deliver substantial results. Evidence shows that the Cuban regime has valued the confrontation with the EU more than the benefits of a cooperation agreement.

CHAPTER 4

POST-FRANCO SPAIN AND CUBA
A BIPARTISAN DEMOCRACY DEALS WITH CASTRO

> Cuba had an astoundingly large number of political prisoners living in deplorable conditions; more than a half million Cubans wished to leave. Civil rights are denied.
>
> Spanish ambassador Mercedes Rico, director of the Human Rights Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1988

> The 12th of October is an infamous and nefast date.
>
> Fidel Castro, on 500th anniversary of Columbus's feat, 1990

> Si mueves pieza (If you move your piece [democracy]), yo moveré la mía (I'll move mine [aid]).
>
> President José María Aznar, offer to Castro, 1997

> The dignity of Cuba cannot be played with on a chess board.
>
> Fidel Castro, answer to Aznar (*caballerito*), 1997

> Who made this *follón*?
>
> Question posed by a Spanish high diplomatic figure when confronting the clash between Spain's Prime Minister Aznar and Castro, 1997

THE NATURE OF DEMOCRATIC SPAIN'S RELATIONS WITH CUBA

Paradoxically, Francoism still enjoyed a considerable degree of presence after democracy was restored in Spain. All social evils that previously were

covered up by the dictatorial regime shot up to the surface. The economic crisis of the 1970s, the labor strikes, the trend of drug abuse, and the crime rate were all seen by the right wing as caused by the recovered liberties, free from authoritarian restraint. Ironically, Cuban exiles (especially those with Spanish roots) allied themselves with the people who sighed, "With Franco we were better off," which was close to "With Batista we were better off."

In Cuba, meanwhile, democratic Spain was also utterly idealized in an opposite sense as a desirable alternative destination for students and technicians. Madrid was in comparison much more desired than an uncertain (and alien) experience in Moscow or Prague (not to mention Angola). But for Cuban citizens in general the lack of accurate information and the near-total absence of direct news began to turn Spain into nothing more than a place of nostalgia for the children and grandchildren of immigrants. Under Castro, formerly prosperous Spanish associations languished, their facilities converted into housing. The average age of their members hovered dangerously close to 70 and beyond. Spanish diplomats based in Havana, frustrated and discouraged by Cuban government restrictions, navigated murky waters without knowing which course to follow. The option of collaborating with the Castro regime might be interpreted as connivance. The complete abandonment could one day be judged harshly and would not at all resemble that escape into the future of "history will absolve me." This sentiment has since permeated Spain's official policy at a level impossible to compute by any objective, empirical methodology.

As Chapter 1 has shown, Spanish cooperation with Cuba over the last 50 years has been impacted by the sui generis nature of both regimes. The record shows that diplomatic ties were solidly maintained throughout the Franco years, in spite of certain issues causing conflict. After the demise of the Franco regime, through what is considered a model transition, the relationship between Madrid and Havana continued to be excellent under the Union of the Democratic Center (UCD) administrations, the first led by Premier Adolfo Suárez (1976–81) and a second during the brief interlude presided over by Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo (1981–82). But when the Socialists (PSOE) came to power in 1982, attitudes were subtly reformed, according to the circumstances.

It appeared that the transitional governments of the UCD had maintained cordial relations with Castro for historical and cultural reasons, as well as pragmatic economic and political justifications. Suárez and, to a certain extent, Calvo Sotelo followed this pattern because they needed to implement a global "legitimating" policy in Latin America to fill the vacuum left by a lack of international recognition during the

Franco regime. In an uncertain world, with Spain still outside of the European Community, this respectful approach toward different governments in Latin America still had a touch of the traditional "foreign policy of substitution." This alternative consisted of creating alliances or maintaining presence in regions in principle would be friendly and at an affordable cost. While Latin America fit the bill, other bolder and more ambitious linkages were sought. Accession to NATO in 1981 was part of this strategy. Spain seemed to practice the old Spanish popular saying of "apuntarse a todo" (signing up for anything). It must be noted that when Spain initiated its political transition, only it and the Vatican did not belong to any of the European-wide organizations. It is not surprising then that the democratic Spanish government was able to maintain the traditional close relations with Castro. The need to keep the links with any part of the world was as important as in the times of Franco.

While the appearance of conflict-free relations and reasonable diplomatic understanding since the beginning of the Cuban Revolution is basically accurate, this assessment politely glosses over some significant diplomatic details. The first is that after Lojendio departed on January 28, 1960, Spain left his post in the hands of a chargé d'affaires for 15 years until Ambassador Enrique Suárez de Puga was appointed on April 18, 1975, just a few months before Franco's death. Trade Minister Nemesio Fernández Cuesta's visit to Havana in December 1974 was the first such since 1959. (Carlos Alfares was named Cuban ambassador in Madrid on January 22, 1976. His predecessor was former prime minister José Miró Cardona, who resigned in 1959, and the position had been vacant all those years.) After democracy came to Spain, the Cuban post was considered a very important one, with seasoned diplomats being appointed to take care of a very difficult relationship. Suárez de Puga (1975–79) and Manuel Ortiz (1979–81) were succeeded by Cuban-born Enrique Larroque (1981–85). Antonio Serrano de Haro (1985–90) and Gumersindo Rico (1990–93) preceded José Antonio San Gil, who resigned at the end of 1994—officially for personal reasons. Disagreements over the policies of the Spanish government and alleged administrative irregularities, however, seem to be the other motivation for the unusual move. After some hesitation by the government, San Gil was succeeded by Eudald Mirapeix, ambassador to Egypt, a seasoned diplomat and an expert in difficult tasks. But, as it will be detailed later, irritated with President Aznar, Castro rejected the nomination of Ambassador Josep Coderch in 1996, leaving the post vacant until the nomination of Eduardo Junco in 1998. He was succeeded by Jesús Gracia in 2001. In 2004, under the new government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero,

Carlos Alonso Zaldívar was appointed. The summary record then shows an impressive or good diplomatic relationship.

However, the pivotal events of the end of the Franco regime and the fast conversion of the Spanish political system into a full-fledged constitutional monarchy led by King Juan Carlos I inserted some crucial dimensions into the relationship with Cuba. While Spain changed drastically in political terms, Cuba insisted on reinforcing its totalitarian system, fully couched in the Soviet strategic sphere. Cuban foreign projection also received a considerable push when its armed forces intervened in several African scenarios, in support of left-leaning rebellions with all the logistical backing of Moscow and the advice of Russian generals. From the military point of view, the performance of the Cuban contingents was considered extremely successful, with some operations branded as models. But this military success at the same time made Cuba appear as interventionist and enmeshed in international conflicts that affected the foreign policies of the European countries and especially their relations with the United States.

When the Cuba-Spain relationship is studied in the broader context of Spain's relations with Latin America in this century, some general characteristics are applicable, as Chapter 1 succinctly shows. Spain's foreign policy toward Latin America since the defeat of 1898 was branded as one of *obligación* (duty), for historical, cultural, and linguistic reasons. Since the end of the Civil War, it has been labeled first as one of *sustitución* (substitution), to fill the space of more complex scenarios that were offlimits for political or economic reasons. Then it became a policy of *presión* (pressure) to be used by the new democratic governments of the UCD and then by the PSOE in both the inter-American context and in the European Community negotiations, before and after Spain's accession. When the friendly political relations with Castro were questioned, the PSOE resorted to justifying the policy as a renewed *obligación*.

Meanwhile, the U.S. government maintained the threat of Title III, only temporarily suspended. Even when one considers that the Cuban government hardened its internal policies (as confirmed by the adoption of measures designed to harass dissidents in the early months of 1997), the Spanish Socialists might also claim some success. They could say that more satisfactory results could have been obtained with their "carrot" policies of inducement to Castro. In contrast, as this chapter will show later, no benefits were obtained by the "stick" policies brandished by the government of Aznar and the ones offered in a more diplomatic way by the European Union through its Common Position. That is why in 1998 the Spanish government changed course and elected a policy of engagement.

In any event, to both Spaniards and foreign observers, on the one hand the Socialists (inaccurately) appeared as antagonists of the United States in the perception of the Cuban exile community and the conservative political circles of Spain. On the other hand, the Popular Party was perceived (simplistically) to be taking its cues from Washington in the eyes of the rank and file of the PSOE and Izquierda Unida. In reality, these perceptions did not exactly correspond to the factual evidence. The relationship between the PSOE and Cuba was not as rosy as the Spanish conservatives and the Cuban exile community portrayed it. Frequent confrontations between Madrid and Havana originated from various causes. They included the skillful operation led by PSOE's premier Felipe González to maintain Spain as a member of NATO (a decision publicly questioned by Castro) by virtue of the referendum held in 1986, the crisis produced by the invasion of the Spanish embassy in 1990, negative remarks against the 1992 commemorations, and personal insults inflicted upon high Spanish officials. The PSOE administration, especially when politically unaffiliated Francisco Fernández Ordóñez was in control of foreign affairs in the cabinet of Felipe González, was very careful not to let Cuba become a thorn in the side of its relations with President Reagan and, especially, with President Bush.

Overall, the issue of Cuba presents an interesting comparison between its use (and abuse) in the domestic politics of Spain and of the United States. In the absence of hard and factual evidence supported by reliable surveys, in the United States a hard stance toward Cuba in the post–Cold War era would reasonably be expected to return of a noticeable number of votes in certain specific constituencies (Miami, New Jersey). For members of Congress who depend on voters outside these Cuban-dominated enclaves, an anti-Castro attitude still receives a warm welcome among the generations that consider the "loss" of Cuba (the United States "lost" it in 1958 as Spain did in 1898) as a historical affront. In addition, this antagonistic position represents a commodity to be traded in the daily dealings of Congress. It also is a valuable asset for fund-raising purposes. Cuba, however, is not that important in the overall electoral politics of the United States. To be hard on Cuba helps *not to lose* some votes in certain congressional districts, but it does not represent a priority item *to win* elections. Cuba is, in summary, a peculiar internal issue in selected scenarios; elsewhere in the United States it is a mere footnote.

In the case of Spain, the issue of Cuba is also very complex and its political manipulation has its roots in history and contemporary politics. Ironically, anti-U.S. attitudes can be detected among those who are conservative and traditional, as well as those at the other extreme of the political spectrum. The first group may justify their antagonism

or distrust of the United States for historical reasons, including religious dimensions such as the perception of the United States as a Protestant-dominated nation. Another motivation, as mentioned in Chapter 1, reaches back to the humiliating experience of the Spanish-American War of 1898. This anti-U.S. attitude can also be attributed to the later debasing of the Spanish military in the 1950s and 1960s, when they were granted surplus military equipment as compensation for the use of military bases on Spanish soil. The second sector, where resentment toward the United States has been more obvious, is the potential electorate and membership of the left parties and intellectuals who have interpreted that the survival of the Franco regime was guaranteed solely by U.S. support. Once the political transition was set in motion, the left was prepared to send the bill to Washington for the cost of the long dictatorial regime. The Cuban issue became an ideal subject for contention.

When the historical and nostalgic memory of the "loss" of Cuba began to fade away within the military circles of Spain as a source of resentment against the United States, the dictatorial nature of the Cuban regime became the central argument the conservative Spanish parties used to exert an influence on the Socialist government while the Partido Popular (PP) was in the opposition. Once in power, the most vocal sectors of the PP insisted on converting the Cuba issue into an integral part of its domestic program. While the Socialists perceived that a friendly attitude toward Cuba and a publicly cautious distance from the United States would be rewarded at the ballot box, the "populares" believed that their potential voters demanded a hard-line stance against Castro. All these arguments do not overlook the fact that actions are also dictated by ethical and old-fashioned ideological reasons: the conservatives are supposed to stand up against Marxism and the Socialists are inclined to act as progressives.

In the second half of the 1980s, several factors converged to contribute to the general disapproval of Cuba within Spain. Among them was the deterioration of Cuba's image in the Spanish press. Ironically, as it was mentioned in Chapter 1 and will be detailed later in this chapter, the government-controlled media during the Franco regime rarely was critical of the Castro regime. When democracy was reborn, a variety of newspapers and magazines competed for readers, taking into account their political inclinations. While the conservative newspapers took an offensive attitude against Castro, the middle-of-the-road and even the left-leaning press did not flatly endorse the policies of the Cuban dictatorial government. Much to the distaste of Castro, certain aspects of the hardening of the Cuban Revolution became targets for the liberal and leftist publications.

Castro was unable to accurately grasp the complex dimensions of the Socialist government's foreign policy. The victory of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party in 1982 created false hopes in Fidel's mind. These hopes remained unfulfilled and were even frustrated by González's decidedly European and, at times, Atlanticist policies. Simultaneously, several anniversaries and events converged, making the relationship even more difficult. In the first place, the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Revolution in 1983 was an occasion for the Spanish press to take a critical stand against the Cuban regime, even in newspapers that for ideological reasons had been prone to defend "progressive" solutions to Latin America's scandalous social injustice, especially during the years when most of the continent was under bloody military dictatorships. This occurred barely a year after the Socialists came to power, while they were still riding the crest of the Third World wave. Spain's foreign relations needed to go beyond the tactics of Suárez, still subject to the "policy of substitution." The lack of a firm position in the European and Atlantic network would come to an end after Suárez resigned in 1981 and Spain joined the European Community. Afterwards, the PSOE government, instead of fulfilling its promise to get Spain out of NATO, campaigned positively for its permanence in the security organization. Castro resented that.

The PSOE Administration

The visits of Spanish Communist leaders to Cuba during the last years of the Franco regime did not cause friction between the governments. During the Spanish transition, Havana and Madrid kept cordial relations. Although his government was busy with the domestic agenda of consolidating the democratic system, Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez arrived in Havana on September 9, 1978. As the historical record shows, he was the first Spanish head of government or state ever to visit Cuba. With the triumph of the PSOE in the elections of 1982, Cuba-Spain relations entered a new, decisive phase.

In the 1980s, both countries would be enmeshed in a series of events, including the trend toward globalization, culminating in the end of the Cold War. Spain became a member of NATO in 1981 and the European Community in 1986. When the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1990, Cuba had to look for alternative support, so Cuba and Spain went through a special process transition.

Prime Minister Felipe González's trip to Cuba in 1986 symbolized the subtle changes in the relationship between the two countries. On November 13, González traveled to Cuba in a Latin American journey

that also took him to Ecuador and Perú.[1] Postponed from 1985, this trip caused media and congressional confrontations. (González had visited Cuba in 1979 as head of the opposition in Spain. Castro had visited Madrid only in 1984 on a refueling stop.) As a result of this visit, on December 21, 1986, the most famous of the Cuban political prisoners arrived in Madrid. Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo, 53, was liberated after 21 years in jail. He was born in Madrid of a Spanish Republican father, who left as an exile but eventually, because of disagreements with Castro, returned to Spain. His son Eloy kept the double citizenship.[2]

Days after the liberation of Gutiérrez Menoyo, a serious diplomatic incident erupted because of Castro's insults against Félix Pons, president of the Spanish Parliament.[3] The setting was the preparations for the 1st Meeting of Democratic Ibero-American Parliaments, to take place in Madrid. Pons implemented the policy of not inviting representatives of nondemocratic parliaments. This time Paraguay, Chile, and Cuba were excluded.[4] Castro called Pons a "tipejo fascistoide" (fascist type).[5] Pons responded that inviting Cuba would be like "to create a club composed of blonds (rubios), and then insert a 'moreno' (of dark hair, not brown or black in skin color)."[6] Castro termed that declaration "insolent, prepotent and discriminatory, racist."[7] Pons replied that the exclusion was justified because the meeting was to discuss shared values and problems of pluralist democratic systems.[8] Castro interpreted that Pons was not acting alone and that his decision was in tune with his party and government.

The context was wider. The Spanish press (including the left-leaning newspapers and magazines) used the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Revolution in 1983 to publish commentaries expressing disenchantment with the Cuban system. Nonetheless, the Spanish minister of foreign affairs visited Cuba in 1984. Later on, Enrique Larroque, Spain's ambassador in Havana, commented on television that relations between the two countries were "excellent and unmovable" and that Spain felt "solidly united to Cuba."[9]

In 1985, in the *Anuario* published by the government-controlled Spanish News Agency EFE, Castro expressed his steady official view of Spain: the Spanish roots and the cultural influence of Spain had helped the Cuban people to resist U.S. cultural penetration. He also recalled with gratitude that the Spanish government had rejected pressure by the United States to join the embargo and the diplomatic isolation of Cuba.[10] Taking note of the political change in Spain, Castro recognized that the relationship became "wider, constant and fluid."[11] However, when contemplating the creation of an Ibero-American organization, Castro warned that it should be organized with the participation of a "neutral" Spain. Only

very perceptive observers could detect that this specification was a direct reference to the membership of Spain in NATO.

Besides the liberation of Gutiérrez Menoyo,[12] the visit to Havana delivered the promise of compensation for expropriations suffered by Spanish citizens in 1960.[13] Although the amount ($40 million, far from the $300 million that was claimed) was rather symbolic; at least it was better that the total absence of any other agreement and revealed a certain degree of culpability of the Cuban government.[14] However, the process of payment was difficult and the system of swapping for other products did not work.[15] When the decade ended, only a few former owners had been compensated, with funds provided by the Spanish government.

The visit had a political and public opinion cost for González. The critical media renewed its agenda of criticism of the Castro regime and its shortcomings. The visit to the Tropicana nightclub was the subject of a number of sarcastic comments, including concrete attacks by members of the exile community. An editorial published by the influential center-left *El País* was a classic.[16] But the Cuban government maintained a steady policy of rapprochement. Castro had learned the lesson since his apparent mistake in judging that the government in Spain would be friendlier with the arrival of González. In reality, Castro never quite "pardoned" González for this violation of expectations.

Along with concern about debt payments, because Cuba lacked ready cash, more worrisome was the approach of commemorative events in 1992. Spain feared that a Soviet-U.S. clash over the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games would spill over to the Barcelona 1992 Olympic events. Taking into account the U.S. boycott of the 1980 Moscow games because of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent retaliation suffered in Los Angeles in 1984, a second Soviet no-show in Korea would have crippled the Olympic movement. The Spanish government (led behind the scenes by Barcelona-born Juan Antonio Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee) had invested considerable energy, prestige, and funds for the sports contest in 1992 in Barcelona.

In July 1985 *Granma* published a reprint of the unprecedented interview of Castro in *Playboy* magazine. He suggested splitting the location of the 1988 games between the two Koreas. Then he questioned the competition for the 1992 site, claiming discrimination against the third world countries. The Spanish Olympic Committee and the government feared the worst. Castro was also very irritated with Samaranch for not backing the candidacy of Havana to host the Pan-American Games in 1987, an event that was eventually awarded to the United States. Spanish diplomacy had to work very skillfully to avoid irreparable damage to the 1992 events. Nonetheless, causing disappointment in Argentina, the

nomination of Cuba as the site of the Pan-American Games of 1991 (with the endorsement of the U.S. Olympic Committee) guaranteed Cuban cooperation in the following contests. Castro was already in the mood to back the 1492 Quincentennial celebration.[17] He offered Cuba to be the spokesman in Latin America for the Barcelona event.[18] New times were approaching and the end of the Cold War was nearing.

In the mid-1980s there was no way to know who would be controlling the Spanish government in 1992, but the continuation of the PSOE in power was in sight, mostly due to the disarray of the right and center.[19] But the Spanish authorities were uneasy regarding 1992. At all costs, Madrid tried to avoid Cuba leading an anti-Spain lobby in Latin America.[20]

The Spanish government's delicate situation became obvious with the question of inviting all heads of state to the Ibero-American Summit to be held in Madrid, as well as to the Barcelona games and the Seville World's Fair. The inclusion of Castro added a security problem, but to exclude him would mean a diplomatic disaster. With 1992, the Spanish government had to deal with two pending issues: the fate of political prisoners (especially those of Spanish origin) and the role of Spain in colonial Latin American.

Nevertheless, the events of 1992 were held with no incidents, in part thanks to a pact agreed to by the world powers. The ETA Basque terrorists apparently cooperated, abstaining from bombings. But Castro was not able (or did not want) to exploit this trip, and limited it to protocol. Only his side trip to Galicia (his father's native land) provided him with an added human dimension. All was surely the result of a high-level agreement with Madrid. As in ancient Athens, there was an Olympic truce.

Adjustment in Spanish Perception

The PSOE's term in power was not free of Cuba-related incidents. Reports and selective commentaries leaked the dissatisfaction of the Spanish government with the evolution of the Cuban regime and the difficulties experienced by the rest of the Spanish presence in Cuba. The Cuban economy was increasingly alarming. Cuba's image in Spain progressively became very negative with the steady defection of officers, scientists, and artists.[21] Even some Tropicana dancers left.[22]

Spanish diplomacy grew preoccupied with the worsening of historical and cultural links with Cuba. Internal reports advocated urgency to fill an increasingly worrisome vacuum of Spanish culture in Cuba. Some diplomatic officers noted that at the rate members of the Spanish

organizations in Cuba were aging, the memory of Spain might be erased within a generation. Concern was expressed over the lack of operational coordination, revealing diplomats' frustrations at being left out of deals under the management of other agencies and ministries. They stressed the need to increase visits to Cuba by high-level Spanish officials (at least at the ministerial level) to head off potential competitors (such as France). On the other hand, visitors needed to return with some concrete results, such as obtaining the release of political prisoners. Finally, they worried over Cuba's perception of the nature of Spain's priorities concerning pressing international issues of the times, ranging from NATO to Spain-U.S. relations.

The dizzying speed of events in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 led Spanish leaders to approach the situation in Havana with extreme caution. In the Spanish analysis, Castro did not seem to be paying attention to Gorbachev, nor did he take notice of or learn the painful lesson of Honecker's fall in East Germany. While Eastern European leaders showed some sense of humor in accepting the "Sinatra Doctrine" in which Moscow told its former clients that they should be going "their way," Castro seemed to take it literally. He would really continue managing Cuba his own personal way. Consequently, the messages from Madrid stressed the urgency of contributing to the reform or transition process to take place in Cuba.

In February 1990, Felipe González included some rare comments about Cuba in an interview given to the Mexican newspaper *Excelsior*. Cuba's fate was "inexorably that of the countries of Eastern Europe."[23] Later, Minister of Culture Jorge Semprún, an intellectual and a former member of the Communist Party, added an unusual negative allusion to the Cuban regime during the ceremony presenting the Cervantes literary prize, held at the University of Alcalá de Henares, with the king and queen of Spain in attendance. Castro did not comment, but he kept his resentment to be vented on a proper occasion.

González and Castro had another opportunity to meet face to face and express their points of view during a brief meeting with Venezuela's Carlos Andrés Pérez on March 15, in Brasília, at the inauguration of the new Brazilian president. It was significant that these two leaders would publicly reveal that they had at least a friendly exchange of opinions on a third country's political process, which, in this case, could only be toward democracy. Castro, even though he had agreed to the meeting, did not immediately react. The Spanish press echoed the negative results of the meeting: "The Spanish Prime Minister, Felipe González, looked concerned . . . 'I am worried that Cuba's strategy for dealing with the world in the 1990s will be an apocalyptic one.' "[24] "He did not

listen to González's requests," was the resounding headline.[25] Although the Spanish and Venezuelan leaders said that Castro had appreciated the sincerity of their talks, the truth was that the irritation over the humiliation suffered must have been difficult to take. He had remained quiet, but soon his talkativeness got the better of him. Upon his return to Cuba, in response to the request to hold a plebiscite in Cuba, he referred to the fact that the king of Spain had not been elected and that the prime minister could be eternally reelected. These statements were not taken well at Zarzuela royal palace. They were the straw that broke the proverbial camel's back. Only a few weeks earlier, Castro had openly speculated about what would happen "if arms were delivered to the radical Catalans and the Basques."[26]

The invasion of the Spanish embassy in Havana in the summer of 1990 was the most serious event in recent memory in a string of minicrises in the Spain-Cuba relationship. What at the beginning was a small incident, produced by a group of citizens wanting to leave the island, became an international diplomatic conflict. Madrid had decided to exercise extreme restraint, bearing in mind that any overreaction could be used by the Cuban government to rally popular support. Mid-level Cuban officials made extemporaneous comments against Spanish authorities (Spain's Foreign Minister Fernández Ordóñez was labeled a "colonial corporal" in a cartoon). A second group of apparent refuge seekers (called *fornidos* by the Spanish press) were, in fact, Cuban security forces infiltrators. However, Spain's more-than-diplomatic answer to the crisis managed to defuse an explosive situation. Official aid was temporarily suspended and Spain obtained diplomatic backing from the European Community.[27]

An apparent truce was unofficially in effect for the next two years. Fidel Castro tried not to do anything to damage his well-sought leading role at the first Ibero-American Summit in Guadalajara, Mexico, since the second was to take place in Madrid in 1992, with where he would make side trips to Barcelona and Seville, and a dream journey to Galicia. The brevity of his visit to the Seville World's Fair and the shortening of his stay in Galicia left the Cuban leader with a bittersweet feeling.[28]

After the 1992 commemorations, which coincided with the "post celebrations" economic crisis and funding reductions for both domestic and foreign programs, Spain's position seemed to focus more on steadily controlling the particular sources of conflict and on designing a plan of action to allow the Spanish government to play a role in what official declarations were already calling a transition. For example, Cuban diplomats were expelled from Madrid for engaging in activities not covered by the conventions.[29] Alina Fernández Revuelta, Fidel Castro's own daughter, the product of an extramarital relationship, landed in Madrid on an Iberia

airliner in December 1993. Having left the island with the help of Spanish citizens and using a Spanish passport, she immediately initiated a fault-finding campaign against Castro. However, this personal activity did not cause any friction between the two governments. She eventually took up residence in Miami, continuing her lobbying work against her father, while conducting radio programs.

On the "soft" side of international diplomacy, Spain continued playing a sort of game of creating dependency in culture and sports. Using the culture trump card, agreements and contacts with Cuba were multiplied. Visits by high-ranking officials were used to meet with dissidents, to the obvious displeasure of the Cuban authorities, with the simultaneous calculation that these gatherings could also be credited as a sign of a crack developing in the regime. This type of rapprochement was, understandably, not acceptable to the Spanish opposition. Leaders of the Partido Popular (PP) and other sectors of Spain's political and media establishment stepped up a campaign lambasting the government for its Cuba policy. In a pre-electoral period, comments from conservative sectors can provide a clue to what Spain's policy with Cuba could be in the event of a PP victory in legislative elections. In this context, it is worth reading opinions that may lie buried in files.

Back in 1990, José María Aznar, leader of the PP and candidate for prime minister, published a short article explaining what his policy would be in the event of a PP victory in the next election. The conservative leader warned that two paths should be avoided. The first was to prevent Cubans from playing a role in their future. The second was to consider Cuba different in the sense that "betting on tourism development can justify the maintenance of the Castro dictatorship."[30] Deputies, spokesmen, and potential ministers stressed that a PP victory would change the policy toward Cuba. Javier Rupérez, spokesman of the PP in the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, and a potential foreign minister, denounced "the bankruptcy of the current policy of rapprochement, bear hugs, and economic consultant role." Other conservative party voices stressed the need to change Spain's policy with Cuba to avoid giving the impression that Spain was backing the Castro Revolution, not the Cuban people.[31] Meanwhile, they termed unacceptable the compensation arrangement for the expropriation of Spanish property after 1959.

Trade and Investment

As outlined above, the "sentimental history" between Cuba and Spain has to a certain degree colored recent political developments, and it has exerted an impact on economic relations as well. One of the important

factors for the continuation of diplomatic links between Franco's Spain and Castro's Cuba seemed to be trade, besides the political and strategic dimensions mentioned earlier in Chapter 1. This is an accurate assessment but does not tell the whole story.

Ten years after the start of the Cuban Revolution, trade between the two countries was balanced. But by the end of the Franco regime (1975–76), a notable imbalance in favor of Spain had begun to appear; Spanish exports to Cuba were double its imports from the island. Although this advantage narrowed in 1977 because of higher sugar prices, the growth in the imbalance never stopped, although Cuba also benefited. Spain ended up purchasing 11 percent of Cuba's exports to the capitalist world; quite a feat, considering Spain's imbalances. In 1975, trade with Spain represented 6.5 percent of all Cuban trade, a figure surpassed only by Japan in the developed world.

During the 1980s the situation changed, when Spain imported less from Latin America because of the region's financial crisis. Nevertheless, ties were maintained with Cuba, both in the first phase of Spain's political transition and, later, during the first years of Socialist administration. Cuba was purchasing up to 14 percent of Spain's exports to Latin America, more than Venezuela (13 percent) and Argentina (9 percent). In 1985, Cuba bought more than 20 percent of Spain's exports to Latin America. In 1983, Spain was Cuba's best customer in the capitalist world. Spain's advantage, however, became increasingly perceptible. Spain purchased only 2.66 percent of its Latin American imports from Cuba. From the first decade of the Revolution until 1987 the Spanish-Cuban trade balance favored Spain by a 2:1 or 3:1 proportion. The coverage rate for this period reached a peak of 338 percent in 1986. With the beginning of the Cuban financial crisis in the early years of perestroika, earlier enthusiasms cooled. In 1988, Spain exported to Cuba goods worth $210 million, while its Cuban imports were worth $88 million. This difference of about 240 percent was maintained in 1989 and rose to 375 percent in 1990. In 1991 the rate stabilized between 309 percent and 294 percent.

On a comparative basis, Spain's trade with Cuba presented some interesting features. For example, at the end of the 1980s, when Spain was accelerating its overall relations with Latin America in preparation for the events of 1992, only 3.6 percent of total Spanish exports were destined for Latin America; however, of this total, an impressive 13 percent went to Cuba. Cuban products, on the other hand, did not enjoy a similar status in Spain. In the mid-1980s the trade balance almost tripled the coverage rate in favor of Spain from a nominal 103 percent to almost 300 percent, which also contrasts with the overall trade of Spain with Latin America.

Years later, this trend slowed (down 67 percent in two years) with Spanish exports to Cuba declining from $287.3 million in 1991 to $190.4 million in 1993, then totaling only 0.3 percent of the total of Spanish exports. In 1994, the overall trend increased by 50 percent with Cuban exports to Spain decreasing from $92.5 million in 1991 to $64.8 million in 1993, although 1994 predictions were for a 15 percent increase. From a total of $379.8 million in 1991, trade between Cuba and Spain fell to $255.2 million in 1993.

The global picture (once other variables and scenarios are taken into consideration) also demonstrates that Spain's trade and investment underwent major reshaping after the country's accession to the European Community. Spain's trade figures with Latin America provide evidence of the loosening of its historical Latin American ties and the new European strategic necessity. By the end of the 1980s Portugal became the equal of Latin America as far as Spanish investment, but while the rest of Latin America lost some of Spain's attention, Cuba stayed the same. From 1987 to 1990 Spain's exports to Cuba almost doubled, resulting in Spain's trade imbalance skyrocketing to more than $560 million in the combined figures of 1987, 1988, and 1989. Only Mexico surpassed Cuba in Spanish imports.

Since Cuba was having problems increasing its sales to Spain, it sought needed funds elsewhere. Private investment started to substitute for subsidies lost after the fall of the Soviet Union. Despite the fact that legislation for private ventures in Cuba dates back to 1982 (by an ineffective law called No. 50), the results were slow in coming. At the end of 1994, the Cuban government revealed that as many as 140 joint venture companies were, in one form or another, operational in Cuba. Of these, Spain was involved in 30; 25 were in industry and 5 in the service sector, almost exclusively tourism. Figures were vague (they always are), but Spanish hotel industry sources cited investment in that sector of around $330 million.

Tourism is a field in which Spain can claim notable expertise. Spain is a world power in attracting tourism, second only to France. This sector, along with U.S.-inspired investment and remittances from emigrants, explains the "miracle" of the Spanish economy in the 1960s. It is not surprising then that the tourist industry became the star of the Spanish investments in Cuba, which represented 20 percent of all foreign participation in Cuba. Spanish investments in this area seemed to be justified by a double strategy. In the beginning they were financed by capital sources that needed a secure environment, and at the same time, investment in a variation of real estate was seen as a beachhead for when political transition occurred. Hypothetical profitability in the medium term, however,

was modest and limited (unless there were drastic changes on the island), considering the possibility of trying to attract Western tourism to Cuba in the face of competition from more heterogeneous destinations like the Dominican Republic or the English-speaking Caribbean.

In the overall investment sector, the present and future are full of uncertainties and conflicts. First, as mentioned above, there was the U.S. government's 1992 Cuban Democracy Act, known as the Torricelli law for its congressional mentor, New Jersey senator Robert Torricelli. It severely curtailed operations in Cuba and even penalized company subsidiaries that do business in Cuba. This action was especially important in a global economy because it is very difficult for a large firm not to have *any* direct or indirect link to another economy. Second, the exile sector would press a claim in the event of a drastic change in the political and economic fabric of Cuba. Jorge Mas Canosa, chairman of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), set a precedent by sending a letter to embassies of countries whose companies were dealing with Cuba. Besides calling the investment "an act of collaboration," Mas Canosa warned them that they were "taking a major risk" and that "any investments made during the present regime will be held in trust by a post-Castro government."[32] He was not alone in his actions.

After the Republican sweep in the November 1994 U.S. congressional elections, Senator Jesse Helms became chair of the Foreign Relations Committee and he announced that the spirit of the Torricelli law would be strengthened. As discussed earlier in this text, that promise was fulfilled in the form of the Cuba Liberty and Solidarity Act ("Helms-Burton"), stating that foreign companies operating in the United States who were trading with expropriated property in Cuba could find their assets in the United States subject to legal action.[33]

Debt and Aid

Despite the publicity garnered by some operations (such as tourism), the fact is that Spain's investment in Cuba represented at one point only 0.03 percent of all Spanish capital invested abroad. Figures for Spanish ventures have been much higher in Puerto Rico (6.18 percent) and Argentina (1.60 percent). In contrast, Cuba took out enough loans to become the sixth-largest debtor in Latin America.

The size of Cuba's debt to Spain in early 1990 was, by any standard, striking. Only Egypt and Morocco were more in debt to Spain than Cuba, whose debt represented 6.5 percent of the total. Basic comparisons of bilateral trade between the two countries show a stunning imbalance, given that trade relations between Spain and Cuba are only 0.2 percent of

the total. In 1994, total Cuban debt to Spain totaled 4.5 billion pesetas (around $45 million).

More than 70 percent of this debt was public, showing that the relationship between Spain and Cuba has been primarily on a governmental level. Export credits under the Development Aid Fund (FAD) have also been favorable in volume for Cuba, surpassing larger countries like Argentina and Mexico. It is not surprising that analysts consider this comparatively high position to be politically motivated. Spain, with this official policy, could be using economic links to tie into the reform or transition process in Cuba.

The fact is that at the height of the Latin American debt crisis, Spain increased its trade with Cuba. Part of the explanation is the infusion of a generous level of credit supported by the Spanish state, which gave private industry the incentive to take risks that, under normal circumstances, would not be taken. Within this context, it would be beneficial to review official aid figures, which sometimes seem to have erratic allocation patterns. This needs to be addressed in the proper context and comparative setting.

For example, from 407.5 million pesetas ($3.3 million) in 1987, the amount of basic official aid plummeted to only 56.2 million ($540,000) in 1991. In the 1992 commemorative year, it ballooned to 491 million ($4.8 million), only to be more than halved to 226.5 million ($1.7 million) in 1993 and down slightly to 211.3 million ($1.6 million) in 1994. The changes in 1991, 1992, and 1993 have several explanations. One is political, the second is related to historic commemorations, and the third to economic limitations.

The 1991 decrease reflects a cut in aid in reprisal for the 1990 Spanish embassy invasion; the 1992 increase reflects budget allocations for the Columbus Quincentennial programs, and the following year's cut was in line with an overall budgetary reduction after an impressive effort in hosting both the Summer Olympic Games (in Barcelona) and the World's Fair (in Seville), as well as being in response to the general economic crisis affecting the entire European Community.

By Latin American and Cuban standards, these aid figures are considerable. A figure of one billion pesetas ($7.6 million) in three years (1992–94) was used by sources close to the opposition parties to assess Spain's aid program since it was reestablished in November 1991 after a return to normalcy once the tension caused by the embassy crisis subsided. The sums of total aid as provided by the Ministry were: $4.8 million in 1992, $1.7 million in 1993, and $1.6 million in 1994.

However, when other data calculation methods are employed they show that in 1990, the figure for aid to Cuba rose spectacularly from

220 million pesetas ($2.5 million) to 1.787 billion ($17.5 million). Only Mexico received more at 1.992 billion. An explanation for this change is that development credit amounts were added for the 1990 figure. For example, according to the figures in 1990, Cuba received 1.676 billion ($16.4 million), only to be surpassed by Mexico with 1.821 billion ($17.8 million). The fact is that FAD credits made up more than 40 percent of total aid and that it is older than the institutionalization of aid programs in Spain, beginning with its start in 1976 as part of packages to increase Spanish exports.

Aid figures may therefore seem confusing when different interpretations about what constitutes "aid" are considered. For instance, official figures supplied by the Foreign Affairs Ministry show that Official Development Aid (AOD) varied from $3.2 million in 1987 to $4.8 in 1992, with a very low $0.53 million in 1991. However, figures provided by other sources (such as the European Commission) show that the total was $17.5 million in 1990, and $11.8 million in 1991. The difference rests in the fact that the higher figures include development fund credits.

The controversy about its use and objectives has been revolving around several polemical dimensions. In the first place, fund conditionality forces the recipient to purchase products from the donor country; second, among the products exported are weapons and equipment that could be utilized for war-making; third, there are disputes among various branches of the government, which has become factionalized. For example, the Ministry of Trade has traditionally defended the use of export credit funds whereas the Foreign Affairs ministry finds this difficult to justify because of criticism from international organizations made up of donor countries, unless it is accepted as being a "donation" in disguise. Finally, it has been speculated that this inclusion is to justify the spending set aside for aid, which is set at 0.7 percent of Spain's GDP (under pressure of demonstrations, sit-ins in metropolitan centers in Spain, and hunger strikes organized by NGOs).

Comparative aid figures to Cuba since Spain's official entry into the "donor club" should also take into account the overall situation in Latin America. From 1988 to 1994, Cuba's rank fell from 2nd in 1991 to 12th in 1992 (as a result of aid being cut off in 1990, because of the embassy crisis). Total fund percentages on Latin America show Cuba receiving 4.7 percent in 1988, 7.7 percent in 1989, 5.5 percent in 1990, but only 0.7 percent in 1991, and since then it has been steadily inching its way back from 1.03 percent in 1992, to 1.8 percent in 1993, and 2.26 percent in 1994. The year 1992 was notable if one compares the spectacular increase from the total figures in Latin American aid from 7.5 billion pesetas (around $75 million) in 1991 to 47.5 billion (around $475 million) in

1992. Cuba's increase was from 56.2 million pesetas ($0.5 million) to 491 million ($4.8 million) in 1992. This comparison should then, in turn, be supplemented by the figures in loans through the FAD program.

Taking into account the fact that aid is used as an instrument of foreign policy and is a variable in dependency, figures show that for Spain, Cuba has been a very important country in the overall Latin American scheme. From 1980 to 1992, Cuba received an impressive 46.6 percent of all Spanish aid to Latin America, well ahead of Venezuela (12.1 percent), Mexico (14.4 percent), and Argentina (10.5 percent). For Cuba, Spain's aid was the largest from within the European Union. Spain contributed 6.9 percent (3.2 percent in 1992) of funds provided. This "dependency" on Spanish funds was surpassed only by Argentina (13.4 percent), Bolivia (8.5 percent), Ecuador (9.8 percent), and Mexico (28.3 percent).

On the related subject of investment, it is ironic that any speculation about Cuba's future and predicted reprisals, as well as predicted punitive measures against current investors, would include the coexistence of two sectors where the foreign (especially Spanish) presence would become obvious once a democratic government were to take over. First, it would face the existence of property built either with Spanish funds or under the management of Spanish companies; second, it would face the same impotence as the current government in paying the debt, much of it derived from "development" loans made available to obtain the Spanish products that the Cuban treasury did not, does not, and will not have sufficient money to pay for. Since these credits have always been, in effect, donations, any future government would be hard pressed to expropriate interests backed by the same source that can forgive the debt. The best of all worlds for Spain would be to act as a backer of the pretransition period by providing aid and donations, and a partner in the transition by forgiving debt and providing additional aid packages.

While Cuba's relationship with Spain is complicated, the island's ties with the European Union as an entity have been, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, virtually nonexistent and modest in terms of trade. In spite of the strong historical and social ties, Cuba is the only Western Hemisphere country with which Spain does not have a trade agreement, as this is the exclusive right of the EU. In contrast, political, security, justice, and migration matters (which could be the source of difficulties with Cuba) are still contained within the other two pillars of the Union as an intergovernmental organization; these are, therefore, reserved to states.

Officials and experts had believed that Cuba would be a suitable candidate for membership in the Lomé Convention once it fulfilled the basic requirements. However, initially this possibility went against the explicit promise made to Haiti and the Dominican Republic that they would be

the last countries in the Western Hemisphere to enter the group. Others thought that Cuba should be treated like Vietnam, with which a special agreement had been under study. What is certain is that the European Community and its most active basic institutions (the Commission and the Parliament) had maintained a prudent and objective position, limiting themselves to protecting human rights and channeling humanitarian aid so that it gets to the neediest sectors.

There was rising concern for the decline of living conditions in Cuba, and a recommendation was made for increasing trade and political dialogue as the best ways "to promote the emergence of a both democratic and constitutional regime."[34] The Commission approved a donation of ECU9.9 million ($12.4 million) for humanitarian aid. Total Cuban aid under the European Communities Humanitarian Office (ECHO) program for 1993 was ECU7.8 million ($9.6 million), and in 1994 the figure rose to ECU13.7 million ($16.9 million). From 1985 to 1993, aid considered as "cooperation" totaled ECU63 million ($78.1 million). As a result of an unprecedented workshop held in Havana under the auspices of the European Community, Cuban officials and members of the European Parliament exchanged candid views that might have served as a basis for future arrangements in the event of political change in Cuba. This kind of discussion would make an agreement possible, similar to those signed with the rest of Latin America or the ones agreed upon at the Lomé Convention for the Caribbean.[35]

Political-Economic Arguments

The uniqueness of the relationship between Spain and Cuba rarely resists disappearing from public attention. It even threatens to turn into a permanent obsession in Spanish public opinion as is the case within the U.S. exile community. One should ask, far from the heat of the moment, about the causes of this strange phenomenon. It is worthy of some thought because the "Cuban problem" turns out to be absolutely disproportionate if one bears in mind some of the variables most frequently touched upon by political scientists and economists who try to figure out all enigmas in international relations.

Given its relatively small population (barely 11 million) and the insignificance of its industry or natural resources from a strategic or world economic point of view before and after the Revolution, Cuba does not deserve the amount of attention it receives. In the United States, the attention Cuba gets is disproportionate to that given to other Hispanic groups. The Cuba lobby is perceived as receiving greater political benefits than other more historically established ones (Arab, Chinese, Slav,

Scandinavian, Japanese, etc.). Only the Jewish lobby might be placed in the same category as the Cuban one when looking at their influence in the political, economic, and media sectors, given the small dimensions of both Israel and Cuba.

As it has been argued in Chapter 2, there are other reasons that explain the passion of U.S. policy toward Cuba. They are similar to those generating the same disproportionate attention given in Spain to the never-ending Cuban saga, as Chapter 1 has demonstrated. If Cuba's physical proximity to the United States is the best way to explain Washington's fascination with and fear of Havana, it does not make sense, then, that the serious crisis in Algeria—on Spain's doorstep—does not receive a proportional amount of attention in the Spanish media, its government statements, or the policies of the various parties. The conclusion is that there must be other reasons, as treated in Chapter 1.

In Spain's case a clue may be found in an ironic question posed by Alexander Watson, U.S. undersecretary of state for Latin American affairs when, surprised by the insistent questioning, he asked Spanish deputies in Madrid if Cuba was "a domestic policy matter for Spain?"[36] In the view of Jordi Solé Tura, former minister of culture and a member of the chamber, the answer was a resounding *sí*, though it was not considered a partisan matter. Solé Tura gave the reasons: In the first place, "Cuba is one of the most loved Ibero-American countries"; second, "it has had a unique history and has embodied many of Spain's hopes"; third, the borders between international and domestic policies are becoming blurred; fourth, arguments over Cuba are colored by current ideological views, with the result that "the role of Spain has become a domestic confrontation, benefiting from reckless radicalism."

With respect to the Spanish perception of Cuba, all the multidimensional aspects presented in the preceding pages converge in a consensus expressed by different opinions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, more precisely, recorded in a report filed by Spain's former economy minister Carlos Solchaga. At the time, the main observations of diplomats with experience on Cuban affairs considered that "there is very little chance for change inside Cuba directed *against* Castro; any evolution of the political situation has to go through him; pressure from within the regime would be neutralized by Castro." Realistically, "room for action from the outside should be maintained by other governments, like Spain's, for whom a political 'soft landing' is the desirable outcome; this is why Spain is not in agreement with Washington's pressure because the result could be a more violent migration." In consequence, "the best scenario in diplomatic circles is the gradual transfer of day-to-day operation to his subordinates, while Castro maintains the position of

guarantor of the system's foundation." While this diagnosis matched the views of reformists in Cuba and in exile, the Spanish diplomatic analysis judged that time was running out.[37] Subsequent events offered a new variable when Castro's illness was announced in 2006 and he resigned in early 2008.

In October 1994, Javier Solana announced a program to train Cuban officials in "democratic" management. The program was to be carried out in Barcelona in cooperation with the University of Barcelona under the coordination of a think tank established in the Center for International Studies (CEI), a joint venture of the university and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs offering a year-long course of preparation for future diplomats. On November 11, Spain signed a new cultural and scientific cooperation agreement with Cuba. José Luis Dicenta, undersecretary of state, declared in Havana that Spain would stress the training of future officers for the transition process. Dicenta later met incognito with members of the exile community in Miami to explain Spain's plans. As a gesture to the exile community, at the height of the Cuban rafter crisis, the Spanish government announced that it would be willing to accept about one hundred families stranded in Guantánamo whose only requirement would be to have a "Spanish" background.[38] This offer, requested by the Miami archbishop and relayed through the Spanish consulate in Miami, is important because it demonstrates a subtle but clear change in the Spanish government's attitude toward Cuba and those exile hopefuls. Even during the most dangerous events of the August 1994 rafter crisis (with the sinking of a launch full of people by Cuban gunboats), the Spanish government's attitude reflected prudence. Since that time, contacts through rarely used channels (such as the Miami consulate) have been increasing to set the parameters (toward the Cuban government as well as various exile sectors) of opening up for various government and private sectors (including a whole range of exile groups from the right-wing Cuban American Foundation to more moderate groups). This would be the culmination of a process begun in the summer of 1991 when representatives of the *Plataforma Democrática* (Democratic Platform—made up of Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, and liberals) met in Madrid with then undersecretary of state Inocencio Arias.

Solchaga's words were blunt: "We are not indifferent to anything that goes on in that country."[39] The development of what can be considered the most candid and official opinion of what, according to the Spanish government, Cuba should do, can be traced back to the fall of 1993, when Spanish foreign minister Solana met his Cuban counterpart, Robaina, during gatherings at the United Nations and agreed that a Cuban delegation would visit Spain "to discuss economic reforms." The project was discussed by Castro and Felipe González during the 3rd Ibero-American

Summit held in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil. Parts of the Solchaga report were made available to select circles and the media. It was revealed that the authors feared that the Cuban economic crisis might be headed toward "general chaos." In the first weeks of 1994, the Cuban government was said to have "rejected" the content of the report.[40] The Spanish government pursued this line of pressure and, in February, invited Cuban officials Carlos Lage and José Luis Rodríguez to meet and share views for economic reform. In March, they expressed a willingness to accept a further consultation from the Spanish government.[41] In late June, Solchaga again traveled to Cuba and the result was an expanded report.

At the height of this new crisis there was a spectacular increase in the number of rafters fleeing the island. President Clinton was so alarmed about the possibility of a second Mariel boatlift that he took the initiative of making indirect contact with Castro through the good services of Latin American writers Carlos Fuentes and Gabriel García Márquez. Castro agreed as a gesture to Clinton. The issue of an uncontrolled migration has been ever present in all eventualities of the U.S.-Cuba relationship. In this setting Spanish foreign minister Javier Solana publicly demanded that Castro speed up reform and face up to the political transition, while, at the same time, he maintained Spain's opposition to the embargo.

As it happened during the execution of the military accused of drug-related charges the year before and in the embassy crisis, the lack of news that the Spanish press normally experiences during Europe's summer vacation was an opportune setting for a series of critical commentaries revealing the frustration over the escalating deterioration of the regime. Keen observers considered that Spain's foreign policy had the opportunity and imperious necessity to exercise its influence of the commentators that have "trivialized the crime and historic catastrophe that means for Cuba the long agony of that dictatorship of stubborn dimensions." Moreover, they fear that "popular perception of complicity with Castro may irreversibly damage the role that Spain may play in the reconstruction of Cuba when the nightmare ends, which may be soon and Spain may be too late."[42]

Solchaga's report (at least in its public version) was surprising not just because it included political opinions, but because it was bitingly clear without the obfuscation of diplomatic language or the incomprehensibility of technical language. It outlined the most basic and urgent measures that the Cuban regime must carry out to resolve its immediate economic problems as exacerbated by the loss of industry, speculation, repressed inflation ("excess circulation"), excess manpower, shortages, lack of inputs, and the difficulty in exporting, among other shortcomings.

But the necessary reforms would also carry with them a political effect. To those who believe that the proposed measures would serve to prop up the Cuban regime, it has to be remembered that, in practice, there has not

been economic freedom, while political liberty and democracy have disappeared. Cuba is not a large country like China and is only 90 miles from the United States. Economic liberalization and foreign investment would solve two of its most grievous problems: reconciliation among Cubans and the United States' embargo. Between letting the Cuban economy suffocate and encouraging reforms that would produce a gradual political reform, the latter is the preferred choice. From here Solchaga logically believed that the Spanish government was acting correctly by facilitating contacts between the Cuban regime and the moderate opposition, at the same time that it affirmed its opposition to the embargo, which it considered more a hindrance to transition than a help. Cuba was facing a dilemma: bring on economic reforms to finance and consolidate its social victories under different circumstances or run the risk of total bankruptcy and the loss of all social support.

This report stressed that Spain has something to say from both a political and moral point of view. In the first place, Spain claims to have a mission in Latin America, especially in the countries that are undergoing political transitions, hopefully not unlike the one experienced in 1975 in Spain. Many eyes have turned to Spain within the Ibero-American, European Union, and United Nations mechanisms; it has played a notable role in debt restructuring, pacification, and development. Many Latin American countries and the United States think Spain can play a crucial role in the Cuban case, precisely because of "its greater autonomy with respect to American policy in that hemisphere." Solchaga was very clear: "Once leadership is achieved, it has to be exercised; even at the risk of failure. When this leadership is moral, its application cannot be developed while it is being imposed, but rather through persuasion and dialog, which is what Spain is doing right now with Cuba."

In line with these words, it is not surprising that then foreign minister Javier Solana announced that Spain would increase aid to Cuba through human resources training to be used in the workforce, in order to avoid the shortages that Eastern Europe experienced. Summing up Spain's "special relationship" with Cuba, Solana told the Spanish congress that cooperation "between Cuba and Spain is bigger than either government—theirs or ours."[43]

Enter the PP: Globalization of a Bilateral Relationship

The bilateral relationship between Spain and Cuba was expanded in the setting of the annual Ibero-American summits inaugurated in 1991 in Guadalajara, Mexico. The new Spanish government that was elected in

1996 began to work along two fronts—Europe and Ibero-America—and this time chose to use the forum shared with its closer linguistic and historical partners.

Due in part to the fact that the central issue of the November 1996 summit held in Santiago and Viña del Mar, Chile, was "governability," Castro's presence again attracted world attention. He was also to become a focal point when the Spanish premier José María Aznar managed to insert in the Declaration of Viña del Mar a very complete definition of democracy as a requirement for permanent membership in that group, renamed the Ibero-American Conference. In spite of the fact that Castro was a cosigner of the Declaration, no motion was on the horizon to get Cuba expelled for not complying with the democratic conditions, as when it lost its membership in the OAS. However, Ibero-American declarations usually can exert an indirect influence on Cuba like the influence of the Helsinki Agreement on Eastern European regimes under the control of the Soviet Union.

Curiously, unanimity against the Helms-Burton law coincided with the pressure some Latin American dignitaries put on Castro to initiate a political opening, in addition to the public demands made by the Spanish premier José María Aznar. The conflict started with an offer made by the Spanish government for the renewal of bilateral cooperation agreements in exchange for some political reform. In the absence of a prearranged face-to-face meeting, the customary lottery seated Aznar and Castro together for lunch.

The language used by the Spanish leader was not exactly the most opportune, and worst of all was his decision to make it public: "Si mueves pieza (If you move your piece [democracy]), yo moveré la mía (I'll move mine [aid])." With considerable humor, they exchanged their ties, with Aznar claiming that Castro got the expensive one. They quietly adjourned, and when Castro returned to Cuba, he referred to Aznar as a *caballerito*[44] at a meeting of the Cuban Assembly of Popular Power. He followed that salvo with the ritualistic admonition that "the dignity of Cuba cannot be played with on a chess board." As a consequence of this exchange, a new expression gained its place in the political and economic vocabulary of Spain: "Mover pieza," sometimes in a sarcastic manner regarding the policy of Aznar toward Castro. In one example, a business reporter entitled an article "¿Mueve pieza Cuba? (does Cuba make a move?)."[45] His closing comment was representative: "Today Spain is the first trade partner of Cuba among the European Union member states. However, in order to be able to maintain this leadership, the current political relations between the two countries will have to improve. Isn't it time to make a move?"

Almost simultaneously with this chesslike offer, Spain presented to the Council of Ministers of the European Union a new cooperation-aid plan toward Cuba, entirely conditioned on the enactment of political reform. It was the base of the Common Position. This proposal was not received with equal enthusiasm by all European partners. For some, the proposal was an adequate pressure mechanism; for others, it was like a subservient nod to the United States. Nevertheless, the main principles were approved by the Political Committee on November 15 under the Irish presidency.

What ensued as a direct consequence of this was one of the most serious incidents between Spain and Cuba in recent history. Under the excuse of a press interview granted by Josep Coderch, the newly appointed Spanish ambassador to Cuba, in which he expressed hopes that a gradual political change in Cuba would coincide with his tenure in Havana, Fidel Castro withdrew the Cuban diplomatic *placet*. The true reason behind this withdrawal was Spanish sponsorship of the new measures approved by the Political Committee of the EU.[46] In addition to this, Castro was visibly annoyed by the establishment of a Cuban-Spanish Foundation (a sort of branch of the Cuban American National Foundation) in Madrid with the full participation of the PP leadership, which used the Casa de América, an official institution, as a meeting place. The evolution of the foundation was not smooth and CANF's leader Jorge Mas Canosa resigned.[47]

In view of the frequent frictions between Spain and Cuba, it is understandable that the rejection of the nomination of the Spanish ambassador was not to be the last diplomatic incident. In March 1997, the detention of a Spanish tourist in Havana prompted Spanish foreign minister Abel Matutes to declare that the Spanish government would not recommend that Spaniards visit Cuba. Roberto Robaina, Cuban minister of foreign affairs, called Matutes a "meddler," a "liar," and a "blackmailer."[48]

The Socialist opposition branded the new foreign policy pattern of resorting to the European Union's institutional cooperation as a sample of *desespañolización* (de-Hispanization) of the relationship with Cuba. For the PSOE, the link (be it contentious or amicable) between Madrid and Havana is much better accomplished and understood as a sort of family affair, where sensitive issues are treated in a more direct and efficient manner. In contrast, once the bilateral topics between Cuba and Spain are placed within the global context of the European Union, these run the risk, in the PSOE's view, of being diluted. This argument also makes much better sense when certain attitudes that border on an explicit anti-U.S. stance are placed in the normal procedures of the European Union, especially the most supranational institutions such as the Parliament and the Commission. The filter applied to measures that seem excessively

radical to Nordic or British representatives suffer a considerable loss of flavor. In summary, in the view of the PP, contentious exchanges between Cuba and Spain have better chances of coming out as beneficial for Madrid once they are placed in the Brussels context. Spain's partners would logically side with Madrid on items that do not represent any noticeable damage to their economies or strategic interests. What is good for Spain may be good for the rest of Europe, seems to be the logic. For the PSOE, converting the bilateral relationship into a portion of the pooled sovereignty means a loss of independence and the disappearance of direct, person-to-person negotiations.[49]

In any event, after all this controversy during most of 1997, it seems ironic that Spain became the party that suffered the most damage in a conflict that originally involved only Washington and Havana. Spain lost one of its shrewdest observers in the diplomatic field, a handicap that followed on the heels of the inopportune resignation (the first of its kind since the Spanish Civil War) at the end of 1994 of Spanish ambassador José Antonio San Gil, due to never-clarified disagreements with the Socialist government. San Gil's shortened term was also followed by the barely yearlong tenure of his successor, Eudald Mirapeix, who was transferred as too lenient toward Cuba in the eyes of the new conservative Spanish government.

As Chapter 1 explains, the only recorded rejection of a Spanish diplomat in Cuba was the case of Lojendio, who was expelled from the island in 1960. In the 1997 annual congressional debate known as "The State of the Nation," PSOE's leader Felipe González had only one major criticism for the foreign policy of José María Aznar: Spain was the only EU member state without an ambassador in Havana.[50]

Impact on Economic Relations

Moreover, Spanish investors in Cuba feared lack of protection when the financial guarantees and other incentives (frequently tied to the acquisition of Spanish goods) were withdrawn by Madrid after 1996. As a result, commercial flow between the two countries faced the risk of a significant slowdown. Meanwhile, other European countries (not publicly involved in controversies with Castro) could very well fill the space left by Spanish interests. On the other hand, the European Union institutions were in the same position as before the incidents. There was no development aid agreement with Cuba and the requirements for a future one were still the same. Cuban authorities rushed to announce that the disputes with Spain should not have any influence on future dealings with Brussels or other European capitals.

The fact is that the sectors that exerted pressure for the approval of the law could claim that the combination of the U.S. legislative measures and the political change in Spain produced uncertainty in business circles, especially Spanish ones. Some investment projects from other countries were put on hold, while some companies announced they were leaving Cuba as a result of the uncertainty caused by the U.S.-imposed limitations and the collapse of the European Union's cooperation-aid proposal,[51] even though the overall accounting of these losses is very difficult to compute. Other business signals were, in contrast, contradictory. For example, Spanish exports to Cuba rose during the first half of 1996 more than 40 percent,[52] but had settled for a 14 percent increase in 1995.[53] Spanish investment for 1996 reached $11.4 million, tripling the figures of 1995.[54] Spain became the second most important trade partner of Cuba (in contrast to its sixth place in 1994).[55] Trade figures for 1997 revealed a steady increase, with no noticeable effects caused by the Helms-Burton law or the political friction between Spain and Cuba.[56] Spanish exports toward Cuba increased 30 percent in 1996, topping $113 million for the first quarter of 1997, a figure similar to the one recorded for the same period in 1996.[57] In 1998, Spain ranked first as a commercial partner of Cuba. Total figures of Spain-Cuba trade topped $600 million. Spanish tourism investment reached $1 million in 1996 and the trend continued to increase in 1997 and 1998.

As a sign of the new critical policy of the Spanish government, a line of credit for exports to Cuba was cancelled.[58] However, in a typical roller-coaster fashion, later it was announced that about $250,000 was available in aid,[59] along with an overall program of development cooperation that included an additional $660,000 in commercial loans and $733,000 for humanitarian aid and scholarships.[60] In spite of the tense relations in 1997, the 1998 cooperation plan included about $10 million reserved for Cuba. In any event, Cuba led the list of countries in debt to Spain, topping more than $500 million in unpaid loans.[61]

Tensions and Uncertainties: The Pain on Spain

During the summer of 1997 another perturbing and novel development in overall U.S.-Cuba relations had as its epicenter some of the most emblematic Spanish investments in Cuba. One by one, the most important hotels in Havana were hit by well-planned, selective bombs. Some of the hotels belong to or are managed by Spanish firms. This dimension is crucial for the proper understanding of the whole context of the Helms-Burton law. While Spain may be one of the most important investors in Cuba, Spanish interests do not seem to be directly connected with U.S.

expropriated land or buildings. However, most of the Spanish investment is so visible because it is based on hotels catering to tourism in a system that is branded *apartheid*—that is, they are closed to ordinary Cuban citizens. Although it seems that the bombs have not been a deterrent to Spanish tourism in Cuba, they have created a visibly uncomfortable feeling in the political and economic circles of Spain.[62] Whether the bombs were planted by the design of Cuban exiles or by dissidents, the message was the same: tourism was the target, and Spain was the most ostensible culprit in collaboration with Castro.

By the end of 1997, the balance of Spain-Cuba relations presented contradictory signs. Trade experienced a rise. Tourism was under threat but was maintained at its previous level. However, political relations were in a suspended state. Prospects for the naming of a new Spanish ambassador were in limbo. The pressure exerted by the Aznar government had no noticeable effects in the evolution of the Cuban regime. Spain's expectation of Cuban "gestures," such as a nod for the opening of a Spanish cultural center in Havana, had not been matched by the responses of the Cuban government.[63] However, a subtle change in the Spanish attitude led to a more practical policy of engagement with Cuba, very similar to the one practiced by the preceding Socialist government. The concentration of significant events in a few weeks at the end of 1997 and the first months of 1998 deserve a careful analysis and due consideration because some of the activities and facts evolved prior to the John Paul II visit to Cuba and some of the most important decisions made by the Spanish government seem to be dictated by the results of the papal visit.

On the cooperation aid level, Spain decided to include Cuba in the list of priorities for 1998 along with Guatemala and Colombia. Although the aid reserved for Cuba still was subject to conditions in tune with the Common Position adopted by the EU, the sum of $6.6 million was about the same as in 1997.[64] Spain's persistence in strengthening cultural links on the eve of the 1898 commemoration paid off and the Cultural Center was finally opened in Havana. The first lecture was delivered by Joaquín Ruiz Jiménez, a former minister of Franco and a father figure of the Spanish political transition.[65] Just a few days earlier, the Cuban exile writer Guillermo Cabrera Infante was awarded the prestigious Cervantes prize.[66] Unfortunately, as reviewed in Chapter 3, the center was closed in the aftermath of the confrontation over the approval of the EU 2003 measures. The Spanish television network TVE opened a permanent bureau in Havana, second only to CNN in the world.[67] Another milestone was the naming of a military attaché at the Spanish embassy in Havana, the only one of its kind from the NATO and EU bloc.[68] On the negative side, unconfirmed reports about Basque terrorists living in Cuba, while

receiving the support of the Castro government for their actions against the Spanish government, clouded the confusing bilateral relationship.[69]

The papal visit to Cuba caught the Spanish government flat-footed. During the commemoration of the Spanish-American War, Spain was in danger of not having an ambassador fully accredited in Havana, while King Juan Carlos I would have to skip Cuba in his obligatory visits to the last Spanish colonies lost as a result of the Spanish-American War. The alleged pressure of the U.S. ambassador in Madrid had made this epoch-making royal visit a permanent question mark.[70] During the papal visit, all observers feared the worst, in view of the unkind remarks against Spanish colonization in Cuba that Castro used at the arrival of John Paul II in Havana. His brother Raúl's project of building a monument in Santiago de Cuba dedicated to the "genocide" of Cuban patriots added fuel to the fire.

However, a dual announcement seemed to signal a truce. Fidel Castro declared on Cuban television that he did not mean any affront for the Spaniards, because many of them fought alongside the Cuban patriots.[71] With media commentaries offering all kinds of speculation,[72] then foreign minister Matutes announced that the naming of a Spanish ambassador was imminent, while the visit of King Juan Carlos I to Cuba during 1998 was in the works.[73] Madrid apparently made a drastic turn in its policy toward Cuba and came closer to the attitude of engagement espoused by the Socialist administration. A delegation of Spanish Popular Party (PP) members of the European Parliament visited Havana and held high-level talks on the topic of the resuscitation of better Spanish aid programs and a package sponsored by Brussels.[74] As mentioned above, in a late move, the Spanish cabinet approved a bill (in effect, a blocking statute in line with the UK and Canadian measures) opposing the application of the Helms-Burton act, as prescribed by the Regulation passed by the European Union back in the fall of 1996. The bill would prohibit persons and companies from complying with the demands of the U.S. legislation imposed on investment in Iran, Libya, and Cuba.[75]

In summary, on balance for Spain, in foreign policy terms the government of José María Aznar could claim credit for capturing a protagonist role in the EU institutions. The Spanish government also enjoyed the praise of the United States—and paid the toll of abuse by the opposition. However, Aznar had lost ground on one of the fundamental political pillars. With no ambassador in Havana and limited diplomatic relations, he had not obtained any of the desired goals of exerting pressure on Castro: there was no reform of the system and the political transition in Cuba was as cloudy as before. Madrid and Washington then shared the same frustration. This probably explains the change of policy in early 1998

and the apparent implementation of a policy of "calibrated" offers to Havana.

It is interesting to note that the 1996–97 public confrontation between Spain and Cuba contrasted with the extraordinary degree of restraint and apparent compromise that Washington and the European Union revealed in order to avoid irreparable damage to trade relations (WTO, especially because of its precarious existence), as illustrated by the 1998 Understanding. All this was happening while the centennial date of 1998 was approaching. With no changes in the confrontational attitude, some may have said, as in 1898, that "más se perdió en Cuba."[76] The visit of the pope to Cuba and some degree of common sense made the difference.

The Spanish business press has been reflecting the concern that the pressure by Helms-Burton has generated the loss of profitable opportunities in different sectors taken by other countries. This preoccupation has been shared with the political opposition to the PP government. Ironically, Spain, one of the world's most active commercial partners with Cuba, is not part of this "telephone connection." In contrast, Cuban-American interests do have deep investment in Spain's telecommunication networks.[77] Companies owned by Jorge Mas Canosa bought INTEL, a Spanish subsidiary of the Telefónica conglomerate, a giant that is absent from Cuba but nonetheless had considerable interests in the rest of Latin America, especially Argentina, Chile, and Peru.

The sectors that exerted pressure for the approval of Helms-Burton could claim that the combination of the U.S. legislative measures and the political change in Spain did produce uncertainty in business circles, especially Spanish ones. The Spanish government announced the suspension of plans to build eight hotels to be managed by a consortium formed by the Cuban government agency Gran Caribe and the Spanish public company Paradores de España, with an investment of $16 million.[78] Occidental Hoteles (an enterprise that manages a hotel in Miami) announced that it was withdrawing from a project, in conjunction with the Cuban company Gaviota, to build a resort in Varadero.[79] In a rare public statement admitting difficulties, Foreign Minister Abel Matutes ended his early 1997 report to the Spanish Congress declaring that Spanish investment "stagnated," because of the "climate generated by the Helms-Burton law.' "[80]

Nevertheless, the overall political consensus between conservatives and leftists has not quite worked out properly on the Cuba issue. Franco's minister of information and tourism, Manuel Fraga Iribarne, now president of the autonomous region of Galicia, and Christian-Democrats José Antonio Ardanza, president of the Basque Country, and Josep Antoni Durán Lleida, the Catalan leader of Unió Democràtica (the Christian

Democratic party allied to Catalan president Jordi Pujol's Convergència Democràtica), visited Cuba in 1997. They expressed critical views about both the U.S. policy toward Castro and the attempts to isolate his regime. While Fraga (who lived in Cuba as a child of Galician immigrants) suffered the rage of Spanish ultraconservatives for his friendly relations with Castro, the visit of the Basque leader produced the expected controversies.[81]

With the above exceptions, the battle lines customarily divided between left and right were shaped differently as a result of the Helms-Burton law. This politically motivated U.S. legislation created a fascinating Spanish global coalition, a novelty in the Madrid political scene. All the main political parties were for the first time in agreement on one topic. Taking into account that not even the nation's constitutional structure or the membership of Spain in the European Union and NATO are free of contentious arguments, the universal agreement on the opposition to Helms-Burton is remarkable. It has to be considered an outstanding milestone in the effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy—a miracle. Yet, the resulting consequence has a sort of logic, nonetheless.

Once in power, the PP—naturally more inclined toward free enterprise—was firmly aligned with the PSOE and Izquierda Unida (despite having been traditionally at odds with both) in opposition to the Helms-Burton legislation. In the European political scene, Spain sided with the rest of the European countries who, as expected, were also in opposition to the new U.S. law. Some European partners had already proceeded to design countermeasures. The United Kingdom, for example, had previously approved protecting mechanisms for its investments, including the Protection of Trading Interests Order of 1992. It would have been surprising that the Spanish political party that campaigned for privatization and the preeminence of free enterprise would burn the bridges that the previous government extended toward Cuba in the form of private and public investments that, after all, generated jobs.

From the left and right, countermeasures were set in motion. The fact that the Socialists were in a way outraced by the conservatives was a novelty. Guillermo Gortázar, a PP member of parliament who had distinguished himself as a critic of the Socialist posture toward Cuba, rushed to propose a package of measures to protect Spanish investment in the island—not as a guarantee against moves by the Cuban government, but as a precautionary mechanism to ward off the consequences of the Helms-Burton law. Among these measures were the regulations on confidentiality of data on investments in Cuba in order to restrict this information from the knowledge of U.S. agencies and thus avoid subsequent retaliatory measures. In addition to the collective mechanisms

of the European Union, the policy known as Obligatory Diplomatic Protection was designed to convert the Spanish administration into a codefendant of related U.S. lawsuits. Finally, some European-wide countermeasures were contemplated, including the denial of visas to potential litigants against European interests. They would be prevented from entering European Union territories, as well as being prohibited from making future investment in the Union.[82] Yet, once the European Union approved its collective measures (as discussed in the preceding chapter), the Spanish government did not immediately enact special mechanisms of its own until early 1998 when the cabinet approved a bill following the model of the blocking measures produced by Canada and the UK.[83]

THE CHANGE OF COURSE

The chain of events, plans, declarations, and counterproposals in the aftermath of the visit of John Paul II to Cuba also included some interesting subtle or spectacular changes in the attitudes of other secondary actors. Spain then decided to accelerate its rapprochement policy. From an attitude of wait-and-see, Madrid decided to announce that the naming of a new ambassador was in the works. While for many months (if not years) a royal visit to Cuba was out of the question, now the Spanish government seized the occasion and announced that it could be a reality in 1998.[84] The PSOE leader Joaquín Almunia continued the pressure for the royal visit and the naming of the Spanish ambassador, in agreement with Castro.[85] In contrast, the office of Premier José María Aznar seemed to be at odds with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[86] and a delegation of members of the Popular Party in the European Parliament.[87] While the Spanish government expressed the condition that the new Spanish envoy should have total freedom to contact dissidents in Cuba,[88] for its part the Cuban government stressed that the visit of the king and the naming of a new Spanish ambassador were two different topics.[89]

While most pessimistic and realistic observers were expecting a long delay on these two pending issues, the Spanish government announced the naming of Eduardo Junco as the new Spanish ambassador in Cuba.[90] Usually well-informed sources described the move as a "thawing" in Spain-Cuba relations.[91] Moreover, it was revealed that the agreement was reached by a personal telephone interview between Castro and Aznar, while a visit of Cuban foreign minister Robaina to Madrid was in the making. The project of the royal visit to Cuba in 1998 was then revived, but it was set to take place in early 1999 or later in the setting of the Ibero-American Summit to be held in Havana in the fall. The announcement was received by the Spanish opposition as "well overdue"[92] and

by the Spanish press as "common sense."[93] The same day, José María Robles Fraga, a PP member of the Spanish Congress and an influential foreign policy adviser of Aznar, met in Miami with CubanAmerican National Foundation leaders to explain that the new decision did not mean a change in Spain's policy toward Cuba. This message was reaffirmed directly by Aznar during his brief visit to Miami on June 8–9. Just days later, Josep Piqué, minister of industry, visited Cuba accompanied by a large group of company executives.[94] It was the official counterpart of another impressive visit made by José María Cuevas, president of the Spanish Confederation of Employers. José María Ardanza, president of the Basque Country, visited Cuba for the second time to reinforce an important commercial and cooperation relationship.[95] Simultaneously, the Spanish government took credit for the newly approved observer status for Cuba in the Lomé Convention negotiations. The leader of the Catalan party Unió Democràtica, Josep Antoni Durán-Lleida, visited Havana again in September 1998 as representative of the Christian-Democratic international organization. Subsequently, the autonomous presidents of Asturias, Andalusia, and Extremadura also visited Cuba.

The PSOE leadership took the opportunity to question the Aznar government as to the motivations for the change, in contrast with the harsh criticism directed to the Felipe González government in the midst of the 1996 electoral campaign. New candidate José Borrell sarcastically asked Aznar why Spanish investment was considered "immoral" during the PSOE administration because it allegedly lengthened the Castro government, and later it was acceptable.[96]

In this context, as detailed in Chapters 2 and 3, on May 18, 1998, the European Union and the United States announced at the end of the summit held in London by UK prime minister Tony Blair (doubling as EU president) and U.S. president Bill Clinton that they had agreed to a compromise to freeze the application of the controversial Helms-Burton and D'Amato acts in reference to investment in Cuba, Libya, and Iran.[97]

When the Popular Party managed to consolidate its power base with the reelection of José María Aznar in 2000, the existing trends and ups and downs of Spain's relations with Cuba continued as in the past. Regarding the human dimension, Castro was not pleased by the constant petitions for asylum made by Cubans arriving in the Madrid airport. The award of asylum status is a sensitive issue because it recognizes the democratic shortcomings of the petitioner's country of origin, in this case Cuba. In addition to this pattern, there were frequent acquisitions of Spanish citizenship by matrimony or inheritance. In other cases, friction was similar to the experience with Elián González, claimed by both families. Children were retained in Cuba as a reprisal for the desertion of the parents.[98] In

addition, Cuban authorities grew irritated by athletes who converted to Spanish citizenship in order to compete in the Sydney Olympics under the new flag. "Athletes stealing," "insult to poor countries," and "sports imperialism" were some of the expressions used. Juan Antonio Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee (COI) advocated that this sensitive issue should be solved at high political levels.[99]

Other sources of friction included foreign real state investment that was curtailed by the Cuban government. Spaniards began to suffer from a bad image when dealing with properties and tourist operations. As a result of isolated cases of abuse and arrogance, the image of the "ugly Spaniard" was in the making, reversing decades of positive image created by Spanish immigration.[100]

In the diplomatic terrain, a new confrontation between the Cuban and the Spanish governments exploded in the setting of the 10th Ibero-American Summit held in Panama on November 17–18. Upon the initiative of El Salvador, a declaration of support for Spain in the fight against terrorism was presented.[101] Castro had arrived in Panama amid unprecedented security measures. With no warning for his host, Panamanian president Mireya Moscoso, Castro announced that the Cuban exiles planned to assassinate him.[102] He later refused to sign the declaration against terrorism. He also had a verbal encounter with Salvadoran president Francisco Flores.[103] Days later, as a response to the negative reactions of his colleagues, Castro had derogatory words for Spain, as an "emergent European economic power in Latin America, sometimes useful for the fight against the Northern voracity, but under a political leadership with evident inclination towards arrogance."[104]

The Cuban government was extremely interested in stressing the difference between its drastic criticism against the Spanish administration, especially José María Aznar, and its encomiastic commentaries for King Juan Carlos.[105] The Cuban media said that in spite of the controversies, Spanish citizens would always be welcome. The insistence on expressing a friendly attitude toward the Spanish people is a parallel with similar policy toward the United States. In both cases, Cuba has stressed the contrast between the "real country" and the "official" state. The pattern of personalizing against Aznar crossed some standard limits as a result of the incident in Panama, beyond past experiences. *Granma* described Aznar's policy as "sick and aggressive." The Cuban government rejected "threats" and a press campaign against Castro, aiming at separating the Cuban and Spanish people, using "a colonial language, full of lies." The Cuban television programs linked Aznar with the "exile mafia and terrorists in Miami," alleging the help given Mas Canosa and the CANF in exchange for the "selling of companies at low cost," denouncing the invitation to attend the

Partido Popular congress, and criticizing the award of an honorary doctorate to Aznar by Florida International University in Miami in 1998.[106] *Trabajadores*, on the occasion of a trip made by Castro to attend the inauguration of the Mexican president, labeled as a "lost dream" an alleged "confabulation between Aznar y Salvadoran President Francisco Flores [qualified by *Granma* as a scribe for Aznar[107]]. All this had as aim the isolation of Castro."[108] In sum, the activity of Aznar was illustrated as "megalomaniac." The language used by Aznar and his minister of foreign affairs was considered "threatening and insulting."[109]

It is interesting to note that all these sources of friction developed in a Spanish media setting that contrasted with the previous situation. Earlier, the Spanish press and book industry had been severely divided into two groups. One supported the Cuban Revolution and silenced reference to the shortcomings of the Castro regime. The other used all kinds of opportunities to attack Castroism. Now the conservative press maintained its line of harassment against Havana, but the center-left *El País* and other centrist and liberal media became extremely critical. "A ferocious dictatorship" was the title of a trend-making editorial, in the past reserved only for the conservative *ABC*. This new scenario irritated the Cuban regime, which blamed the Aznar government. The polemic caused in Panama by the declaration against ETA was blamed on the same alleged policy.[110] This origin of the incident is similar to the controversy in Chile during the 1996 Ibero-American summit, when Aznar made the offer of "moving a piece." In both cases there was no diplomatic preparation. It was a result of the what is called the "presidentialization" of Spain's foreign policy and its anchoring in La Moncloa, the office of the primer minister, instead of in the realm of the minister of foreign affairs.

Looking back to the first months of 1995, three types of evidence have revealed themselves in assessing the relationship between Cuba and Spain. In the first place, Cuba's progressive isolation and the deterioration of its socioeconomic conditions forced the government to take previously unthinkable steps (economic reforms, public relations campaigns). In this area, Spain continued to be the link that Castro could not run the risk of breaking. Second, the Spanish government had shown no signs of changing the special attention it has given Cuba. But the alarming deterioration of Cuba's economic indicators and the growing controversy between Madrid and Havana that frequently created a very tense atmosphere combined to indicate that a qualitative change in attitude toward Cuba had occurred in Spain. Whatever it might be, a new policy could be executed only by an adjustment, a hardening, or the imposition of conditions with negative implications for the Cuban government. Diplomatic "weariness" had been inexorably replaced by frustration, which could only

create alarm and pressures to take drastic measures, though it would not lead in any case to Spain abandoning Cuba.

Conclusion

With all advisable caution, it would be helpful on one hand to synthesize the impeccable arguments of Solchaga and Solana and, on the other, weigh the context of the frequent public statements of some Spanish diplomats. "There are still some imbeciles within and outside the Spanish administration, who are interested in seeing the Cuban regime change as slowly as possible," said Jorge de Orueta, ex-counselor of the Spanish embassy in Havana.[111] From this perspective as chargé d'affaires, Ignacio Rupérez's analysis of the 1994 new *balsero* crisis (when the strait of Florida was flooded with refugees feeling in *bslsas*) was quite valid: "Our presence and actions in revolutionary Cuba will be examined, perhaps with the same passion we have displayed in abundance as principal actors, but ones playing undignified roles in a drama in which everyone has done exactly as he pleases. One should distrust the view, advanced since 1990 that the revolution is a defender of the Spanish heritage against the United States and Spain the successor of the USSR in providing unconditional support for Cuba. One hundred years after 1898 we may have a repeat of that debacle and soon we might be saying again (in the face of any loss), 'that's nothing compared to what we lost in Cuba'."[112]

The insertion of Cuban affairs into the domestic arena of Spanish politics only contributed to making the EU-Cuba relationship even murkier. It is doubtful that this partisan confrontation would at any moment benefit the fragile and shaky situation of the dissident movement, worried about a negative fallout from the internal quarrel between the Spanish government and the opposition. In consequence, the most prudent and effective approach for the EU member states to take, in expectation of contributing to a peaceful political transition, seemed to be a behind-the-scenes diplomatic policy, distanced from the headline-grabbing incidents that ultimately only produce a hard-line attitude in Havana.

Among the alternative paths has been replacing a policy based solely on delivering gestures and symbolic moves with a cohesive, comprehensive, and multilateral approach, heavily anchored on solid legislation that conditions developing assistance and closer political linkages on respect forhuman rights. This real "Common Position" has been considered very difficult for the Cuban government and domestic interests in Europe to manipulate and exploit. This new scenario would mean the disappearance of a fragile relationship influenced by embassy invasion crises, cocktail wars, personal insults, demeaning references to historical dates, violations

of diplomatic traditions, and mass demonstrations led by high government officials. Given that certain economic and tourist activities have been proceeding steadily, inspite of all limitations derived from the nature of the Cuban regime and world trends, the most sensible way to maintain open communication lines is to lessenthe sources of friction and obstacles, to keep European and Cuban governments in minimum contact and increase linkages between the respective civil societies, in expectation of important political changes to come.

CHAPTER 5

WAITING FOR FIDEL AND RAÚL
RESIGNATION, SUCCESSION, TRANSITION

> Me importa un bledo (I don't give a damn).
>
> Fidel Castro, opinion on the UN Commision on Human Rights (2003)

> We wish Castro and Cuban democracy a speedy recovery.
>
> Pietro Petruccci, spokesman of the European Commission, 2006

> The Council called upon the Cuban government to improve effectively the human rights situation by releasing unconditionally all political prisoners . . . to facilitate access of international humanitarian organizations to Cuban prisons . . . the EU stands ready to resume a comprehensive and open dialogue . . . agreed to the lifting of the already suspended 2003 measures.
>
> EU Council' Conclusions, June 21, 2008

> I want to express my contempt towards the immense hypocrisy of that decision.
>
> Fidel Castro, on EU Council's Conclusions, June 21, 2008

> A good step in the right direction.
>
> Cuban foreign minister Felipe Pérez Roque, June 21, 2008

AT LAST?

By mid-2006, for the first time in almost half a century, all actors and observers of the Cuban drama that has attracted the attention of

a wide spectrum of the world's public opinion were in rare agreement. All breathed a mix of expectation, calm, anguish, and hope before the moderately imminent biological (as the term is customarily used in Cuba) end of at least the current political leadership. It was expected that the vigil would end for the terminal reason (the death of Castro) that most feared or hoped for. It was less clear then if this one-of-a-kind chapter of the recent history of Cuba would also represent a drastic change of regime. In other words, the ultimate question answered with the passing of Fidel.

Most observers would agree that something had begun to develop in Cuba in mid-2006. But analyses and political views differed on whether this change to come was going to be a succession or a transition. All bets were off for predicting either a synchronized change in the leadership according to the legislation in place, with Raúl Castro taking over the powers bestowed by his brother Fidel, or in the alternative a brief interlude in the direction of a true transition to a different kind of political regime.

All the pieces in the puzzle seemed to be prepared. Pessimistic observers of the regime had said for years that all was legally *atado y bien atado* (tied up and well tied up, as the Spanish official saying went during the last years of the Franco regime) for the effective Cuban succession. But no one seemed to know if that plan would lead to a provisional leadership by Raúl Castro, as it was in fact announced when the sudden illness and surgery of Fidel Castro were revealed and his brother temporarily took his place. A collective power wielded by the party was an alternative on the horizon.

In any case, in the context of EU-Cuba relations, an atmosphere of stillness prevailed. The United States and the anti-Castro interests were engaging in another cyclical round of hardening the economic and political measures against Cuba that were initiated by the embargo. Meanwhile, diverse European Union collective interests and individual governments seemed to be inexorably coming to a conclusion. With some sense of resignation, they realized that their efforts toward a policy of constructive engagement with the Cuban regime and the society at large were not receiving the expected results. "Welcome to the club," was the collective assessment in Washington and European capitals.

The U.S.-Cuba confrontation appeared to be characterized by another variation of the old-fashioned Cold War methods, at least in their verbal and talk show appearances. The European-Cuban relationship was tinged by a peculiar and special touch of stunning stubbornness, as solid as the one that had marked the U.S.-Cuba relationship for over four decades. The difference this time was that the Europe-Cuba relationship was doomed to frustration, not by irritation on the part of the European Union but by the hardening of Castro's behavior on human rights. A feeling of "mutual irrelevancy" characterized both strategies.

Both Cuban and EU actors seemed to be convinced that they had exhausted all moves to influence each other. Both appeared to be placidly resigned to the fact that, no matter how much they would (or would not) try, there was no chance for an important change in their corresponding behavior. For the European Union this diagnosis did not appear negative. After all, the record shows that Brussels and most of the member states have tried to influence, persuade, and subtly coerce Havana in a given *future* political direction. They aimed mostly at preparing the country for changes *after* the end of the current political system. For Cuba, the stalemate had to be read as a triumph, even at the price of not receiving some expected benefits in exchange for a mild reform in behavior. Havana could boast that facing the European Union and some powerful European actors had political returns. It was therefore valued at a much higher level than submitting to negotiation and compromise.

This was the apparently well-set scenario that had been dominating the European-Cuban relationship when the Castro regime was approaching its 50th anniversary and the leader was ready to pass his 80th birthday. The balance had been developed from a series of trends, events, and tactics that evolved parallel to the more tumultuous relationship (at times dangerous and bordering on war) between the United States and Cuba since 1959. As we have seen in the course of this study, the ups and downs of the European-Cuban link are, to a certain extent, collateral damage and appendages of a deeper and more complex relationship between Havana and Washington. Some of the European motions toward Cuba have resulted from reactions to the U.S. policy, although some European actors have had a long historical linkage with the Caribbean nation, like the well-known and special case of Spain. As demonstrated in Chapters 1 and 4, this "special relationship" has been constantly present in the analytical framework of Spanish observers and scholars. The result is that reality and historical facts are usually filtered through the particular lenses of the direct witnesses and researchers.

This stalemate is aptly illustrated by the evolution of what has to be considered the most critical confrontation between the European Union and Cuba in decades, leading to a softening of the attitudes and offerings of the EU, with no evident results and rewards given by the Cuban regime. Far from resorting to the battle lines, both sides seemed to have preferred to agree on a modus vivendi that, while it does not satisfy anybody, serves at least as a platform for not worsening the situation.[1]

As it has been pointed out above, the series of moves started with the realization that the temporary measures taken by the EU in mid-2003, as retaliation for acts considered violations of human rights by the Cuban regime, were not working. The results were actually counterproductive.

The situation did not benefit anybody, with the possible exception of the hardliners in the Cuban exile community and the U.S. government. Moreover, the measures strengthened the Cuban government's resistance to foreign pressure. By expecting the Cuban regime to submit first to the persuasion and then to the punishment for unbecoming behavior, the European diplomatic machinery was shut off and its minimal support for the dissident movement it meant to benefit became ineffective. Brussels saw that the EU became the victim of the same condition that has affected U.S. interests through the 40-plus years of the embargo and isolation policy.

BACK TO "CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT"

Not convinced that a change of policy would render the expected results, the European Union decided in mid-2005, just less than two years after the imposition of temporary measures, to suspend them and return the official attitude to the basic threefold strategy in existence since the mid-1990s when the EU adopted the Common Position on Cuba. First, as it has been reviewed in the preceding chapters, the EU stated disagreement with the political and economic system of Cuba. However, the EU reiterated opposition to the U.S. embargo and especially to its collateral measures regarding potential retaliation against outside interests dealing with Cuba. Finally, it conditioned an improvement of the EU-Cuba relationship and the expected benefit derived from programs of development cooperation on the implementation of a substantial reform in the Cuban legal and political system and a policy of respect for human rights.

As discussed earlier in Chapter 3, this scene has to be properly framed within the context of the stormy first part of 1996 when the prospects of a rapprochement between the European Union and the United States were still favorable. Simultaneously the congressional vote difficulties for the passing of the Helms-Burton act ended abruptly with the shooting down of the Brothers to the Rescue airplanes. Let's recall that in the fall of that year, after the victory of the Popular Party led by José María Aznar, the new Spanish government took the lead in the EU and managed to get the Common Position approved. Reinforced by the measures in 2003, in late 2004 the EU decided to get rid of the measures, without much enthusiasm. Then it elected a dual approach of engaging the dissident movement and strengthening communication with the Cuban government and society at large.

The preparations for this mild reform of the official attitude commenced in mid-2004. Although the issue had been much discussed and debated during the previous months, the change of government in Spain

as a result of the March 14 election (linked to the March 11 terrorist attack in Madrid) was also a deciding factor. The new Socialist administration took the lead in persuading the rest of the EU governments to consider a correction for a situation that was, according to the evaluation of the core of EU Council members, counterproductive and not to the benefit of the Cuban civil society, while diplomatic channels also remained frozen.

The Irish presidency of the EU Council ended in June 2004 with no noticeable changes. Several sectors of the EU institutions continued stressing the need to follow the official script and proceeded with campaigns to influence and to pressure the Cuban government. Such was the notorious case of Swedish EU Parliament member Cecilia Malstrom, a leader of the critical sector opposed to any amelioration of the measures taken in 2003.[2] As referred to later in this commentary, Malstrom's activity was to resurface when the EU changed course. She was eventually named Sweden's minister for European Affairs.

As a sign of an unchanged situation, on May 13, 2004, the Irish presidency of the EU issued a declaration reaffirming its condemnation of the trials of dissidents in Havana. The text recalled the Resolution adopted by the UN Commission on Human Rights of April 15, 2004, reminding Havana that the situation was to be weighed when the evaluation the Common Position was due.[3] Consequently, on June 14, 2004, at the closing of the Irish leadership of the EU, the General Affairs Council issued its assessment expressing "disappointing lack of progress" by the Cuban government, and "serious concern at the ongoing large-scale violation of human rights in Cuba." It demanded from Cuba "to release immediately all those detained for political reasons." Among other concerns, the EU expressed "regret at the imposition of new restrictions on private enterprise," "condemned the unacceptable attitude of the Cuban government towards EU delegations in Havana," and "regret at Cuba's refusal of EU cooperation." As a result "of the lack of progress . . . the Council reaffirmed the measures adopted on 5 June 2003." At the same time, "in the context of its policy of constructive engagement, the EU and its Member States would also continue to provide support for cultural events in Cuba and would urge the Cuban authorities to avoid obstructing this process."[4]

In spite of the apparent lack of substantial changes in European perceptions, the Spanish lead of the EU's new course of action on Cuba became more assertive when on July 9, 2004, Madrid named its new ambassador. Carlos Alonso Zaldívar, a veteran career diplomat with previous experience in Seoul and Rome, was named and confirmed. This appointment gave the Castro government a sense of priority because Madrid had announced earlier that three important posts were designated

for the initial changes. The other two were the ambassadors to the UN and Morocco. Simultaneously, Herick Campos, PSOE deputy and secretary general of the Socialist Youth, visited Havana, with the result that the Partido Popular retaliated by sending its secretary for International Relations, Jorge Moragas, to Cuba to visit Oswaldo Payá. Days later, the Cuban authorities released Martha Beatriz Roque, the only woman among the 75 arrested dissidents.

The plans for reformatting the EU policy proceeded. News of the impending change was met by the Spanish opposition with certain measures to influence the discussions taking place in Brussels. The Spanish embassy prepared the way, intending to use the reception on the national day of October 12 for announcing the new plan. This decision generated considerable criticism from sectors of the dissident movement and the Cuban exile community. In this contextual framework, in another of the serious incidents that could have had important consequences, Jorge Moragas traveled again to Havana on a tourist visa. He was accompanied by two Dutch deputies, while the Netherlands was holding the EU presidency. Moragas intended to meet with representatives of the dissident movement, was detained at the airport, and was forced to go back on the same Air France airplane. The Spanish government presented a protest to the Cuban authorities. The incident caused considerable trouble to the Spanish embassy while it was preparing the ground for the change of policy. The events were strategically located just before the Latin American Committee (COLAT) of the Council of the EU was to meet to discuss the Cuban issue, with the result that the debate was postponed until later in November, giving time to the European embassies to assess the situation.

In what was to be one of the most publicly debated debuts of any Spanish ambassador to Cuba, Alonso Zaldívar became the center of the controversy. In the course of the reception for the national day of October 12, not attended by Cuban officials who had systematically boycotted the occasion since the imposition of the diplomatic measures, he announced that the Spanish government had decided to take the lead and apply what was destined to be the centerpiece of the EU's new approach. The new format was not to invite the representatives of the dissident movement to national day celebrations but to hold separate, periodic meetings between the member states' embassies and representatives of the dissident community. Some dissidents took the arrangement as a pragmatic move. Others felt insulted and left the reception in disgust, while the Cuban exile community in Miami lambasted the Spanish government.

Days later, news erupted about the fall suffered by Fidel Castro in the town of Santa Clara when leaving the podium of a ceremony, after

concluding his speech. The incident gave considerable ground for speculation regarding his health. The Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs convoked (in a rather unprecedented move) the Spanish ambassador to announce to him the "unfreezing" of the conflictive relationship that prevented direct communications with European embassies. In spite of all difficulties and obstacles placed by different actors, at the year's closing it was obvious that the existing policy had exhausted all its available credibility. Brussels and several European governments had given explicit signals to Havana of the need to offer a hint of a gesture that would help the EU to change course. At the beginning of January 2005 all the member state embassies and the EU representation were returned their normal diplomatic access, with the notable exception of the Czech Republic.

Consequently, the Cuban government extended an olive branch in the form of the release of a dozen political prisoners between the summer of 2004 and fall of 2005, among them the prestigious poet and independent journalist Raúl Rivero and the economist Oscar Espinosa. This move was limited in number and in concept. The bulk of the 75 imprisoned dissidents still remained in jail and the "liberation" was designated as *excarcelación* for health reasons, in fact a house exile. However, EU circles welcomed the improvement, took a positive note, and continued to pressure the decision makers of the national governments to match the expectations.[5] While the conservative opposition in Spain evaluated this development as a triumph for Castro, the Dutch government holding the EU presidency judged the decision as encouraging.

The change of the EU presidency had resulted, among other details, in the announcement of the reformatting of the EU attitude. On January 31, the General Affairs Council issued its conclusions deciding that "all measures taken on June 5, 2003" were "temporarily suspended." This decision was to be reviewed in six months "in the light of developments towards democratic pluralism and respect for human rights." In detail, the Council terminated "the limitation of high-level visits," while meetings "with peaceful opposition might be part" of such high level visits. It also suspended "the reduction of the level of participation in cultural events." As later developments would show, on June 13, 2005, the Council decided "to maintain the dialogue" and to keep the measures suspended, in spite of the fact that it reiterated "its urgent request to release unconditionally all political prisoners," expressed "regret at the lack of any further advance since the release" of a number of prisoners, and the fact that it did not detect "satisfactory progress on human rights."[6] In essence, the EU had elected to keep on trying to maintain open lines of communication, with the result that European circles and interests opposed to this new EU approach branded it "a policy of appeasement."[7] However, the semester

and its background were not an easy scenario for what appeared to be a notable improvement in EU-Cuba relations.

The Spanish government and EU leaders stressed the need for the change, justifying this move because the imposition of the "sanctions" did not deliver any positive results,[8] outlining an improvement in the relationship and a noticeable decrease in the tension.[9] In contrast with the optimistic EU assessment, the U.S. government predicted that Cuba would implement an even harsher policy against the dissidents. Some of them, however, considered that the change would not have any effects on their situation. The U.S. press stressed the division of views within the EU regarding the evolution of the Cuba issue. Things had returned to "normal." However, some interesting novelties were revealed, as a sign of the new times.

I DON'T GIVE A DAMN

On the EU side, the lifting of the measures had a most important result—the visit to Havana paid by Louis Michel, commissioner for development. He met with Fidel Castro in a night session that lasted three hours. He also met with Foreign Minister Pérez Roque and Ricardo Alarcón, president of the Cuban parliament, as well as with several representatives of the dissident movement in Cuba.[10] Alarcón had been one of the most critical voices regarding the relationship with the EU. On the eve of Pérez Roque's trip to Europe and right after Michel's visit to Havana, Alarcón demanded of the EU "a little humility" in its relations with Cuba when pondering conditions for better treatment. He labeled the suspended sanctions "childish" and considered "unimportant" the promised help from the EU, while warning Europe not to treat Cuba as an "unbecoming kid, suffering a punishment in a corner by a teacher without authority."[11] Days later, Alarcón warned that "Cuba would not give power to idiots," referring to the representatives of the dissident movement staging pacific demonstrations and meeting with EU officials.[12]

However, much to the regret of the Cuban government that had invested considerable energy in special operations (among them the trip made by Pérez Roque to Europe) in the weeks before to obtain a favorable outcome, the UN Commission voted a Resolution once again. This time it was offered by the United States on the human rights situation in Cuba. Twenty-one members (among all the EU members) voted against Cuba, 17 against the measure, while 15 abstained. Keen observers had predicted the EU attitude based on the previous record. In 2004 all EU members sided with the Honduras-led measure; in 2003 Europe endorsed the initiative taken by Costa Rica; and in 2002 the EU members added

their vote to the Resolution presented by Uruguay.[13] When the outcome was known, Castro vented his anger at the UN Commission, using one novel expression in his long list of epithets. This time he responded to the UN: "me importa un bledo la Comisión," the equivalent of "I don't give a damn," thus branding the EU members as "accomplices" of the United States.

Among the benefits received by the dissident community was the liberation of poet and journalist Raúl Rivero, thanks to the active negotiations of the Spanish government. After deciding to reside in Spain, upon his arrival Rivero was received by Zapatero, under the auspices of PSOE international relations secretary Trinidad Jiménez (who later in the year would become the target of Castro's wrath).[14] Significantly, the PP leadership of Madrid presented him the "Tolerance" award, approved the previous December.[15]

Economic relations between European countries and Cuba were in the background of this evolution, especially the Spanish investments. At the end of 2004, the Cuban and Spanish governments agreed to close an agreement on the exchange of the debt for funds destined to education projects.[16] Oil conglomerate Repsol-YPF was exploring partnerships with Chinese and Norwegian companies.[17] Meanwhile, a reduction of business for small- and medium-volume companies was predicted in the background of priority given to large multinational companies[18] and the aggressive strategy posed by China.[19] The Cuban government did not renew a dozen licenses for small Spanish companies, while negotiations for unblocking the trade relations remained frozen.[20]

DON'T BLAME ME FOR TRYING

In spite of this conflictive and shaky scenario, as mentioned above, the EU Council, confirming the decision made on January 31, 2005, decided on June 13 to continue with the suspension of the measures, giving the constructive dialogue policy a chance. This time, the EU even walked the extra mile in extending the term of the cyclic evaluation of the conditions of the 1996 Common Position. It was changed from a short six-month period to a whole year, offering Cuba the opportunity to show an improvement in its human rights record in June 2006.

Previous to the announcement of the decisions, all sides with a stake in the issue lobbied the EU to either make a change in its policy or stay the course. Over a hundred NGOs (predominantly sympathetic with the Castro regime) demanded the permanent lifting of the 2003 measures, the elimination of the Common Position, and the reestablishment of relations between the EU and Cuba based on mutual respect.[21] In contrast,

a representation of the most important dissident organizations in Cuba demanded the EU's official recognition of the movement, a stop to the issuing of trade loans to the Cuban regime, and the monitoring of the human rights situation, with the explicit recommendation of continuing with the sanctions imposed in 2003.[22] However, as many insiders and independent observers predicted, the EU General Affairs Council decided to maintain the status quo of January 2005.[23]

Nonetheless, the agreed text was laden with several samples of unusually harsh language. As mentioned earlier, the EU reaffirmed the validity of the Common Position and reiterated its willingness to maintain a constructive dialogue, insisted on "its urgent request to Cuba to release unconditionally all political prisoners," expressed "regret at the lack of any further advance since the release in June and November of 2004 of a number of the political prisoners," and condemned "the action taken by the Cuban authorities to curb the freedom of expression and assembly and freedom of the press." It also condemned "Cuba's unacceptable attitude towards foreign parliamentarians and journalists who attended the Assembly [of May 20, 2005]" and called on the Cuban authorities "to refrain in the future from such actions which would jeopardize normal relations between Cuba and the European Union." Finally, while noticing that "there was no satisfactory progress on human rights," the EU decided to reconsider its Common Position in June 2006, while measures taken on June 5, 2003, remained suspended.[24]

Inside the EU machinery and deep in the bowels of the Cuban governmental structure, a common sentiment was to dominate the moves of each side in the coming months. According to seasoned observers and insiders in Brussels, each side had come to conclude that the arguments available to influence each other were exhausted. The stalemate, in essence, neither benefited nor damaged their corresponding image, prestige, or appearance of power and resistance. No one was then surprised to see that, from mid-2005 to mid-2006, everything seemed to be business as usual, more of the same.

It is not surprising then, as a confirmation of the new low priority given by Castro to the European scene, that he finally chose not to attend the Ibero-American Summit held in the Spanish city of Salamanca, in spite of the lobbying by the Spanish government to obtain a record participation. Although the exile community made preparations for protests, Castro decided to follow the pattern of remaining absent since the summit held in Panamá in 2000. He gave as an excuse that he had to concentrate on efforts to deliver Cuban help to Central America and Pakistan in times of natural disasters.[25] Although threats of an attempt against his life were mentioned as a justification along with the fact that a potential court order

could place him in jeopardy of arrest like Pinochet in London, the more plausible explanation was that the occasion did not merit his efforts. He preferred instead to concentrate his energies in selected travels where he would obtain the reward of unquestioned stardom, not subject to hidden conditions in order not to embarrass his hosts, among them King Juan Carlos and the new prime minister of Spain.[26]

Nonetheless the gathering could be considered a positive milestone for the Cuban government, not only because no critical remarks were made on the human rights situation and no demands or recommendations were given to Foreign Minister Pérez Roque, substituting for Castro, but by virtue of a significant linguistic detail used in the official documentary declarations. For the first time in the history of the Ibero-American summits, the word *bloqueo* (blockade) was used instead of the milder term *embargo* as it is customarily used also in governmental Spanish. *Bloqueo* is normally employed only by parties, groups, and commentators much inclined to give unconditional support to the Cuban regime. Caught in the media dispute and the concerns expressed by the U.S. administration, the Spanish government and the Ibero-American Summit staff stated that the term is regularly used in Spanish in the documents issued by the United Nations, a claim that is not exactly accurate as shown by the yearly reports on the resolution "to end the embargo."[27]

The "canapé war" (as the controversy over the invitation of dissidents to national celebrations in European embassies in Havana has been called) was renewed during the month of October. The new EU approach was interpreted in different ways by each one of the governments, now more free to choose an alternative way for maintaining links with the opposition. This policy was under the scrutiny of numerous observers, not only in different European countries but also in the Americas.[28] On the one hand, the German embassy elected on October 3, 2005, to have not one reception, but *two*, one in the morning for the diplomatic corps and a second in the afternoon to receive members of the "civil society." But the Cuban government did not like this compromise and boycotted the diplomatic gathering, At the end of the month, the Cuban government suspended the celebration of the Czech national day in a Spanish Sol Meliá hotel in Havana, an incident that prompted the protest of the dissident movement against the hotel chain, accusing the Spanish business of "confabulation" with the Cuban government.[29]

On the other hand, the Spanish embassy implemented the new policy. It consisted of avoiding an invitation to the dissidents but substituting periodic meetings with them, an approach that apparently received the approval of the Cuban authorities. Nonetheless, Castro increased his declarations of protest not only against the United States. He also opposed

any efforts of the European countries and the EU to impose conditions on assistance. Simultaneously, the Czech and Slovak governments reiterated their intentions of coordinating efforts in convincing the rest of the EU to reinstate the measures taken in 2003.[30]

However, from mild diplomatic flaps, the confrontation between Cuba's apparently most important link in Europe and the Castro government picked up as the year was closing. The new occasion was the expulsion of two members of the Spanish Association for a Cuba in Transition (AECT), who had been in the country compiling information for a report.[31] Their materials were confiscated, including video recordings of declarations of the organization Ladies in White (families of political prisoners) demanding the support of the EU Parliament that had awarded them a prize for their activity.[32] The Spanish government protested the expulsion measure, just after Fidel Castro used one of his speeches to harshly criticize the comments made by the international relations director of the PSOE, Trinidad Jiménez, who had earlier demanded the termination of the harassment of the Cuban opposition.[33] Jiménez, as mentioned above, earlier was instrumental in the release of dissident poet Raúl Rivero and his residence in Spain. This time she was branded by Castro as "a functionary of a party that calls itself Socialist or Social Democratic." This is a rather unusual and disdainful way to refer to the party led in the past by Felipe González and currently by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, and considered by the Spanish opposition (the PP) as friendly to the Cuban regime. It must also be noted that the Ladies in White organization delivered a letter to the British embassy (while it held the EU presidency) asking for the release of political prisoners, while holding press conferences in front of the Spanish embassy.[34]

The Eclipse of the Patriarch

The July 31, 2006, stunning news of Castro's illness and temporary retirement from power hit the dormant EU institutions and most influential governments preparing for the summer vacation. Although customary statements were expected expressing diplomatic wishes for a fast recovery, there was a polite silence regarding the political evolution of the regime. No explicit declarations of (unnecessary) support for the temporary heir were detected. In some countries where Cuban affairs have become in recent years a domestic issue, such as Spain, the expected gentle diplomatic comments made by high officials were met by a round of critical evaluations from the opposition.

A consensus of caution developed, showing that no political faction or sector wanted to be on record as contributing to the worsening of the

situation. With the exception of the vocal commentaries made by second-level figures of the PP and the leadership of Izquierda Unida (defending the "conquests" of the Castro revolution), the attitude in Spain was prudent and respectful. Any other more active pattern could be interpreted as meddling in the internal matters of a country in a delicate situation. In more concrete terms, Spain's Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos wished recovery to Castro, while Spain's ambassador in Havana, Carlos Alonso Zaldívar, reiterated that the future of Cuba would be determined "by Cubans and only by Cubans." The PSOE spokesman in the Spanish Parliament was unusually blunt when he shared his party's wish for Cuba "to direct itself towards full democracy, that today 'does not exist' and that process should be done 'without external interfering of any sort'. For its part, the PP representatives called the Castro regime 'a hereditary dictatorship' and demanded of the Spanish government a clear message to Cuba for betting for a pacific transition."[35]

On the business and tourism front, reactions to Castro's illness were prudent and did not show any noticeable concern for changes. Plans for tourist travel to Cuba were not affected in the heavy season of August. Business sectors positively evaluated important investments made in Cuba, still under the impact of the apparent strategy executed in 2005 by the Cuban government for priming large companies instead of small and medium enterprises. It was then recorded that 99 joint businesses were cancelled and 67 were scheduled to be terminated.[36] However, the new crisis did not seem to raise fears in the important Spanish businesses established in Cuba. Trade balance in 2005 was extremely positive for Spain: while Cuba sold €137.8 million ($131 million) of goods to Spain, it imported €488 million ($485 million). More than 200 small and medium enterprises from Spain still operate in Cuba, while large conglomerates such as Melià, Altadis, and Repsol showed an increase in activities in the hotel, tobacco, and oil exploration industries.[37]

It is in this pragmatic and market-oriented context where the state of the relations between Spain and Cuba took a new profile facing the uncertainties posed by Castro's illness and impasse. Reflecting a wide range of analytical approachs by a number of scholars and think-tank staff, samples of documents stress that there was never an intention of "creative and critical engagement and dialogue" with Cuba to generate a change of regime. And yet, a sense of dissatisfaction was in the minds of the high echelons of the Spanish government. Under the accusation of the PP that the open dialogue policy espoused by the PSOE-led administration, two alternatives were considered, further dramatized in the new panorama presented after July 31.

The first was a return to the policy of the subtle and vocal policy of pressure applied in the last years of the Aznar administration and most especially from mid-2003 to mid-2004. It was considered unrealistic and would mean that in order to be coherent it should also be applied to varied regimes that violate human rights equally or worse than in Cuba. The alternative, withdrawing an active policy toward Cuba, is contrary to the historical links. On the one hand, while Spain probably has one of the highest numbers of diplomatic experts in a variety of Cuban fields, matched only by the United States. On the other hand, there is no definite policy and strategy toward Cuba that responds to the intimate links that unite both civil societies (and traces of it). The time may have come, in view of the novel panorama posed by expectations of a real transition, to construct an individualized approach to a new Cuba. This may be perfectly in tune with a new EU attitude.

EU spokesmen and other anonymous staff members reaffirmed a scrupulous policy of caution, coinciding with one of the strategies expressed by the U.S. government on the need to avoid any chaotic development that would provoke a massive exodus. Reminding observers that the EU Council had agreed to draft a long-term strategy paper, this was seen now as even more difficult than before the Castro crisis. Countries such as the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia were then pressuring for a position closer to the United States' attitude. In spite of persuasion by Spain, in the EU's view the Cuban government had shown "an incapacity or unwillingness to evolve toward democracy." In spite of this, the EU would always be ready to help the Cuban people in the event that they ask for assistance. However, the EU did not wish the Cuban regime "to succeed itself." Given a choice, Brussels would like to be able to work with the most moderate sector of the Cuban government, but it did not hold high hopes for a China-like solution, because Cuba "does not have the economic capacity and its geographical closeness to the United States" is a factor to consider. The consensus to be built is then to maintain open communication channels with the government and the opposition. It has been taken for granted that the drafting of a new position would irritate the government, because the EU did not draft a common position or a strategy on any other Latin American country. But Brussels had been conscious that it had to send a clear message to Cuba and the exiles, in addition to the fact that it had given the country around €145 million (around $150 million) in assistance since 1993.[38]

However, the spokesman of the European Commission, Pietro Petrucci, made the most innovative and explicit statement. He surprised and amused the Brussels-accredited press by stating that "the EU desires to President Castro and Cuban democracy a speedy recovery."[39] Although

it was an extemporaneous statement, made with no previous consultation with the EU hierarchy, and it was simply an anecdotal detail, it contrasted with frequent comments made by U.S. and exile community representatives regarding expectations for Castro's health. On the Cuban leader's fall in Santa Clara, "when asked if he wished Castro a speedy recovery, Boucher [the U.S. State Department spokesman] said, 'No. The situation in Cuba is of our primary concern. The situation of Mr. Castro is of little concern to us.' "[40] These kinds of references to drastic changes in Castro's health have made the situation of the Cuban Catholic Church very uncomfortable. Complying with standard doctrine, the church leadership in Havana issued statements about prayers. This move was heavily criticized by the hard-liners in the exile community, while the leadership of the Catholic Church in Miami took a moderating attitude.

For his part, Javier Solana, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, advised "serenity" and expressed his hope for a transition that should be "acceptable." The EU Council staff was supposed to be working on a draft for the new strategy document, but it was not expected to be discussed until the first External Relations meeting at the beginning of September under the EU presidency held by Finland.[41] The EU Parliament was not in session and its most important representatives regarding relations with Latin America were in Colombia meeting with their counterparts about several integration systems in the formation of the Euro–Latin American Parliamentary Assembly.

In any event, still taking into account the new variable of Castro's illness and temporary withdrawal from active power, some standing pieces should be part of the analysis and have a considerable place in the framing of the new strategy. In the first place, there is a lack of consensus within the EU was not reduced to the actions of one country. On the one hand, Spain wished to move in a given direction for reasons of historical linkages, political and economic. The rest seemed not to have a special stake in Cuba. However, according to Madrid-based Susanne Gratius, the lineup could be subdivided into four teams: (1) the advocates of human rights (Northern Europe and the Netherlands), with a policy on Cuba based on principles; (2) the "engaged" (Belgium, Spain, France, Italy before and after Berlusconi, and Portugal), favoring dialogue and discarding the conflictive measures imposed in 2003; (3) the "atlanticists" (the UK, Germany, and Austria), critical of Cuba, an issue not worth a conflict with the United States; and (4) the "hard-liners" (the new members from Eastern Europe, led by the Czech Republic), favoring sanctions in line with U.S. policy.[42] While each sector would exercise its own influence, the final approach would have to reflect the considerable weight of the conservative majority of the European Parliament. It is also important

to note that the "hard-liners" and the "human rights advocates" share similar concerns and, at times, work together.

However, the final shape of resolutions and positions generated by the Council did not necessarily reflect the results of an open vote, but also revealed the energy and pressure applied by some specific members. In the same way that the 1996 Common Position reflected the individual role played by Spain under the leadership of Aznar, in the new era the new Spanish government took the front seat. While the Cuban issue has been giving an opportunity to Spanish parties to use it as a domestic topic, the behavior of the Castro regime also has provided an excuse to countries that have no direct stake in Cuba. Whether one likes a specific policy of a given country or not, the close cultural and historical links enjoyed by some (like Spain) make them irreplaceable partners in a pre-transition strategy. This is why seasoned observers have pointed out that in the context of the need for the United States to seek the help of Europe and Latin America, Bush had a golden opportunity to reformat the badly damaged relationship with Spain's Rodríguez Zapatero and to join efforts in addressing the sensitive issue of Cuba.[43]

This panorama left the EU with three instruments to be used when dealing with Havana. One was a conditioned political dialogue. The second was economic and tourism links. The third was development aid. That meant that the inclusion of the issue of human rights did not condition the opening of a political dialogue on tangible improvements. Until Castro's crisis, it was obvious that the first and the third were rejected by the Cubans, leaving only the second actually shared by all European actors. The new situation made available by the crisis presented the question of whom European interests would deal with in Cuba. The enigma rested on knowing if the military would be running the show as effectively as it had been in recent years while controlling most of the state enterprises. As with most things related to the Europe-Cuba relationship, only time would say if the approach was correct or doomed to failure like the historical U.S. embargo policy.

As a reflection of Spain's special attitude toward Cuba, it was not surprising that, after recovering from the stunning news, the Spanish press reacted with a considerable number of commentaries and analyses, incorporating a wide range of views from insiders, residents, and foreign writers, giving due priority to Cubans in Miami, Spain, and even in Cuba itself, some under the cover of pseudonyms. An exceptional piece was published by the U.S. ambassador in Madrid, Eduardo Aguirre.[44] Editorials in the mainstream press offered a notable consensus, with an impressive absence of any kind words for a regime that appeared to have no future. Expressions systematically labeling it a "dictatorship" were not

limited to the conservative and centrist press but were also used prominently in progressive and moderate leftist newspapers. In this context, observers will find very useful the constant updating of the digital edition of the journal *Encuentro*, published in Madrid. Although designed and managed by Cubans, it incorporates views of Latin American and Spanish writers.[45] The nature of the "biological change" was stressed heavily, while blame for the uncertainty of the future was placed on Castro's resistance to change and reform.[46]

Inspired by García Márquez's novel, "Eclipse of the patriarch" was the innovative title of an editorial in Madrid's influential *El País*, which summarized a generalized Spanish opinion on some of the reasons for the survival of the regime. These are the extraordinary internal conditions of Cuba, its proximity to the United States, the U.S. embargo that increased adherence to Castro's strategy, internal mobilization that rudely controlled the opposition, and most recently Castro's popular prestige in Latin America reinforced by a wave of populism. However, the editorial ended by opining that "Castroism without Castro" would be infeasible, and it is in the interest of all actors to make the transition a pacific one controlled by all Cubans. It added that the Cuban Communist Party and the White House agree on the need to avoid chaos and a possible migratory avalanche.[47] Reflecting what may be a fitting epitaph, and depending on future developments, another editorial in *El País* considered the temporary disappearance an "irreversible event" with lasting consequences. This feeling was widely shared by influential columnists and observers in Europe, Latin America, and the United States.[48] It thus expressed the general opinion in Europe in calling for prudence in the ranks of the exile community. Efforts should be made so that "Castroism, after a violent trajectory, ends at least in a peaceful way, giving way to reconciliation and democracy."[49]

First Anniversary

A year after the dramatic announcement of Fidel Castro's illness and temporary cession of power to his brother Raúl, the relations between the European Union and Cuba apparently returned to a level of normalcy, matching a previous cycle—the Cuban authorities' freezing attitude followed by European actors' attempts to persuade Havana to open up and implement political and economic reforms.[50] After a prolonged wait-and-see approach by Brussels and some of the most active European governments in the relationship with Cuba (led by Spain), some initiatives received an ambivalent response from the Cuban government, distinguishing between a perceived positive move from certain governments

and an aggressive attitude from others. However, when the special EU Council critical conclusions were issued in June 2007, including an offer made to the Cuban authorities to meet in Brussels, the answer from Havana was violently and publicly negative, topped by a column written by Fidel Castro himself. In sum, one year after the July 31 announcement regarding Castro's health, not much changed in the details and spirit of the relationship between Europe and Cuba. In spite of specific moves implemented by Madrid, the same assessment could be applied to the "special relationship" between Spain and Cuba.

The bold move toward Cuba executed by the Spanish government during the Easter week surprised European and U.S. observers as a major turn in Spain's policy since the PSOE's electoral victory in March 2004. When most analysts expected the impasse caused by Castro's illness and temporary absence from the public scene to last longer and invite an extended period of inaction and caution from an array of foreign actors, Spain decided to act. The risky trip taken by Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos to Havana had to be seen within a wider context of the European perception of Cuba.

Although the overall attitude of the United States toward Cuba had not changed in a noticeable way since the crisis developed, some events initially revealed internal contradictions, erratic decisions, and ambivalence toward the desires of different sectors of the Cuban exile community. The signals emanating from Washington when Castro's illness was announced were cautious and continued to reaffirm the administration's wish for the return of democracy to Cuba, controlled by the Cuban people.[51] At the same time, the U.S. government warned the Cuban exile community not to rush toward a strategy to prime the return of the properties confiscated by the Cuban Revolution.

While wide sectors of the Cuban community showed signs of moderation and revealed the evolution of their political views in the polls, the hard-line attitude remained well anchored in the congressional representation. The number of Cuban exiles supporting the continuation of limitations on travel and remittance of funds to relatives has notably diminished over recent years.[52] Divisions over the effectiveness of the embargo and its eventual dismantling have divided the core of the Cuban community, a trend that became notorious when Castro's illness crisis erupted.[53] In this setting, scandals mired the performance of enterprises that were the result of impressive 1980s and 1990s lobbying work performed by CANF. Radio Martí and TV Martí were questioned by investigative reports.[54]

Regarding the relationship with Europe in general, the Cuban government reaffirmed the cool approach that it had experimented with even

after the lifting of the EU special measures in 2005. The government continued to place selective difficulties in the way of certain foreign representatives' access to the high echelons of the regime. Meanwhile, the government-run media sporadically would send veiled or explicit attacks against certain European governments and then the EU as a whole, accusing it of "conspiracy" with the policy of the United States. The EU Common Position has been systematically equated with the standing U.S. embargo.

Within this general panorama, one EU member state was consistently singled out: Spain. In part, this is explained because of Spain's historical, undisputed, intimate linkage with Cuba, as Chapter 1 has demonstrated. A selective poll of EU officials and European diplomats with Cuban interests and duties placed Spain first in a ranking of EU member states having influence in EU-Cuba affairs.[55] The Spanish leadership in the context of the European-Cuban relationship was either scrutinized or questioned by the rest of the EU members, while the Madrid government received encouragement and pressure to take action in one direction or another. In general terms, in recent years the most decisive measures taken by the EU institutions reflect, in one way or another, the impact of the actions taken by the Spanish government or the representation of its leading parties. Spain is followed in influence by France, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, Czech Republic, Belgium, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, and Portugal (as a result of its presidency of the EU during the second semester of 2007). Let's remember that when, for example, the Popular Party (PP), led by Aznar, took over the helm of the Spanish government, the call in Brussels was to approve the Common Position on Cuba in 1996. In turn, when the PSOE recovered power, the general script changed in the direction it proposed. Most of the partners in the EU follow Spain's lead, constructing a consensus. Resolutions by the European Parliament frequently reflect the imprint of the conservative majority led by the PP.[56]

In spite of its role in the 2005 lifting of the special measures imposed in 2003, the Spanish diplomatic representation in Cuba still suffered a mixed treatment by the Cuban authorities.[57] Internally, the Spanish government had been consistently harassed by the Popular Party in the domestic context, in its favorable media, and in international forums such as the EU institutions, especially the Parliament. PP representatives and critics of the Socialist Party policy toward Cuba frequently visited Washington (former Premier Aznar,[58] most prominently) and Miami, making declarations and giving interviews to receptive audiences and media.[59] The consensus of the 1980s and 1990s between the two major Spanish parties was terminated once the policy toward Cuba became one of confrontation after

Aznar's arrival to power, with the result that diplomatic relations between Madrid and Havana were reduced to a minimum.

While the PSOE never questioned (and even endorsed) the PP-sponsored award of EU honors to Cuban dissidents and contributed to making the Brussels-Havana link minimally effective, the stalemate created by the temporary imposition of measures in 2003 convinced the new Spanish government that they were counterproductive. Lack of effective communication between European governments and Cuban authorities was the norm, while the conditions of the dissidents remained the same. Hence, the change of EU policy in early 2005 was executed without a fight from the minority that opposed the consensus. However, the expected substantial changes were not produced and then the crisis of Castro's illness put the relationship on hold.

But Spain seemed to be destined not to disappear from the scene. It is not by coincidence that explicit declarations regarding Castro's medical condition would not come from the Cuban government, which labeled the issue a "secret of state." News correcting the near-death assessment made by U.S. officials would come from Venezuela's Chávez and a Spanish doctor who had the chance to examine Castro, making an unusual declaration that he did not have cancer and predicting that he would recover soon and be ready to resume power.[60]

From Prudence to Boldness

Before Raúl was named effective head of state and government in February 2008, there was very little basis for envisioning what alternatives he might devise. European speculation found two important dimensions worth consideration, both connected with the role of military. On the one hand, European interests are eager to know what new role nationalism would play in the transition period. On the other hand is the sense of professionalism that the Revolutionary Armed Forces claim to have and to what degree they would be willing and able to perform once the full succession takes place.[61] In this scenario, the enigma will be if in a first stage of the opening of the system there is a return to the limited private initiative experiments in the first part of the 1990s. How this would be connected to a further incentive for renewed and more aggressive European investment is a variable whose outcome is difficult and cumbersome to evaluate.

The impact of a decisive opening of the economic and political system as a result of an effective transition is highly uncertain. A more than realistic (pessimistic, for some) evaluation of European chances considers that the limited economic investments made in Cuba, added to the

special historical interests of some members (Spain), will not be able to confront the invasion of U.S. involvement. During the first transitional stages under the cover of a modest economic opening, European investment would have a comparative advantage over the U.S. financial energy. But the risk for medium and small European enterprises, once the system becomes competitive, will be impressive. That is why numerous European voices had been pressing for the preparation of a common strategy to confront any novelty presented by the new situation.

A third scenario resulting from a difficult and confrontational succession (although its probability is low in European calculations) is a climate of infighting between factions within the Armed Forces, while a part of the population tries to settle old accounts and attempts to capture sectors of political and economic influence. Without knowing what the U.S. government may do, diverse European governments might design an exit strategy for families and nonessential personnel, using the varied means available. Among them are the geographical closeness of European sovereign, colonial, or semicolonial territories in the Caribbean (France, UK, Netherlands) and an increase of the air connections maintained by several national carriers (Spain, France, Britain). Unless a considerable maritime lift is implemented, there are no clear resources to accommodate a sudden transatlantic migration of European nationals.

In any event, a scenario such as this would also represent a sorry failure of the European efforts over the last two decades to facilitate a peaceful transition. Nonetheless, this violent outcome would be beyond the reach of European resources and calculations. The EU's efforts were never designed to influence any given scenario, but to facilitate the most positive background and context to avoid this type of negative environment.

On the other hand, analysts may note that the Cuban response to the prudence of the European consensus (broken only by the selective individual actions of some governments) was to reward it by liberating some ill prisoners[62] while sentencing others.[63] In addition, Havana provocatively published notes in the government press expressing extremely harsh criticism of the standing policy of the EU. In this setting, European observers have certified the fragility of the Cuban social fabric, perceiving that dissidents are extremely divided and their organizations heavily infiltrated by the intelligence services of the regime. Simultaneously, the different attitudes of the Cuban exile community do not seem to be in sync with the stalled situation in Cuba. They also are perceived to have no clear influence on the restructuring of the embargo parameters beyond the prevailing inertia.

The European perception of the exile community has not changed drastically in recent times.[64] There has been considerable evolution

toward coordinating efforts (by Consenso Cubano) and a moderating movement because of the change of attitudes in emblematic organizations such as the Cuban American National Foundation. However, the international community has perceived the most vocal and publicity-seeking circles as dominated by resistance to compromise or accommodation to the evolving circumstances. On what the Cuban exile community should do to facilitate a peaceful transition, even at the price of tolerating a solid succession in Cuba, the EU's consensus advice (with the exception of the minority opposing a diplomatic attitude) has been to develop a special variation of the European approach of "constructive engagement," with due adaptations.

The leading proactive groups in the Consenso coalition consider that the U.S. federal government does not speak for them, and that their actions and designs differ from Washington's framework. EU observers judge that a certain degree of clarification is needed regarding the embargo and the relationship between "the two active Cubas" (the dissidents and the most innovative exile sectors). The ultimate beneficiaries (or victims) of future actions would be the ten million-plus Cubans living on the island and the almost two million residing in a worldwide diaspora.

Regarding the embargo, while EU opposition is based on principles and the defense of its own interests threatened by extraterritorial laws (such as the Cuba Democracy Act and Helms-Burton), the steady European message has been that it only benefits the Cuban regime, reinforcing its political excuse for the shortcomings of the system. The inertia in maintaining the embargo for historical reasons and the rationale that its unconditional lifting after almost half a century would be a victory for Raúl do not counteract the empirical failure to obtain its principal goal—the sudden collapse of the regime. Brussels cannot fully accept that the U.S. government states that the bad U.S.-Cuba relationship (embargo included) is not international but rather a Cuban domestic issue (under the pressure of Florida's electoral clout). At the same time, the Cuban exiles claim not to speak for the U.S. government and ultimately demanding that Washington deals directly with Cuba's population, leaving Cubans the monopoly of initiative.

This argument sidelines the fact that the codification of the embargo, by taking away the U.S. president's power and giving it to Congress, was a direct result of the impressive lobbying of Cuban exile groups.[65] If it is true that U.S. policy toward Cuba depends on domestic issues, this linkage does not translate in the current frustration that claims that Washington's policy does not speak for the exiles.[66]

Reflecting on the banning of official EU aid in Cuba, under the claim that it mirrors the "imperialistic" intromission of the United States,

Brussels insiders share with Cuban exiles the need not to connect (at least publicly) the aid resources intended for the dissidents with the official policy of the United States. That connection itself has been serving the Cuban regime to discredit the movement as taking cues from Washington. Official plans designed for a transition in Cuba only add fuel to the fire, raising fears in the majority of the population who are exclusively engaged in daily survival.

Brussels has noticed with keen interest that some of the ingredients of the European "constructive engagement" have been embraced by exile groups that in the past were considered "fundamentalist" in facing the Cuban regime. For example, EU observers note the opposition of the Cuban American National Foundation to the U.S.-imposed limitations on the level and periodicity of remittances channeled by Cuban exiles to relatives in Cuba.[67] This kind of people-to-people engagement is considered the most productive way to lessen the hardships endured by a sector of the Cuban population, touching not only the immediate family as beneficiaries but also others. The fact that this position contrasts with the official policy of the U.S. government may improve the attitude of the Cuban government.

Since the crisis produced by Fidel Castro's illness exploded and the temporary and limited cession of power was announced, most predictions regarding a new European (and especially Spainish) strategy toward Cuba were fulfilled for months. The expert and governmental recommendations that were then issued were accepted with a certain degree of resignation and a sense of wisdom.

The institutional machinery of the EU and leading member states (those with a historical legacy and other influence-making factors) reaffirmed a cautious attitude in their policy toward Cuba. Innovative political and economic frameworks were frozen after Raúl Castro took over the conditional control of government. In spite of the array of events and incidents outlined above, life seemed to be business as usual. The only difference was that Fidel was not officially on the scene, occupying center stage. All things considered, that was not the right time for risky movements. Europe considered that the circumstances were not the most propitious for a considerable shift in either explicit general policy or individual actions.

European foreign offices opted for taking into account the subtle language emanating from Havana and for responding to the apparent "normalcy" presented by the temporary transfer of power with a nod and the intention to wait. The prevailing consensus (difficult and arduous in its precarious existing state) confirmed the need for not changing the situation in place in the middle of 2006, before the illness of Fidel

Castro. But the impasse produced a spillover effect well into 2007. It was only to be mildly reformed when in February 2008 Raúl Castro officially succeeded his brother.

The EU's two most explicit signals to Cuba had been lack of action and an intention to change policy. The promised draft of a "strategy" (a word that gradually disappeared from the EU vocabulary) toward Cuba, as prescribed by the Council in 2006, should have been available just after that summer but became frozen. Waiting for better perspectives, the actors equipped with stronger influence (led by Spain) were energetically opposed to the codification (another potential "common position"). This would have made more difficult the necessary flexibility to maneuver according to unforeseeable circumstances, in addition of giving the Cuban regime a new excuse for claiming harassment of the U.S. type. The only other explicit declaration was the semester renewal of lifting the "special and transitory measures." Therefore, the official attitude of the EU has continued to be practically the same as enshrined in the Common Position.

Several factors contributed to this activity (or lack of it). One came from the absence of any changes in the overall political shape of the Cuban regime. In the first place, subtle and explicit signals emanated from the Cuban government to the effect that notable changes were not expected. Meanwhile, Fidel Castro continued to make his presence felt in indirect media appearances, reinforcing the perception that he was recovering. Second, the pacts arranged by Cuba with other actors (like Venezuela) indicated that Havana did not have an urgency to obtain additional support or favors.

The issue then was to detect the exact motivation for a subtle change of course or a drastic shift in the policy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain made the decision to reestablish full communication with the Cuban government through an accord in the fields of economics, investment, and a political dialogue including human rights.[68] As an immediate result, commentaries ranged from silence and prudence to overt criticism and finger-pointing on the motivations behind the move.[69] Remorse came mainly from the dissident community, who felt humiliated by the refusal of Foreign Minister Moratinos to meet them during the visit. As an alternative, the scheduling of interviews with a lower-level representative was proposed. Commentators close to the views of the Spanish Popular Party were similarly critical.[70] Media analysts questioned the future effective impact of the initiative. Voices in the exile sectors pointed out that the move had a predominantly economic explanation.[71] Spain was tending to its investments, seeking protection for current operations, and expecting devolution or compensation for past terminated partnerships.[72]

Significantly, the frustration over the visit of Moratinos prompted some of the dissident groups to sign a commitment of unity, although they denied the link between the visit and their decision.[73] Subsequently, a timely conference was held in Berlin, under the sponsorship of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the International Committee for Democracy in Cuba, in which former prime minister Aznar gave a renewed critical view of the Spanish government's policy in Cuba.[74]

The Spanish move also gave a new basis for the Spanish political opposition to attack the foreign policy of Premier Rodríguez Zapatero.[75] In addition, the measure generated protests from Spanish commentators usually situated on the moderate left, producing critical editorials from the normally favorable press, most especially the Madrid daily *El País*.[76] This influential newspaper awarded its Ortega y Gasset Prize to exile dissident Raúl Rivero, who was liberated in 2005 thanks to the role played by the Spanish government.[77] When the Popular Party presented a motion in Congress asking the Spanish government to demand that the Cuban authorities release 134 political prisoners,[78] the minister of foreign affairs answered that the dialogue strategy will be the most effective and expressed commitment toward the dissidents.[79] Elena Valenciano, PSOE's secretary for international relations insisted that the Spanish government specifically mentioned what was expected from the Cuban authorities regarding the prisoners, reminding critics that in the past Spain did not have a leverage position and did not obtain any results.[80]

Finally, the Spanish decision raised questions from the U.S. government,[81] alluding to a lack of consultation.[82] The Spanish government replied to this complaint with terse and blunt statements. Significantly, Spain's partners in the EU did not produce public announcements, while the Commission reaffirmed its commitment to keep the lines of communication open with Cuba, even though Havana confirmed its rejection of collective cooperation.[83] The EU-U.S. yearly summit held in Washington included a brief reference of support to the Cuban people and human rights.[84]

However, keener analysts reminded the drafters of simplistic explanations based solely on trade and investment that the Cuban operations are in fact of relatively minor importance for the Spanish economy as a whole. There is also very little political return in terms of shifting votes to the PSOE from the business sector, which inclines toward the PP. In spite of the public acrimony over the Cuban issue, its actual impact on the election results is insignificant. Indecisive voters (the ones tipping the scale) are motivated by unemployment, the cost of living and housing, education, immigration, and ETA terrorism. They are not moved by attitudes toward Cuba. This sensible argument is mirrored by the fact that

U.S. policy toward Cuba is not driven by the desire to recover property.[85] There must be a more credible motivation—the feeling that Spain was losing ground in Cuba, where its presence has been felt for half a millennium. To maintain this existence in a scenario where the only change may come from within, the only alternative is to stay put, as the United States does with any other country except Cuba.

So, Spain was left with the unnerving prospect of subjecting its policy to a never-ending (in view of the standing impasse of the Cuban regime) annual review of the EU's Cuba policy, with the Czech Republic and other governments, "cheered on by U.S.-supported groups operating in Europe, pressing for a common posture that would result in diplomacy similar to that practiced by the U.S. Interests Section in Havana." That is, "a diplomacy based on extensive contacts with dissidents and scarce contact with officials, academics, and others who are not formally part of the opposition." Rational logic then must consider that "given all that, it is little wonder that Madrid decided to set its own course and not to subordinate its diplomatic strategy to a Euro-debate twice a year."[86]

Spain then decided to lead the pack of those who, for lack of means or influence, consider that the best strategy is to exploit the holes and windows of opportunity that the Cuban system permits. The "bilateralization" method prevailed over the precarious "multilaterality." For these reasons, the diverse lines of culture, development cooperation, and the political dialogue with the government of Cuba are to be seen as the columns that maintain communication with the incipient "civic society." This strategy would then ultimately be endorsed, at least tacitly, by responsible partners.

This attitude is not exempt from risks, because fast and tangible results are demanded. However, it has to be taken into account that Spanish and European expectations and strategy are geared toward the medium-term future, when the peaceful and reconciliatory transition is expected to happen. In order to contribute to this scenario, the Spanish analysis came to the conclusion that Europe has to be present directly on the scene.

An extreme realist view in EU and Spanish circles has evaluated this strategy as apparently agreeing to pay any price for maintaining an open communication line with the Cuban government. At the same time, this approach attempts to be present in wide sectors of the economy and culture (possibly reopening the Spanish cultural center, closed down by Castro in 2003). However, this may not be that important, considering two combined dimensions of the attention given to Cuban issues in Europe. On the one hand, Cuba has received due attention in the EU institutions, especially in the branches dedicated to Latin America,

human rights, and development. On the other hand, in the majority of EU member states Cuba does not enjoy an important amount of attention.

In this contextual setting, some loss of confidence might be the result of the Spanish move in Havana. It is estimated that the final report card given by the rest of the member states (especially the most critical and skeptical) would always depend on how many imprisoned dissidents were be liberated. In other words, Spain may have been placed in a dependency status—it is up to the Cuban regime to respond and evaluate the importance of a new relationship before offering some concessions. In the metaphorical expression of EU insiders, the Spanish minister of foreign affairs took a direct dive into the Cuban swimming pool . . . knowing that it was half empty. Then it was up to the Cuban government to provide the necessary water.[87]

Meanwhile, the balance of the mild economic reforms that were optimistically expected and apparently implemented by the temporary tenure of Raúl Castro were either not confirmed or were eliminated.[88] In sum, the prospects of a continuation of the stalemate or a situation of "business as usual" made the alternative of not making any moves a dubious proposition.

TOWARD A NEW EU DISAPPOINTMENT

When the end of the first semester of the European Union calendar was approaching in June 2007, a sector of the EU establishment paid attention to a topic that could not compete with the daunting task faced by the German presidency for crafting a compromise to rescue the basic aspects of the failed constitutional treaty. Cuba has never been a major issue for the EU and has never crossed the border of creating notable difficulties with the exception of the polemic created by the passing and potential implementation of the Helms-Burton law in 1995. Nonetheless, as we have seen above, the evolution of the Cuban regime after the announcement of Castro's illness occupied the attention of major actors in the EU setting and generated considerable polemics. The pending business of the temporary measures taken against Cuba in 2003, provisionally suspended in 2005, and the standing validity of the Common Position approved in 1996, became the centerpieces of the decisions to be made at the closing of the semester. Without the full satisfaction of all parties involved, a new compromise was reached, the expected continuation of a stalemate and ambiguity in the relations between the EU and Cuba.

First, expectations were high over the prospects of permanently lifting the measures. Spain and other member states were pressuring for

the permanent suspension on the grounds that they were in fact not implemented and they had become a cause of irritation for the Cuban regime.[89] Opposing members and sectors of the dissident movement were advocating for the reimposition of the measures.[90] The confrontation was also set in the context of the visit of U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice to Madrid, where she raised the U.S. opposition to the Spanish engagement in Cuba. Spanish authorities politely responded that Spain had the right to conduct its own foreign policy, especially with Cuba, and that the confrontation between the United States and Cuba was a thing of the past.[91]

Ultimately, the EU Council decided to uphold the suspension of the measures, without making any move toward their permanent dissolution. The compromise included the avoidance of mentioning the said measures. Despite an unprecedented informal consensus between Madrid and Prague on lifting the measures (thanks to intense high-level lobbying of the Spanish government), the Council did not agree on definitely lifting the measures because some member states insisted that the human rights situation in Cuba had not improved.

Moreover, the thorny topic of the Common Position suffered the same treatment. The document that was drafted included the customary serious demands made by the EU for Cuban political and economic reform, and calling for the liberation of political prisoners.[92] In closing, the EU offered the Cuban government to send a special delegation to Brussels to discuss all matters of mutual concern.[93] At the same time, the Spanish government invited the Cuban dissident community residents in Madrid to a meeting for explaining the current policy.[94]

The complex background of the deal included the difficult consensus to avoid any reference to a reevaluation of the controversial Common Position set in 1996. However, it had to include a call for the Cuban government to release unconditionally all political prisoners, an offer of support to the Cuban civil society toward peaceful change, and finally the confirmation of the EU invitation to Cuba to send a high-level delegation to Brussels to resume a comprehensive dialogue, including the conflictive topic of human rights. Nonetheless, important disagreements over the policy toward Cuba persist regarding the measures taken in 2003. Despite intensive discussions, it was not possible to reach an agreement on the state of the pending 17th Reevaluation of the Common Position, with a possible lifting of said measures. There was also no agreement on including an explicit reference to the continued suspension. By reevaluating the Common Position without mentioning the measures meant that, de jure, they would be in force again, something that a majority of states opposed. That is why the text did not make any reference to a reevaluation. It was a

skilful way to circumvent troubles. The final consensus then implied that the Common Position was still valid, but that the conclusions were not to be considered a reevaluation of the Common Position. The agreement also meant that the 2003 measures remained suspended. In the event that the Cuban authorities did not accept the invitation to meet, the pending 17th Reevaluation of the Common Position would be executed in June 2008.[95]

Bearing in mind that member states would have certain difficulties in explaining this elaborate, cumbersome compromise, the EU officials advanced some points to be addressed to media and other actors. To start with, government officers were advised to bear in mind that the consensus was a successful serious initial agreement. The EU would strengthen its future position by showing a sign of unity. It would lose leverage by showing internal fighting. A reopening of the complex text meant the risk of destroying the agreement. With the invitation of the EU to meet the Cuban government, the ball was in Cuba's court.[96]

Most media observers in Spain greeted the solution as the best among the possible outcomes, given the circumstances.[97] In contrast, the compromise did not meet the expectations of the dissidents and sectors of the Cuban exile community. The Cuban government reaction was first a cool silence. That was followed by a declaration laced with animosity and visible irritation.[98] The crowning to this came in the form of a column published by Fidel Castro in his series of articles in the newspaper *Granma*.[99] His harsh words were similar to the speech made in 2003 on the 50th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada Barracks, when Castro responded to the imposition of the restrictive measures. He then described what he called "sanctions" as "unenforceable and unsustainable." He labeled the Common Position a draft written by the State Department and the Czechs "U.S. peons." The conclusions of the EU Council were "calumnious" activity in "internal affairs of Cuba." In sum, the EU was allegedly acting with a "persisting and humiliating subordination to the United States," as illustrated by "the EU questioning at the U.S.-EU summit." It was then "up to the EU to make corrections in its policy towards Cuba." He also regretted the naming of British former prime minister Tony Blair as representative for the Middle East peace process and he pointed out the "demoralizing state of the EU" over the difficulties to agree on a "constitutional" treaty.

Cuban diplomats offered to explain or "translate" these otherwise clear statements to EU officers, a move that the latter politely considered useless.[100] The EU establishment knew very well that the apparently solid Cuban front hides behind different levels of "hardness." The most moderate, predicted by Brussels (and Madrid and other European capitals)

to be the reliable interlocutors in the transition, have *not* been the most vocal.[101]

Confirming predictions, Castro limited his public visibility to this written medium, without appearing on television or in photos taken to be distributed. In consequence, he did not accompany his brothers and the military leadership on July 26 for the 54th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada barracks, held in Camagüey. While European media recalled the precarious economic situation of Cuba and took notice of the signs of a correction to be made by Raúl Castro and the reiteration of an accommodating deal with the United States,[102] Fidel remained secluded for his 81st birthday on August 13, fueling rumors about his deteriorated health and near-death state.

As predicted by most keen observers, and sincerely expected in private by government officials and EU staff, the Cuban official response to the EU message sent the situation back to what it was when Spain made the bold move of an opening toward Havana. In addition, Cuba received a combination of good and bad news. On the one hand, the Cuban government was reprimanded by a resolution of the European Parliament, in a plenary session attended by only 73 of its 785 members.[103] On the other hand, the United Nations Human Rights Council decided to discontinue the position of the special rapporteur on Cuba, relieving the Cuban regime of pressure to investigate abuses of its own citizens.[104] In spite of the expected triumphant interpretations in the Cuban press,[105] EU circles explained that the rapporteur position was discontinued as part of a political deal to obtain consensus on the overall functioning of the newly established UN Human Rights Council. However, the potential of introducing single resolutions remains open, with the requirement of getting substantial support (at least 15 countries). There is also the possibility of reintroducing a new special rapporteur, an unlikely prospect in the case of Cuba. Nonetheless, Cuba hasn't avoided the monitoring per se.[106]

Against this international background, in 2007 the EU doubted the official GDP growth rate published by the Cuban authorities (an alleged 10 percent growth rate). The perception of Cuba's economy ostensibly deteriorated, raising serious concerns over the viability of Raúl Castro's government in providing the necessary resources and reforms to make the living conditions of ordinary Cubans more passable. The reality shows that most Cubans can barely cover their basic needs for a half-month with the existing salaries. Tourism services, in the 1990s converted into the solution to fill the vacuum left by disappearing Soviet subsidies, deteriorated in quality, causing a decrease in the number of visitors (16 percent less in 2006 than in 2005).

Finally, it is significant to remember that the meaning of the Common Position has been subtly changed and manipulated by a variety of actors. What originally was simply a set of conditions presented to Cuba for enjoying a cooperation agreement, similar to the deals made with the rest of the Latin American countries, has been "sold" by the Cuban exile community and the U.S. government as "sanctions," a word that has been expanded to illustrate the measures taken in 2003. The Cuban government has gladly accepted the term and its spirit. In the background of the discussions over whether to lift the 2003 measures, the Cuban government, through its representatives in Brussels, sent the unequivocal message that there was no chance of an agreement unless the Common Position was lifted. This aspect was reconfirmed by Foreign Minister Pérez Roque during the meeting with the EU Troika held in Paris in October 2008.[107] EU circles know very well that there is a double language—one used in private to deal with the European power circles, and another used in public for implementing the higher up instructions in Cuba.

DASHING TO THE FINISH LINE

The individual initiative taken by Spain was not going to be an isolated national move. Several other events were to take place in early 2008, in the context of the elections for the National Assembly that named the new Cuban government without the inclusion of Fidel, and the executive promotion of his brother to the position of head of state and government. First, EU commissioner Louis Michel, in control of the portfolio of Development and the ACP group (of which Cuba is a member, as described above in Chapter 3), visited Havana in March 2008 and had high-level talks. Many more meetings and talks took place in Brussels, New York, and Havana; they involved representatives of the governments of Cuba, Slovenia, and Spain, and of the EU Parliament and the Vatican. The trips taken by Moratinos and Michel to Havana have to be seen within a wider context regarding the European perception of the Cuban scene.

All this was in preparation for the important decision to be made by the European Council regarding the permanent lifting of the 2003 measures. The increased activity during the last part of 2007 and first months of 2008 was framed by complementary events that were surely prime candidates to offer a close to 50 years of the Cuban Revolution and its relationship with Europe. The series was initiated by the official retirement of Fidel Castro, who resigned from his position as head of state and government, with the subsequent appointment of his brother Raúl as effective leader of the Council of State. In his typical dramatic

fashion, Castro made a pre-announcement of his resignation when on February 15 he ventured that later on he would make an important declaration. Five days afterward, on February 19, using one of his frequent columns published in *Granma*, Castro stated that he would not consider being renamed by the Assembly of Popular Power as president of the Council of State and Commander in Chief.[108] World media reacted to this truly historic news that was much expected—only one notch below the importance of his eventual death—since the moment on July 31, 2006, when his illness forced him into temporary retirement from power. The Spanish press reflected the event with commentaries, raising expectations, offering a provisional judgment on his record as undisputed leader of Cuba, and speculating about the role of Raúl.[109] The Spanish ambassador in Cuba, expressing the expectations of his government, declared that the resignation of Castro would "dinamize" the situation in Cuba.[110]

Although traditional issues did not disappear (pressure from the exiles, banning Cubans from going to Spain to receive honors, attendance at the EU–Latin America summit to be held in Lima),[111] a star theme was raised to the podium of attention: the permanent lifting of the 2003 measures.[112] The Cuban government campaigned for the elimination of such "sanctions," a label that eventually became part of the lexicon used even in the institutions of Brussels.[113] Press reports confused the proceedings to be executed by the EU Council with the examination of the Common Position of 1996 and its elimination. A rather common popular misidentification of the 1996 and 2003 separate decisions had managed to contaminate sectors that should be aware of the difference.[114] In any case, the representatives of the dissident movement rushed to express rejection for the project.[115]

With the PSOE victory in the Spanish elections of March 2008, no drastic changes were expected for some time to come in the overall EU policy beyond the plan to either reform or abolish the Common Position. As we have seen, priority was supposed to be given to the content and scope of the annual review of the measures suspended in 2005 and an evaluation on the progress made by Cuba.

When an approval of the proposition of the EU presidency was expected for June 19, 2008, at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC), Germany surprisingly asked for a delay in making a decision, among other reasons because the agenda was totally full with the news-making rejection of the Lisbon Treaty by the Irish electorate.[116] Finally, on June 23 the EU Council, in the format of the Agriculture and Fisheries council, meeting in Luxemburg, endorsed the decision with a

text that reflected the deep internal differences of the Council. The conditions presented to Cuba were explicit and the results were to be reviewed in June 2009.[117] The liberation of political prisoners and access for international human rights organizations to visit Cuban prisons were some of the items that were the subjects of previous debate and included in the final redrafted declaration.[118] As expected, the Spanish conservative opposition disagreed with the government's policy.[119] However, significantly, the U.S. government had stated earlier that the conditions placed on Cuba were the correct ones toward an end shared by Washington and the EU.[120]

On the Cuban front, the exile community and dissidents expressed dissatisfaction. The Cuban government initially remained silent.[121] But Fidel Castro went on the offensive and lambasted the EU move with one of his columns.[122] He expressed contempt for the EU decision and called it hypocritical. What was most significant in this declaration was the fact that the column was only "published" in the Internet outlet Cubadebate.[123] Even more worthy of careful study was the contrast with the extemporaneous opinion expressed by Foreign Minister Pérez Roque, while attending a conference in Angola. He considered the measure "a good step in the right direction." Moreover, Castro then rushed to clarify in another declaration that his opinion did not reflect internal infighting in the Cuban government.[124] In any event, experts noticed that this probably was the only time in half a century of the Cuban regime that Castro's statements were not copied faithfully by a component of his government. The contradiction was not a surprise to the Spanish government.[125]

Time passed and the official silence of the Raúl Castro administration regarding the expectations of the lifting of the measures continued. The Cuban government maintained close communication with the EU member states that it considered appropriate (especially Spain) but did not show signs of engaging the European Union in the resumption of the cooperation programs that remained frozen since 2003. Observers expected the crisis generated by the Gustav and Ike hurricanes in September to propel the Cuban government to call for European assistance. However, while some national programs were implemented and help from NGOs was put in motion, no official EU assistance was accepted. In a way, the EU was treated the same as the United States, whose aid was rejected. The silence from Havana when the conclusions of the EU Council announced the permanent end of the measures opened up several interpretations. One is the continous significant influence of Fidel Castro over certain matters of state. Another is the inference that

the Cuban government would still be waiting for the dismantling of the Common Position of 1996, considered by Havana as "sanctions," when its content is simply a set of conditions posed to Cuba to enjoy a full cooperation agreement.

However, in another twist of attitude, on September 16, in the middle of the grave crisis created by hurricanes Gustav and Ike, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to announce that it had sent a *note verbal* (drafted on September 3) to the local French embassy as holder of the European Union presidency. It stated that Cuba was accepting the offer of the EU for a "political dialogue."[126] At the same time the Cuban government confirmed the rejection of the conditions imposed by the EU to resume better relations after the lifting of the measures. The announcement seemed to dramatize the rejection of U.S. assistance, on the basis that Cuba claimed not to be able to accept U.S. help while under the embargo.[127] But, in a roller-coaster movement, the Cuban government then declared that direct assistance from 25 EU countries and the EU Commission was still not acceptable. The exceptions were Spain and Belgium. Havana only clarified that it accepted "to consider" the offer.[128] When the Spanish minister of foreign affairs announced the imminent commencement of the dialogue negotiations, the Cuban ambassador in Madrid declared that such dialogue would be carried out when both parties were considered as "equal."[129]

Apparently the conditions were acceptable to the Cuban government when, on October 14, Cuban foreign minister Pérez Roque arrived in Madrid, met with his counterpart Moratinos and the vice president of the Spanish government, María Teresa de la Vega, and the vice secretary of the Socialist Party, José Blanco, and was then warmly received by King Juan Carlos. The purpose of the visit was to prepare the new bilateral agenda, as a prelude for the meeting to take place in Paris with the EU Troika. Press conferences and reports revealed that several political prisoners were to be released. Spain would offer Cuba a financial reconstruction package of €24.5 million ($33.7 million), a line of credit up to €100 million ($137 million), and a deal on the existing debt (over €1,500 million, or about $2 billion). In addition, Moratinos announced that Rodríguez Zapatero would visit Cuba in 2009, a project that the prime minister himself qualified as "under study." On October 16, Pérez Roque met in Paris with French foreign minister Bernard Kouchner, Czech foreign minister Karel Schwarzenberg, and EU development commissioner Louis Michel, forming the EU Troika. This was the first time that such level of gathering had taken place since the imposition of the measures in 2003. No topic was officially off the agenda.[130] All these visits and meetings led to the double arrival in Havana

of Spanish undersecretary of cooperation Soraya Rodriguez and EU commissioner Louis Michel on October 22–25. It was expected that both officials would map out details of the new relationship with the Cuban government.[131]

Perhaps as a symbolic collateral event and the opening of a new chapter in Spain-Cuba relations, the Spanish government announced the appointment of the new Spanish ambassador, Manuel Cacho Quesada, in Havana, as successor of Carlos Alonso Zaldívar.[132] The EU Commission had proceded earlier to the renewal of the diplomatic representation in Cuba, with the appointment in June 2007 of Javier Niño, formerly on the staff dealing with the Latin American matters within RELEX and with the EU Council, as successor to Sven Kühn von Burgsdorff, who, as we saw earlier, inaugurated the EU Delegation in Havana. It was expected that the new chargé d'affaires would have a tenure as busy as the one experienced by his predecessor.

Conclusion

A review of the events in the EU-Cuba relationship that took place after the announcement of Fidel Castro's illness confirmed most of the patterns and trends observed during almost half a century of relations between Europe and the Cuban regime. The EU and its member states have continued with a policy that gives priority to the individual national initiatives. This trend has been implemented taking into account the limitations imposed by the pressure of the Cuban regime against a comprehensive and unified EU position. The provisional status after Castro temporarily relinquished power was confirmed when he finally stepped down and passed the official mantle to his brother. The insistence of the European Union institutions on maintaining open communication lines was reinforced when Raúl Castro announced that he would implement certain economic and social changes in the regime. Expectations, however, were not confirmed, and his speech of July 26, 2008, the anniversary of the Moncada attack in 1953, was a disappointment. Nevertheless, the European efforts did not subside. As it has been reviewed above, a frenzy of European visits to Cuba and a series of public and behind-the-scenes meetings led to the permanent lifting of the 2003 measures. The ambivalence with which the Cuban government received this decision left the issue more or less the same. The double twist of the visit of Cuban foreign minister Pérez Roque to Madrid and Paris to discuss the new agenda with the Spanish government and the EU seemed to be a prelude to an improvement of relations. It is expected that this combination of uncertainty and give-and-take was destined to be the atmosphere surrounding

the 50th anniversary of the Revolution on January 1, 2009. Beyond that, further events and trends will belong to the history of the next 50 years, if not of the Cuban Revolution, at least of Cuban history and its relations with Spain and the rest of Europe. But that chapter should be reserved for another book.

Conclusion
Dilemmas and Options

A complete review of the facts and arguments discussed in the preceding chapters shows that the relationship between Europe and Cuba is a classic result of the "multilevel governance" that is the trademark of the EU, if not Europe itself. This profile is applied to European interstate exchanges. Above all, on a theoretical level there would be an obvious irreplaceable actor leading the operation that has been called "constructive engagement." The EU as a collective entity, personified by its most prominent and decisive institutions, would play that role. But within the complex structure the different pieces of the EU puzzle exert varied degrees of influence, according to national components or levels of power and influence.

On one side, for example, there is the pressure that a given country can exert within the negotiations of the Council. The work of this institution is subject to the consensus and unanimity rule that is characteristic of a body that is essentially intergovernmental when dealing with matters not included in the core of the first pillar, fully pooled sovereignty composed by the common economic and social policies. The fact that Cuba is a low-priority issue in the environment of the Common Foreign and Security Policy opens the door for the active work of individual members that have a special agenda. Across the Rue de La Loi, national identifications are defused in the Berlaymont building, the compound of the Commission, in theory seeking to be faithful to the interests of the EU as a whole. The fact that external competences are spread out through the different Directorates-General (DGs) and not concentrated only at the Charlemagne building (site of the Directorate of External Relations–RELEX) and the offices of the DG Development, makes the work even more difficult. In addition, national preferences and ideological inclinations can still make their presence felt in the final decisions. Brussels then gets more complicated when all around town 27 permanent representations (REPERs, or "embassies") of the member

states (MS) prepare the terrain for the work of the Council, fixing the stance of their respective governments. Again, the fact that Cuba is not a priority brings an ampler space to maneuver for a commissioner or a minister to push the preferable agenda to the front. It is in the Parliament where ideological bands are in their most natural habitat. Conservatives manage to push their agenda by majority rule in declarations, demanding reforms in Cuba as a precondition for changes in the prevailing official relationship of the EU with the Castro government. The Socialist-left group is more successful in keeping the lines of communication open in the hope of a peaceful transition. The result is a stalemate.

This rather incomplete role played by the EU leaves space open for the actions taken by the most important states, by virtue of their corresponding "special relationships" with Cuba or the lack of them, or because of specific issues that dominate their individual behavior. However, the overall scenario produced by the absence of a clear consensus in the collective framework of the EU would in theory leave the space totally subject to the presence of one special country with a protagonist role. This is the case of Spain, wishing to act by reasons of its historical links and political and economic concerns. The same logic could then be applied to consider the role of the rest of the states as very limited, because they do not have a special interest in Cuba. However, some of them are noted individually, if not by positive agendas, by opposing the potential activity of the EU, making the work of the most active states more difficult. The government of Cuba is elated by this complex structure and behavior. It is a case of preferring to deal with individual countries (Spain) or opposes them (the Czech Republic), instead of negotiating with collective entities (such as the EU), unless there is a clear advantage to do so (the General Assembly of the UN).

Taking into account the priority status given to the European contribution to a peaceful transition in Cuba, a fundamental double question needs to be posed. Why is it that the relationship with the European countries individually, and the EU collectively, has been conflictive and very difficult in recent times? Why has this situation led to a state of "mutual irrelevancy," as expressed by European officers.[1] In the background of this question, an additional query should be considered: Is Europe really important for Cuba? If the answer is moderately affirmative, then a second complementary question should be presented: To what extent could the hypothetical importance to Cuba be a decisive factor in considering the European suggestions, pressures, invitations, and requirements? In more concrete, national terms, the task is to find which countries are more "important" for Cuba, in a positive sense (to lure

their cooperation) and in a negative fashion (to counteract their actions). Returning to the general context, the looming question is whether it could be stated (or denied) that the European policy toward Cuba is really a simple reaction to the U.S. strategy. It is not easy to find answers to these questions.

The most salient difficulty in the relationship between Cuba and Europe in recent years is based on the fact that the EU itself has clearly changed since the end of the Cold War and most especially since its enlargement in 2004. This is a dimension that frequently is sidelined by a perception that still identifies the EU with the original members, plus the successive enlargements made until the end of the Cold War, with countries that used to belong to "Western Europe" but did not become members because of convenience (the United Kingdom), political shortcomings (Spain, Portugal), or neutrality (Austria, Finland, Sweden). It is a fact that there has been frequent friction in recent years between Havana and Brussels and several European governments. This is attributed to the attitude of some new EU members toward Cuba, with the result that the European-Cuban relationship has become very conflictive.

In this context, it is obvious that Europe as a whole, not just the EU, has been and is important for Cuba. But this importance is less valuable than certain European circles believe. However, it is still superior to the pretense of the Cuban government when it has systematically rejected the conditions of the EU and the demands of the hard-line countries. Both bands basically agree that someday they would claim that their policy had contributed to the peaceful transition of Cuba. In spite of the fact that all agree to maintain the open communication lines with the Cuban government and the civil society, several tendencies differ regarding conditionality in the "constructive engagement."[2]

The self-evaluation of European governments accredited in Havana reveals a ranking of the most important countries (in a positive sense for Cuba) and the most influential in maintaining the hard-line attitude toward Cuban policy. In positive importance and the recognition of its peers, no. 1 without any discussion and with total unanimity is Spain. Even when some European governments are critical of Madrid's current Cuban policy, they admit that if they had the historical legacy of Spain they would probably act in a similar way. This Spanish preeminence is followed at a distance by Italy, France, Germany, and Belgium and then by the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. In the critical band, no. 1 is the Czech Republic (a true leader of the hard line), followed by Poland and Hungary, although these two countries have moderated their vision

and behavior after changes of government. Interestingly, the Netherlands and Sweden are alternatively placed in the group of "positive important" countries and on the side of "negative" because of their critical view in the field of human rights.[3]

This picture is not much different than the perception and self-evaluation of the different European institutions, mirroring Europe as a whole. For its part, the EU Council reflects in its decisions the difficulty of reaching a collective intergovernmental consensus, always subject to the threat of veto or depending on the power of persuasion of some leading members. The European Commission (the collective body that is not supposed to show national inclinations), exercising its policy toward Cuba through its development aid branch, would reflect the average of the attitudes of the governments of the smember states. But its inclination toward openness and dialogue, especially when the portfolio is controlled by centrist or liberal commissioners, is frequently the object of the critical MS that complain of the excessive freedom of the executive, without reflecting a consensus derived from the Council. In other words, this view expressed by the representations of some the EU states in Havana claims that the Commission is sometimes too much "engaging" to the "left" of the Council consensus. During the conference on the transition scenarios held in Brussels on May 13–14, 2008, under the sponsorship of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Robert Schuman Foundation, several members of the People's Party criticized the Spanish government on this line.

Finally, there is the activity of the European Parliament, in which there is a majority conservative attitude as expressed in public declarations and documents. However, this numerical superiority is neutralized to a certain degree by the political activism of the Socialist group. In conjunction with the United Left, the former Communists, and the Greens, this group primes the maintenance of the open communication policy with the Cuban government, without sidelining the civil society. The Cuban dissidents, however, complained that since 2007 the EU did rather little to advance the cause of human rights defenders in Cuba. They notably criticized that Commissionner Jean Louis Michel did not receive them during his March 2008 visit to Cuba and that they don't enjoy direct Commission middle management representatives. The conservatives advocate for the maintenance of the Common Position and were opposed to the lifting of the 2003 measures, while the Socialist group takes up a more engaging attitude. A minority of more activist groups and lobbies endorse the complete lifting, a decision that, as we have seen, finally was entertained and approved by the Council in June 2008. This parliamentary balance has been consolidated (even after the retirement

of Castro). The overall attitude has not distanced itself from the line coined in the Common Position, based on a dual track of political criticism and the offer of generous aid conditioned on the respect of human rights.

In sum, this bundle of European attitudes and perceptions on the evolution of the Cuban regime reveals that at no moment has the general consensus abandoned the standard script of combining communication, persuasion, and pressure toward Cuba. Very well aware of the shortcomings of the regime, its resistance to change, and its internal intolerance, Europe seems to send a message like the one issued by the millionaire in the Billy Wilder film *Some Like It Hot*. When told that the female-impersonating character is not really a good musician and, finally, that "she" is a man, he responds: Nobody's perfect. Cuba has been telling the EU that she is not democratic and that she does not want to change. The EU, in response, has been insistent in its courtship effort. At the end of the road, the EU seems to be willing to disregard for the time being most of Cuba's shortcomings in order to make progress toward an understanding of cooperation contributing to a peaceful transition.

There is a clear contrast between the Cuban vision (in public declarations and personal surveys) and the European attitude regarding European policies toward Cuba as a reflection of U.S. actions. Havana insists that the conditions presented by Brussels to Cuba (Common Position, measures of 2003) are simply a replica of a script issued by Washington, as expressed in the embargo and codified by the Helms-Burton act and subsequent measures with respect to travel and remittances. Moreover, critical governments inside the EU consider the "constructive dialogue" policy simply a form of opposing the United States in a scenario without much strategic importance. The European governments behaving this way would claim to act independently of the United States.[4] In a certain way, this attitude would resemble the one implemented during the Cold War when they opposed the embargo and kept an economic relationship and diplomatic link with Cuba without implying support for a Communist regime. The EU and most European governments consider that maintaining the official bond or presenting demands on human rights do not represent a policy of taking cues from Washington.

Nonetheless, the Brussels establishment, reflecting a consensus of the feeling in the most influential capitals regarding Cuban issues, increasingly has become more concerned, if not irritated, by the unusual language used by Cuban authorities, echoing the expressions used by Fidel Castro in his writings. The offer to meet in Brussels got, in the view of EU officials, a provocative and unfriendly reply, less than the

respectful tone that Cubans themselves request. The EU representatives have not been happy with what is perceived as a "deliberate misreading" of the EU texts, or relying on a nonrepresentative minority. Brussels would hope that the Cuban declarations would properly take notice that the Common Position explicitly excludes coercive means, different from the U.S. attitude to which it is frequently paralleled.[5]

In this respect, some analysts judge that the Cuban regime actually has not been interested in the ending of the Common Position, a logic that parallels its attitude toward the U.S. embargo. As frequent declarations of Cuban officials including Fidel Castro have illustrated, the EU Common Position has been equated to the U.S. policy. The Cuban government then has skillfully applied the same treatment to both, interpreting them as examples of economic and political imperialism, blaming them for the economic shortcomings of the Cuban system. It needs to be stressed when dealing with this comparative dimension that the EU Common Position has not planned to bring change to Cuba by coercive means, not even at the height of Aznar's influence, thus disproving Cuban claims. The question is how long this nationalist approach will continue to be effective in dealing with the perception of Cuban citizens. That has been the main reason why Spain and other EU partners have opposed the drafting of a "strategy paper" that is interpreted as the imposition of "sanctions."

In this scenario, what can Spain and other EU actors do? One obvious option is to maintain the policy of "constructive dialogue" and communication with the "real Cuba" and the "official Cuba." With patience, constancy, diplomacy, and firmness, the only policy that still has not failed in the Cuban drama could at the end of the road deliver the desired results when at last the full transition to democracy is implemented. Then it will be seen that the brief interlude of almost broken diplomatic relations between 2003 and 2005 was the exception in the close relationship between different governments and regimes since 1898. Only when real change takes place would it be possible to assess the usefulness of a policy of open communication. Meanwhile, different European governments, with Spain at the helm, seem to agree with the popular expression: "don't blame me for trying." This is exactly what several national actors, international officers and dignitaries, and EU institutional representatives have been trying to do since months before the National Assembly election took place, Castro relinquished power, and the new government led by Raúl was named.

In view of the above arguments and facts, and under the leadership of Spain, Europe should also maintain the requirement of protection of human rights, without media-grabbing declarations that became

counterproductive. In this setting, a modification of the Common Position, confirmed as a simple condition for an effective association status within the ACP group, as was its original spirit, should be stressed. This sensible stance is even more delicate in the course of the implementation of moderate economic measures by the new Cuban leadership. Errors committed at this stage may mean that someday the phrase "more was lost in Cuba" ("más se perdió en Cuba") may have a different sense, similar to the original flavor of the Spanish expression.

In any event, at the end of the road, when the transition is in motion, but not before, the moment of truth will have come to see what kind of new influence Spain and EU partners that share the basic approach on Cuba may have. Meanwhile, the rest of the EU (with the possible exception of the standard protests from the hard-liners) will probably show the wait-and-see attitude that has been the trend, responding to what kind of pragmatic priorities are contemplated. Neither Spain nor its EU opponents on the Cuban issue have the capacity to drastically change the current official position or reimpose the temporary measures, unless Cuba makes a reckless move.

In summary, the balance sheet of the European Union's policies and attitudes on Cuba shows a mixed picture. It is composed of a coherent script of measures intended in the first place for keeping the communication line open, and secondarily for contributing to the conditions for a sort of "soft landing" in the terrain of democracy and market economy in the event of a peaceful transition. This strategy has not come free of charge, as demonstrated by the persistent negative vote on Cuba in the UN Commission on Human Rights, and the maintenance of the Common Position imposed in 1996 that conditions any special cooperation and aid package on the implementation of political reforms.

This institutional policy contrasts, on the one hand, with the apparently uncoordinated policies of the member states that trade and invest in Cuba according to their individual interests. It is a fact that the Common Position legally does not oblige MS to coordinate trade and investment policies with Cuba. But the result is that such freedom of movement makes the Common Position appear "neither common, nor a policy," in the words of sarcastic EU insiders.[6] On the other hand, the EU strategy contrasts with the U.S. policy of confrontations and harassment. While the United States has been pursuing a path composed of the embargo and extraterritorial laws such as Helms-Burton, the EU has opted for a "constructive engagement." While the European pattern has been geared toward preparing for the transition, the United States' policy has concentrated on regime change.[7] Both, however, have one dimension in

common—Cuba has not changed or reformed according to the expected results. The European strategy can be labeled as one based on good intentions and reasonable (if not high) expectations, but in the end, any serious attempt to condition an offer of a special status in the EU structure (bilateral agreement, Lomé, Cotonou) has resulted in a high degree of frustration.

Decision makers in Brussels and many European capitals have come to the conclusion that Fidel and Raúl Castro's priorities have placed a conditioned relationship with the European Union at a lower level than maintaining a line of internal discipline at the cost of violating basic human rights. Moreover, the confrontation with the United States has been considered by the Cuban regime as the ultimate raison d'être to justify the continuation of the system and the refusal to modify it, or even less to change it.

Insiders of the EU institutions are aware of the limitations of the standard Common Foreign and Security Policy when subjected to the rule of unanimity and consensus. When the target country or issue does not enjoy a clear identification as urgent and crucial for the collective security of the European Union or any of its most influential member states, the resulting common stance is riddled with minimum denominators and weak requirements as a product of compromise. The result is that the country in question, in this case Cuba, safely elects to avoid dealing with a bloc and prefer to resort to the traditional policy of "divide and conquer." This tactic is even more effective when Cuba still enjoys alternative sources of economic support and political endorsement. The collective conditions imposed by a long and elaborate consensus are easy to reject, as is the case of Cuba, protected by Venezuela and the political backing of other Latin American countries.

Still, for Cuba it would be very advantageous to accept a set of requirements palatable to the leadership. That would eliminate a source of unnecessary friction and wasted energy and it would render some economic benefits to supplement the resources received from Latin America and China. Consequently, the open option for the EU establishment is to elect a practical exercise of "enhanced cooperation" or an extreme example of "variable geometry," in which a specific country takes the lead and establishes an independent policy toward Cuba. The hope is that this individual strategy, respected by the rest of the smember states, would open the way for a variety of spillover effect that would entice others to join in a more aggressive strategy of constructive engagement in order to contribute to the benefit of Cuba's civil society and the eventual reform of the political structure. Although imperfect and in a way frustrating, this scenario would match the historical pattern of Spain's relations with Cuba.

The loss produced by a return to a state of mutual isolation would not generate any benefits for anybody, including the Cuban government. It would suffer the consequences of the contrast between the "official Cuba" and the "official Spain," affecting the standing historical link between the "real Cuba" and the "real Spain."

Notes

Chapter 1

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2. For an early sample of books on Cuba's international relations, see the review essay by Jorge Domínguez, "Cuba in the International Arena," *Latin American Research Review*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1988, pp. 196–206.
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4. For a review of Spanish-Cuban relations, see, from a British perspective: Alistair Hennessy, "Spain and Cuba: An Enduring Relationship," in H. J. Wiarda (ed.), *The Iberian-Latin American Connection. Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press/American Enterprise Institute, 1986), pp. 360–374.
5. See John Kirk, *José Martí: Mentor of the Cuban Nation* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1983).
6. Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *Cuba/España, España/Cuba: historia común* (Barcelona: Grijalbo, 1995), pp. 278–292.
7. Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005).
8. *El País*, "Fraga quiere restablecer cuanto antes los lazos 'de familia' con Cuba," 1 diciembre 1996.
9. See the following works by Manuel de Paz-Sánchez: *Zona Rebelde: La diplomacia española ante la Revolución Cubana (1957–1960)* (Tenerife: Centro de la Cultura Popular Canaria, 1997), pp. 301–317; "Franco y Cuba," paper presented at a symposium organized by the University of Nantes,

December 7–9, 2006; and *Franco y Cuba: Estudios sobre España y la Revolución* (Tenerife: Idea, 2006), cap. 5, pp. 187–300, and cap. 6, pp. 301–375; *Suite para dos épocas: La caída de Batista y el triunfo de la Revolución Cubana, según la diplomacia española* (París: L'Harmattan, 1997).

10. De Paz-Sánchez, *Zona Rebelde*, p. 57 and De Paz-Sánchez, *Franco y Cuba*, pp. 301–371.
11. De Paz-Sánjhez, *Zona Rebelde*, p. 116.
12. Dee Paz-Sánchez, *Zona Rebelde*, p. 88.
13. Message of July 8, 1957, quoted by De Paz-Sánchez, *Zona Rebelde*, p. 24.
14. Report of January 9, 1959, quoted by De Paz-Sánchez, *Zona Rebelde*, p. 103.
15. Report of January 16, 1959, quoted by De Paz-Sánchez, *Zona Rebelde*, p. 113.
16. See summary of the incident in De Paz-Sánchez, *Zona Rebelde*, p. 304. This news-making incident is considered one of the most graphically documented events of the Cuban-Spanish relationship. Recorded by television, there are photographs in which Castro and Lojendio are physically quarrelling, while aides barely managed to keep them separated. See, for example, reprint in *Efemérides* (Madrid: EFE, 1989), p. 137. The episode was to be the central event of a one-hour documentary produced by Televisió de Catalunya-TV3 (the Catalan TV network) entitled "Franco i Fidel: una amistat incómoda" (Transmitted in January 2009, available at www.30minuts.com).
17. See Enrique Trueba, classmate of Castro and later president of the Hogar de Cuba in Madrid, in "Veinticinco años de castrismo," *Ya*, 1 enero 1984.
18. See context in the book of memoirs written by the cousin of Francisco Franco, Salgado-Araujo, *Mis conversaciones privadas con Franco* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1976), pp. 278–279.
19. De Paz-Sánchez, "Franco y Cuba."
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21. *El imparcial*, "La invasión de Portugal, el sueño imperial de Franco," 4 junio 2008. http://www.elimparcial.es/contenido/9603.html.
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23. Quote and translation from "Declaraciones a *El País* de Fidel Castro," *El País*, 20 enero 1985.
24. Rephrasing of Castro's words offered by White in a letter addressed to this author, November 25, 1997.
25. Georgie Anne Geyer, *Guerrilla Prince* (Mexico: Kosmos, 1991); De Paz-Sanchez, *Franco y Cuba* (Spain: Ediciones Idea, 2006).
26. From confidential first-hand diplomatic sources.
27. Frei Betto, *Fidel y la religión* (Santo Domingo, R. Dominicana: Editorial Alfa y Omega, 1985), p. 144.
28. Ibid.
29. Tad Szulc, *Fidel: Un retrato crítico* (Barcelona: Grijalbo, 1986).

30. Lambie, "Franco's Spain and the Cuban Revolution," pp. 240–242.
31. De Paz-Sánchez, "Franco y Cuba."
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.

CHAPTER 2

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2. Decreto Legislativo No. 50 (February 15, 1982).
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4. Miguel Angel de la Guardia, Havana Radio, January 5, 1997 (FBIS-LAT-004).
5. Alistair Hennessy, "Cuba, Western Europe and the U.S.: A Historical Overview," in Alistair Hennessy and George Lambie (eds.), *The Fractured Blockade: West European-Cuban Relations During the Revolution* (London: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 11–63.
6. Kenneth Maxwell, "Joaquín Roy: Cuba, the US and the Helms-Burton Doctrine," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 5 (September/October 2000), p. 143.
7. "Alarcón discusses Helms-Burton," Havana Radio and Television Networks, March 21, 1996 (FBIS-LAT-96-059).
8. Mimi Whitefield, "Claims on Cuba," *Miami Herald*, June 10, 1996.
9. "Alarcón discusses Helms-Burton."
10. "The Helms-Burton, Cubans, and Housing," *Prensa Latina*, April 3, 1997.
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12. Alistair Hennesy, "Economic Factors," p. 239.
13. Consuegra-Barquín, "The Present Status Quo of Property Rights in Cuba," Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (ASCE). *Cuba in Transition*. Papers and Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Meeting. Miami, Florida, August 10–12, 1995, p. 206.
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30. Hermenegildo Altozano, "Consideraciones sobre el entendimiento UE-EE.UU. de 18 de mayo de 1998 respecto a medidas (disciplinas) para fortalecer la protección de inversiones." Seminario sobre "Cuba: Nuevas perspectivas tras el acuerdo sobre la Ley Helms y el relajamiento del embargo," Cuba Negocios, Madrid, 3 julio 1998.
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CHAPTER 5

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CONCLUSION

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